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# Theories of Leadership

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# Overview

## Three theoretical questions

- Action dispensibility (actor or structure?)
- Action dispensibility (situation or person?)
- Cause or consequence?

## Four empirical components

- Context
- Followers
- Relationship between leader and follower
- *Leadership style*





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Question 1:

# ***ACTION* DISPENSIBILITY?**



# The actor or the structure?

## The structure

Analytical perspective:

- Situational factors (which also determine leadership behavior)

Focus:

- Contexts, systems, situations, procedures, processes

Theories:

- System theory, institutional theory, discourse analysis, social identity theory, etc.

## The actor

Analytical perspective:

- Actors (which also determine leadership behavior)

Focus:

- Groups, coalitions, leaders (roles and positions)

Theories:

- Rational choice theory, cognitive theories, information processing theories, social psychology, etc.



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Question 2:

# ***ACTOR DISPENSIBILITY?***

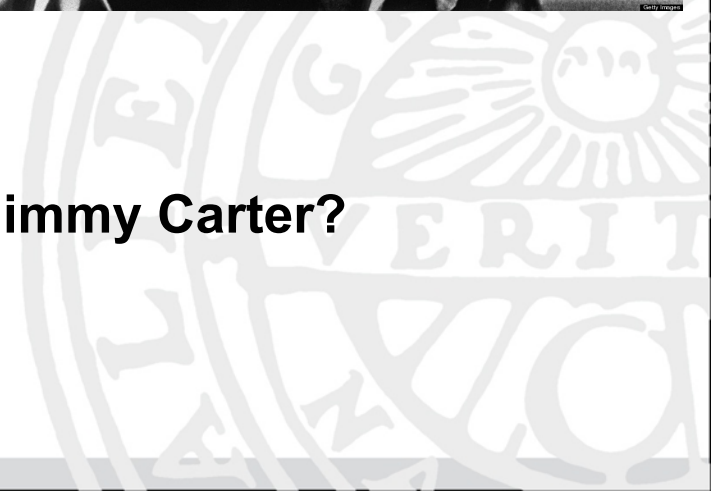




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**Would it have been the same with Jimmy Carter?**





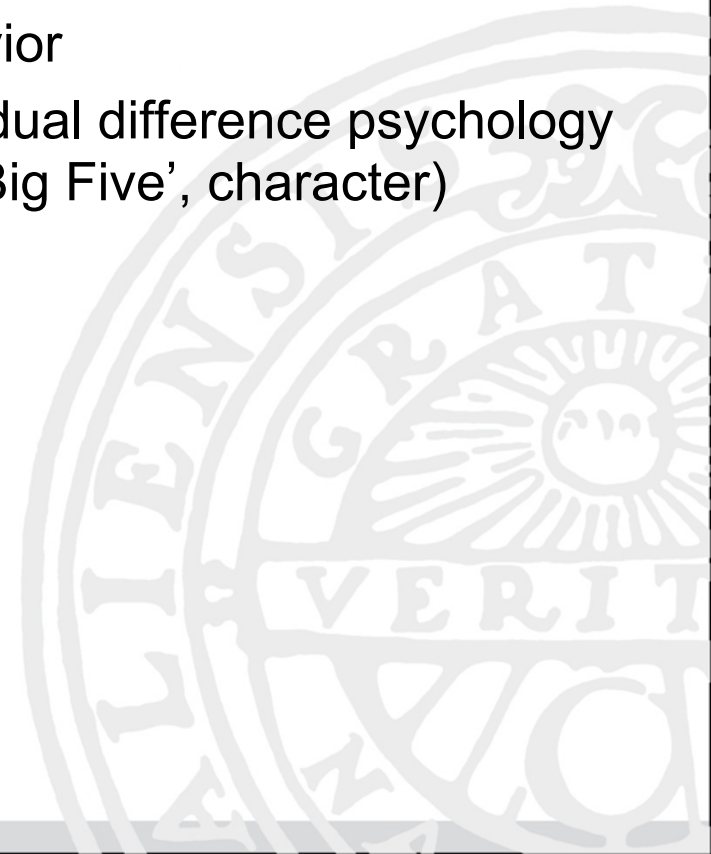
# The situation or the person?

## The situation

- Situational characteristics are the best predictors of individual behavior
- Social psychology (ex . Milgram's Obedience Experiment, Stanford Prison Experiment)

## The person

- Personal characteristics are the best predictors of individual behavior
- Individual difference psychology (ex. 'Big Five', character)







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Question 3:

**CAUSE OR EFFECT?**



# The cause or the consequences?

## Causes

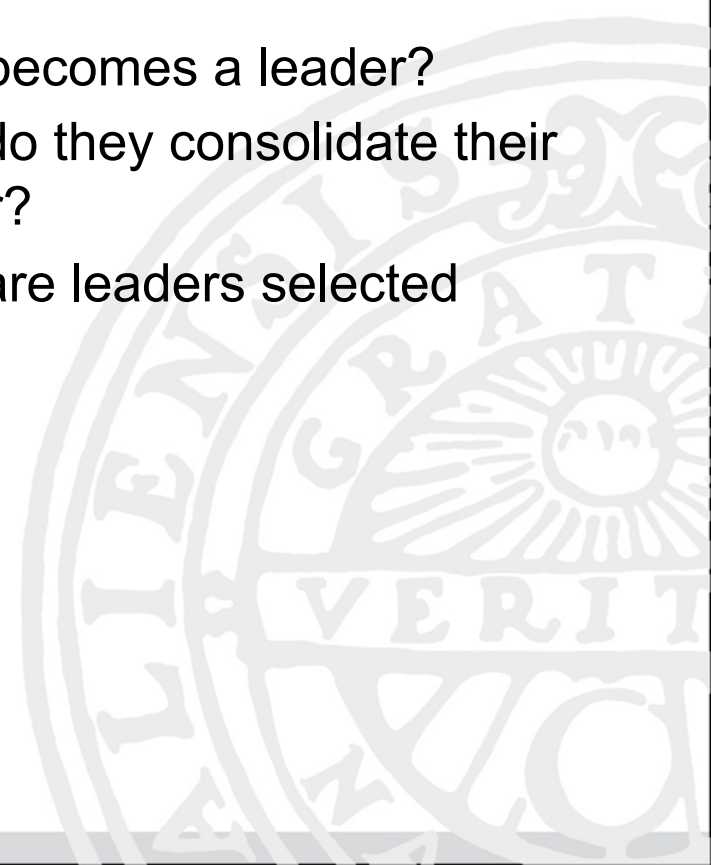
Leadership is the independent variable

- What 'works' and when?
- Can the lessons be copied elsewhere?
- How do individuals matter?
- What individual characteristics (skills, traits, background) matters?

## Consequences

Leadership is the dependent variable

- Who becomes a leader?
- How do they consolidate their power?
- How are leaders selected





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The empirical components of leadership:

# **CONTEXT, LEADERS, FOLLOWERS**





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# Context

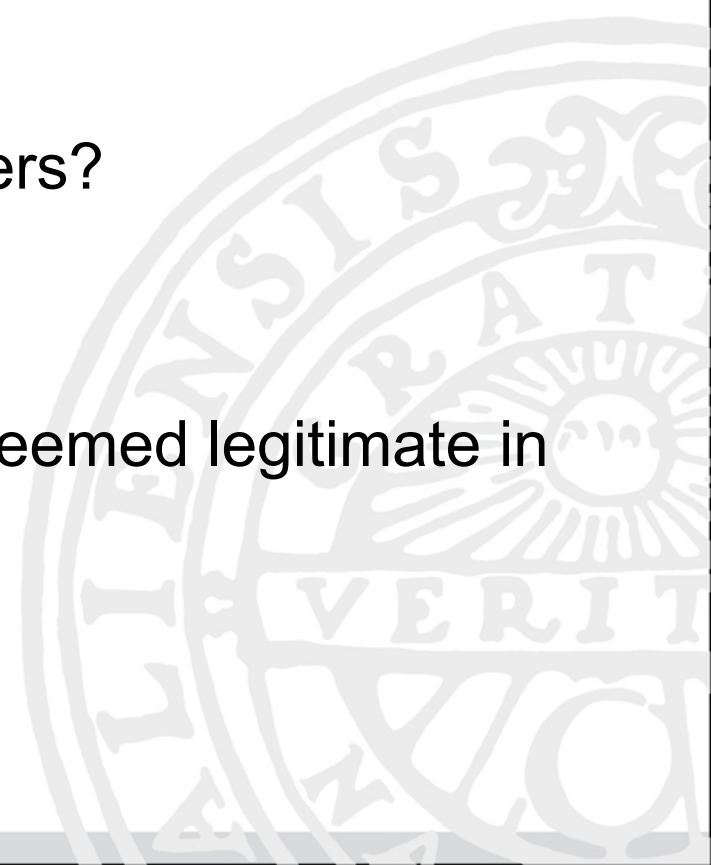
- Culture
- Political system
- Recruitment process
- Nature of the situation





# Followers

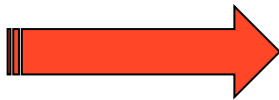
- What kind of leader does followers want?
  - Images?
  - Expectations?
- How do followers select their leaders?
  - Informal processes?
  - Formal processes?
- When, why and how are leaders deemed legitimate in the mind of the followers?



# Relations between leader and followers

## Leadership tools

- Dominance
  - Coercion
- Incentives
  - ‘nudge’ theory
- Persuasion
  - Rhetoric



## Follower tools

- The force of the masses
  - Voting, demonstrations, riots,
- The rise of competitors
  - Disempower

*A struggle about legitimacy*



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Focusing on the Leader

# LEADERSHIP STYLES





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# The Leader

## Three methodological approaches:

- Single case analysis
- Typological analysis
- Aggregation







# The Leader

## Theoretical perspectives on leadership behavior:

1. General psychology, ex. cognitive theories, information processing theories, motivational theories, affect theories:

**Leaders are like all of us, flawed**

2. Individual difference psychology, ex. Trait theory:

**Leaders are born, not made**

3. Behavioral psychology, ex. Learning theory:

**Leaders are made, not born**

4. Social psychology, ex. Group dynamic theory:

**Leaders are a function of groups**



# The Leader

## **Frequently applied individual variables in studies on leaders:**

- Beliefs (“operational code”)
- Motivations
- Political skills
- Organizational capacity
- Cognitive style
- Emotional intelligence
- Reaction to stress
- Background





# The Leader

Effective leaders use specific sets of behaviors =  
*Leadership styles*

(e.g. Directive, Participative, Laissez-faire, Supportive)





# Leadership styles

Crusader vs. Pragmatist

Ideologue vs. Opportunist

Directive vs. Consultative

Task-oriented vs. Relationship oriented

Transformational vs. Transactional

# The Leader

## **Transformational (or charismatic)**

*Leaders have certain personal qualities to inspire followers to reach new goals*

- ✓ High moral and ethical standards
- ✓ Strong visions for the future based on values and ideals
- ✓ Intellectual stimulation (challenges norms and practices)
- ✓ Individual consideration (developmental needs of followers)



## UNDERSTANDING LEADERSHIP

- Analytical perspectives – *contexts, situations, actors, persons, cause and consequences*
- Theoretical approaches – *behaviorism, social psychology, individual psychology, affect psychology*
- Defining components – *context, leaders, followers and the relationship between them*
- Leadership styles – *pragmatic, transformational, crusaders, etc.*
  - Different styles useful in different situations!