Leadership and Political Change in Asia-Pacific

Editors

David Hudson, Nicolas Lemay-Hébert, Claire Mcloughlin and Chris Roche

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Table of Contents

Editorial

Leadership and Change in Asia-Pacific: Where Does Political Will Come From?

David Hudson [1,*], Nicolas Lemay-Hébert [2], Claire Mcloughlin [1] and Chris Roche [3]

[1] International Development Department, School of Government, University of Birmingham, Birmingham B15 2TT, UK;
E-Mails: d.e.hudson@bham.ac.uk (D.H.), c.mcloughlin@bham.ac.uk (C.M.)
[2] Department of International Relations, Coral Bell School of Asia Pacific Affairs, Australian National University, Canberra, ACT 2600, Australia; E-mail: nicolas.lemay-hebert@anu.edu.au
[3] Institute for Human Security and Social Change, La Trobe University, Melbourne, VIC 3086, Australia;
E-Mail: c.roche@latrobe.edu.au

* Corresponding author

Abstract
We introduce this thematic issue by exploring the role of leadership in social and political change. In current times, the importance of leadership and choice has proved as important as ever. Leadership is often the critical variable separating success or failure, legitimacy and sustainability or collapse. This thematic issue explores a range of in-depth case studies across the Asia-Pacific region that help illustrate the critical elements of leadership. Collectively they demonstrate that leadership is best understood as a collective process involving motivated agents overcoming barriers to cooperation to form coalitions that have enough power, legitimacy and influence to transform institutions. Five themes emerge from the thematic issue as a whole: leadership is political; the centrality of gender relations; the need for a more critical localism; scalar politics; and the importance of understanding informal processes of leadership and social change.

Issue
This editorial is part of the issue "Leadership and Political Change in Asia-Pacific" edited by David Hudson (University of Birmingham, UK), Nicolas Lemay-Hébert (Australian National University, Australia), Claire Mcloughlin (University of Birmingham, UK) and Chris Roche (La Trobe University, Australia).

1. Introduction

We introduce this thematic issue by exploring the role of leadership in social and political change. Change always happens through the interaction between individuals and the institutional context they inhabit (or agency and structure). Leadership is at the heart of this process; and to understand it we must take a dynamic view of how incentives, values, interests and opportunities motivate individual leaders and groups to push, or resist, change.

Leadership is a collective process where motivated agents must overcome barriers to cooperation to form coalitions that have enough power, legitimacy and influence to transform institutions in a positive (developmental) way. This thematic issue sheds light on how this process can unfold, using a range of in-depth case studies across the Asia-Pacific. Collectively, the seven articles help address the question of where 'political will' comes from, where political will is redefined as a process of contestation at the individual, collective and societal levels.

2. Why Leadership, Why Now?

When we originally planned this thematic issue on the topic of leadership, we could never have imagined that it would be published in the midst of a global pandemic; a time when leaders around the world are facing the most extraordinary test. Addressing the devastating effects of Covid-19 effectively has called on state and non-state authorities to make and enforce extraordinary rules, ensure citizen compliance with them, and plan and implement highly complex, unforeseen public health and economic interventions.

We have witnessed much variation, both across and within countries, in rising to this challenge. While academic analysis remains nascent, researchers are beginning to examine the relationship between how well countries have performed in response to Covid-19 and pre-existing levels of institutional development, political systems, economic wealth, geography, demographics and cultural factors. But it is apparent that these cannot provide a complete explanation. Some of the worst performing countries in the world, with the highest rates of infection per capita, also have some of the highest GDP (the US, for example). And while political institutions might matter, there are fewer clear patterns between, for example, authoritarian or democratic regimes in their handling of the crisis than we might expect.

Leadership matters, ultimately, because institutions do not respond to pandemics; people do. That said, as we have seen in the response to the global pandemic, leaders respond to crisis in ways that reflect the institutions and incentives in which they are embedded, constrained and enabled by. A myriad of everyday decisions are now being taken, sometimes for the greater good and sometimes self-serving, by people with power. By people who are either bestowed with, or who are claiming, the space to act.

The outcomes of these choices will not always be foreseen or intended. The complexity and globality of the pandemic and the dependencies within and between human societies means they will be radically non-linear. What is certain is that we will have to live with the institutional legacies of choices that are not obviously rational or desirable. Understanding the dynamics of leadership is arguably more important now than ever, if we want to understand what enables or constrains complex problem-solving in crisis, but more broadly, what can enable or constrain social change.

3. From Leaders to Developmental Leadership

Our argument here, and elsewhere, is that we cannot unpack the leadership complex by exclusively examining leaders' choices and actions. For more than ten years, research from the Developmental Leadership Program (DLP) has investigated the political dynamics of leadership (Hudson, Mcloughlin, Roche, & Marquette, 2018). The findings stress that leadership is not an individu-

al phenomenon that happens inside politicians' heads. Leaders cannot pursue real change without influencing people, or persuading them to change their ideas or behaviours. Leadership is always, everywhere, an interaction between leaders and followers (Hudson & Mcloughlin, 2019). Political 'will' isn't something that can be conjured up, literally 'at will' by individuals and then change happens. The necessary ingredients and process that change happens through is one that is often deeply political and uncomfortable and is fundamentally about contestation. By contestation we mean that motivations, interests, ideas, goals and plans need to be formulated, challenged, and compromised—and it is only through such a process that political will can be built. As such political will is something that is built collectively and involves coalitions and deals, it includes followers as much as leaders, or constellations of leaders across the political spectrum and across different spaces and scales. These are issues that a number of the articles in this thematic issue elaborate upon.

Critically, it is also true that leaders are never entirely free from rules that constrain or restrain them. In the real world, change hinges on the complex relationships between individuals and the norms and rules they inhabit.

4. Leadership at the Individual, Collective and Societal Level

Elsewhere we have argued that political will for positive change can be achieved through a process of 'developmental leadership' (Hudson et al., 2018). Developmental leadership is a collective, strategic and political process through which people contest institutions and make change happen. It is typically messy, protracted, and beset by dead ends and reversals. But ultimately it always works via three core elements coming together at the individual, collective and societal levels. At the individual level, developmental leadership functions through motivated and strategic individuals. These individuals have some set of incentives, values, interests and opportunity to push for change—in short, motivation. But motivation is not enough. And this is the point: Even the most motivated need a combination of power and opportunity to realise their goals, as well as the skill to work strategically.

Second, as noted, because political will is collective not individualistic, developmental leadership requires barriers to cooperation be overcome and coalitions formed. And these coalitions must have sufficient power, legitimacy and influence. The effectiveness of such coalitions depends upon the political strategies and tactics they use, their perceived local legitimacy, the work they do behind the scenes, and ultimately, their pragmatism. Critically, coalitions can be very mixed, made up of those who are intrinsically committed to reforms, but also often include those who are more instrumental or opportunistic.

Third, and critically, an effective (and powerful) coalition boils down to their ability to contest and delegitimise one set of ideas and legitimise an alternative set. Time and again, ideas, rules and norms of how the world should operate and be ordered is the most significant barrier to change. The work of developmental leadership, and the coalitions that support it, is to challenge, contest and change the ideas that structure society. Doing so, and crucially via ways that are perceived as locally legitimate, ensures that such change is more likely to be sustainable. Contests over the myths, narratives and frames that people view the world about what's fair and right for society become the critical ground that political will is built on, or evaporates.

5. Emerging Themes: Political Leadership, Gender, Critical Localism, Informal Social Change and Scales

The thematic issue begins from this understanding of leadership as collective, political and contextual and offers a broad range of case studies straddling the Asia-Pacific region. Roche, Cox, Rokotuibau, Tawake, and Smith (2020) and Craney (2020) cover the Pacific, with case studies from the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea as well as a Pacific regional initiative ('Green Growth Coalition'). Lin (2020) analyses technocratic leadership in the People's Republic of China, Krishna and Roche (2020) and Gordon (2020) look at India. Finally, Sherlock (2020) and Hudson, Mcloughlin, Margret, and Pandjaitan (2020) discuss cases from Indonesia.

Five main themes emerge from these debates and the thematic issue as a whole: leadership as political; gender relations; critical localism; scalar politics; and the value in understanding informal processes of leadership and social change.

The first theme that appears clearly in the issue is the political nature of leadership, and a number of crucial contributions are made on this theme. Lin (2020) looks at the role of political capital to explain the rise of a provincial technocratic elite in China in the 1990s. As such, Lin makes a contribution to the political technocracy theory, understanding this rise as an effective alliance of technocrats and career bureaucrats. Craney (2020) looks at 'locally led development' through an informal elite network lens, problematizing simplistic understandings of what constitutes the local in that respect. Gordon (2020) contributes to the 'transformative leadership' discussion, understanding how actors operating outside of traditional politics manage to bring effective social change through their actions. Krishna and Roche's (2020) analysis makes a crucial contribution to the understanding of political will as being contingent upon leadership at the individual, collective and societal levels. And Hudson et al. (2020) offer new empirical evidence for how political leaders are evaluated, supporting the social identity theory of leadership in a non-Western setting (Indonesia precisely). They show how individual leaders who best reflect and represent the identity of the group tend to

be more trusted and have more leeway in how they are perceived as effective or not.

The second theme appearing clearly in this thematic issue is gender relations and leadership. Through their focus on Simbo for Change, an initiative in the Western province of the Solomon Islands, Roche et al. (2020) bring to light the leadership of the director of the initiative, Esther Susi, and the notion of 'quiet feminism' showing how the initiative she led re-articulated women's empowerment as an essential part of creating a cohesive a broader island identity. Gordon (2020) looks at what motivates women to become leaders in their own communities through an analysis of a grassroots microfinance organisation called Rojiroti in India. Because of their own positions in their communities, women leaders were best placed to tackle a number of issues and managed to display 'transformative leadership' in doing so. As such, through their active involvement in this social process, Rojiroti's women leaders were able to challenge rather than perpetuate the existing inequalities. Moving up scales, Sherlock (2020) looks at how civil society organisations working for women's empowerment and gender equality in Indonesia have managed to influence members of parliament to adopt positions that would end up being of mutual benefit to both actors.

The third theme explicitly discussed in this thematic issue revolves around the concept of 'critical localism' and leadership. Localism is too often easily accepted and valorised. Roche et al. (2020) question the concept of the local, especially when constructed as an unhelpful binary opposition to a vague concept of the international. They call for more attention to be paid to 'critical localism,' this is exploring the vernacular understandings of the local and the complex webs of power in which different 'local' actors are located. Similarly, Craney (2020) questions the assumption made by donors and multilateral organisations about who is included in the concept of the 'local,' arguing that a diversity of voices and experiences should be captured. Gordon (2020) similarly sheds light on the complex landscape that are constituted by local politics through a thicker understanding of what 'grassroots' leadership is about.

The fourth theme is around scalar politics. The thematic issue as a whole stresses the importance of 'multiscalarity,' understood as the constant interaction between different scales of analysis: the global, the regional, the national, and the local. Roche at al. (2020) point out not just this 'vertical' scaling, but also the importance of 'horizontal' linkages in the Pacific which illustrate the role of support from with the region, which can be more relevant and culturally appropriate than international linkages from outside the region. As previously mentioned, Sherlock (2020) adopts a scalar approach through the interplay between grassroots and national politics. For us this is a critical avenue for future research: How leaders and leadership effectively works through and across different scales, and the politics of that.

The final theme relates to what fluid and informal processes of social change tell us about more deliberate attempts to support individual and collective leadership. Craney (2020) and Roche et al. (2020) provide examples of collective action from the Pacific which demonstrate characteristics which are very much at odds with the more formal projectized approaches that tend to dominate the world of international development. Gordon (2020) also points to similar distinct facets of leadership amongst grassroots women's organisations in India in generating mutual support and solidarity. Sherlock (2020) illustrates how women's civil society organisations in Indonesia, whilst supported by a large development program, have at the same time worked politically with members of parliament to build 'alliances of instrumental advantage.' These articles provide a useful reminder of how decentring the world of formal institutionalised development can reveal not only how more immanent processes of social change occur, but also the shortcomings of more deliberate, intentional project based attempts to promote leadership. Essentially, those who want to provide effective support to leadership processes will need to let go. Not a comfortable proposition. But one that cannot be ignored.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

About the Authors

David Hudson is the Professor of Politics and Development in the International Development Department at the University of Birmingham. David's work focuses on the politics of development, in particular on the role of coalitions, leadership and power in reform processes and how development actors can think and work politically as part of the Developmental Leadership Program, migration and migration-decision making, and how people in rich countries engage with global development issues as part of the Development Engagement Lab.

Nicolas Lemay-Hébert is a Fellow in the Department of International Relations, Australian National University, and the Department's Director of Research. His current research interests include state-building and intervention issues in Asia-Pacific and beyond. He is particularly interested in local resistance to international interventions and the political economy of interventions.

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Claire Mcloughlin is Lecturer in Political Sociology in the International Development Department at the University of Birmingham. Claire's research focuses on the political sociology of vital public service delivery in conflict-affected and divided societies. In particular, she is interested in the politics of distributive justice and procedural fairness in service delivery, and the historical processes that embed welfare provision in social contracts. Claire currently conducts research on the politics of development and leadership for the Developmental Leadership Program, for which she acts as Deputy Director (Research).

Chris Roche is Professor of Development Practice at La Trobe University, in Melbourne, Australia, and Director of the Institute for Human Security and Social Change. Chris is also Deputy Director (Impact) of the Developmental Leadership Program.

Article

The Characteristics of Locally Led Development in the Pacific

Chris Roche [1,*], John Cox [1], Mereani Rokotuibau [2], Peni Tawake [3] and Yeshe Smith [1]

[1] Institute for Human Security and Social Change, La Trobe University, Melbourne, 3086, Australia;
E-Mails: c.roche@latrobe.edu.au (C.R.), j.cox2@latrobe.edu.au (J.C.), y.smith@latrobe.edu.au (Y.S.)
[2] Balance of Power Program, Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development, 19419 Suva, Fiji;
E-Mail: mereani.rokotuibau@bop.org.fj
[3] Australia Pacific Training Coalition, 14319 Suva, Fiji; E-Mail: peni.tawake@aptc.edu.au

* Corresponding author

Abstract

There is a growing recognition of the effectiveness of locally led processes of social change and development. However, most of the case studies that have been discussed in the literature are focused on *programs* run by international development agencies. This article examines three locally led *processes* of change in the Pacific. These include the Simbo for Change Initiative in the Solomon Islands, the Voice in Papua New Guinea and a regional process led by the Green Growth Coalition. We explore how local understandings of leadership, preferences for informal ways of working, holistic ways of thinking, the importance placed upon maintaining good relationships and collective deliberation fundamentally shaped each of the cases. We note how these preferences and ways of working are often seen, or felt, to be at odds with western modes of thought and the practice of development agencies. Finally, we conclude by exploring how these initiatives were supported by external agencies, and suggest further research of this type might provide benchmarks by which Pacific citizens can hold their governments and development agencies to account.

Issue

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1. Introduction

There is a growing promotion of locally led processes of social change and development. However, most of the case studies that have been developed and discussed in the literature and the international development arena are generally focused on programs run by international development agencies, for example the Coalitions for Change program in the Philippines (Sidel & Faustino, 2020), the State Accountability and Voice Initiative in Nigeria (Booth & Chambers, 2014), Pyoe Pin in Myanmar (Christie & Green, 2018), or the Vanuatu Skills program (Barbara, 2019). This article, by contrast, examines three locally led *processes* of change in the Pacific (as opposed to projects), and seeks to understand their specific nature.

As a number of authors have noted, the concept of 'the local' is contested and often unhelpfully "constructed in binary opposition to the international" (Roepstorff, 2020, p. 285). Further, the local "has been depicted as the problem *and* the solution" (Mac Ginty, 2015, p. 847): Something, or somewhere, either to be civilised or developed, or romanticised as the "potential saviour" of the deficiencies of international efforts to promote development (Mac Ginty, 2015, p. 841). Such conceptualisations of localisation by international actors, it is

argued, run the risk of reproducing existing power relations (Roepstorff, 2020, p. 292), through new forms of "remote control" (van Voorst, 2019, p. 2117). There is therefore a call for a more 'critical localism' that not only avoids oppositions between local and international dimensions, but that explores vernacular understandings of the local, the agency of different actors and the complex webs of power in which they are located (Mac Ginty, 2015; Roepstorff, 2020). This article attempts to do this through an examination of three specific cases that can be described as locally led in the sense that they are "driven by a group of local actors who are committed to a reform agenda and would pursue it regardless of external support" (McCulloch & Piron, 2019, p. 8), and "who are local in the sense of not being mere implementers of a donor agenda" (Booth & Unsworth, 2014, p. 1).

Critical development literature has highlighted the problems with traditional top-down development institutions and the power inequities and failures associated with modernist and neoliberal modes of development practice. Much of this literature is aligned with postdevelopment theories and anticipates the emergence of new practices that can continue to strive towards greater global equity without reproducing neocolonial tendencies of the past (Escobar, 2018; Klein & Morreo, 2019). Escobar in particular notes the importance of what he calls "autonomous design" as part of this practice. That is practice that is both based on a given community's understanding of its own realities and that seeks to change norms from within: "It might involve the defense of some practices, the transformation of others, and the veritable invention of new practice" (Escobar, 2018, p. 172). This inevitably leads to a plural and emergent understanding of what constitutes development or indeed postdevelopment. We use this lens to explore the three case studies presented in the article. As such we are not seeking to evaluate the 'development effectiveness' of these initiatives according to some predefined criteria, rather we are seeking to investigate how the concepts of critical localism and critical development might help illuminate specific cases of local, communal and relatively 'autonomous design.'

2. Case Study Selection and Methodology

In order to expand the horizons of 'the local,' the cases explored in this article have been chosen to represent locally led initiatives that engage in different but intersecting "scale-making projects" (Tsing, 2000, 2005). These include: the Simbo for Change movement on the apparently classically small and bounded local scale of the island of Simbo in Solomon Islands (in fact Simbo for Change relied on both mobilising local identity and creating connections with national and international bodies); The Voice Inc., a national level youth initiative in Papua New Guinea; and the Green Growth Leaders' Coalition, a Pacific regional process seeking to promote 'green growth.' These disparate case studies have been select-

ed, not as representative examples of local, national and regional scales, but as lenses through which to understand the dynamics of scale in the Pacific, both as the "enduring realities of scale and distance" that shape Pacific states (Allen & Dinnen, 2015, p. 381), and as contingent investments in scale-making projects that create and redefine the local in different contexts.

These cases have been the subject of ongoing mixed methods action research (key informant interviews, surveys, community focus groups and participant observation) by academics and consultants from La Trobe University's Institute for Human Security and Social Change. In the cases of Simbo for Change and the Green Growth Leaders' Coalition, the action research was initiated under the Australian aid program's Pacific Leadership Program (PLP) and the major findings and the specifics of data collection have already been reported elsewhere (Craney & Hudson, 2020; Denney & McLaren, 2016; Suti, Hoatson, Tafunai, & Cox, 2020). The Voice Inc. case study has emerged from other action research in Papua New Guinea that the Institute has an ongoing role in, and has been developed in close collaboration with key actors from the Voice.

The Institute's approach to researching contemporary development practice has evolved into a collaborative model that decentres academic researchers from the research process and engages development practitioners as co-creators of knowledge. We are influenced by postcolonial Pacific models of reflexive learning such as the *talanoa* (Vaioleti, 2006) and *tok stori* models (Sanga & Reynolds, 2018) that create space for mutual listening and reflection between multiple research participants as peers.

Our action research approach has evolved into an informal network of academics and development practitioners from Australia and the Pacific (many of whom have been involved in PLP) who meet to reflect on contemporary development discourse and practice in the Pacific, particularly the politics of knowledge production. This process has included several face to face meetings and a conference session held at the Research for Development Impact conference on "Leadership for Inclusive Development" held at La Trobe University in June 2019. This group has selected the three case studies discussed in this article as examples of Pacific led development that demonstrate important principles of local agency at different scales.

2.1. Simbo for Change

Simbo is a small island of some 1,800 people in the Western Province of Solomon Islands. The majority of the population are members of the Methodist or Seventh Day Adventist churches. Simbo for Change is an initiative begun in 2012 by Esther Suti, a business woman from the island (Suti et al., 2020, p. 3). Esther, who at the time was based in Gizo, the provincial capital, had noticed that women who travelled from Simbo to sell agricultural pro-

duce in the market were often subject to violence and harassment. Furthermore, the trip to Gizo often involved an overnight stay and raised concerns about child-care and protection back on the island (Suti et al., 2020, p. 8). Esther sought to assist her fellow islanders in addressing these issues, not least by exploring how alternative livelihood options might reduce travel demands and promote family safety.

Rather fortuitously, after having failed to find support for her ideas in the Solomon Islands, Esther was introduced to the NGO Samoan Women in Business Development Inc (SWIBDI). SWIBDI's approach to women's empowerment and sustainable agriculture aligned well with Esther's interests and she struck up an important personal friendship with Adimaimalaga Tafunai (hereafter Adi), the CEO (Suti et al., 2020, p. 9). Adi's connection with an Australian government funded development program—the PLP—enabled Esther and SWIBDI to find the financing necessary to collaborate. PLP resourcing allowed SWIBDI staff to travel to Simbo and provide technical support to agricultural livelihoods initiatives, in ways that would reduce the need to travel away from the island (Denney & McLaren, 2016, p. 9). This included experimenting with virgin coconut oil and the production of coconut soap, as well as reviving honey production.

Not all of these livelihood projects were successful. The coconut oil and soap production did not progress as hoped, but income from honey has been substantial. Some 300 hives are now reported to be in use, with income projected to be more than SBD $500,00 per annum (US $61,200) and being used to pay school fees and home infrastructure (International Fund for Agricultural Development, 2018). This has contributed to 'Simbo Honey' gaining a national reputation and Solomon's honeybees more generally being seen as a viable source of income (Akwai, 2019).

In July 2017, the partnership between Esther and SWIBDI also led to Simbo becoming the first internationally accredited organic island in Solomon Islands. SWIBDI had a long-standing interest in organic agriculture and recognised the possibility for Simbo to also pursue this path given its low use of pesticides, fertilizers and other inputs. This led to SWIBDI providing support for a successful plan to achieve certification, including training on composting and manuring, and further restricting the use of insecticides, animal drugs or antibiotics. These activities, combined with women's savings clubs formed by the women's group Madegugusu Women's Association, were undertaken on an island-wide basis. Indeed, Esther, in part due to exchanges with PLP staff, became insistent that this all-encompassing approach should be the case despite SWIBDI suggesting that a more focused experimental trial and error approach might be a better starting point.

Ensuring that all four tribes on the island, and the chiefs of those tribes, were engaged was a politically shrewd way of mobilising the island scale as a collective identity that respected the place of existing leaders while allowing space for new activities and leadership roles among women. This positioned Simbo as a model community to the provincial and national governments (Suti et al., 2020, p. 8).

The relationship between SWIBDI and Simbo was also underpinned by a much longer historical connection between the Island and Samoa. Samoan Methodist missionaries are reported to have brought Christianity to Simbo in the early 1900s (Dureau, 2001). This "second coming" of Samoans to Simbo, as some on the island called it, seems to have enabled deep levels of trust built on shared moral purpose and Christian values (Suti et al., 2020, p. 9).

As a locally led initiative, Simbo for Change focused on reinvigorating the island scale, using a mix of livelihoods development, and work that cemented social cohesion using appeals to Christianity and traditional leadership. Yet, far from being a conservative social movement, Simbo for Change has been able to address gendered inequity, as have other small initiatives in the Western Solomons (Cox, 2017; McDougall, 2014). Simbo for Change has done so by stretching the 'local' beyond the island scale and reimagining the island as reconnected to and held in esteem by provincial, national and Pacific regional actors.

In Escobar's terms, this case illustrates an emergent process of 'autonomous design': Simbo for Change was locally led but supported by a broader network of actors beyond the island. Interestingly, a previous study of the response to the 12-metre tsunami which struck Simbo and neighbouring islands in 2007 had pointed to similar processes (Lauer et al., 2013). Lauer et al. (2013, p. 48) found that strong social capital and resilience on the island was bolstered by an "intermeshing with larger-scale processes" that enabled islanders to gain experience and qualifications off the island and was then used to help provide the necessary leadership to respond effectively to the crisis.

2.2. The Voice Inc.

The Voice Inc. (TVI) is a Papua New Guinean youth organisation which was established in 2007 by a group of law students at the University of Papua New Guinea. Initially, they sought to provide legal education to people living in Port Moresby's informal settlements, and, in 2009, launched the Clean Generation campaign. This anti-corruption initiative launched on World Clean Up Day attracted some 200 young people to remove rubbish in Port Moresby: a metaphor for a new generation of educated young leaders prepared to clean up the physical environment and the corruption that is seen to characterise the political order (Walton, 2018). Since then, the Clean Generation campaign has mobilised thousands of participants, and supports a radio program, a magazine (published in both English and Tok Pisin) and a substantial social media presence. TVI has also expanded its activities to other universities in Papua New Guinea (notably

the University of Technology in Lae, and the University of Goroka) and developed a youth leadership development program (DREAM). This program works on personal development and now has two additional levels: "Active Citizens" and "Nation Builders," designed to build not just individual but collective leadership skills. Over time, TVI has grown from being an organic movement based around some core friendships into a formal NGO which incorporated in 2010.

TVI's day to day culture is characterised by the prominence of female leadership. Most of the TVI staff are women and the organisational culture is notable for the way that young men adapt to this environment respectfully. Whilst some might regard TVI as a relatively privileged group of middle-class students, the importance of modelling alternative gender norms in Papua New Guinea cannot be underestimated. TVI is an explicitly Christian organisation but unlike conventional churches has been successful in creating spaces where young people feel accepted without being subject to an organisational hierarchy. Many TVI members do not attend church regularly but do find their faith validated through the DREAM and other TVI activities.

Many students subsequently take up leadership roles in community groups or campaigns. This aligns with TVI's aims for collective leadership that can address challenges that Papua New Guinea faces at a national scale, primarily by imagining TVI members and alumni as attaining positions of influence as ethical actors who can reshape the nation. TVI has close links with anti-corruption groups such as Transparency International Papua New Guinea, has fed into legislative reform undertaken by the Constitutional Law Reform Commission, and has strong relationships with the National Youth Development Authority. TVI's institutional partnerships are increasingly populated by TVI alumni, whose career paths have benefited from the informal networks fostered by TVI activities. TVI are exploring how this growing network might be the basis of broader reform coalitions, for example in the area of youth drug and alcohol issues.

TVI enjoys a high public profile and has been successful in attracting support from international agencies such as: the German NGO, Bread for the World, who provide core funding; Oaktree, an Australian youth NGO; Oxfam; and the Australian Aid program. Their partnerships also include large corporations in the resources sector, such as Oil Search and Exxon-Mobil. The corporate partnerships provide mentoring (particularly in science, technology, engineering and mathematics) for young women leaders by Papua New Guinean women who work in these organisations. TVI note that corporate partners have much less demanding reporting requirements than NGOs or aid donors and are much easier to work with, a point that traditional donors have cause to reflect on.

In 2016 student unrest broke out on university campuses protesting against corruption and demanding the then Prime Minister Peter O'Neill stand aside. As the protests became more politicised, students fragmented into provincial or tribal groups affiliated to competing camps of politicians. These protests became volatile with police firing on the University of Papua New Guinea students, with one student being killed and campus buildings being destroyed. This led to some deep reflection by TVI who noted how readily students mobilised around sub-national identities rather than the principled commitment to the national interest that TVI tried to foster. This stock-taking led to TVI rethinking how it might support collective action and coalition building, and how it might leverage and support its extensive alumni network. In the wake of the protests, Student Representative Councils were dissolved as trust between students and university administrators declined. University officials, who have generally been supportive of TVI, see that this provides the organisation with a new legitimacy. At the same time, TVI seeks greater financial sustainability without becoming dependent on any one donor, aiming to raise 40% of its own funds through fee-for-service income such as a recent youth survey that they conducted in Southern Highlands for Oil Search.

None of this is easy. Acting as a mediating organisation between students and university administrators can be seen as politically quietist. Association with extractive industries may pose a risk to TVI's reputation. An organisation that seeks to build coalitions, and indeed build bigger alliances who can bundle different interests, may be subject to accusations of co-optation. At the same time, TVI is an interesting example of how young women leaders have navigated various public domains—normally dominated by older men—and created accessible public space for themselves. Further, they have done this at the same time as seeking to preserve their vision and values, and while managing the complex and divergent expectations of their funding partners. Sometimes this means that they have rejected external funding that they feel undermines TVI's ability to act flexibly and responsively.

The case of TVI demonstrates an approach grounded in a belief in the importance of mobilising collective action and leadership, based in large part on identity, in this case 'youth' reconfigured as a "Clean Generation" of nascent national leaders. But it also illustrates how other identities i.e., regional and sub-national identities, and gender can intersect with, complicate or undermine such processes, and the compromises that may be needed to build broader alliances.

2.3. The Green Growth Leaders' Coalition

The Green Growth Leaders' Coalition (GGLC), established in 2012, is a regional coalition which works under the umbrella of the International Union for Conservation of Nature Oceania (IUCN). This coalition was built upon a long-standing network of individuals who question externally driven approaches to development in the region, and how Pacific leaders have responded to that imposition (Craney & Hudson, 2020, p. 4). The coalition is made up of current and former national politicians, as well

as leaders from regional organisations, the private sector, churches and civil society. The membership is fluid and informal, with selection based on "leadership experience and ability to effect change within their communities and countries within the next five years" (IUCN, 2016). GGLC is usually described as "a fellowship of like-minded individuals" (Craney, 2020, p. X) rather than a formal grouping. Its purpose has been to promote 'green growth' in the region by creating spaces for leaders in the region to share experiences and learn from each other and develop strategies and policies for change (Craney & Hudson, 2020, p. 5). Like the Simbo for Change initiative, it was supported until 2017 by the Australian government-funded PLP.

Aidan Craney (2020) describes GGLC's informal ways of working and its elite status. Here we describe some of GGLC's achievements. Whilst these are hard to definitively measure, not least because of the informal, behind the scenes manner in which the coalition works, there are a number of processes that observers suggest GGLC has contributed to, even if the precise nature of that contribution is sometimes hard to define.

At the local level GGLC's support to the development of the Ha'apai Green Growth Strategy in Tonga—and its subsequent integration into the Ha'apai Development Master Plan, provides a concrete example of GGLC's contribution to a provincial level process. This involved both technical assistance and political support to the Civil Society Forum of Tonga and the Tonga National Leadership Development Forum. The Ha'apai Green Growth Strategy began with community consultations across the province of Ha'apai. These were then shaped into "a document which provided guidance for environmentally friendly economic growth that promoted local customs and livelihoods" (Craney & Hudson, 2020, p. 7). This in turn led to the Ha'apai Development Committee supporting a declaration to integrate 'green growth' principles into Tongan national development plans. This included GGLC providing input to the Tonga National Dialogue on Green Growth in November 2016 which was hosted by the Tonga National Leadership Development Forum and was attended by the Deputy Prime Minister of Tonga (a member of GGLC), and the Crown Prince, Tupouto'a 'Ulukalala (IUCN, 2016).

At the national scale in Vanuatu, GGLC is seen as having made an important contribution to the Vanuatu National Sustainable Development Plan, *Vanuatu 2030: The Peoples Plan*. Some observers have referred to it as "the pinnacle outcome of coalition influence to date" (Craney & Hudson, 2020, p. 1659). Hon. Ralph Regenvanu, who was Minister of Lands and Natural Resources at the time and who was part of the GGLC coalition, played a key role (also assisted by Fei Tevi, another leading player in GGLC). The plan reflects GGLC's holistic understanding of development and is based on three foundational pillars of sustainable development: society, environment and economy (Government of Vanuatu, 2016, p. 1).

Some question the degree to which the work of the Department of Energy in Vanuatu, which has carriage of green growth, is aligned to this holistic picture (Dornan, Morgan, Cain, & Tarte, 2018, p. 418); or whether its inclusion was more about accessing international climate financing (Dornan et al., 2018, p. 420). However, others see the Vanuatu 2030 plan as a major step forward. The IUCN, for instance, notes that the *Vanuatu Business Review* at the time of the plan's launch said "this time, due largely to the intercession of IUCN and the GGLC initiative, we were about to change the way we talked about development" (IUCN, 2017, p. 12).

Finally, at a regional level, GGLC is seen as contributing to the deepening of the narratives of green growth and the blue-green economy in the Pacific. Dornan and his co-authors suggest that "[a]mong the regionally focused groupings advocating for green growth, the Green Growth Leaders Coalition has been particularly significant" (Dornan et al., 2018, p. 415). They note how GGLC linked the concepts of environmental sustainability and resilience with notions of social relationships and indigenous culture in ways that vernacularised discourses that were often used, or defined differently, elsewhere. The burgeoning use of the terms 'green growth' and 'blue-green economy,' linked in turn to notions of Pacific islands as "large ocean states" (Chan, 2018), is seen by some as part of a new assertive Pacific regionalism (Fry & Tarte, 2018, p. 3) that is a significant departure from donor-dominated agendas of the past.

This case might be seen to represent a superficial attempt to shift aspirational national or regional policies and strategies that lack the resources and capacity for implementation. However, we argue that the GGLC was highly strategic and effective in reclaiming a Pacific centred narrative and developing, promoting and sharing a set of ideas that contest donor-led concepts of development and reticence to take meaningful action on climate change.

3. Characteristics of Locally Led Development in the Pacific

In examining Pacific case studies of locally led development, our intention is not to reassemble a reified culturally predetermined 'Pacific Way' or 'Melanesian Way,' even though these cultural narratives of tradition and modernity retain considerable currency and can be powerful mobilisers of social movements across the region (Titifanue, Kant, & Finau, 2020). Nor do we seek to romanticise a spatially bounded idea of self-contained local actors who are innocently detached from the global. Rather, we observe a highly dynamic and fluid situation where 'local' leaders can make connections beyond their own immediate communities by investing in scale-making projects that selectively reinvigorate old ways of doing things, reconfigure political dilemmas and bring in new ideas, options and resources. These rearticulations of the local at different scales are not restricted to 'devel-

opmental leaders' with progressive intentions: Predatory elites can also mobilise the local, the national or the regional (or the connections between these scales) in ways that promote their narrow interests, and use their local identity in ways that reinforce inequality and injustice, and undermine developmental outcomes.

3.1. Reclaiming Pacific World Views and Narratives

Our cases provide examples of how local leaders have repurposed older Pacific traditions and narratives, including Christian themes. Sometimes this is found in the relatively holistic understandings of development and change where economic, social, environmental and spiritual goals are integrated and represent the shared patrimony of the groups in question. For example, in the case of the GGLC, deploying Hau'ofa's (1994) influential articulation of the deep cultural and environmental dimensions of Pacific islanders' ties to the ocean was crucial to building a cohesive trans-regional group identity. On Simbo, linking livelihoods, gender inequality, family safety and related social concerns to Christian faith and traditional leadership revitalised a collective island-wide identity (Suti et al., 2020). TVI drew on practices of Christian faith and personal awakening as the platform for constructing a new generation of leaders who can reclaim the promise of Papua New Guinea's constitutional vision of an egalitarian and prosperous nation. All resisted or reworked what Greg Fry has called, in reference to the Pacific region, "imposed framings" (Fry, 2019, p. 315) and reframed their own objectives and activities within existing scale-making projects (Pacific regionalism, Simbo as an island or TVI's reimagining of national leadership).

The groups in our case studies strategically deployed understandings of the local and mobilised collective identities at different scales to further common interests or goals. These Pacific collective identities are often at odds with the western modes of thought and practice prevalent in international development contexts: For example, where humanity (or the economy) is seen as separate from the environment; where formal process, public debate and contestation are more valued than less formal processes of consensus building and dialogue; and where faith, family and friendships are thought of as operating in spheres outside of professional life.

The day to day operations in each of the cases were characterised by the establishment of safe spaces for informal exchange and dialogue. This sometimes explicitly used indigenous forms of facilitating conversation like *talanoa* (Vaioleti, 2006) in the case of GGLC, or simply worked within the informal norms and structures of local clans (as in the Simbo case). These dialogical methods also demonstrate the importance of personal friendships and the recognition of interaction both during and outside of meetings or sessions (e.g., through eating and drinking together as a means of deepening mutual understanding, friendship and trust). Esther Suti's trans-Pacific, faith-based friendship with Adimaimalaga Tafunai, the

friendship of the students that initiated TVI, and the "fellowship of like-minded individuals" who established GGLC are all important in understanding their success. As Ceridwen Spark has noted in her work on coalitions, friendships can be important not only for success but also for building the trust necessary in enduring hardship and challenges (Spark & Lee, 2018, p. 1).

3.2. Elites, the Pacific and Social Change

The leaders in each case can be considered elite and indeed the term 'elite' is now a popular label for the educated classes of the Pacific (Cox, 2018, pp. 16–18; Gibson, 2019). GGLC was a self-appointed elite of influential Pacific public servants and community sector leaders (see Craney, 2020). TVI's membership reflects its middle-class student origins. Esther Suti, the principal catalyst of Simbo for Change, was a middle-class businesswoman based in the provincial capital.

Class and other privileges are part and parcel of political leadership in the Pacific and elsewhere (Corbett & Wood, 2013; Spark, Cox, & Corbett, 2019) and leaders from elite backgrounds are routinely criticised as being unrepresentative of broader populations. Here we do not claim that elites are representative, but our case studies do indicate that elite actors are able to mobilise movements that have inclusive, collective aims (see also Rousseau, 2012). Across the Pacific there are authoritarian, extractive or 'predatory' elites who rely on intimidation and male-dominated patronage politics (Cox, 2009; Wood, 2018). However, in most countries, the relative privilege of the middle classes is yet to evolve into a settled package of political demands or economic interests supportive of a stable political order (Barbara, Cox, & Leach, 2015).

There are certainly trans-regional 'bottom up' movements that articulate progressive (largely urban middle-class) values on nuclear testing (George, 2011), climate change (Titifanue, Kant, Finau, & Tarai, 2017) or West Papuan independence (Titifanue, Tarai, Kant, & Finau, 2016; Webb-Gannon & Webb, 2019). These movements all began in small, elite circles with strong connections to activists from outside the Pacific region but their ideas have spread well beyond the specific campaigns, NGOs or other institutions that promote them. Indeed, these causes have become part of a regional identity, mediated by social media (Titifanue et al., 2020) in ways that often leave Pacific governments out of step with the values of their citizens (Finau et al., 2014).

We see these dynamics as a similar process to Charles Taylor's (2004) description of the diffusion of the modern social imaginary from elite circles into broader society. This is not a matter of simple distribution but a practice of vernacularisation (Merry, 2006), where new concepts of society are rearticulated in local idioms. Each of our case studies provides a specific example of local elites leading a rearticulation of ideas of development that were initially introduced (or imposed) by colonial pow-

ers, missionaries or aid agencies but that have since been "remixed" (Teaiwa, 2014) in ways that reflect local conditions and agendas at different scales.

3.3. Collective Leadership, Relational Deliberation and Politics

Individual well-being, rights and freedoms sit at the heart of much international development theory and practice. Yet these universalistic liberal approaches are not easily translated into local vernaculars (Merry, 2006) and may have unintended effects of side-lining or undermining local practice, world views and leadership styles that are more relational and collective. For example, as Ceridwen Spark (2020) has observed, donor rhetoric on rights and inclusion can be experienced as discrimination by Pacific women working in development programs. In Pacific cultures, cooperation, the maintenance of good relationships, and collective deliberation are highly valued, even if that can make processes seem slower, indecisive or ineffective to outsiders. These ways of working can also favour strengths-based approaches, which start with the mobilisation of internal resources to address locally determined problems, allowing existing skills and practices to be revalued and extended. Nevertheless, in some places, dependency on outside assistance and aid programs can undermine this resilience and local ownership (Yates, 2019). Processes of collective deliberation can be co-opted by the powerful for their own ends; or be so under-appreciated by expatriate program managers and funders that local actors give up in frustration (Spark, 2020).

The case studies also point to the importance of personal, community and political connections and networks, rather than representatives of civil society organisations, interest groups or 'stakeholders' in driving these initiatives. Furthermore, individuals often also wear many hats (e.g., government employee, church leader and NGO member with a small business practice—all at the same time). Relational ways of working seem to lead to a high degree of behind the scenes leadership and networking. In this way, the actors in the three case studies sought to complement and shape other institutions (e.g., regional bodies, national governments, churches, universities and traditional leadership), rather than seeking to undermine or replace them. In the case of Simbo for Change, this led to what might be described as a "quiet feminism" (Spark et al., 2019), which re-presented women's empowerment as an essential part of creating a cohesive island identity while restoring male chiefly prestige (Suti et al., 2020, p. 7). In the case of TVI, this involved the creation of what might be called 'women friendly spaces,' as well as reaching out to private sector companies that offered opportunities for young women leaders. For GGLC, working with relational cultural norms meant maintaining its informal status and engaging with existing heads of government, regional organisations and civil society leaders.

3.4. External Support

None of these initiatives were project-based, in that they did not start as projects with specific objectives, timelines and budgets, rather they evolved as processes of ongoing change that sought to address particular issues. All were founded upon: the promotion of shifts in ideas, beliefs and practices through largely informal processes; the creation of safe spaces for reflection, dialogue and debate; and doing so whilst maintaining and deepening respectful relationships.

On occasion, this led to resistance to—and sometimes refusal to engage with—standardised forms of development practice, project management, and donor branding that were felt to be detrimental or distracting. TVI refused Australian aid for additional program activities but put forward a successful counter proposal that provided resources for organisational reorientation. This has ultimately given the movement more autonomy and less dependence on a donor. GGLC did not compromise its messages on green growth, despite opposition to it from DFAT officials concerned about Australia's reputation on climate action. Esther Suti promoted a collective 'whole of island' approach rather than the more limited pilot initially preferred by technical advisors.

These tensions notwithstanding, each of the case study processes were relatively well supported in sensitive and small ways by external agencies (PLP in the cases of GGLC and Simbo; and Bread for the World with TVI). Despite general rhetorical commitments to supporting locally led change amongst aid agencies, in reality effective practice in this area is actually quite rare. This gap is due to a number of well-rehearsed reasons related to the political economy of the aid sector (see Roche & Denney, 2019; Yanguas, 2018), and the tendency for organisational practices to endure despite their limitations (Fushimi, 2018). The case studies all represent, in different ways, a reversal in and resistance to the normal power relations between donor and local agency, because they were centrally driven by intrinsic (rather than extrinsic) motivations, dynamics and incentives.

Interestingly, both the Simbo and GGLC initiatives, despite their different scales, also illustrate the importance of intra-Pacific support, which can be more relevant and culturally appropriate, but which also has the ability to contest narrow thinking or expand ideas and connections. Under the PLP, experienced and highly skilled Pacific Islander staff played important intermediary roles, often as critical 'sounding boards' who introduced new ideas, questioned politically naive proposals or debated alternative courses of action. These external staff were also important in enabling broader connections nationally or regionally, and in playing a role of a trusted 'insider-outsider' who can be used to raise unwelcome issues without damaging the close relationships that local leaders are embedded in. These insider-outsiders often gave permission to 'local' actors to be more ambitious in their goals and more innova-

tive in their practice of bringing others along a path of change.

4. Conclusions

This article adds to the literature on locally led development in three ways. First, it explores initiatives that were not established as projects by development agencies. Second, it takes a critical look at 'the local' and seeks to enrich understandings of the different ways in which local identities can be understood and, indeed, used to further particular interests. And third, we have sought to tease out what these types of initiatives might tell us about the characteristics of Pacific led development: characteristics that are often at odds with how conventional international development agencies tend to work, and that arguably provide those agencies with much food for thought.

Much of what we describe above is also consistent with postdevelopment conceptualisations of social change in which local, pluralist and solidaristic initiatives are central, and where connections to place, local knowledge and the non-human are highly valued. This of course begs the question as to what might be done to further promote and support such ways of working, particularly if they run counter to orthodox development practice. We offer three ideas as a contribution to the debate. Firstly, we suggest that further exploration of other 'indigenous' processes of locally led change in the Pacific might be instructive and help to build a broader and deeper repository of knowledge. Secondly, these case studies and findings might be socialised in ways that start to inform other Pacific networks working on linked issues such as The Pacific Community's SPC monitoring and evaluation network, who have just produced a key report on applying Pacific approaches to evidence gathering (Pacific Community, 2020), the Pacific Islands Association of Non-governmental Organisations and the Pacific Conference of Churches. Thirdly, these networks and a broader coalition of activists and sympathetic supporters could start to develop some principles and 'benchmarks' that might provide Pacific citizens and organisations with a means to hold their governments and international agencies to account.

The Covid-19 pandemic arguably provides a critical juncture (Tyrrel, Kelly, Roche, & Jackson, 2020), or "a portal, a gateway between one world and the next" (Roy, 2020). In such moments, the structural drivers of behaviour are "significantly relaxed for a relatively short period" (Capoccia & Kelemen, 2007, p. 343). In the current moment, there is an important opportunity to be debating both the nature of development and change in the Pacific, and in particular who is in the driving seat.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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About the Authors

Chris Roche is Professor of Development Practice at La Trobe University, in Melbourne, Australia, and Director of the Institute for Human Security and Social Change. Chris is also Deputy Director (Impact) of the Developmental Leadership Program.

John Cox is a Social Anthropologist and Development Studies Specialist and an Honorary Associate of the Institute for Human Security and Social Change.

Mereani Rokotuibau is Team Leader of the Balance of Power Program, an initiative of Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development, and is based in Suva, Fiji. Previously she worked as the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Unit Manager for the Solomon Islands Resource Facility, and for the Pacific Leadership Program.

Peni Tawake is the Partnership and Coalition Manager at the Australia Pacific Training Coalition based in Suva, Fiji, and previously worked for the Pacific Leadership Program.

Yeshe Smith is Programs and Partnerships Manager at the Institute for Human Security and Social Change, and an Accredited Partnership Broker with the Partnership Brokers Association.

Article

Alliances of Instrumental Advantage: Supporting Women's Agency in Civil Society Organisations in Indonesia

Stephen Sherlock

School of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of New South Wales, Canberra, ACT 2612, Australia;
E-Mail: stephen.m.sherlock@gmail.com

Abstract

This article examines how Indonesian civil society organisations (CSOs) working for women's empowerment and gender equality have worked together with members of parliament (MPs) to support processes of developmental change. Examples are taken from initiatives supported by MAMPU, an Australian government funded project that promotes gender equality and women's empowerment in Indonesia, describing ways in which gender-focused organisations have engaged with, and had an impact upon, the actions of political leaders in parliament. The article focuses on interaction between institutions and the agency exercised by individuals within institutions. MPs act within a structure of institutional and political incentives, but they also have the power to make choices about how they respond to incentives. Moreover, the leaders of outside actors such as CSOs can modify the structure of incentives by both applying pressure on MPs and providing opportunities for legislators to make different choices. One of MAMPU's tools for targeting MPs has been political economy analysis. Having correctly understood the pressures and incentives facing MPs, CSOs can target their actions to bring about outcomes favourable to both sides in what the article calls 'alliances of instrumental advantage.' Organisations supported by MAMPU achieved success where relationships were forged between the organisations and politicians based on the identification of mutual advantage.

Keywords

civil society organisations; Indonesia; political change; political economy; women's empowerment

Issue

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1. Introduction

This article examines how Indonesian civil society organisations (CSOs) working for women's empowerment and gender equality have cooperated with members of parliament (MPs) to support developmental change. Examples are taken from initiatives supported by the Australia–Indonesia Partnership for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, known as MAMPU, describing ways in which CSOs partnered with MAMPU have engaged with, and had an impact upon, actions of political leaders in national and regional parliaments. The article focuses on interaction between institutions and the agency exercised by individuals within institutions. MPs act within a

structure of institutional and political incentives, but they also have power to make choices about how they respond to those incentives. Moreover, leaders of outside actors such as CSOs can modify the structure of incentives by both applying pressure on MPs and providing opportunities for legislators to make different choices.

MAMPU arose out of a commitment by the Australian government to cooperate with the Indonesian government in reducing poverty. The objective was to help provide a voice for poor women in the developmental agenda to ensure that issues of importance to women were not marginalised in anti-poverty programs (MAMPU, 2019). MAMPU has been implemented in two four-year phases since 2012, receiving funding from the

Australian Government to a total of about A$108 million. The article shows that one of MAMPU's tools for identifying and targeting MPs has been through political economy analysis. In the experience of MAMPU and its partners, having correctly understood the pressures and incentives facing MPs through this analytical process, CSOs can target their actions to bring about outcomes favourable to both sides in what the article calls 'alliances of instrumental advantage.' Organisations supported by MAMPU achieved success where relationships were forged between the organisations and politicians based on the identification of mutual advantage.

Two examples of MAMPU-supported initiatives have been selected. Firstly, intervention in the drafting of laws and regulations on migrant workers, and secondly, facilitation of productive relations between MPs and their constituents. The case studies illustrate how MAMPU and its partners were able to deal with certain challenges—in the first case to bring about changes to a national law that affected the lives of many thousands of Indonesian women (and men), and in the second case to empower local-level women's organisations to exercise influence over their representatives. The ambitions behind these actions were realistic and contextual and should not been seen as a template or definitive model that can be replicated by CSOs in all circumstances. Rather the case studies illustrate what can be achieved when both international donors and CSOs think and work politically to achieve developmental change.

2. MAMPU and Alliances of Instrumental Advantage

MAMPU has supported a range of partners to empower low-income women to make use of their political rights, to influence government policies and to demand better services from national and local state institutions. MAMPU has used various approaches to advance these objectives, but an underlying strategy has been to encourage engagement between groups of low-income women, MAMPU's partner organisations, and decision-making leaders in both executive government and parliaments. The strategy has been to facilitate engagement with parliamentary representatives as key decision-makers about matters that affect women's lives, through parliament's roles of passing legislation, deciding on budget allocations, scrutinising executive government actions, and representing the interests of constituents.

MAMPU's methodology for parliamentary engagement has been to enmesh the interests of partner organisations with those of the MPs involved in decisions related to a wide range of issues affecting women. These have included women's access to social protection programs, improved working conditions, women's health and nutrition, reducing violence against women and the rights of migrant workers. The approach has exploited opportunities to identify and focus on common material and political interests of the two sides, especially by using entry points created by incentives influenc-

ing the behaviour of MPs. In doing so, this can create the alliances of instrumental advantage between non-state actors and parliamentary leaders mentioned above. They are alliances because they enmesh the interests of forces inside and outside parliament, but they are instrumental in the sense that they are tactical arrangements to encourage reform on specific issues without necessarily having to involve ongoing organisational or ideological agreement.

This approach exemplifies the strategy articulated by Fox (2015) as a 'sandwich strategy' which supports "coordinated coalitions among pro-accountability actors embedded in both state and society" (Fox, 2015, p. 356). In his metanalysis of social accountability initiatives, Fox describes this as a "scenario of mutual empowerment" where "openings from above led by reform champions…meet collective action from below" (2015, p. 356). In the MAMPU-based examples described in this article, reforming stakeholders within institutions were supported by outside actors and, in return, they delivered important outcomes to what Fox calls "their societal counterparts" (2015, p. 356). In one case MPs supported a single legislative change that was central to the objectives of a CSO and, in the other, MPs developed new parliamentary practices that opened opportunities for citizens' input.

2.1. Indonesian Civil Society and MAMPU

The decision to initiate a program to strengthen the voice of poor women in Indonesia's poverty alleviation efforts took place in the context of the evolution of CSOs and women's collective action in post-authoritarian Indonesia and of donor efforts to support civil society. During the years of President Suharto, community groups fell under state control and were required to conduct activities under the umbrella of government programs. Thus, women's collective action at the community level virtually disappeared, except for religious groups and the state sponsored *Pembinaan Kesejahteraan Keluarga* (Family Welfare Guidance). The stifling of more feminist and development focused action has required progressive regeneration since the fall of the Suharto regime in 1998, and external partners, including international donors, have played a role.

Yet even under authoritarian rule, civil society did provide one of the few spaces for political action relatively free from state control—at least at the national level (Aspinall, 2005). Therefore independent CSO activity was able to blossom after 1998 and has "generally been credited with a critical role in turning the country into a functioning democracy" (Mietzner, 2012, p. 217), despite the continuing influence of old elites (Hadiz, 2010; Robison & Hadiz, 2005). Mietzner has proposed that Indonesia's democracy is "an arena of contestation" between entrenched elites and a range of reformers and that the elites do not always prevail (Mietzner, 2013c, p. 29). Similarly, Lay (2017, p. 2) has argued that

'a new democratic space' has emerged and, while contested by many actors, this space has provided opportunities for CSOs to assert their agendas in parliament and other locations. It is in these arenas of contestation that CSOs continue to exercise influence over decisions about policies, laws and practices by state institutions and powerbrokers. And such arenas have been the site of MAMPU-supported actions by civil society.

But the picture still remains mixed. Perdana (2015) documented many of the democratic reform achievements of CSOs after 1998 but highlighted that civil society as a whole has been weakened by internal fragmentation and by continuing patronage-based politics. Reflecting such concerns, recent years have seen a tone of pessimism enter debate about Indonesian democracy and the power of civil society (Mietzner, 2020; Warburton & Aspinall, 2019). Nevertheless, CSOs remain active and considerable advances have been made in the creation of spaces for collective action amongst previously marginalised groups such as women (Migunani, 2017). This is especially so at the regional level, where women had previously been excluded from public debate, but where possibilities were opened up by reforms that devolved many areas of government authority to the districts from 2001.

MAMPU engages with women's and gender equality focused CSOs from the angle of building alliances to ensure that voices of poor women are on the agenda of poverty alleviation. MAMPU was not specifically designed for reform of democratic structures but rather with the aim of empowering a marginalised group to participate in processes of decision-making available in a democracy. As such, it is an inherently political undertaking because it requires CSOs and the groups they work with to enter the arenas of political contestation described above. But MAMPU does not engage directly with state institutions, nor is it simply a CSO-strengthening exercise—MAMPU attempts to work at the point of interaction between the state and its citizens by supporting Fox's "pro-accountability stakeholders" and their "scenarios of mutual empowerment" (Fox, 2015, p. 356).

2.2. Role of Political Economy Analysis

Since MAMPU's approach is deeply political, it requires a keen understanding of the written and unwritten rules of politics. The role of political economy analysis in the MAMPU methodology is to dissect the roles and relationships shaping the behaviour of parliamentary representatives in order to understand how the world appears from their perspective and thus how they might, or might not, respond to particular approaches from non-state actors. The analysis of the structure of incentives facing MPs provides a conceptual tool which, when applied to a specific issue and specific set of MPs, provides a guide for action.

As suggested above, political economy analysis starts from the proposition that political systems give rise to an array of incentives that influence the behaviour of actors within the system. Political actors in any institutional framework will use incentives created by that framework to maximise advantage for themselves. And powerful actors usually have a good understanding of how to gain advantage because, firstly, they benefit from mentorship and direction from their leaders and, secondly, because they develop their own personal experience and expertise from working within the system. Outsiders, however, benefit from neither of these advantages and may have little knowledge of formal mechanisms and limited grasp of informal practices and unspoken rules followed by insiders. For actors such as CSOs, an added impediment can be distaste for what they see as the 'dirty game' of politics and a sense that becoming adept in political manoeuvring might somehow sully their character. But thinking and acting politically is critical to the success of CSOs because not knowing the written and unwritten rules of the game, or deliberately shrinking from gaining such knowledge, places them at a great disadvantage. Understanding the incentives influencing the behaviour of insiders is a central component in empowerment of outside actors.

Political economy analysis can therefore be used as a tool by less powerful political actors to create alliances with insiders within state institutions and thereby influence insiders' decision-making. Such analysis can provide insights into pressures that influence the actions of insiders and support the development of strategies that are most likely to illicit positive responses to ideas and proposals from outsider organisations. The MAMPU methodology uses analysis of the institutional and stakeholder variables of the political economy of Indonesia's parliaments and how they affect the behaviour of MPs. The focus is on MPs as individual actors because, as in any institution, it is the behaviour of people that occupy positions in parliament that determine its character. A purely institution-focused approach tells us something about what the rules are, but sheds less light on the reasons actors within an institution behave the way they do. We need to know not only what institutional actors do, but why they do it.

The political economy approach has a long pedigree is social science, but it has been taken up more widely in international development circles in recent years. The most notable examples are frameworks formulated by the World Bank (Fritz, Kaiser, & Levy, 2009) and the Drivers of Change approach developed by the UK Department of International Development (Warrener, 2004). MAMPU's use of political economy analysis has developed in the context of debates about the practical utility of such analysis. Hout takes the view that while donors are "concerned *about* the political context in which they operate, they feel they should not themselves be concerned *with* politics in their partner countries" (Hout, 2012, p. 407), emphasis in original). Being foreign development agencies, Hout contends that they "experience an almost insurmountable difficulty" (2012, p. 407)

in integrating their analysis into programs because of the risk of political meddling in a sovereign country. This has created a tendency for donors to take the politically more tenable approach of concentrating on technical matters because they are not in a position to openly confront entrenched interests. But while MAMPU is not designed to encourage head-on engagements with existing power elites, it is still a political endeavour. As outlined above, it provides support for bringing together reforming elements within society and within decision-making institutions in order to create coalitions with potential to bring about change.

MAMPU's political economy analysis concentrates on the dynamic interaction between institutional variables such as legislation, rules and organisations and actor/stakeholder level variables such as societal actors, political leaders, interest groups and individual actors (Warrener, 2004, p. 8). In the arena of parliamentary engagement, the focus is on how institutional incentives inside and outside parliament interact with individual parliamentary actors. In analysing the interaction, it reveals that MPs are not merely passive reflections of incentives they confront, but actively respond to them to achieve personal and collective objectives. At the same time, MPs are also constrained by these influences and can even be forced to act in ways that they would prefer not to, and which may even go against their own personal values. But it should always be remembered that the way individual actors choose to respond to the pressures of their political environment will vary in degree and kind. For example, all MPs need to keep potential financial supporters friendly to them, but some will try to balance donors' influence against the best interest of their constituents, while others may subordinate themselves to wealthy donors or even corruptly collude for personal gain.

I am not suggesting that all MAMPU initiatives have been preceded by formal political economy analysis, but rather that the program has learnt through practice that the best outcomes were achieved when they implicitly or explicitly built on an intersection of interests between the two sides. Recognition of the efficacy of this approach has motivated MAMPU's efforts to integrate the approach more explicitly into programming. MAMPU therefore engaged the author of this article to, firstly, conduct a political economy analysis of incentives that influence the behaviour of MPs and, secondly, to review previous efforts in parliamentary engagement by MAMPU and its partners. The review tracked the evolution of MAMPU's engagement and determined that the most effective examples of engagement were politically informed and were responsive to changing political context. The review drew lessons to be passed on to MAMPU partners in the form of advice and guidelines for their future activities. Nevertheless, it should be emphasised that in the two examples to be discussed below, the organisations supported by MAMPU conducted studies of the various stakeholders involved that were very sim-

ilar to political economy analyses and which had similar effect. In one case, the organisation carried out "actor mapping" (Arus & Ghofur, 2015, pp. 12–15) based on the essential principles of political economy analysis and, in the other, the organisation developed guidelines for participants that included elements of the methodology (Yayasan BaKTI, 2019).

2.3. What Incentives Influence the Actions of Indonesian Member of Parliament?

This section analyses the structure of incentives that influence the behaviour of Indonesian MPs and describes the relationships from which the incentives emanate. It is important to reiterate from the outset that the relationship between incentives and behaviour is not simply deterministic—legislators have agency and they make their own decisions about how to act. But every day of their political lives they are forced to react in some way to pressures bearing upon them. And understanding these pressures helps to make sense of patterns in politicians' behaviour and why certain approaches from the outside are likely to receive a positive response and others are not.

Indonesia has a presidential system where the separation of powers between the executive and legislative branches of government endows parliament with extensive political authority. There are parliaments at both the national level and regional levels, and both routinely use their independent popular mandate to play a role in drafting and passing laws, including state budgets, and have potentially formidable powers to hold the executive to account (Sherlock, 2007). Members of these parliaments play different roles as election candidates, political fundraisers, party members, constituent representatives, members of parliamentary committees and partners/protagonists of executive government. The network of relationships is illustrated in Figure 1.

2.3.1. MPs as Election Candidates

The cost of campaigning has escalated dramatically during the last several Indonesian elections, a trend that most observers see as a result of the 'open list' electoral system which permits voters to vote for either individual candidates or a party. The system has created perverse incentives for candidates and entrenched what is locally known as 'money politics,' such as vote-buying and pork-barrelling. Recent in-depth research studies throughout Indonesia, observed that the system is "widely blamed by political candidates and voters alike for increasing pressures for patronage" (Aspinall & Sukmajati, 2016, p. 5). One former MP observed that elections have become more "capital intensive" and without significant financial backing it is "not realistic to run" (personal communication, 2018). Campaigns increasingly appear to be like auctions where candidates try to prove they can bring voters higher material benefits. One candidate
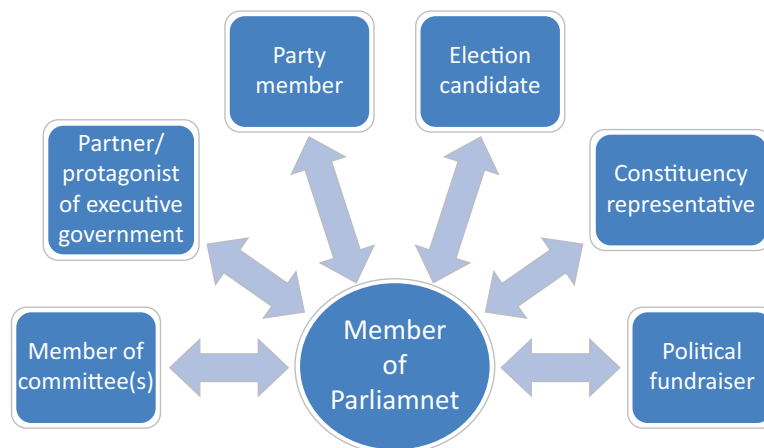
Figure 1. Relationships in MPs structure of incentives.

complained that it is "a real struggle to get people to vote for you on the basis of ideas, rather than…gifts of money or goods" (Aspinall & Sukmajati, 2016, p. 63). The incentive is to offer handouts rather than to advocate policy or ideals. The challenge for all CSOs and other outsiders is to find ways of influencing public attitudes about the meaning of elections. I have frequently interviewed women candidates who have expressed frustration at the problem of finding a supportive community environment in which to put forward ideas and proposals about issues affecting women.

2.3.2. MPs as Fundraisers

In such circumstances, politicians have to be fundraisers. Patronage and clientelism have been longstanding features of Indonesian society and politics, but modern, urbanising, commercialised and media-based cultures have entrenched new forms of clientelism (Magaloni, 2014), rather than eliminating them as once was expected (Aspinall, 2013; Brun & Diamond, 2014). Political costs do not end after election day because an MP must maintain his/her profile and popularity after winning an election. A clientelist political culture creates expectations that parliamentary patrons will personally provide benefits to a community. Brun and Diamond (2014, p. 257) emphasise that in many developing countries "politicians need to mobilise votes through the distribution of particularist benefits or clientelistic promises rather promises of public goods." MPs are locked into clientelist relationships if they want to be re-elected.

There is thus a strong incentive for politicians to seek out wealthy donors and to enter into relationships involving influence-buying, rent-seeking and corruption. For example, collusive arrangements develop where companies win contracts as a result of their connections with MPs. The ever-increasing cost of politics has meant that elected positions are increasingly being filled by businesspeople or individuals supported by them (Mietzner, 2007). This generates a self-reinforcing nexus between MPs who are attracted to rent-seeking

behaviour as a method of staying in office and those who are attracted to public office because of opportunities for enrichment. For women's organisations, who have no financial resources to offer, the task is to find other forms of support for sympathetic representatives and to thus increase the possibility that such MPs can sustain a viable career in public life without falling into the grip of transactional politics.

2.3.3. MPs as Party Members

Indonesian parliamentarians' role as party representatives creates a particular set of incentives and obligations. Firstly, legislation obliges candidates to be nominated by a party, and a high-ranking position on the party ticket is a crucial advantage. And since Indonesia's parties tend to be dominated by small cliques of leaders, MPs are obliged to stay close to those leaders and win favour with them. Good party relationships come at a cost—parties demand substantial payments for a top position on the party ticket and expect ongoing contributions (Mietzner, 2013a, 2013b). The most influential MPs are those with deep pockets and connections with influential local and national families. One corollary of the transactional nature of relations between MPs and their parties is that central party machines rarely exercise discipline over their members when it comes to policy matters. The parties are weak on policy development (Mietzner, 2013b) and, while they expect MPs to defend the material interests of the party in patronage-based politics, they rarely intervene in policy and legislative debates unless the direct personal interests of party leaders are at stake. I have shown elsewhere (Sherlock, 2012) that the policy-making function usually ascribed to political parties in political science literature has, in Indonesia, largely been subsumed by the parliamentary committee system. Policy proposals are mostly the product of initiative by small numbers of committee members, usually with little reference to an official party stance (Sherlock, 2009).

Paradoxically, this weakness in parties provides openings for CSOs to build bridges with parliamentary figures

seeking practical support to intervene as issues emerge onto the political stage. MPs with ambitions to enhance their profile by developing expertise and connections in a particular policy area need to seek outside assistance because they are unlikely to find backing within the party machine. Thus, openings for CSOs frequently arise during the course of parliamentary deliberations on legislation, but CSOs must be well-informed about potential partners and well-attuned to the ebb and flow of political life in order to exploit the advantage. A key aspect of that process is to realise that prominent players rarely act under party direction but are mostly driven by individual ambition and internal political dynamics within their committee.

2.3.4. MPs as Parliamentary Committee Members

Because of the extensive power of the legislature in Indonesia's presidential system, parliamentary committees are key centres of decision-making. Therefore, one of the most powerful incentives for an MP is to be active in committee roles in order to exercise influence and build networks of power and patronage. In particular, leadership positions such as committee chair or deputy chair are highly sought after. For members with ambitions to become leading national or regional political figures, prominent committee roles can be a steppingstone to power, including as a powerbroker inside their party. This makes committees involving large government budgets, such as education or infrastructure, attractive for rent-seeking opportunities. But other more policy-driven committees, such as foreign or legal affairs, provide openings for MPs building a reputation for strategic thinking. In regional parliaments, committees are responsible for overseeing budget allocations for the provision of services in areas such as community health, education, local infrastructure and issues about the quality of service delivery. The importance of the committee system in parliamentary decision-making makes it a key target for women's organisations. But, once again, outside interventions must be properly timed and carefully calibrated to the needs of inside actors who may be willing to cooperate. Issues come and go, and the attention span of parliamentary committee members is short.

2.3.5. MPs as Partners or Protagonists of Executive Government

MPs have strong incentives to build a reputation in their dealings with executive government and to maintain a network of connections with ministers and senior officials. This can be achieved by being seen as a cooperative partner who is known for his/her policy expertise or by building a profile as a protagonist of government who, for example, asks difficult questions during committee investigations. Having respect in government circles enables MPs to obtain information and to facilitate both formal and informal meetings connected with their committee or party work. Stand-offs and other interactions between legislative and executive government actors have repeatedly opened up opportunities for CSOs to exercise influence by cooperating with strategically identified MPs. An example was the case discussed below where Migrant CARE provided data, arguments and drafting assistance to MPs who were arguing their case with executive government agencies about legislation on migrant workers.

2.3.6. MPs as Constituency Representatives

Finally, of course, MPs are elected as representatives of a particular constituency. This can be the most difficult role because incentives to be a good constituency representative are in competition with other pressures. As mentioned, there are strong pressures to win elections and stay in office through embedding oneself in the culture and practices of transactional politics. The relatively weak capacity of the Indonesian state to deliver policy and/or programmatically based public goods creates pressures on legislators to be seen as using their personal influence to win special benefits for individuals and narrowly targeted groups (Keefer, 2007). And citizens' approaches to parliamentarians for direct assistance are highly rational in an environment of weak government services. Indeed, this can discourage MPs from engaging broadly with their constituents because they want to avoid constant demands for help. Nevertheless, as the case study of the CSO BaKTI outlined below indicates, it is possible for women's organisations to facilitate a better quality of interaction between MPs and their constituents and, in doing so, to provide stronger incentives for political representatives to go out into the community.

2.4. Case Studies

Let us now examine two cases of CSO engagement with parliaments by MAMPU partner organisations which exemplify the effectiveness of approaches which enmesh the interests of outside organisations and parliamentary actors. The cases are, firstly, the success of Migrant CARE in influencing the content of legislation on Indonesian migrant workers and, secondly, initiatives led by BaKTI which have shown potential to develop more productive relations between MPs and their constituents.

2.4.1. Migrant CARE

To take the first case, Migrant CARE is an advocacy and support organisation whose goal is to argue for legislative and other protections for overseas Indonesian workers and their families and to provide legal and other assistance to ensure they understand "their rights as workers and citizens" (Migrant CARE, 2016) and that their time abroad is lived with dignity and respect. The treatment of Indonesian migrant workers, including bad working conditions, low pay, withholding of wages

and physical and sexual abuse, has been a prominent issue for many years. Humanitarian concerns and feelings of national outrage were generated by horrific stories of individual cases and personal tragedies. MAMPU partnered with Migrant CARE because a large proportion of Indonesian migrant workers are women and because women workers are most vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. For its part, Migrant CARE recognised that the issue of migrant workers' rights is highly gendered and that bringing about change had to involve active support from women workers.

Following the inauguration of a new national parliament in 2014, Migrant CARE began lobbying for amendments to legislation on overseas workers. Crucially, the organisation developed a good relationship with the chair of the committee responsible for the bill, who was supportive of legislative reform. They also cultivated links with other committee members and their staff, leading party figures and specialist staff inside parliament, and worked together on drafting new legislation. Interaction with parliament took many forms, including formal meetings and drafting sessions, appearances before parliamentary committees, public events, media conferences, and informal meetings with individual MPs in cafes, homes and offices. Migrant CARE was closely associated with every stage of drafting and deliberations on the legislation and their efforts were rewarded with the passage of a law in 2017 that incorporated most of the proposals they had put forward.

Migrant CARE's input was highly regarded by leading committee members because it provided extensive data about the issue and practical proposals for key problems, such as proposed wording for key clauses of the bill. In particular, Migrant CARE's ability to bring women who had experienced abuse as migrant workers to appear in person and tell their stories to parliamentary meetings was invaluable in breaking down resistance to reform. This was an example of what one MP said a committee valued from CSOs: "Something we can work with," rather than aggressive hectoring and grandstanding (personal communication, September 2018). In the words of the committee chair:

> If you hold a demo, it's just a demo, a way to say something in public. But if a small number comes to me and we have a discussion, there can be some result. There can be mutual benefit for you and me. (Personal communication, May 2018)

Migrant CARE was able to make well-timed and targeted interventions at specific stages of deliberations because the organisation was closely attuned to the politics of the process—for example, suggesting compromise solutions when the committee was deadlocked. This was in contrast to what another MP identified as some CSOs' tendency to simply repeat a standard set of arguments and to show themselves unfamiliar with both the technicalities and the politics of deliberations (personal communi-

cation, September 2018). In return, the view of the committee chair was that civil society had "got most of what they wanted" in the final version of the legislation (personal communication, September 2018).

Migrant CARE's work on this legislation could have remained a one-off achievement at the national level, but MAMPU worked with the organisation to encourage it to extend its methodology to Indonesia's regions, with the aim of influencing the passage of regional legislation in migrant-sending provinces. For example in early 2015, the organisation cooperated with a multi-stakeholder network in the provinces of Nusa Tenggara Timur and Nusa Tenggara Barat to develop draft legislation on migrant workers and their families in three districts in the provinces. By the middle of the year, drafts had been accepted by two of the three relevant district legislatures and were eventually passed into law.

Migrant CARE's initiatives succeeded where they enmeshed with the interests of leading parliamentary figures in pivotal positions—principally the chair of the responsible committee and supportive members—and helped them to respond to the array of incentives identified above. Firstly, the organisation's backing for the passage of good quality law supported MPs in their roles as both committee members and party members because it demonstrated the MPs' effectiveness as leading political operators who could make an impact in policy terms. Policy units in Indonesian political parties are generally weak, thus throwing a burden of policy-making responsibility onto parliamentary committees that they are ill-equipped to handle (Sherlock, 2010, 2012). Partly through Migrant CARE's assistance, committee members could take credit for improving the public standing of the parliament and their respective parties, in the face of frequent criticism of the quantity and quality of legislative output. This was an especially potent outcome for the committee leadership because stories of abuse of Indonesians overseas had struck an angry response amongst the public. Secondly, passage of the law enhanced the relationship between committee members and executive government powerbrokers, because final agreement on many clauses of the legislation was only reached after hard negotiations with government agencies which had competing ideas about the objectives of the law. Finally, for committee members representing constituencies with migrant workers, passage of the law was extremely valuable for their efforts to be seen as responding to constituents' concerns.

2.4.2. BaKTI

In the second case, BaKTI—an umbrella organisation with affiliate groups in eastern Indonesia—has led efforts to facilitate better interaction between MPs and women's organisations in their communities and to overcome problems created by perverse incentives discussed above. The increasing centrality of 'money politics' can crowd out incentives for MPs to engage with constituents

on local issues, policies and the provision of public goods. If voters see their MPs only as providers of private benefits, then politicians are discouraged from even visiting their constituencies, except to promise things during election time. In an attempt to address this problem, national and regional parliaments created rules obliging (and financing) MPs to visit their constituencies during parliamentary recess periods, thus aiming to manufacture a regulatory incentive to counteract incentives created by the prevailing transactional political culture. The practical result, however, was that MPs conducted formal ritualistic meetings with hand-picked groups of well-connected constituents who attended only to listen passively to speeches and to pocket attendance money.

It was these realities that BaKTI observed as it worked with MAMPU on a range of initiatives to promote parliamentary engagement by low-income women. Since 2012, the organisation has worked to turn conventional top-down parliamentary recess events on their head by a new approach called 'participative recess.' Under this strategy, public discussions between constituents and MPs take previously formalistic proceedings and turn them into active participatory events. The objective is to bring issues affecting women to the attention of local MPs. There are few speeches and the bulk of the time is devoted to organising participants into focus group discussions based around issues of importance to them. Each group formulates a set of issues to present to the MP at a plenary discussion with the promise that the MP will take up the issues in parliament and with relevant government agencies.

The basis of the method is to build coalitions between community-based women's organisations and MPs who are looking to break the stranglehold of transactional politics. BaKTI organises what it calls 'constituent groups' which are composed of local groups and individuals, but which receive formal endorsement through a written agreement with MPs and local government. These agreements ensure that the participative recess activities receive support from the local parliamentary secretariat in the form of logistics, venues and funding. BaKTI makes particular effort to attract the widest possible membership and that group leaders are composed of committed people and not co-opted by local power-brokers. The number of MPs involved is still limited and the methodology represents only a beginning, but it is a model for what could be done if larger and more powerful players were to take up the idea.

The strength of the participative recess initiative lies in its potential to tap into the most basic of incentives for MPs—to promote their standing in communities and to retain office in the next election. The constituent groups and the meetings they sponsor help MPs to get a better understanding of what voters are experiencing and thinking. In the face of powerful incentives to relate to voters only in terms of individual monetary benefit, the initiative provides openings for MPs to engage with constituents on a broad range of issues related to delivery of government services and provision of public goods. This is the reason the approach has been taken up and actively driven by some politicians themselves—they have replicated the BaKTI methodology and independently built connections beyond community groups around BaKTI. Such MPs are pushing against the dominant stream of transactional politics, but they show that there is a cohort of politicians who genuinely want to build better constituent relationships. It is MPs such as these that receive encouragement and practical support from participative recess activities. There is then potential for MPs with respect in the community and increased prospects for re-election to respond to one of the other main pressures that bear upon them—to build their profile and reputation within their respective parties and, by doing so, to positively influence the behaviour of their peers.

3. Conclusion: Thinking Politically

The formation of coalitions of instrumental advantage supported by MAMPU is fundamentally a matter of taking developmental reform beyond the merely technical into the realm of the political. Relatively powerless groups in society such as low-income women can advance their interests if they reach an understanding of the written and unwritten rules that govern decision-making institutions and the behaviour of political leaders, and then learn how to make political systems operate in their favour. The experience of the MAMPU program, and its partners such as Migrant CARE and BaKTI, highlights a number of key conclusions.

Firstly, the structure of incentives that influence MPs' behaviour should not be read in a deterministic or static fashion. In Indonesian circumstances, political economy analysis could lead to the pessimistic conclusion that all politicians are driven by forces of 'money politics,' to the exclusion of what civil society might see as good representation. But politicians also have agency—they must respond to pressures around them, but they make choices about how they respond. Moreover, outside actors have agency as well and are participants in making and remaking incentives that leaders confront. For example, when Migrant CARE built supportive relationships with MPs advocating legislative reform they changed the structure of incentives in a positive way by increasing the power of forces outside parliament working in favour of change—had there been no civil society voice reformers may well have capitulated to opponents of change. Similarly, the participative recess methodology is a way to mobilise community voices in support of MPs pushing to make elected representatives more accountable to constituents. In doing so, they tilt the balance of incentives away from a predominance of clientelist relationships and strengthen incentives for representatives to be responsive to the community.

Secondly, the nature of alliances of instrumental advantage, as distinct from lasting compacts based on a common political philosophy, is that they are fluid,

tactical and contextual. The fact that MPs have agency and make decisions about their behaviour also means that their responses are also highly contextual and that alliances with them are time-bound. MPs' actions can vary greatly according to the issue and its timing within political and electoral cycles.

On some issues at certain times they may be willing to work together with an outside organisation, but on others they may not return its calls. Such an understanding is important when CSOs try to identify possible entry points into a parliament and who are likely to be partners or champions. There is a tendency for development advocates to give the impression that there will necessarily be a recognisable bloc of dependable 'reformers' who can be relied on for consistent support. While the existence of such a bloc would clearly be ideal, the reality is that political figures are likely to be inconsistent. Of course, it is sensible to aim for lasting long-term alliances when more principled agreement with a committed champion is possible, but this cannot be expected in most cases. Thus, it is generally more productive to follow Migrant CARE's practice and map out who may be willing to cooperate on the basis of mutual advantage on a particular issue at a specific time.

The identification of champions in the Indonesian context is especially difficult because, as discussed above, parties generally lack a consistent policy orientation and it is very difficult to predict what stance any particular MP might take on the basis of their party affiliation. MPs with clear policy commitments must normally be pinpointed individually because, without really intending to, parties have given their MPs more individual agency than would be expected in a parliament where members are subject to strict policy discipline. For example, Migrant CARE's experience was that all parties debating protection of migrant workers were united in condemning abuse of Indonesians overseas, but beyond a common reflexive nationalistic response, the stances of key individuals in the responsible committee bore little relationship to their party background. Similarly, BaKTI has identified no consistent correlation between MPs' party affiliations and their willingness to commit to the participative recess process and does not ever expect to do so (personal communication, March 2018).

It can be useful to think in terms of three likely cohorts amongst decision-makers on any issue: Obvious advocates, clear opponents and the—probably largest—grouping of 'undecideds' that can be swayed by developments. Parliaments and parliamentary committees will usually have a cohort of the first kind who are known to be motivated by a policy interest or a thought-out political philosophy or ideology, but they will regrettably be small in number and should not be the exclusive focus of attention. The second cohort of committed opponents would clearly not be productive targets. The third non-committal cohort, on the other hand, will usually include individuals who could possibly be brought on side because of particular interests related to the issue at hand. Reformers can emerge from the most surprising places. But the number of close working partners is likely to eventually centre on a core group of individuals, after an initial period of surveying all possible openings. All MPs should be targets for general publicity and argumentation, but allies and champions will be few.

Of course, all potential relationships with parliamentary cohorts need to be subject to a careful risk assessment. There may be political risks in working with a particular individual or group of MPs who have a wider political or ideological agenda. There may be reputational risks of being seen associating with someone who is later revealed to have been involved in unethical or illegal behaviour. Political relationships are based on mutual advantage, but while identifying potential partnerships, it is also important to assess the risk of being exploited, or of unintended consequences from being associated with negative views or practices.

Finally, it is imperative that outsider organisations bring something politically valuable to potential partners in parliament. Thinking politically means knowing what is appropriate and what is timely. Migrant CARE provided support to reform champions to help them win a political battle and was rewarded with a greatly improved legislative framework. BaKTI has provided a framework and inspiration for MPs who want a more genuine interaction with their constituents and have consequently strengthened the voice of marginalised sections of the community. The key lessons are that trust and engagement take time and require politically-informed analysis to connect with the right partners, and that strategic interventions in concert with leading decision-makers can pay dividends. The experience of MAMPU and its partners, as exemplified by the two cases discussed in this article, is that although parliamentary politics in Indonesia has many problems, there are still openings for engagement that can actually change the structure of incentives facing MPs for the better. Realising that political relationships are inherently opportunistic and often impermanent provides a foundation for clear-headed thinking about what is politically possible at any given time.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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About the Author

Stephen Sherlock is Adjunct Associate Professor at the University of New South Wales, Canberra. His research interests include parliaments, political parties, political governance and women's representation in Indonesia. He is former Director, Centre for Democratic Institutions, Australian National University, and is currently an Independent Consultant in Indonesia, Southeast Asia and the South Pacific.

Article

The Rise of Technocratic Leadership in the 1990s in the People's Republic of China

Rongrong Lin

Research Center of CPC Rules and Regulations, Institute of Urban Governance, Shenzhen University, 518060 Shenzhen, China; E-Mail: rlin@szu.edu.cn

Abstract
The transformation of China's political elite provides important insights into the nation's political metamorphosis and the changes in cadre selection criteria. The current literature explains the composition of Chinese political elites by referencing cross-sectional biographic data and describing how the revolutionary veterans stepped down and were replaced by the technocrats who emerged in the 1980s and 1990s. However, explanations for the rise of the technocrats have largely been limited to socioeconomic factors. By analyzing the longitudinal data of Chinese provincial leaders during the period of 1990–2013, this article shows the rise of technocrats in Chinese politics in the 1990s but also provides an explanation for it from the perspectives of individuals' career paths and the contemporaneous political and policy landscapes. These explanations were drawn from analyses of the expansion of higher education and faculty restructuring in the 1950s, graduate job assignments, the recruitment and promotion of young and middle-aged cadres, and the cadre policy known as the Four Modernizations of the early 1980s. This article presents the interactions among individuals' career opportunities, group composition characteristics, and socioeconomic and macropolitical dynamics. It also reveals how the Chinese Communist Party legitimizes its ruling power and maintains state capacity and political order through elite recruitment.

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1. Introduction

More so than at any time since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, there has been an upsurge of theoretical and practical interest in the study of Chinese leaders. Because this is an important factor in China's elite politics, institutional changes, and socioeconomic development, many specialists have rushed to ask the question of who is running China using empirical data to present a comprehensive picture of leadership transformation. Scholars have provided substantive insight into the prevailing norms and prudential rules of leadership selection, particularly in reform-era China. They have observed the emergence of technocrats in Chinese politics since the early 1980s and full-fledged

technocratic leadership in the 1990s (Andreas, 2009; Lee, 1991; Li & White, 1988, 1990, 1998). In the existing literature, this profound leadership transition is primarily explained by the increasing demand for highly educated candidates with technocratic expertise who were meant to guide China's rapid industrialization and economic-modernization projects.

This explanation, however, is far from complete and leaves open more fundamental questions for empirical investigation. For example, are technocrats a growing presence in the Chinese political power structure? How were technocrats recruited into the party and state hierarchies? What accounts for the rise of the technocrats? Did it signal that expertise was favored over Redness in political competitions for authority positions? If the

socioeconomic explanation for elite transformation was complete, then why did not technocrats come to the fore in the 1950s and the 1960s when the state's policies were geared towards industrialization and the national building agenda relied heavily on technical experts? (Xu, 2001, p. 67)

This article presents answers to all of these questions by analyzing empirical data about Chinese provincial leaders during the period of 1990–2013. This advances our knowledge of China's technocrats in three ways. First, this article will analyze the rise and fall of technocrats and career bureaucrats in provincial politics from a historical perspective. Second, this article will, for the first time, interpret the rise of the technocrats by investigating the opportunities at different time points throughout the lives of the provincial leaders studied here. It will seek to explain how technocrats obtained their education, professional work experience, and political status. It will further examine the interactions among individual career opportunities, elite group composition, and broader institutional frameworks. Finally, the current literature generally evaluates the nature and competitive advantages of technocrats by studying their technocratic orientation, educational backgrounds, and career patterns. This article will take a step further and analyze the role of political capital of the technocratic elite through party membership and occupational experience as party workers.

The first section of this article presents a review of the research literature pertaining to Chinese leadership transformation, particularly the technocracy thesis. The second section briefly introduces the biographic dataset of provincial leaders and the operational definition and measurement of technocrats. The third section describes the historical changes leading up to the unbalanced proportion of technocrats and career bureaucrats among provincial leaders. In the fourth section, the rise of the technocrats in the 1990s is explained by reviewing both the biographies of individual leaders as well as the socioeconomic and macropolitical dynamics. After summarizing the study's major findings, this article will conclude by discussing the historical necessity for technocratic leadership in China since the early 1980s.

2. Chinese Leadership Transformation and the Emergence of Technocratic Leadership

The question of who is running China used to be answered by consulting rumors and hearsay about supreme leaders or rising political stars during leadership transitions. Sensibly, the analytical focus has turned to a general and quantitative account of biographic characteristics of cadres at varying levels ranging from the central, provincial, municipal, county, and grass-roots (Bo, 2002, 2008; Feng, 2010; Goodman, 1980; Landry, 2003; Lee, 1983; Li, 2002; Li & Bachman, 1989; Li & White, 1988, 1998, 2003; Lin, 2012; Zang, 1991, 1993). The growing consensus in this flourishing area of scholarly inquiry

is that Chinese leadership possesses three essential features: male dominance, Han dominance, and increasing education. Meanwhile, a wave of China scholars is now paying special attention to the technocratic movement in Chinese leadership. However, there is a debate between those scholars who view Chinese politics as a technocracy and those who view it as a political technocracy.

The rise of China's technocrats is often traced to the 12th Party Congress of 1982 (Li, 2002; Li & White, 1988, 1990, 1998). After that, the ruling elite was a group of technically trained leaders with professional job experience, such as industrial managers, economic planners, and engineers (Li, 2002, pp. 25–28; Li & White, 1998, pp. 235–236). Sharing a similar technocratic identity and a pragmatic orientation (Li & White, 1988, pp. 395–396), they maintained leadership unity and stability along with mutual recognition (Li & White, 1998, p. 234). However, in parallel to this observation, other scholars have specifically rejected the idea of dominance by the technocrats. Instead, they point out the cooperative coexistence of technocrats and career bureaucrats; neither group has absolute authority because they share political power (Lee, 1983; Zang, 1991, 1993, 1999). As Xiaowei Zang (1993, p. 801) put it:

> The career bureaucrats need the technocrats for their advice and expertise, and thus need to share power with them. The technocrats need to cooperate with the career bureaucrats in order to climb up the political hierarchy that has been controlled by the latter.

In this respect, leadership formation is conceived as a political technocracy instead of just a technocracy (Zang, 1991, p. 123).

What is not debated is the emergence of a technocratic elite who were meant to change how power is legitimized in China and to negotiate the nation's massive political and socioeconomic changes (Li & White, 1988, pp. 395–396, 1990, pp. 12–13, 1998, p. 234). This is seen as a fundamental response to the demands of modernization, economic prosperity, and technological development (Zang, 1993, pp. 789–790). In other words, as argued by Cheng Li and David Bachman (1989, p. 89):

> Under the impact of an accelerating worldwide scientific and technological revolution, technical expertise should be a basic credential for leadership and a fundamental reason for popular support. According to these leaders, modern society is so complex that only experts can estimate the implications of a decision.

This scholarly divergence has appeared primarily because of the relative weakness of the technocratic elites and the relative strengths of career bureaucrats. For example, there is a reasonable amount of skepticism that technocrats could effectively cope with complex sociopolitical issues that are different from technical issues (Li & Bachman, 1989, p. 90). As Cheng Li and Lynn

White discuss (1990, pp. 20–21):

> Social and economic problems sometimes caused by new policies often occur more rapidly than the means technocrats can devise to deal with them. Their technical 'expertise' is probably even more important as a legitimacy to justify their rule than as a functional requisite of their leadership.

Career bureaucrats usually rise from the grassroots, step by step. They possess broad career experience and accumulate political and human capital in diversified functional divisions as well as in party and government organs. They are relatively advantaged in bureaucratic operations, specialized knowledge, and experience in governance. Generally, they have better people skills than technocrats who have technical jobs and only work with machines or other highly skilled people. Given these differences, it could be argued that career bureaucrats have co-opted technical professionals into the power center while hindering the rise of technocrats.

Cheng Li and Lynn White identify 1982 as the watershed year for technocratic leadership in China, when Li Peng, Hu Qili, Jiang Zemin, Wang Zhaoguo, Hu Jintao, and Wu Bangguo were elected as Central Committee (CC) members or alternate CC members (Li & White, 1988, p. 380). Before 1982, the percentage of technocrat members of the 9th, 10th, and 11th CCs was only around 2%. It increased to 17% in the 12th CC and went up to 20% in the 13th CC. Based on this evidence, Li and White (1988) concluded there was an emerging technocratic leadership in China. Xiaowei Zang (1993, pp. 789–791), however, pointed out that the proportion of technocrats was too small to sustain Li and White's conclusion. Zang (1993) noted that technocrats accounted for 32.80% of the membership of the 14th CC, while career bureaucrats were 40.74%. In another study, Zang (1991) observed 302 central government cadres; the percentages of technocrats and career bureaucrats were 23.18% and 47.02%, respectively. Zang concluded that technocrats and career bureaucrats are two important political forces and, thus, the notion of political technocracy is a better fit for the composition of China's leadership. However, in the 15th CC, Li and White (1998) noted that at least 55.4% of full CC members were technocrats.

The empirical studies discussed above suffer from two limitations: missing data and problematic definitions of the term technocrat. Li and White (1998, p. 235) defined technocrats in terms of technocratic major, professional occupation, and leadership position. However, the classification of technocratic majors is ambiguous. For example, some empirical studies classify the academic fields of finance, economics, or management as technocratic majors along with engineering and the natural sciences; others do not. Furthermore, in most studies, the percentage of technocrats was calculated by considering technocratic major and leadership position only, regardless of professional occupation. The percentage

of technocrats may be overestimated because some may have had a technocratic major but no professional work experience. The missing-data problem may have led to measurement errors. Specifically, information was unavailable for the academic majors of 39.24% of the cadres in Zang's investigation of bureaucrats in the central government, 36.1% of the members in Zang's study of the 14th CC, and 22.0% of the members in Li and White's study of the 15th CC (Li & White, 1998; Zang, 1991, 1993).

3. Methods and Data

This article addresses two questions: (1) How the proportion of technocrats has evolved in provincial leadership, and (2) how they assumed political positions. The data was collected by capturing information about 1,891 provincial party secretaries, governors, deputy party secretaries, and vice governors from 1990 to 2013, representing 85.10% of all provincial leaders for the study period. Leadership biographies were drawn from diverse, authoritative sources, such as official government websites, the leadership databases of Xinhua Net, People.com.cn, Chinese Economics Net and the like. The leadership profiles were cross-checked against the Chinese Political Elite Database of National Chengchi University of Taiwan. To trace historical changes and individual leaders, a provincial leadership dataset was created with a person-year structure, recording who occupied what provincial leadership position in each province on a yearly basis. In this way, the dataset contains 9,814 life-history observations. Three sets of information were coded to trace provincial leaders' life course transitions from school to work. They include: (1) educational levels, academic majors, and the time of attaining educational qualifications; (2) party membership and the time of joining the Chinese Communist Party; and, (3) previous work experience in industry, engineering, economic management, the State-Owned Enterprises (SOE), and party work.

This study adopted Li and White's (1998, pp. 235–236) definition of technocrat and Zang's (1993, p. 788) definition of career bureaucrat. Career bureaucrat was defined as a state or party cadre without a technocratic major working in the party and government systems, mass organizations, the People's Liberation Army, or other agencies. Technocrat was defined by three dimensions: education, professional occupation, and leadership position. To avoid definitional ambiguities, some clarifications and refinements were made for the measurement details of technocrats. For example, the previous empirical studies did not distinguish between full-time and part-time college work and only captured individuals' highest educational attainments. The fact is that the number of college-educated provincial leaders has grown steadily year-to-year. Among them, the percentage majoring in the humanities and social sciences has increased significantly from 50% in 2000 to 79.64% in 2012 (Lin, 2017). This trend was paralleled by a sharp

rise in the percentage of provincial leaders obtaining part-time college education, up from 29.95% in 2000 to 79.11% in 2013. However, measuring credentials in the form of the highest educational qualification achieved results in an underestimation of the number of technocrats. This study therefore focused only on full-time college education and traces the entire full-time educational histories. In addition, technocratic majors were limited to natural and applied sciences, such as physics, chemistry, biology, geology, mathematics, engineering, agriculture, and medical science.

In terms of professional career experience, this study adopted the measurement strategy of main career patterns used by Cheng Li and David Bachman (1989, p. 75) and Xiaowei Zang (1993, pp. 797–798), and studied the frequency and length of job experience. Unlike the previous empirical studies, specific work experience in industry, engineering, and economic management was considered. That is, those working in these specialized areas for ten years or longer were also regarded as potential technocrats. To summarize, for the purpose of operationalization, technocrat was defined as a person: (1) receiving a degree from a full-time college, or above, in a technocratic major and (2) having a main career pattern, or ten years' experience, in industry, engineering, or economic planning.

4. Historical Changes in Technocrats and Career Bureaucrats

Of the provincial leaders in the study period of 1990 to 2013, 79.55% received a college education. As indicated in Table 1, among these college-educated leaders, 55.44% were trained in a technocratic major and 38.91% in the humanities and social sciences. Particularly, provin-

cial leaders studying engineering constituted 38.22% of the total. The technically trained elites were a larger proportion of the 1990–2013 provincial leaders compared to those who studied the humanities and social sciences.

A technocratic major was only one of the factors analyzed for technocratic leadership. The next critical step was to classify and examine career patterns. Technocrats generally had career experience in industry, engineering, or economics. As shown in Table 2, only 15.77% of the elites were recruited into provincial leadership as professional specialists in industry, engineering, or economic planning. At the same time, a large number of career bureaucrats came to power, accounting for 64.32% of all provincial leaders. Party workers accounted for 52.45%, whereas government administrators were only 8.63%. To take insight into the tenures in industry, finance and engineering respectively, provincial leaders with 10-year tenure or longer provide 21.98% in industry, 10.76% in finance and 0.92% in engineering. Taking both the main career patterns and job tenures in professional occupations together, 32.26% of provincial leaders worked as industrial managers, engineers, or economic planners.

After considering both technocratic majors and relevant career patterns, technocrats accounted for 20.13% of the 1990–2013 provincial leaders. Among these technocratic elites, 73.84% acquired professional titles, such as professor or engineer. From a historical point of view, there was a fluctuating increase in the percentage of technocrats, from 26.21% in 1990 to 32.79% in 1996 (Figure 1). From 1997 onward, however, the percentage of technocrats continuously declined from 32.54% in 1997 to 9.13% in 2013. The fluctuating increase in technocrats was accompanied by a fluctuating decrease in career bureaucrats from 1990 to 1997. As illustrated in

Table 1. Academic majors of Chinese provincial leaders, 1990–2013.

	Obs.	%
Technocratic Major		
Physics/Chemistry/Biology/Geology/Mathematics	863	11.05
Engineering	2,984	38.22
Agriculture	364	4.66
Medical Science	117	1.50
Subtotal	4,328	55.44
Humanities & Social Sciences		
Philosophy	210	2.69
Economic/Finance	945	12.10
Legal Studies/Political Science	583	7.47
Education	57	0.73
Literature/Linguistics	958	12.27
History	227	2.91
Management	58	0.74
Subtotal	3,038	38.91
Unknown	441	5.65
Total	7,807	100.00

Source: Author's database.

Table 2. Main career patterns of Chinese provincial leaders, 1990–2013.

	Obs.	%
Party Work	5,147	52.45
Government Administration	847	8.63
Mass Organization	251	2.56
Military	67	0.68
Subtotal	6,312	64.32
Industry	865	8.81
Engineering	90	0.92
Economic/Finance	593	6.04
Subtotal	1,548	15.77
Education	658	6.70
Police/Court	101	1.03
Personnel/Organization	144	1.47
Resource/Environment	364	3.71
Propaganda/Media	133	1.36
Others	554	5.64
Total	9,814	100.00

Source: Author's database.

Figure 1, bureaucrats were at 34.46% in 1990, with a small drop to 28.25% in 1993. Thereafter, the percentage of career bureaucrats slightly rose to 30.25% in 1994 and then declined to 26.67% in 1996 and 26.68% in 1997. The small fluctuation over the period of 1990–1997 was followed by a consecutive increase from 29.07% in 1998 to 44.59% in 2007. Thereafter, the percentage of career bureaucrats slowly reached its peak of 45.13% in 2010 and modestly decreased to 37.32% in 2013.

By comparing technocrats and bureaucrats in provincial politics from 1990 to 2013, the percentage of career bureaucrats dramatically exceeded that of technocrats during the period of 1990–1991 and from 2000 onwards. The rise of technocratic leadership was discernible in
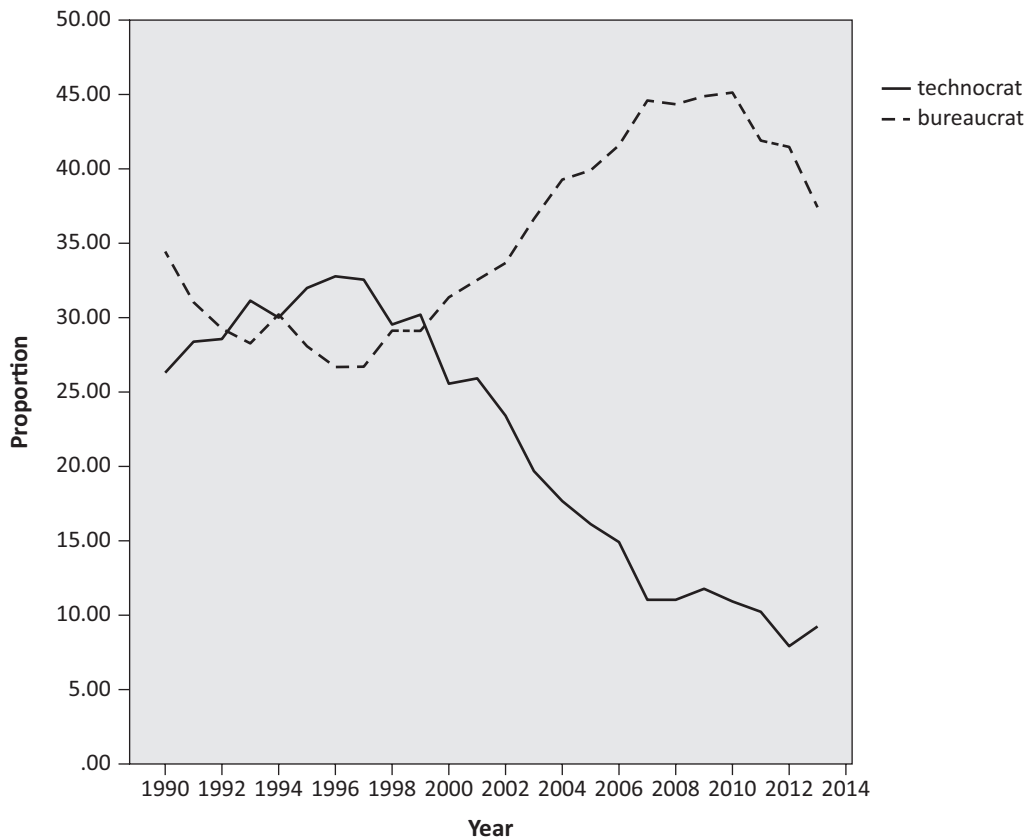

Figure 1. Technocrats and career bureaucrats in provincial leadership (1990–2013).

the 1990s, particularly from 1992 to 1999. Despite the high number of provincial leaders trained in science and engineering, the data suggests there was no technocratic dominance in reform China. In reality, the provincial elite transformation of the period 1990–2013 has turned away from technocratic leadership. It has alternatively moved toward a bureaucratic-technocracy characterized by the relative dominance by career bureaucrats since 2000.

5. Explaining the Rise of Technocrats in the 1990s

How can the rise of technocratic leadership in the 1990s be explained? This question can be divided into three specific questions. First, where did the college-educated technical specialists with technocratic majors come from? Second, how did college-educated technical specialists acquire professional career experience? Third, how did technical specialists come to occupy political positions and become technocrats? The first two questions seek to understand how the party state nurtured a highly specialized and science-oriented labor force for industrialization and state building. The third question is meant to explain why this group of technical specialists were eventually turned into a pool of qualified candidates for political leadership after the introduction of the cadre policy of the Four Modernizations (*ganbu sihua*, 干部四化).

5.1. Attending University: Educational Expansion and Faculty Restructuring

Most of the technocrats in China's provincial leadership in the 1990s came from the birth cohorts of the 1930s and the 1940s, accounting for 29.88% and 65.46%, respectively. Those from the same birth cohort were likely to have experienced the same major historical events and state policy shifts across their lives (Li, 2002, p. 6). Before the Cultural Revolution, 98.05% of the 1990s technocrats were admitted into university. Among them, a majority received their full-time college education between 1958 and 1965. The period of the mid-1950s through the mid-1960s was the first large-scale expansion of education in the People's Republic of China history. The Chinese Communist Party sought to fight illiteracy and to improve educational credentials in order to build the state. As early as 1953, the Cultural and Education Committee of the Central People's Government Administration Council placed primary emphasis on education, particularly higher education. According to 'the Decision on Education Work' (*guanyu jiaoyu gongzuo de zhishi*, 关于教育工作的指示) issued in September 1958, the Chinese Communist Party made every effort to achieve universal college education within 15 years and improve its quality for another 15 years.

Along with educational expansion, faculty restructuring took place in a broad range of universities in China. In June 1950, Zhou Enlai (1950, p. 19) stressed to the

National Higher Education Conference that restoring economic and social order created an urgent need for a specialized labor force. In November 1951, the National Conference for Deans of Engineering Faculties laid the groundwork for a far-reaching faculty restructuring. The goal of higher education was nurturing technical specialists so a reform plan for engineering faculties was proposed. The nationwide faculty restructuring was initiated in 1952. Its priority was training technical experts and teachers and developing specialized colleges for industrialization and economic development. After the faculty restructuring of 1953, the number of comprehensive universities decreased from 49 in 1949 to 14 in 1953. The number of engineering-oriented universities grew from 28 in 1949 to 38 and that of normal universities for teacher training grew from 12 to 33. The percentage of science-and-engineering-oriented universities had two remarkable increases before the Cultural Revolution. The first increase occurred in 1952 when across-the-board faculty restructuring was launched. Science-and-engineering-oriented universities accounted for 51% of the total universities all over China as compared to 38% in 1951. The second increase occurred in 1958 when the percentage of science-and-engineering-oriented universities increased from 49% in 1957 to 62%. At the same time, the enrollment rate for these specialized universities grew from 54% in 1949 to 64.5% in 1953. After 1960, it was over 70% every year and reached its height of 90.7% in 1969.

A vast majority of the 1990s technocrats attended university during the educational expansion and faculty restructuring of the 1950s. The academic majors they chose were in accord with the regime's overarching agenda for industrial and economic growth. For example, in order to strengthen national defense, promote economic development, and improve living standards, the First Five-Year Plan (1953–1957) proposed the policy of industrialization, particularly the development of heavy industry. The Second Five-Year Plan (1958–1962) continued the policy of heavy industry, particularly in the areas of metallurgy, machine production, petrochemicals, power generation, coal, construction materials, and the like. As for the academic majors of the 1990s technocrats, 39.96% studied mechanical engineering and 16.75% studied chemical engineering. Those majoring in steel and metallurgy, civil engineering, and aeronautics and astronautics accounted for 10.28%, 9.61%, and 6.95%, respectively. This empirical evidence supports the proposition that the academic majors preferred by technocrats echoed the context of China's industrialization and economic policies.

5.2. From School to Work: The Evolving Graduate Job Allocation Plan

In addition to the education received in the era of far-ranging educational reforms, technocrats experienced a particular type of transition from school to work and

found their places in professional occupations. This question is related to their first job and their job tenure in professional occupations.

Looking at the 1990s technocrats as a group, 94.01% received technocratic training from a full-time college education and a first job in the corresponding professional field. And, 80.59% of all technocrats embarked on their professional careers by occupying a highly technical job at an SOE. Only 4.47% assumed political positions in the party system or government hierarchies immediately after college graduation. A vast majority of technocrats with SOE job experience remained at the same SOEs or were transferred to different SOEs in the early- or mid-1980s. The average SOE tenure was 16.15 years.

Facilitating this education to job match was the centralized graduate job placement plan which lasted from the 1950s through the 1980s and became prevalent in the 1960s and the 1970s. The essential pillar of the plan was the party state's rigid control over job assignments for graduates, and its final political decision on how and where to place skilled manpower. The important 'Decision on Reforming Length of Schooling' (*guanyu gaige xuezhi de jueding*, 关于改革学制的决定) released in August 1951 underlined the job placement plan of university graduates by government. In the process of state planning, universities and colleges reported the supply of prospective graduates. Work units reported their specific demands for labor to the overseeing departments. The overseeing departments transmitted the supply-and-demand information to the state planning department through the hierarchical structure. The state planning department subsequently developed a draft for the national manpower plan and gained the approval of the State Council. Following that, the approved plan was delivered from the top down to local departments and then to universities and work units. This process of job allocation under state planning left little room for graduates, tertiary universities, and work units to negotiate. In 1952, the plan adhered to the central government's allocations of labor to premier construction projects and to remote regions to aid the nation's industrialization and state-building strategies. The core value of the centralized graduate job allocation plan lay in efficiently extracting and mobilizing specialized human resources in the face of the daunting obstacles of socialist reconstruction tasks, economic hardship, and a desperate shortage of skilled labor in the early years of the People's Republic of China. It fostered job-worker matching by promoting matches between university courses and the requirements of particular jobs and by acquiring employment information on both the supply and demand sides. The central government also sought to enhance the geographical balance by deploying human resources to rural and remote regions (Agelasto, 1998, pp. 261–263). For individual graduates, the plan guided their occupational choices and helped internalize their belief in the state's job allocation plan via political mobilization and propaganda.

5.3. Being Selected into Party and Government Systems: Four Modernizations and 'Reds and Experts'

In the People's Republic of China's first 30 years, the newly established regime produced a large number of highly educated and technically trained experts through the expansion of education and placed them in related professional positions under the centralized graduate job allocation plan. In terms of career progression, for technocrats in provincial leadership in the 1990s, 72.12% began to assume political positions during the period of 1980–1985, about 20 to 30 years after graduating from college. Why and how did these technical experts move away from professional career lines and hold power in the party and government systems? At first glance, socioeconomic development helps to explain the rising demands for technical experts and the regime's reliance upon them for industrialization and modernization programs. But that is an insufficient explanation for the high number of career transitions from professional occupations to elite positions within a tightly controlled and fiercely competitive hierarchy. The following paragraphs will examine the supply and demand for cadres in the 1980s by analyzing the historic convergence of the retirement of revolutionaries and the cadre policy of the Four Modernizations. A complementary perspective will be described to explain the emergence of technocrats in the 1980s and their rise in the 1990s. It is closely related to the political impetus and considerations of reds and experts for paramount leaders in a new era of politics and policies.

After the chaotic years of the Cultural Revolution, the revolutionary veterans were rehabilitated and seized political power. They managed to regain legitimacy and popular confidence in the Chinese Communist Party and to restructure the nation's socioeconomic and political systems by adopting pragmatic and incremental reform strategies. One of the formidable problems that bothered these born-again reformers was the death and poor health of the aging revolutionary veterans. As indicated by Cheng Li and Lynn White (2003, p. 566), the average age was 64.6 for the 11th CC members and 62 for the 12th CC members. The average age was 73.8 for members of the 12th Politburo Standing Committee and 71.8 for the 12th Politburo members. From the very outset of the reform, Deng Xiaoping and Chen Yun mentioned on different occasions that old revolutionaries were ill-suited for the new tasks of economic development due to aging. In 1977, in a meeting with vice-ministerial-level leaders from the party, government, and military systems, Deng openly doubted whether half of them were able to work in the office for eight hours every day. While he pointed out their vast revolutionary and work experiences, he counseled that they should be acutely aware of their lack of energy. In the report of *Promoting and Training Young and Middle-Age Cadres is the Top Priority* (*tiba peiyang zhongqingnian ganbu shi dangwuzhiji*, 提拔培养中青年干部是当务之急) in May

1981, Chen Yun (1981a) indicated the following observations about the age structure of leaders. Like the leading cadres of ministries, the top leaders at the provincial, municipal, and prefectural Chinese Communist Party were largely over 60, and a large number of cadres were over 70. They were positioned high in the power hierarchy and burdened with heavy workloads. These senior leaders were ill-equipped to meet the demanding and sophisticated task of running a modern state. They could not afford to work hard for a prolonged period of time. A substantial number of them kept working in spite of illness and eventually died from overwork. In July 1981, Chen Yun (1981b) focused on the issue of power succession in terms of a shortage of eligible successors. He delivered the speech 'Promoting Thousands of Young and Middle-Aged Cadres' (*chengqianshangwan de tiba zhongqingnian ganbu*, 成千上万地提拔中青年干部). In addition, Deng Xiaoping and Chen Yun repeatedly emphasized the Chinese Communist Party's determination to eliminate 'three sorts of people' (*san zhong ren*, 三种人) from the cadre corps. In August 1980, Deng Xiaoping (1980) made an important speech, 'Reforming the Party-State Leadership System' (*dang he guojia lingdao zhidu de gaige*, 党和国家领导制度的改革), and identified the 'three sorts of people' as the followers of the Gang of Four, those with the radical ideology of factionalism, and rebels. Deng stressed that they should be removed from office and excluded from Chinese power circles, as Chen Yun did in his 1981 speech.

On the eve of the sweeping post-Mao reforms, state leaders decided to recruit and promote young and middle-aged cadres in the context of large-scale socioeconomic and macropolitical transformations. The retirement of revolutionary veterans and the restructuring of cadre corps created a wide range of vacancies within the political hierarchies. At the same time, maintaining the regime's stability and accelerating modernization accentuated the need to co-opt highly trained specialists into the ruling elite. To bring young bloods into the party and bureaucracies, the state leaders overcame the structural barriers of cadre recruitment criteria and political resistance from revolutionaries by clarifying the issues of 'why,' 'who' and 'how,' to promote in cadre selection.

Promoting young cadres caused major concerns among revolutionaries' who had reasonable anxiety about their young successors' lack of experience. Deng Xiaoping and Chen Yun compared young cadres with revolutionary veterans and explained the regime's imperative to recruit cadres for three reasons. First, veteran cadres became mature and independent by extending their revolutionary and occupational experience particularly during their formative years. Likewise, young cadres were expected to acquire in-depth career experience from administrative practices and training. Second, both aging revolutionaries and young cadres seemed inexperienced in the face of the new tasks and obstacles arising from the modernization and reform processes. Both of them were vulnerable to failure. Third,

young and middle-aged cadres were energetic and professional and possessed technical knowledge and expertise. More importantly, they largely came from the birth cohorts of the 1930s and the 1940s and had bitter memories of the Cultural Revolution: "As the Cultural Revolution grown-ups, they understand the views and behaviors of the youth in the early years of the Cultural Revolution" (Chen, 1981b, p. 300). Chen Yun (1981b, p. 299) declared:

> At present, several veteran cadres are still irrational in promoting the younger generation and fail to recognize the urgent need for cadre selection. It would be detrimental to the Party if unqualified candidates were ultimately placed in leadership positions only after elder leaders cracked up.

Deng Xiaoping (1981, p. 384) also warned of the urgency of recruiting young and middle-aged cadres: "This is a strategic issue in determining the political fortune of the Party and current leaders. Another catastrophe following the Cultural Revolution would come if power succession was not completed in three or five years."

In deciding who to promote to authority positions, the state leaders emphasized political integrity and expertise. Their cadre policy initiative, the Four Modernizations, was enshrined in the Party Constitution in 1982. It aimed to select younger, politically reliable, well-educated, and technically professional cadres. A candidate for political promotion could be graduate of a vocational school or a college (*dazhuan*, 大专) in the postliberation era, technicians with over 10-year seniority in professional occupations, young and middle-aged cadres without college education but with deep practical experience, as well as sent-down youths and talents with self-learning skills. Deng Xiaoping (1980, p. 325) summed up the selection criteria of potentially qualified candidates: "The young and middle-aged cadres with political loyalty, diligence, and specialized knowledge are widely positioned in every walk of life. They spread across various localities and divisions. The central issue is that we have not discovered and promoted them."

In July 1981, Deng Xiaoping (1981, p. 386) made a brief comment on political reliability and meritocracy for college graduates in the 1960s while discussing how to rejuvenate the leadership: "They are relatively professional and capable. As college graduates several years before the Cultural Revolution, a vast majority of them are politically reliable. They are by and large 40 years old." He argued and provided a specific example of deputy director of the Second Automobile Factory, who completed his college education one or two years before the Cultural Revolution. He took the opposite position in radical ideology and policies and was suppressed shortly after the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution: "Suffering from suppression in the course of the Cultural Revolution is recognized as one of the political criteria," Deng (1981, p. 386) declared:

Is he an expert? He has already assumed the leading post of deputy director in a large factory. Why could he not become an expert if receiving training in party schools and possessing more diverse career experience by holding other posts?

From a career perspective, technically-trained college graduates in the 1950s and the 1960s were turned into technical experts with lengthy professional work experience through the 1970s and the 1980s. Were they matched close enough to the cadre policy of the Four Modernizations so that they could constitute a pool of qualified candidates for political office during the massive leadership reshuffles of the reform era, turning out to be the technocrats of the 1990s?

For youthful rejuvenation, the average age for technocrats upon entry into public service was 39.65 in the 1990s. Among them, those aged under 30 accounted for 11.14%, between 30 and 39, 30.48%, between 40 and 49, 52.19%, and over 50, 6.19%. In terms of specialized knowledge and professional competency, they benefited from educational expansion and received the technical training of a full-time college education. They were allocated to professional occupations and stayed at the SOEs for over ten years under the state planning of manpower. 74.50% of them possessed professional titles such as engineer, economist, and the like. For 44.91% of the 1990s technocrats, their first job in the political system was closely related to their educational credentials and professional career experience.

For political reliability, 98.10% of the 1990s technocrats joined the Chinese Communist Party. Of these Chinese Communist Party technocrats, 96.72% became Chinese Communist Party members before working in the party or government systems. In terms of the timing of joining the Chinese Communist Party, 41.17% were admitted to the Chinese Communist Party before the Cultural Revolution. With respect to the age of joining the Chinese Communist Party, 56.75% became Chinese Communist Party members between the ages 20 and 29. For the technocrats joining the Chinese Communist Party before beginning public service, the average Chinese Communist Party seniority was 12.99 years. 55.75% had Chinese Communist Party seniority of over 10 years.

In addition to Chinese Communist Party membership and seniority, another salient criterion for political reliability was party work at SOEs, colleges, or research institutes. Empirically, 57.09% of the 1990s technocrats took charge of party work before occupying political positions. For example, they concurrently worked as head of the SOE and party secretary. The average party work tenure was 7.92 years before entering public service. To be specific, the shortest tenure was five months and the longest tenure was 22 years. Looking at the typical career pattern, 50.90% of the 1990s technocrats had a career pattern of party work with an average seniority of 24.78 years.

As a final note, political screening was required for every college application and job assignment in the 1950s and the 1960s. Political screening focused on family origins, family members, individual class and political status, main social ties, rewards and penalties, investigation results, and so on. Documents related to that political screening were an important part of every graduate's dossier for job allocation purposes. In this respect, college graduates working at the SOEs were politically reliable because they had already been vigorously screened.

In summary, this analysis of educational backgrounds, professional occupations, party membership, and party work experience provides a compelling explanation for why technical specialists working in the 1970s and the 1980s fit the recruitment criteria under the cadre policy of Four the Modernizations and subsequently steered their careers to party and administrative systems and political power. From this perspective, it is possible to see why they could be regarded as both Red and expert and therefore eligible or even ideal candidates for authority positions when state leaders reached a consensus about promoting young and middle-aged cadres in the 1980s.

6. Conclusions

This article presented an analytical account of China's provincial leadership transformation. It focused on the rise of technocrats in the 1990s and examined their major life transitions. Career transitions included admission to university, moving from college to work, and then to jobs in the party or in administrative posts. It also mapped out the interactions among individual career opportunities, the composition of the group, and the shifts in state policy that directly affected them. For technocrats in the 1990s, their educational and career opportunities were significantly shaped by macro-sociopolitical transformation, such as the expansion of education, faculty restructuring, the graduate job allocation plan which started in the 1950s, and the retirement of revolutionary veterans in the 1970s and the 1980s. In short, they were the right people, in the right place, at the right time. The party state sought to co-opt these technical experts into the power hierarchy in order to legitimize its rule by fostering economic and technological development. More importantly for purposes of this study, the party state sought to maintain a delicate balance between cadre selection criteria and the pool of viable political candidates who were educated and worked within the existing career mobility structure.

For those reasons, this study's analyses support the political technocracy theory: There was an alliance of technocrats and career bureaucrats. The emergence of technocratic leadership does not necessarily represent a preference for technical expertise over political loyalty in cadre selection.

As observed in this study, technocrats in the 1990s were thoroughly Red and deeply expert per se, possessing both educational and political credentials. This empir-

ical evidence supports Zang's argument. That is, despite a political alliance between bureaucrats and technocrats, party bureaucrats only recruited "the technocrats who express loyalty to the regime and the orthodox ideology" (Zang, 1993, pp. 802–803). However, the ascent of technocrats in the 1990s by no means signaled the replacement of generalists with specialists in Chinese politics. Technocrats cooperated with career bureaucrats and had a slight advantage in terms of numbers in the 1990s. For that reason, technocrats appeared to be the backbone of Chinese provincial leadership even though career bureaucrats still sat at the apex of the power hierarchy. After 2000, career bureaucrats came back to prominence as the percentage of technocrats decreased. With the incremental institutionalization of cadre recruitment and promotion, particularly the emphasis on step-by-step promotion, generalists were positioned advantageously in very fierce political competition because they got acquainted with the functioning and operation of party and bureaucratic systems and possessed managerial and coordinated competency as well as diverse administrative practices.

As the regime's agenda was shifted to economic development, industrialization, and modernization, the demand for technical specialists became greater. However, this was an insufficient condition for technocratic dominance. Technocrats did not come to prominence in the 1950s when the party state promoted socialist reconstruction and Communist-style industrialization. And, they did not come to prominence the early years of the 21st century when the party state launched its growth strategy of innovation nation and the number of college students studying science, technology, engineering, and mathematics increased dramatically.

This article argues that turning technically trained experts into technocrats was the political choice of reformers, but this choice was significantly conditioned by the supply of cadre candidates. As to the cadre corps before the Cultural Revolution, old revolutionaries passed away or retired to the second line. For the cadre corps after the Cultural Revolution, the 'three sorts of people' stepped down from political office and unqualified cadres were transferred outside the party systems and government bureaucracies. Additionally, the general population was poorly educated, particularly when educational institutions and training systems were largely paralyzed due to the ten-year period of chaos during the Cultural Revolution. In this historical context, the pool of potential cadres inside or outside the political system was extremely limited.

At the same time, the basis of legitimacy for running a modern state changed. The supreme leaders shifted cadre recruitment to consider both political reliability and such meritocratic standards as education and professional competency. By considering the supply and demand of prospective cadres, they had no choice but to expand the source and scope of cadre selection along the new recruitment criteria. They had to turn to can-

didates who graduated before the Cultural Revolution. Educational reform before the Cultural Revolution produced a large number of technically trained college graduates. Under the graduate job allocation plan, they were assigned to technical positions at SOEs and accumulated professional career experience. They largely escaped the Cultural Revolution's political purges and repression. Their career opportunities for transfers and advancement arose because they were politically loyal, highly educated, and professionally competent. It is not the specialty of science and engineering vis-à-vis humanities and social sciences that conferred significant competitive advantage on the technical specialists. The underlying force of co-opting technical specialists into the ruling elite was a dilemma between the imperative of youthful rejuvenation and the lack of politically reliable and well-educated cadres at the critical juncture of a personnel reshuffle. As the cadres, and the public in general, have become more educated, personnel bottlenecks have been resolved and technical experts are no longer considered a major source of cadres. As for China, the short-term emergence of technocratic leadership is peculiar to the early years of the post-Cultural Revolution era, spanning from the late 1970s through the 1990s. This data does not suggest that technocrats have grown into a strongly competitive and cohesive political force with a shared ideology and group identity. Nor does it mean that China is taking the technocratic road.

Drawing upon data about a group of technocrats in provincial leadership in the 1990s, this article has provided an important lens through which a link among individuals' career transitions and socioeconomic and macropolitical transformations can be understood. In explaining the rise of the 1990s technocrats, this article has directed attention away from the influence of socioeconomic factors to the impact of state policies as well as the political preferences, impetus, and constraints in the cadre selection process. The rise of the 1990s technocrats was not an isolated phenomenon or peculiar to China. It also occurred in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, Mexico, Chile, Taiwan, and other countries. Comparative studies would provide interesting observations and convincing explanations for this seemingly common technocratic turn.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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About the Author

Rongrong Lin is an Associate Research Fellow of Research Center of CPC Rules and Regulations, Institute of Urban Governance, Shenzhen University, People's Republic of China. She obtained her PhD from the School of East Asian Studies at the University of Sheffield, UK. Her research interests include elite politics and public personnel management. Recent publications are "The Educational Attainment of Chinese Provincial Leaders in Reforming China, 1990–2013: A Longitudinal Examination" (*China: An International Journal*) and "How Does Human Capital Affect Cadre Promotion?" (*CASS Journal of Political Science*).

Article

Locating Leadership and Political Will in Social Policy: The Story of India's MGNREGA

Ujjwal Krishna * and Chris Roche

Institute for Human Security and Social Change, La Trobe University, Melbourne, VIC 3086, Australia;
E-Mails: u.krishna@latrobe.edu.au (U.K.), c.roche@latrobe.edu.au (C.R.)

* Corresponding author

Abstract

The term 'political will' is often conveniently used to explain the success or failure of any policy or programme. It has emerged as the "sine qua non of policy success which is never defined except by its absence" (Hammergren, 1998, p. 12). Therefore, a structured examination of the term is necessary to analyse social policy and programming. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), enacted by India's United Progressive Alliance government in 2005, offers a compelling case to examine the role of 'political will' in the formulation of a major programme. The evolution of the MGNREGA, which has been described by the World Bank as the largest antipoverty state-run employment-generation scheme anywhere in the world (Dutta, Murgai, Ravallion, & van de Walle, 2014), depended significantly on leadership and political commitment in the legislature and the executive, as well as their coordination and substantive engagement with civil society, represented through non-governmental organisations and activists. We explore the complex power relations between the diverse range of actors involved in the MGNREGA, and gauge the role of leadership and political will in the formulation of the MGNREGA, as carried out by the United Progressive Alliance government between 2005 and 2014, in contrast to the manner in which it was reframed and retained by its successor dispensation, the National Democratic Alliance from 2014 onwards. We then examine the MGNREGA, utilising a framework which expands our understanding of political will as being contingent upon leadership at the individual, collective and societal levels (Hudson, Mcloughlin, Roche, & Marquette, 2018), thereby providing us with greater explanatory power.

1. Introduction

Upon being elected in 2004, India's United Progressive Alliance (UPA), a coalition led by the Indian National Congress party, began introducing various legally-enforceable rights with a view to increase economic and social opportunities for its citizens, of which the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005, later renamed as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was its flagship program. The UPA:

> Introduced numerous programmes to benefit poorer groups who had been largely ignored both by its main rival, the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP], which had led a ruling coalition between 1998 and 2004, and by the Congress itself in earlier periods. (Manor & Duckett, 2017, p. 306–307)

The MGNREGA:

> Sought to protect the livelihoods of the poor agricultural labourers during periods of distress, by granting adult members of every rural household the right to demand [at least] 100 days of [guaranteed] unskilled work at stipulated minimum wages from the state. (Vijayabaskar & Balagopal, 2019, p. v)

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme that operates under the aforementioned Act, came into force in February 2006, following the enactment of the MGNREGA in August 2005, and it was phased-in across India in three steps in a "highly non-random manner that prioritized economically underdeveloped districts" (Zimmermann, 2013, p. 3). After initially being implemented in the first 200 poorest districts of India, the scheme was extended to the rest of the country with 130 additional districts receiving it in April 2007, and all remaining rural districts by April 2008 (Ministry of Rural Development, 2010).

MGNREGA has been described as the largest antipoverty state-run employment-generation scheme anywhere in the world (Dutta et al., 2014). It registers 270.5 million active workers, and reaches 693 out of India's 718 districts, spanning 265,067 *Gram Panchayats*, which are elected village-level local self-governing institutions (Ministry of Rural Development, 2020a), that are entrusted with rural development: "Work is provided in public works projects at the statutory minimum wage notified for the programme by State Governments that are responsible for implementing the [MGNREGA]," and this "work must be made available within 15 days of receiving an application to work, failing which, the State Government is liable for paying an unemployment allowance" (Dutta et al., 2014, p. xxiii). The MGNREGA was initially conceptualized amongst civil society activists in the state of Rajasthan in the early 2000s, recognizing the need for a public works program to combat drought (Chopra, 2011), and was eventually introduced by the Indian National Congress-led central government in 2005.

Essentially it is a public works programme that is planned through a bottom-up, decentralised process, with half of the works implemented through *Gram Panchayats* at the village-level (Chopra, 2011). It is a demand-led Act, with resources transferred from the central to state governments based on the demand for employment in each state, assessed through periodical surveys conducted by the *Gram Panchayats*. The assured employment for one hundred days at minimum wages guaranteed by the MGNREGA to a rural household is a right that can be expected, demanded and legally enforced. In addition to short-term employment generation the MGNREGA also creates durable assets like productive infrastructure for poverty alleviation (Second Administrative Reforms Commission, 2006). Given that the MGNREGA is demand-driven, there are no state-wise allocations. Instead:

> Releases are based on labour budget estimates prepared at the start of the year and the actual demand for work during the year…[and] total funds available for [the MGNREGA] include [Government of India] and state government releases, as well as, unspent balances from previous years. (Accountability Initiative, 2020a)

With the UPA government losing the 2014 Indian general election, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), led by the centre-right BJP came to power. The BJP's ascendance raised a number of question marks over whether the MGNREGA would be continued, particularly since its welfare narrative, focusing on 'empowerment,' pointedly differed from the Congress' which emphasised on 'rights' and 'entitlements' (Aiyar, 2018). Even though the BJP maintained ideological opposition to the Congress' conceptualization of employment generation, and favoured individual effort as opposed to state support, it has not only retained the MGNREGA but has also overseen its growth.

Figure 1 contains revised estimates of budgetary allocations to the Ministry of Rural Development (in blue), and allocations to the MGNREGA as a proportion of the overall ministerial budget for each financial year since the programme's inception. It is clear that while there has been some ebb and flow in allocations during the UPA years up until 2014, there has since been a broadly upward trend in allocations by the NDA since FY 2014–2015. It must be noted that revised estimates are used since they present a more accurate picture compared to budget estimates, since:

> Some of the estimates made by the government might change during the course of the year, [and that] once the year gets underway, some ministries may need more funds than what was actually allocated to them in the budget, or the receipts expected from certain sources might change. (Tiwari, 2019)

In terms of outcomes, both household-level and person-wise employment indicators, as seen in Figure 2, have similarly seen a broadly upward trend since the NDA government took office in 2014, across the categories of demand for work, allotment of work, and actual numbers worked, save for a slight dip in total persons demanding and being allotted work in FY 2017–2018. MGNREGA employment data has been analysed here from FY 2011–2012 up until FY 2019–2020, since comparable categories of data for previous financial years are not available, and figures for the current FY 2020–2021 are provisional, with data being available only for part of the year on the MGNREGA Public Data Portal (Ministry of Rural Development, 2020b).

Even though the employment data shows an overall upward trend since FY 2014–2015 in terms of total demand, allocation, and actual work undertaken, metrics such as total person-days generated, and the total
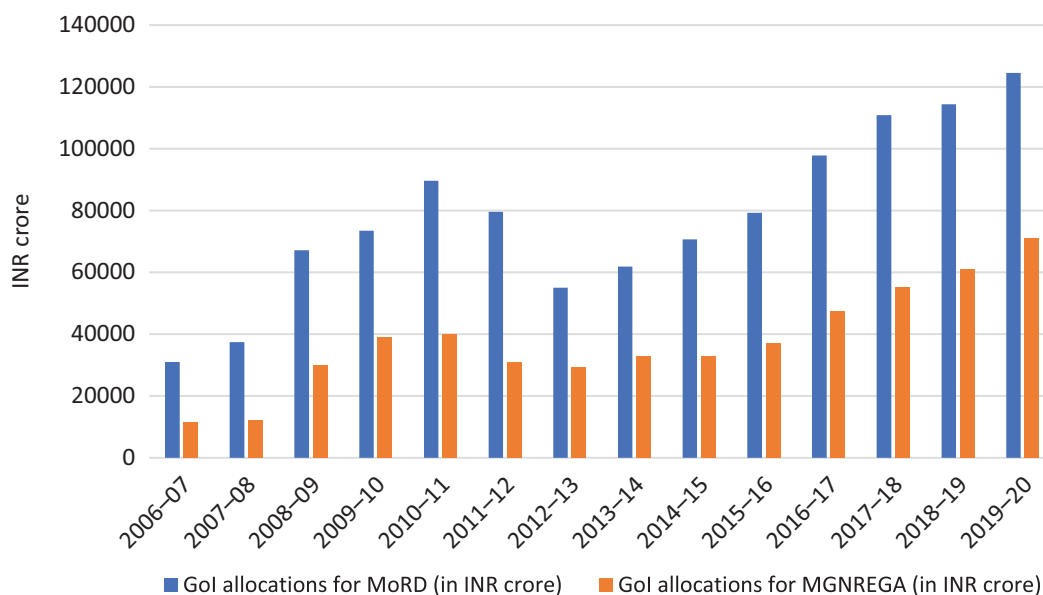
Figure 1. Union expenditure budget of the Ministry of Rural Development for FY 2006–2007 to FY 2019–2020. Note: Figures in Rupees crore (1 crore = 10 million) and are revised estimates (constructed from data in public domain). Source: Accountability Initiative (2020b).

number of households reaching the prescribed 100-day limit, provide a relatively mixed picture, as is clearly visible in Figure 3. The labour budget estimate under the MGNREGA is contingent upon the amount of total cost (towards wage, material, and administrative costs) to be incurred while generating a person-day wage employment, and as such, this fact lends significance to the use of person-days as an indicator. On the other hand, the 100-day limit for MGNREGA is a useful indicator as well, and arguably a more representative measure of the programme delivering on the letter and spirit of what the MGNREGA guarantees to the rural poor. In terms of both total person-days and total households having reached the 100-day limit, no clear trend is visible, and hence

the overall employment figures (demand, allocation, and actuals) need to be viewed in perspective. This is because while these may provide an aggregate picture, the data in Figure 3 unpacks them in a way that shines greater light on salient programmatic features prescribed by the MGNREGA, and by its operational guidelines (Ministry of Rural Development, 2013).

Therefore, what emerges from the data is that at least in terms of demand for, allocation of, and actually undertaken public works at both the household and individual levels, there has been a largely upward trend since the NDA took office in 2014. This upward trend has also been mirrored in rising budgetary allocations. Even though this trend is not identical for total person-
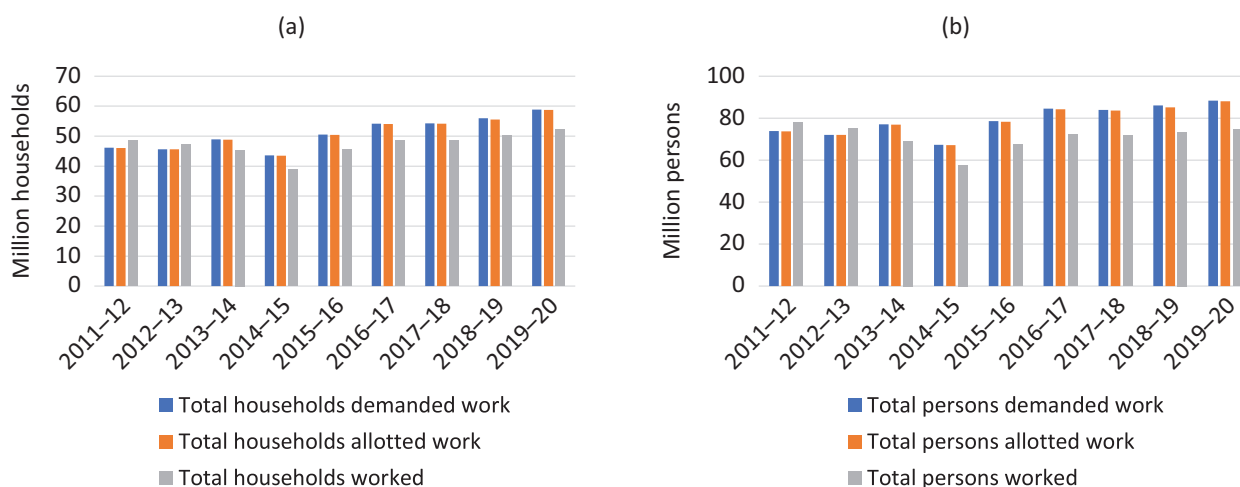

Figure 2. Total household demand for work, allotted work, and actually worked (a), juxtaposed against total persons demanded work, allotted work, and actually worked (b). Note: Figures in million Rupees (constructed from data in public domain). Source: Ministry of Rural Development (2020b).
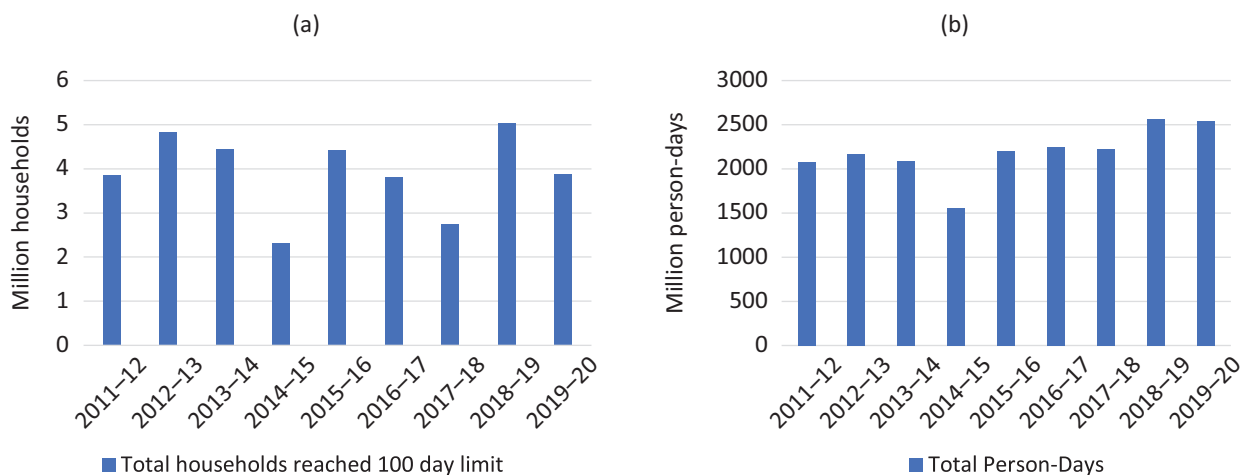
(a)

(b)

Figure 3. Total households that reached the 100-day limit (a), juxtaposed against person-days generated (b). Note: Figures in million Rupees (constructed from data in public domain). Source: Ministry of Rural Development (2020b).

days generated, and the number of households that reached the 100-day limit, what is unmistakable is that the BJP-led government, despite its publicly-stated distaste for the ideological basis of the MGNREGA (Pankaj, 2017), has not only retained the programme, but has overseen its growth. In this article, we explore how political actors formulated, framed, and re-framed the MGNREGA in the UPA and NDA dispensations, by unpacking the concept of 'political will.' The literature on the programme to date does not examine the motivations behind the political framing and re-framing of the programme in a structured manner: The focus has largely been on programme implementation. While there has been some exploration of the political leadership of the scheme (Manor & Duckett, 2017), this has used cross-country comparative analysis across a broader sweep of national antipoverty programmes, and as such has not sufficiently examined the case of the MGNREGA itself. We begin by interrogating the concept of 'political will' and reviewing the literature surrounding its usage and operationalization, as well as the literature on the role of leadership in the MGNREGA, introducing a framework of 'developmental leadership' (Hudson et al., 2018), which we argue provides for greater explanatory power by expanding the typical definitions of political will. Following that, we conclude with a comparison of the evolution of the MGNREGA under the UPA and the NDA through the categories proposed by the 'developmental leadership' framework.

2. Interrogating 'Political Will'

'Political will' remains a highly ambiguous concept, described variously as "the slipperiest concept in the policy lexicon," and the "the sine qua non of policy success which is never defined except by its absence" (Hammergren, 1998, p. 12). It has been frequently used in the Indian context, ranging from leading bankers attributing the sclerotic pace of economic reforms to

the lack of 'political will' to undertake them ("Lack of political will," 2014), to the requirement of 'political will' to reduce India's neonatal mortality rates ("Save our babies," 2018), as well as to the centrality of 'political will' in the implementation of India's family planning programme (Gwatkin, 1979). The ambiguity in its meaning lends value to the term as political rhetoric, since in the absence of a clear causal diagnosis, policy failure can be conveniently labelled as a failure of 'political will' (Post, Raile, & Raile, 2010). Nevertheless, there is no consensus as to what constitutes 'political will' in each of these cases, and while the role of 'political will' can be seen to be relevant in the popular imagination for the success or failure of any government programme or scheme, a structured examination of the term is necessary to operationalise it.

At times, 'political will' is defined in a markedly individual actor-driven manner based on commitment, intent or willingness, such as by the UK's erstwhile Department for International Development (2004, p. 1), which considered it "the determination of an individual political actor to do and say things that will produce a desired outcome." The origins of this understanding of 'political will' can be traced to Kpundeh (1998, p. 92), who argued that it is the "demonstrated credible intent of political actors to attack perceived causes or effects…at a systematic level," and to Brinkerhoff (2000, p. 242), who proposed that it is the "commitment of actors to undertake actions to achieve a set of objectives…and to sustain the costs of those actions over time." Individual-centric notions of political will are echoed by Anderson, Branchflower, Moreno-Torres, and Besançon (2005), who consider it to be willingness which can be assessed by commitment and inclusiveness, and Rose and Greeley (2006, p. 5), who argued that it is the "sustained commitment of politicians and administrators to invest political resources to achieve specific objectives." One of the principal precedents of 'political will' that have been suggested in the Department

for International Development (2004, p. 1) are imagination on the part of the politician or policymaker, that is "some capacity to envision how things might be different." Personality traits and styles have an impact on the choices made by leaders, and to understand them, and the pathways they enable, there is a need to delve into the psychology of leaders and the manner in which it motivates them to pursue developmental change (Corbett, 2019).

'Political will' can also be understood at a collective level, with Brinkerhoff (2007) linking the term to state capacity by arguing that the fundamental nature of capacity development is as an "endogenous process that engages not just the abilities and skills, but the motivation, support, and aspirations of people" (p. 111), or in other words, the "ownership and/or political will" (p. 112), although cautioning that "it is problematic to accurately identify ownership and political will, and to differentiate these two volitional components from capacity questions" (p. 112). Chopra (2015), while focusing on the MGNREGA's performance in terms of its implementation across four states, builds upon a political economy perspective in which institutions, actors and incentives are delineated (Mcloughlin & Batley, 2012), and the role of politics is considered crucial (Leftwich & Wheeler, 2011). In this vein, Chopra extends Brinkerhoff (2000)'s framework for understanding the commitment of actors involved in programme implementation, which consists of two principal elements—'action' and 'intention.' Similarly, Post et al. (2010) attempt an expanded understanding of political will by including "incentives or disincentives" (p. 655), "bargaining mechanisms" (p. 664), "credibility…(based on reputational costs)" (p. 660), and "political or social institutions or…aspects of human behaviour" (p. 655) as key determinants. Moreover, Andrews, McConnell, and Wescott (2010) suggest in their work on leadership-led change that the acceptance of change, granting authority for change, and introducing or freeing the abilities necessary to achieve change, are crucial, and that leadership is therefore more about collective rather than individual action.

Post et al. (2010, p. 658) in a similar vein describe the conceptual components of 'political will' by extracting three categories of the conceptual components of 'political will' through an examination of the previous definitions of the complex, multifaceted term. These include (1) the "distribution of preferences with regard to the outcome of interest," the (2) "authority, capacity, and legitimacy of key decision makers or reformers," and (3) the extent of "commitment to preferences" with regard to the policy action in question. In this sense 'political will' requires enough people in positions of power who support the policy or programme in question, and an insufficient number of veto players who may potentially block or derail it (Roberts, 2017), which assumes greater significance in large democracies like India where there are "typically more complex arrays of supporters

and veto players" (Roberts, 2017). The intensity of the policymakers' commitment to supporting a policy or programme therefore hinges upon factors ranging from their most influential constituencies, the pressure groups lobbying them and the intensity of their preferences in turn, the ideological underpinnings as implicit in their party membership, as well as larger cultural preferences (Roberts, 2017), thereby marking the importance of collective interests.

Hudson et al. (2018, p. 8) have recently argued that:

> The key to opening the black box of political will lies in the interaction between institutions and individuals, or structures and agents, [and]…requires a move from a static and reductionist view of institutions initiated and sustained by 'political will,' to a more dynamic and temporal view of politics as a process of contestation to establish the 'collective will.'

What emerges from the multiple definitions of 'political will' that have been discussed in this section is that there are essentially three categories or levels which might be described as the (1) individual, the (2) collective, and the (3) societal. Even though the literature, as distilled above discusses what can be termed the individual and the collective levels quite extensively, the societal aspect is somewhat less well-articulated.

This definition holds that 'political will' depends on the developmental (positive) leadership of motivated individuals with the values, interests and opportunity to influence change, as well as their ability to overcome barriers to cooperation and form coalitions with power, legitimacy, and influence, while these coalitions' power and effectiveness partly hinges on their ability to contest and de-legitimise one set of ideas and legitimize an alternative set (Hudson et al., 2018). However, "typically, though not exclusively, [this] involves a process of active contestation where various stakeholders within society enter into debate and conflict—though not necessarily violence" (Hudson et al., 2018, p. 9) over distributional consequences, as well as the fairness of outcomes concerning existing or proposed institutional rules, or both (Beetham, 1991; Mcloughlin, 2015). It is argued that it is the "outcome of this political process of contestation [which] is that leaders and coalitions accrue power to reformulate institutions in ways that are perceived as locally legitimate and sustainable" (Hudson et al., 2018, p. 12). We use this three-level conceptual framework to explore the puzzle of the maintenance and growth of the MGNREGA under the NDA.

3. Comparing the MGNREGA under the UPA and NDA

3.1. Motivations of Individuals

The centre-left UPA government, led by the Congress, and supported through a confidence-and-supply arrangement with the Left Front parties until 2008, came

to power in May 2004 after winning the 2004 Indian general election, dislodging the previous BJP-led NDA government which was in power from 1998 to 2004. The idea of an employment guarantee had been an important feature of the Congress's 2004 election manifesto which made an explicit policy commitment by way of the MGNREGA (Indian National Congress, 2004). The Congress president, Sonia Gandhi, widely expected to assume the premiership following her party's election victory, in a surprise move, relinquished the position of prime minister to Manmohan Singh, her key lieutenant and former Indian finance minister in prime minister PV Narasimha Rao's cabinet from 1991 to 1996. Singh was credited for his leadership and technocratic finesse in spearheading the crucial economic reforms that liberalised India's economy in 1991 in the face of a looming and potentially debilitating balance-of-payments crisis, heralding an end to India's 'Licence-Permit Raj,' as its complex web of bureaucratic controls was popularly described, and implementing a simultaneous across-the-board reduction of import tariffs (Baru, 2014).

While Singh was chosen to preside over the central government, Sonia Gandhi would chair the UPA, as well as the National Advisory Council (NAC), the latter consisting of members who, while designing the MGNREGA, utilised ideas generated by "prolonged encounters in Rajasthan state between civil society organisations and state governments (some of which were Congress-led)" (Manor & Duckett, 2017, p. 308). This dual model was partly due to Sonia Gandhi not being "intimately familiar with administrative matters," yet being motivated in the policies that emerged from the NAC she chaired to go "much further than previous Congress governments in addressing poverty, [since] she regarded them as efforts to lend substance to the dynasty's claims to be progressive" (Manor & Duckett, 2017, p. 318). These efforts stemmed from her experience of observing from close quarters her mother-in-law, prime minister Indira Gandhi's "(mostly empty) promises to tackle poverty" and what has been described by some observers as her husband, prime minister Rajiv Gandhi's "inept and confused" leadership, throughout which she "had acquainted [herself] with the progressive rhetoric of the Congress Party" (Manor & Duckett, 2017, p. 317–318).

The MGNREGA:

Formed the cornerstone of the shift in the UPA's approach to development towards universalization and entitlements, articulated in the National Common Minimum Programme which committed the different constituent political parties of the coalition towards delivering on the basis of a cohesive policy framework. (Krishna, 2019, p. 9)

Even as the Congress party:

Exercised great power within the ruling coalition that it led between 2004 and 2014…it was allied to many (mainly regional) parties, some of which had only limited interest in poverty initiatives…[and] Prime Minister Singh and some of his key colleagues were sceptical and eventually even hostile to certain poverty programmes that Congress leader Sonia Gandhi supported. (Manor & Duckett, 2017, p. 309)

Over a long academic and bureaucratic career, Singh had served as chief economic advisor, secretary in the finance ministry, Reserve Bank of India governor, Planning Commission deputy chairman, and later in politics as finance minister and leader of the opposition in the upper house of Parliament. Baru (2014) describes Singh as enthusiastically receiving the scheme once it reached his office through the NAC. However, in line with his background and technocratic motivations, he "resisted demands for linking wages in the [MGNREGA] to a minimum wage and wage indexation" (Singh, 2014), even though, owing to the nature of his relationship with the NAC chair, he acquiesced to the NAC's demands.

The centre-right BJP-led NDA government came to power in May 2014, and installed Narendra Modi, who had till then served as chief minister of the western Indian state of Gujarat, as prime minister. Individually far less committed to the MGNREGA, Modi, and arguably most of the BJP cadres, lent very little personal ideological support to the MGNREGA, as exemplified by the prime minister's remarks on the floor of the Lok Sabha, the lower House of Parliament, which betray his lack of 'political will,' that he would keep the MGNREGA alive as a 'living monument' of the failures of the Congress for making people dig holes after 60 years of Independence (Joshua & Sriram, 2015). This served the dual objective of indicating his ideological distaste for the scheme, while leaving open the option of retaining it if necessary.

3.2. Collective Action

The NAC was a body formed to oversee the implementation of the National Common Minimum Programme which consisted of "various distinguished professionals drawn from diverse fields of development activity," and was "envisaged…as a form of interface with civil society and government, thereby positioning this party-political domain as having a window in civil society and parliamentary domains" (Chopra, 2011, p. 160). Manor and Duckett (2017, p. 312) outline how "progressive intellectuals and civil society leaders [were in] potent roles in the policy-making process for the first time—most notably in the NAC that Sonia Gandhi chaired," as well as the important role of "progressive bureaucrats." Chiriyankadanth, Maiorano, Manor, and Tillin (2020) describe the boundaries between different actors as being blurred, with several activists, as well as bureaucrats, both then retired as well as currently occupying official policymaking roles at the time, being members of the NAC.

It elicited opposition from the central government itself over the MGNREGA's perceived fiscal irresponsi-

bility, in view of its high annual expenditures which would typically constitute around 1 percent of Indian GDP (Zimmermann, 2013). During and after its formulation, contestation emerged over the MGNREGA in the form of the differences between the prime minister's office and the finance ministry on the one hand, and the NAC on the other as "related mainly to the financial implications of the programme with estimates of how much it would cost the exchequer varying from 1 to 3 percent of national income" (Baru, 2014, p. 142), with neither the prime minister nor the finance minister agreeing to an open-ended fiscal commitment given that the "benefits of the programme were to be based on self-selection" (Baru, 2014, p. 142). Conservative industrialists and landowners' "anxieties about heavy expenditures were shared by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and officials in the finance ministry and helped to trigger cuts in the outlay for several poverty programmes, including the MGNREGA, in 2013–2014" (Manor & Duckett, 2017, p. 313). The MGNREGA was envisioned as a 'targeted' programme in which rather than being dependent on an administrator to choose the beneficiaries, the programme "expects beneficiaries to select themselves by creating incentives so that only the poor will participate in the scheme," even though this self-selection or self-targeting mechanism is weak in instances of low awareness and the MGNREGA wage outstripping the prevailing market wage (Shankar & Gaiha, 2013).

However, such criticism is tempered in view of the self-targeting mechanism's lack of incentive creation for misuse, "in that nonpoor people are unlikely to demand such work" (Dutta et al., 2014, p. xxiii). Moreover, procedural criticism over the NAC's structure and the disproportionate power it wielded needs to be viewed in perspective, with Chopra (2011) highlighting how these institutional mechanisms created much-needed further space for multiple actors and institutions to interact and exercise power during the formulation processes of the MGNREGA, ranging from activists and civil society networks like the People's Action for Employment Guarantee, to actors belonging to a variety of political parties and trade unions, with the NAC effectively being formed as a coalition of motivated individuals. The MGNREGA is a case which highlights that firstly, power is diffuse and has multiple sites where it is exercised; and secondly, that power works through complex and iterative ways, with overlaps in actors, the flow of information, and the congregative activities of the parliamentary, executive, party-political, and civil society domains, adding to the "complex and messy nature of policy formulation" (Chopra, 2011, p. 167).

Despite the UPA government being led by the centre-left Congress, it has been argued that the MGNREGA, when passed in 2005, was not entirely influenced by the neoliberal bent of an important segment of the executive leadership at the time. The role of the Left has been described by Chopra (2011, p. 162) as "intricately bound up with civil society actors as well as other stakeholders involved in the formulation processes, in addition to their explicit role in the parliamentary and executive domains." This reflected the fact that broader political alliances shaped the programme, with a firm basis in compromises as a result of differing ideas and political ideology. After the 2004 Indian general election, the UPA would not have been able to secure a majority without the Left Front parties' support, chief among them the Communist Party of India (Marxist), since forming a government is dependent on securing the support of more than half of the parliamentarians in the Lok Sabha. In such a context, the Left Front wielded 'disproportionate' influence over UPA policies until such time as they decided to discontinue their support to the UPA government following reservations over the terms of the Indo–US Civil Nuclear Agreement in 2008 (Krishna, 2019). The route for exercising this influence was through interventions during the negotiations of the UPA–Left coordination Committee, an inherently 'party-political' process (Chopra, 2011). At an ideological level, this party-political process was buoyed by several left-leaning actors in civil society and NAC processes, despite their lacking explicit Left Front party memberships (Chopra, 2011). Moreover, the UPA's alliance partners such as the Rashtriya Janata Dal, a regional party based in the northern Indian state of Bihar, supplied politicians such as Raghuvansh Prasad Singh, the union minister for rural development from 2004 to 2009, who acted as the "bridge between the [UPA's] fiscal conservatives and the populists" through his own personal networks and relationships (Baru, 2014, p. 142).

Since 2014, the BJP commanded a parliamentary majority in the Lok Sabha of its own accord and was logically "less beholden to [its] coalition partners [in the NDA] in formulating its policies" and programmes, which would reduce both accountability and collective constraints (Krishna, 2019, p. 9). Aiyar (2018) argues that since 2014, the NDA government has also exhibited strong signs of excessive centralisation of power in the Prime Minister's Office, with line ministries in direct contact with local district magistrates to tightly monitor implementation targets. This trend, coupled with the prime minister's highly personalised, charismatic leadership style, has also compromised the federal structure of governance and the attendant state-specific priorities and social policy innovation, and "increased activity has not been complemented by increased capacity and as districts lurch from one target to another, they have little time for monitoring quality" (Aiyar, 2018).

Moreover, the NDA "placed technology at the heart of its policy agenda, onboarding the UPA's Direct Benefit Transfer approach early on through its Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile" trinity platform, essentially a troika of free bank accounts for all beneficiaries, a unique identification number, and mobile phone connectivity to streamline service delivery "with a view to migrating towards a cash-based welfare setup" (Krishna, 2019, p. 9). Such a Direct Benefit Transfer-centric approach has been described by commentators as an approach to gloss over, rather than

overtly address, the "roots" of core governance "delivery failure" like "complex procedures, weak human resource, [and] poor training" (Aiyar, 2018).

3.3. Societal Contestation and Deliberation

The NAC allowed for the inclusion of several civil society activists in the process of creating the first draft of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Bill (Chopra, 2011). However, the influence and freedom that the NAC gained in crafting the UPA government's policies and programmes, stemming from what was perceived to be Sonia Gandhi's supreme authority in the political landscape of the country during the UPA years, also elicited criticisms of acting as an extra-constitutional authority. Through the media, this complex power equation led to widespread public discourse, leading to both the contestation and legitimation of, at a societal level, ideas of what constitutes legitimate politics and suitable social policy.

The MGNREGA was prominent among the legislations enacted between 2004 and 2009, the UPA's first full term in office, which included the Right to Information Act, 2005, and the Recognition of Forest Rights Act, 2006, among others. Electoral analysts have argued that with a seemingly "correct reading of the effects of economic reforms and the deployment of the *aam adami* [Hindi for 'common man'] language in 2004, a series of pro-people legislative and policy initiatives [such as the MGNREGA]" (Yadav & Palshikar, 2009, p. 42) partly contributed to the Congress leading yet another coalition government at the centre with a considerably enhanced mandate. Manmohan Singh became the first prime minister after the inaugural holder of the office, Jawaharlal Nehru, to be re-elected after a full five-year term. According to Manor and Duckett (2017, p. 307), the UPA's election victory in 2004 had been mistakenly attributed in the media to a "revolt among the rural poor against the policies of the previous BJP-led government." However:

> The UPA set out to make that myth a reality at the next election, [and] had some success in achieving that, although that was also over-stated in media assessments in 2009…[with] its poverty initiatives, only some of which succeeded, [adding] up to a decidedly innovative approach. (Manor, 2011, as cited in Manor & Duckett, 2017, p. 307)

Even though its impact on the UPA's victory in 2009 was partially attributable to the MGNREGA, it still considerably raised the costs of its discontinuation or dilution, thereby leading to a reasonable degree of institutional lock-in.

The media had "erroneously claimed that [the MGNREGA] won re-election for the ruling alliance in 2009, but it helped to ensure a majority that would survive until 2014 when scandals and political blunders sent it down to a severe election defeat" (Manor, 2011, as

cited in Manor & Duckett, 2017, p. 320). As the second term of the UPA government (2009 to 2014) grappled with allegations of corruption, extant problems with the scheme, such as states reneging on their employment-provision commitments, wages being "delayed and withheld," and "a lack of proper social auditing and monitoring" resulting in corruption (Freud, 2015, p. 3), "were exacerbated by the UPA's overall image of policy paralysis and inaction" (Krishna, 2019, p. 9). During the UPA's second term it began 'dilly-dallying' with the idea of Direct Benefit Transfer programmes, in the run up to the 2014 parliamentary elections (Pankaj, 2017), and essentially set the scene for re-framing the MGNREGA towards a cash transfer-based setup which the NDA built upon further from 2014 onwards. The UPA proceeded to re-frame the scheme in this direction without first addressing the acute capacity and access-related concerns surrounding the delivery mechanisms of such an approach. While Manmohan Singh as prime minister had:

> Persuaded cabinet colleagues in 2010 to make a change in the rules governing India's MGNREGA that undermined efforts by actors at lower levels to siphon off funds from the programme…by contrast, he permitted cuts in funds for that same programme after 2011 (which…contributed to his party's defeat at the 2014 election). (Manor & Duckett, 2017, p. 322)

The 'cynical' process of 'starving' the MGNREGA of essential funds had begun in 2010 itself, through placing a cap on the funding allocated, which led to issues with paying wages and providing employment (Ghosh, 2015).

Despite its "pro-business and investment-oriented" framing, evident in its national-level drive to push such a narrative with initiatives such as "Make in India, Skill India, and Start-up India…as opposed to the 'entitlements' and 'rights'-oriented framework reminiscent of the Congress" (Krishna, 2019, p. 9), the NDA government has not abandoned the programme and budgetary allocations to it have seen a largely upward trend since it took office. Although simultaneously, the NDA has re-framed the MGNREGA's emphasis towards 'asset creation' driven by targets and often in a 'top-down' or centralised manner (Pankaj, 2017), the 'polar opposite' of the UPA's conceptualization of the MGNREGA, which had pursued a "demand-driven job creation regime focused on participatory decentralised development" (Pankaj, 2017, as cited in Krishna, 2019, p. 9).

Therefore, important differences emerge in the formulation and framing of the MGNREGA between the NDA and the UPA, with the former responding to societal expectations of its declared ideological approach towards poverty programming by not mentioning the MGNREGA in its 2014 election manifesto, a programme towards which it maintains what is described by some observers as a 'hostile attitude' (Gowda & Batra, 2019). The attendant re-framing by the NDA has been captured

by Pankaj (2017) as tweaking the MGNREGA towards becoming 'asset-focused' against 'wage-focussed,' and 'target-focussed' at the cost of 'demand-focussed' which compromised its original emphasis on promoting 'participatory decentralised development' as envisaged by the UPA. Such 'asset fetishism' has disproportionately skewed the scheme's benefits towards agriculturists at the expense of landless labour, which has affected employment generation (Pankaj, 2017). "The UPA had prioritised job-creation over asset-creation by mandating a wage-material expenditure ratio of 60:40" (Pankaj, 2017, as cited in Krishna, 2019, p. 9), and mandated that four out of the eight works that the scheme covered are to be related to more labour-intensive work, with the remaining four works related to labour-intensive asset creation (Pankaj, 2017; Pawariya, 2017). Despite the NDA expressing:

> Its intent to change the ratio of expenditure between labour and material from the current 60:40 applicable at the gram panchayat level to 51:49 applicable at the district level…[it] decided to maintain a 60:40 wage—material ratio at the district level…to ensure [the] creation of good quality assets in rural areas. ("MGNREGA wage-material ratio," 2016)

While noting that public policy and the nature and choice of development programmes pursued are not regime-neutral, Pankaj (2017) also illustrates that the NDA quelled 'lurking uncertainty' around the MGNREGA's continuation by attributing changes in the programme to itself, and declaring it:

> A programme of "national pride and celebration" on the occasion of 10 years of its completion…[with then] Union Finance Minister, Arun Jaitley, [emphasising] that "transformation has been brought in the implementation of this Scheme," asserting further that the scheme is not "cast in stone." ("Modi government praises," 2016, as cited in Pankaj, 2017, p. 61)

4. Conclusions

In the Indian context, "most political parties…(with the exception of the communists) are founded not on a strong economic ideology but on notions of culture and identity—national, regional, ethnic, caste-based or linguistic" (Kotwal, Ghatak, & Ghosh, 2014, p. 41), and "there is a lack of a one-to-one mapping between economic and social ideologies on either side of the political spectrum" (Krishna, 2019, p. 9). Kotwal et al. (2014, pp. 41–42) argue that:

> Positions on economic policy are usually a derivative, influenced by vote bank calculations or the need to attract funds for election campaigns. Since policy choices do not arise from deep ideological commitments to preferred economic paradigms, they are

often incoherent, shifting and lacking in the sort of essence that may qualify for labels like socialist or libertarian.

The political origin of antipoverty programmes has been based in "pragmatic calculations about [parties'] political utility," and even as "socialist or progressive ideals long espoused by ruling parties played a part, in [countries like] India, their time-honoured rhetorical commitments to socialist or social democratic ideals had not previously been translated into much robust action (Manor & Duckett, 2017, pp. 310–311). "While lying on two opposite ends of the political spectrum, the Congress and the BJP have followed broadly the same paths in the pursuit of neoliberal policy" (Pankaj, 2017, as cited in Krishna, 2019, p. 9), even though the Congress has adhered to the cautious, reforms-by-stealth route as opposed to what has been described as the BJP's faster and bolder approach (Pankaj, 2017). Manor and Duckett (2017, p. 311) argue that:

> [The] traditional social democratic posturing of the Congress Party (including Indira Gandhi's promise to 'abolish poverty'), which had seldom been matched by substantive action, was again treated as a point of origin and was given substance for the first time.

Both the Congress and the BJP consider high rates of GDP growth to be synonymous with development, and while the Congress concedes to the need for state intervention in social sector development, the BJP subscribes to a trickle-down approach (Pankaj, 2017).

Considering these differences, the BJP has re-framed the programme away from the Congress's preference for a universal approach with the nationwide implementation of the MGNREGA, and away from a mixed portfolio of cash and kind transfers towards more targeted cash-based assistance (Pankaj, 2017). Despite the BJP's ideological aversion to the scheme, and a heightened propensity for veto players to exercise their derailment agenda, the institutional lock-in for the MGNREGA had already occurred. At a societal level, the MGNREGA's provision of income as a right in rural areas raised the political costs of the scheme's discontinuation or dilution. While one may have expected the cessation of the programme on ideological grounds, in fact the BJP has been unable to repeal in order to avoid electoral ramifications, particularly in rural areas. Budgetary allocations to the MGNREGA by the BJP, as well as employment indicators at the individual and household levels have seen largely upward trends since 2014.

Even though individual-level distaste for the MGNREGA may persist in the BJP, as evident in prime minister Narendra Modi's "making people dig holes" remark in parliament, the BJP has collectively identified the incentives for its retention. At an individual level, key UPA leaders and NAC members, from the top-down, were personally and openly committed to the idea of

the MGNREGA, as demonstrated throughout the 2004 general election campaign and the Congress' manifesto. The NAC emerged as the site of collective deliberation for a coalition of motivated individuals, who hailed from a broadly similar ideological persuasion and therefore displayed a certain cohesion which helped resolve party-political differences between UPA allies.

With ideological commitment and programme formulation in relatively greater synchronisation, societal norms were shaped effectively, particularly in rural India, leading to the 'locking-in' of the programme which at the societal level formed a rights-based social contract with a concomitant expectation created for its retention (Chopra, 2014). As a result, despite individual and political contestation by the NDA, the MGNREGA was retained, although re-framed to better reflect the BJP's ideological approach towards poverty programming, the stage for which was partly set by the UPA in its second term by linking Direct Benefit Transfers with the MGNREGA. Therefore, while as a blanket term, 'political will' does not really explain much, expanding and reconceptualising its definition by analysing leadership at the individual, collective, and societal levels, helps illuminate the drivers behind the formulation, retention, framing, and re-framing of the scheme.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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About the Authors

Ujjwal Krishna is a Specialist Doctoral Research Scholar at the Institute for Human Security and Social Change. His PhD research on the political economy of development policy involves working with the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade on its aid investments in leadership and coalitions. He was previously with ICRIER, where he supported the Government of India's digital development interests, particularly at ICANN 65 in Marrakech. Ujjwal holds an MA (Distinction) in Development Studies from IDS, Sussex, and a BA (Hons) in Economics from the University of Delhi.

Chris Roche is Professor of Development Practice and Director of the Institute for Human Security and Social Change at La Trobe University. He is also Deputy Director (Impact) of the Developmental Leadership Program, an international research program which explores how leadership, power and political processes drive or block successful development. Prior to joining La Trobe in 2012, Chris worked for over 25 years for International NGOs as a Project Manager, Evaluator, Policy Researcher, and as a Director.

Article

Transformative Grassroots Leadership: Understanding the Role of Rojiroti's Women Leaders in Supporting Social Change

Rebecca Gordon [1,2]

[1] International Development Department, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, B152TT, UK;
E-Mail: r.l.gordon@bham.ac.uk
[2] Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, Cambridge CB2 8PQ, UK

Abstract
Many have argued that supporting women's leadership is an important pathway to women's empowerment. However, there is still a need for better understanding of how women become leaders, particularly at the grassroots level, and how they support social change. This article explores women's leadership as part of a grassroots microfinance organisation, Rojiroti. Through interviews and focus group discussions, it finds that Rojiroti's women leaders were motivated to become leaders to create better opportunities for their families and communities, and that they lead in line with frameworks of transformative leadership by supporting relationship building, by facilitating and guiding knowledge transfer and by providing space for reflection and skills for action (Wakefield, 2017). In particular, their situated knowledge was essential for inspiring shared vision for challenging unequal power relations. Overall, better understanding their leadership, that particularly nurtures relationships and collaboration, due to their position as being from the social groups they sought to support, is critical to the current challenges facing interventions and activism that seek to promote women's empowerment and contribute to social change.

Keywords
gender; grassroots; India; inequality; leadership; power relations; Rojiroti; social change

1. Introduction

Effective women's leadership has often been associated with processes to challenge gender inequality and as such is closely linked with theories of empowerment. These theories have emphasised the role of women as active agents of social change (Jenkins, 2011). It has been argued that women's collective power and leadership are clear and necessary pathways to women's empowerment, and to inclusive and sustainable development (Esquivel & Sweetman, 2016). However, although it is rooted in feminist activism and theory, there have been critiques of the concept of 'empowerment' as having led to an instrumental and depoliticised approach which has become "diffused and diluted" (Batliwala,

2007, p. 559). Scholars have argued that research into women's empowerment needs to focus on political contention and engage with power relations that lead to inequality. In line with this, current understandings of empowerment specify the development of consciousness, and direct exercise of power, to achieve change (Nazneen, Hossain, & Chopra, 2019). This brings us back to leadership since it is often essential for raising consciousness and disrupting existing unequal power structures. Batliwala's (2010) seminal work has emphasised the need to better understand leadership, particularly in the context of social justice. An understanding of where leaders come from, and how they advocate for reforms that disrupt discrimination, is important for considering how social change can be supported.

Microfinance has been considered by many as an approach to promoting women's empowerment (Pokhriyal, Rani, & Uniyal, 2014); however, it has also been widely criticised for being an example of where the concept of 'empowerment' has become depoliticised. For example, Kabeer (2005, p. 1) argued that microfinance is no "magic bullet" for women's empowerment if it does not address the constraints on women's agency posed by structural inequality. Indeed, giving money to women and encouraging productive activities has led to increasing pressure on women, rather than challenging underlying norms (Chant, 2016). Wilson (2015) powerfully argued that the poorest women are often excluded from microfinance groups, and those that are included are faced with increasing debts, whilst practices of solidarity are replaced with individualised and neoliberalised cultures, which perpetuate unequal power relations within communities.

It is clear then that many microfinance organisations do not support women's empowerment. However, previous research with a grassroots microfinance organisation in rural India, Rojiroti, found that it operated differently compared to the microfinance organisations subject to mainstream critique (Gordon, 2016). Whilst microfinance organisations predominantly provide services to women, previous studies have noted a dearth of women in leadership roles. For example, Hunt and Kasynathan's (2001) study, now dated, found that 70% of two microfinance organisations' staff were men. Rojiroti, however, is predominantly led by women from the communities in which it works, with women making up 80% of overall staff. Given the argument for the need to better understand the role of leadership in challenging inequalities (Batliwala, 2010; Jenkins, 2011), focusing on Rojiroti's women leaders may provide an important insight into whether they can engage with power relations that lead to inequality, and in doing so support social change.

Women living and working in their communities have long demonstrated their leadership in transforming power relations (Mwaura Muiru, Amati, & Wamaitha Mbotela, 2012). However, others have noted that, while there are important and significant insights on the collective mobilisation of women as social actors, the role of leadership within grassroots groups is less examined (Subramaniam, 2011). Literature on leadership often focuses on access to formal leadership positions, so still too little is known about how women become leaders, particularly at the grassroots level (Domingo et al., 2015) and how grassroots women leaders contribute to social change. By drawing on feminist political ecology (FPE) and theories of transformative and feminist leadership, this article therefore seeks to extend the literature, by exploring women's leadership as part of a grassroots microfinance organisation in rural India. This article also seeks to contribute to policy discussions by determining in what ways interventions that seek to promote 'women's empowerment' can better support women to directly exercise power. Additionally, in sharing women's own perspectives on their leadership, and exploring whether leadership has contributed to social change, this article has relevance for those working in feminist movements that seek to effectively challenge inequality. To relate this study to the broader evidence on leadership, existing studies will firstly be explored.

2. Exploring Women's Leadership

Leadership is a contested concept, but overall involves mobilising people and resources, as well as navigating power relations (Domingo et al., 2015). However, in order to understand both what motivates leaders to initiate change, and how they do this, it is important to understand the way leaders interact with the world and the choices they are presented with, in this case as leaders of a grassroots microfinance organisation. Despite leadership being recognised as an important pathway to empowerment and social change, leadership in microfinance Self-Help Groups (SHGs) has been afforded little focus in the literature. One of the few studies exploring leadership within SHGs found that women who became group leaders were more likely to be younger, have higher education status, and be from better-off families than other group members (Singh, 2014); it also found that external influences, such as requirements for paperwork, often affected who was able to be a leader. Another study compared leadership in the Self-Employed Women's Association's (SEWA) which consists primarily of female union members, to the Grameen Bank, where there is more limited female leadership. Randleman (2013) argues that women leaders of SEWA enabled a more supportive infrastructure which enabled them to challenge power inequalities in the locations they worked. As limited attention has been given to the study of women's leadership within microfinance organisations, there is sparse evidence of the role of women's leadership within these organisations in supporting social change.

In place of a focus on leadership, the potential for SHGs to support social change has been explored in more depth. For example, studies have found that SHGs exposed women to new ways of thinking (Sanyal, 2009) and supported the recognition of shared interests (Janssens, 2010) which led some to challenge inequalities. More recently Kabeer, Narain, Arora, and Lal (2019) found that SHGs had provided a space in which women could develop consciousness and capabilities to take the lead on key issues, such as children's school attendance. As Kabeer (2011, p. 518) noted, membership of non-governmental organisations appeared "to be acting as a seedbed for grassroots leadership in the countryside." Broadly considered, grassroots leadership is a bottom up change process, led by actors outside of the dominant power structures which mobilises actors and resources for collective action (Subramaniam, Gupte, & Mitra, 2003). For example, Subramaniam's (2011) study in rural India found that grassroots groups played

an important role in facilitating consciousness-raising. Recently, Chaudhuri and Morash (2019) explored the work of a group of grassroots women leaders who were able to promote change by developing independent and innovative strategies of intervention that worked in spite of restrictive gender norms.

Therefore, the potential of women's groups to create supportive environments, that can develop consciousness and the direct exercise of power to achieve change is clear. However, further exploration of the role of women leaders within these groups could extend the literature on women's leadership, as many grassroots organisations that involve women's leadership tend to be small and localised and are thus rarely captured in the literature (Domingo et al., 2015). Focusing on Rojiroti's women leaders will also provide a contribution to the limited literature on leadership of microfinance organisations.

2.1. Rojiroti Leadership

Rojiroti is a grassroots microfinance organisation in the sense that it is community-based, relatively small in scope, and focuses on the issues that directly impact members' lives. As noted, microfinance has been strongly critiqued as an approach to women's empowerment. However, Rojiroti operates in distinct ways. When Rojiroti begins to operate in a new area, community mobilisers support women in joining SHGs. The focus then immediately shifts to supporting women members with an interest in, and aptitude for, facilitating groups to become the group leader. This approach has meant that Rojiroti is predominantly led by women, who also make up the majority of Rojiroti's managing board. As an organisation, it is neither entirely bureaucratically structured, nor entirely collectivist, but members are engaged in key decisions which indicates a distribution of authority. Feminist scholars have examined this form of hybrid group structure and leadership as contributing to the theoretical understandings of how collective action can facilitate consciousness-raising and lead to change in women's lives (Purkayastha & Subramaniam, 2004).

Rojiroti operates in rural Bihar, where gender compounds with other structural factors such as class and caste, to inform social interactions (Govinda, 2008). More than 90 percent of Rojiroti members are from scheduled castes, tribes, or other disadvantaged castes. This is markedly different from other microfinance providers, with research indicating that just 20 percent of all microfinance members in India were from scheduled castes or tribes (Sa-Dahn, 2017). In this context leaders need to be able to understand the multiple forms of marginalisation that group members face, as it has been argued that in order for leaders to support social change, concepts and ideas need to be adapted to the cultural specificities of the social world in which women belong (Govinda, 2008).

Given the limited literature on leadership within microfinance organisations, Rojiroti provides an interesting example through which to explore women's leadership on a small scale, with potential to broaden understanding of how women's grassroots leadership can support social change. Additionally, it may provide insights for both microfinance organisations and policymakers who seek to contribute to 'women's empowerment' on how women's leadership might be an important aspect of tackling inequalities that constrain women's ability to directly exercise power. In order to explore the role of Rojiroti's women leaders in supporting social change, this article seeks to draw on insights from FPE and theories of transformative and feminist leadership.

2.2. Theories of Feminist and Transformative Leadership

Batliwala (2010) writes that leadership is first and foremost about holding, exercising and changing the distribution and relations of power. Feminist political ecologists suggest that gender is a crucial variable in understanding power, particularly in constituting access to, control over and knowledge of resources (Sundberg, 2017). FPE was forged out of feminist and women-centered scholarship and activism in environmental issues and was also informed by critiques of how women and other marginalised groups are excluded as knowledge holders. FPE has thus been vital in arguing for engaging women as political actors, and bearers and producers of knowledge; for example, Rocheleau and Edmunds (1997) highlighted that women in many rural areas manage spaces that are nested in, or between, spaces controlled by men. The ability of women to be recognised as agents of change is implicated within these power relations, and thus their perspective is vital in considering how to negotiate for social change. More recent FPE analyses have highlighted the importance of a focus on the intersections of power and oppression (Mollett & Faria, 2013), making it clear that categories, such as class, ethnicity, caste and age, and subsequent power relations shape leadership. This provides the starting point from which to consider how leaders emerge, and how they contribute to social change.

In addition, the concept of transformative leadership, long associated with feminist leadership and motivated by equity and social justice (Antrobus, 2002), provides a useful lens for an analysis of the role of leadership in social change. A transformative feminist leader is understood as an individual who seeks to mobilise others around a shared agenda of transformation for equality, uses power to nurture people and build communities, leading through consultation, participation and consensus-building (Batliwala, 2010). This work on feminist leadership emphasises a dual concern, firstly with supporting women to take up leadership roles, which is shaped by gender and power dynamics (as highlighted by FPE), and also with them leading social transformation in ways that other forms of leadership do not and cannot. To explore both of these aspects, this article utilises an analytical approach to explore transformative and feminist leadership.

Drawing on Batliwala's (2010) work, Wakefield's (2017, p. 35) framework identifies transformative and feminist leadership as: modelling feminist purpose and principles, setting an example and appreciating intersectionality; inspiring shared vision based on personal and collective reflexive learning; empowering and enabling others to act through building interpersonal relationships and trust; challenging patriarchal norms and oppressive power; and supporting the care and well-being of individuals and the group to contribute fully to transformation. This analytical approach is used to reflect on the actions of Rojiroti's women leaders.

3. Methods

The data for this article come from my PhD research, which sought to understand how membership of Rojiroti influenced women's financial, social and cultural resources, individual and collective agency and what effect this has had on girls' education. The research was underpinned by feminist standpoint epistemology and a commitment to knowledge building that centres and prioritises women's expertise and experiences (Hill Collins, 1990). The study was also guided by the commitment to research as being about "establishing, maintaining and nurturing reciprocal and respectful relationships" (Smith, 2013, p. 129). My ongoing relationship with Rojiroti, for over four years at the time, was the starting point of this research, but I was positioned by my gender, age and ethnicity as an individual, but also part of a collective reality associated with histories of, and continuing, exploitation, including through research processes (Smith, 2013).

The responsibilities as a researcher therefore required being cognisant of power relations and seeking to be critically self-reflexive and transparent about these (Khatri & Ozano, 2017). Throughout, communication with Rojiroti was important, asking them to contribute to, and question my decisions, to try and ensure that the methods were culturally sensitive and appropriate. This was important for considerations about informed consent and providing transparency about research decisions and likely outcomes with participants. In relation to exploring leadership, the nuances of intersubjectivity in the way in which I was able to interact with staff members and SHG members, is worth noting. For example, having existing relationships with women staff may have influenced their responses, as many of them reflected predominantly positively on their work; whilst I considered whether this was related to promotion of the organisation, they were generally not hesitant to share areas they could improve as a group. Although not related to their individual leadership, it implied they were willing to critically reflect. However, it is important to acknowledge that there may have been other aspects of their leadership which were not captured in this research. I have also sought to continually reflect on ethical considerations and challenges in more depth in other articles (Gordon, 2019).

Overall, the research consisted of eighteen one-on-one interviews and thirty focus group discussions (FGDs). One-on-one interviews are an important way of gaining an understanding of the perspectives and motivations of those involved in the organisation in leadership roles, seeking insight into the way in which Rojiroti operates from the reflections of staff members. To foster discussions among those not involved in the leadership of the organisation, FGDs have been considered a good approach to hear multiple and collective voices (Liamputtong, 2015). The one-on-one interviews were conducted with seventeen women leaders from Rojiroti and one male staff member. As I did not want my pre-existing relationship with Rojiroti to influence sampling, I randomly selected eighteen participants from the overall sample of all staff at the organisation; this was a large proportion of the overall staff number (31), so it sought to reduce bias, but maintain diversity and breadth of staff perspectives. The FGD sample came from a randomly selected list of fifty Rojiroti SHGs; again, this initial approach sought to reduce the risk of bias as I had engaged with many of its SHGs before. The thirty FGDs were then purposively selected based on the availability of members and to ensure that they represented the diversity of ages, geographical locations and number of years that groups had been in operation. All interviews and FGDs were recorded, translated and transcribed for analysis. The data were then analysed using thematic and inductive coding relating to the overall research questions.

During the inductive coding, a key theme that became clear was the important role Rojiroti's women leaders played in supporting social change (which was considered broadly to include any change in women's lives which they considered to be as a result of group membership, particularly shifts that challenged inequalities). Therefore, the coding of the data under this theme (from the seventeen interviews with women group leaders and all FGDs) is the main focus of the analysis for this article. Ongoing collaboration with Rojiroti also meant that I was able to follow up through informal discussions to explore women's role as leaders further with them. As a result, in addition to the main focus of the PhD research, the study also provided insight into gender and leadership in microfinance organisations. Also, in line with feminist standpoint epistemology, participants' emphasis on the importance of women's leadership warrants explicit focus in this article. Of note, this article does not seek to be generalisable; it provides an in-depth exploration on the role of women's leadership in a single organisation. However, it may offer insights of broader relevance about women's leadership at the grassroots level.

4. Where Do Leaders Come From?

Leaders are always situated in a particular context. In this case, many women's route into leadership came through

joining SHGs that Rojiroti operated, inherently linking leadership to their motivation to join these groups. This focused mainly on their perception that joining Rojiroti could provide positive opportunities for themselves and their families: "I shed the purdah and joined this group for the sake of my children" (Rojiroti Group Leader, Interview #15). One woman explained how she was motivated to lead groups to improve her own skills, and the skills of her family and community. Women also saw the role of leadership as enabling them to gain desired independence: "Earlier I was confined to my home, now I have the freedom to move and go out for work" (Rojiroti Group Leader, Interview #4); "Women were not allowed to step outside of their homes, and they could never even think about working….I am part of this group now, and I have reached up to the level of overall treasurer" (Rojiroti Group Leader, Interview #2). "Because of this exposure I can work in the school and have gained status in the family and society" (Rojiroti Group Leader, Interview #16). Feminist political ecologists have often highlighted how women's lack of access to resources, as a result of gendered power relations within their community, restricts their ability to access income-generating opportunities that support their independence (Sundberg, 2017). In this context, patriarchal social norms and practices place women in a situation of dependence on male relations, who become the central conduit for access to resources (Agarwal, 2003). Women were motivated towards leadership by an opportunity that subverted these power-laden practices and relations, and enabled access to resources, and subsequently increased independence.

In the informal follow up conversations with Rojiroti staff about their motivations for taking up leadership positions, women also noted how they had taken these roles because it was easier for women to reach and connect with other women: "They will get more information if there are women leaders" (Rojiroti Group Leader, Interview, #2). They emphasised the importance of their own identity in being able to better set up, support and share information with women. Many of them saw a leadership role as one of responsibility to others around them: "there is affection among group members…we have become family" (Rojiroti Group Leader, Interview, #1). As noted in the literature "group action can be vital in supporting women's self-esteem and self-confidence" (Evans & Nambiar, 2013, p. 4); in this case the experience of being in close relationships with other women appeared to build their sense of purpose and confidence in their ability to act as leaders, and they were motivated to support group members by taking on these positions. A FPE perspective, which focuses on the social relations surrounding who accesses services and resources, and how access is achieved, would argue that "women's place-based politics is embedded in, rather than removed from the material lives they are trying to change" (Harcourt & Escobar, 2002, p. 11). Thus, taking up leadership roles could represent a rein-

vention of practices and possibilities, whereby women previously excluded from access to power could become a conduit through which to transfer it to other women in their communities.

Wakefield's (2017) framework notes that women investing in structures, processes and practices that disable patriarchal norms is an important part of transformative feminist leadership. Rojiroti women leaders had noted that many other microfinance organisations operating in their area had male staff; by becoming leaders, women were dismantling the place-based norm of men's leadership of similar organisations. Women's perspective on their own drive to take up leadership positions, to provide this close-knit form of leadership, may also be seen as a reaction to this patriarchal norm through its role in challenging power structures which influenced access to opportunities and resources for women. Women's reflections on the way in which they felt confident in these roles also reflects on this change in practice and possibilities: "I might have grown older age wise, but I feel much younger and more energetic because of Rojiroti. I have learnt communication and social skills and have started questioning and debating too" (Rojiroti Group Leader, Interview #6). Another Rojiroti group leader reflected on her leadership skill development: "Due to the meetings and the visits of different places, I want to visit new places to learn more and to see new things. It gives me confidence and exposure" (Rojiroti Group Leader, Interview #14). Women's leadership is thus fluid, operating within existing networks, but also creating new networks and opportunities which have the potential to challenge unequal power dynamics. However, whilst it is clear women leaders were motivated by this opportunity to provide alternative approaches to accessing resources for other women, it is also important to explore whether their leadership was able to contribute to social change (Batliwala, 2010).

5. Do Rojiroti Leaders Demonstrate Transformative Leadership and Support Social Change?

Findings showed that Rojiroti women staff often lead their groups in ways that could contribute to challenging inequitable social structures in three main ways: by supporting relationship building within the SHGs, by facilitating knowledge transfer and by creating space for reflection and skills for action.

5.1. Leadership as Relationship Building

The FGDs highlighted the fact that group leaders do not just come to deliver loans and leave. Rojiroti group leaders provided emotional and social support, as summarised by two group members, "we became close to each other during the formation of the group" (FGD, Interview #29); "During group meetings we come closer to each other and discuss many things which increases our awareness" (FGD, Interview #25). Group leaders

also agreed that "the social aspects of meeting helps us in bonding and providing solutions for fellow members." (Rojiroti Group Leader, Interview #8);

> Other groups are limited to finance and they have no concern about social or emotional values of their members. Their relationship is solely of borrower and lender. However, with Rojiroti, we are helped to grow as a person, as the group understands our emotions. (Rojiroti Group Leader, Interview #20)

In providing leadership that went beyond enabling access to resources, Rojiroti women leaders were actively building relationships between themselves and group members, and among group members. Wakefield (2017) emphasises building interpersonal relationships and providing space to help people to connect on a personal level as being important aspects of transformative leadership.

This relationship building was recognised as having been fundamental to group solidarity in an example given by one of Rojiroti's group leaders:

> The sudden death of my daughter had a very negative impact on my mental health….They (other group members) took me up to the hospital and provided monetary help in my hour of need. I got all support from them, which is the benefit of the group. (Rojiroti Group Leader, Interview #18)

Another group leader highlighted this point too:

> We discuss almost everything, and meetings help us to bond and understand each other. We also share our family problems and social issues. We also share lighter moments and have fun. In short, these meetings are quality time for us. (Rojiroti Group Leader, Interview #13)

These examples relate strongly to Wakefield's (2017) observation that through building interpersonal relationships, transformative leaders support the care and well-being of individuals and groups. This can strengthen the ability of women to stay connected and resilient in the face of stress, which is vital to contributing to social change through collective action.

FPE underscores the importance of situated knowledge, and relationality (Elmhirst, 2015), which is important for understanding how Rojiroti's women leaders were particularly able to build relationships among their SHG members. When microfinance organisations channel leadership that is predominantly male, and often from outside the communities they seek to represent, this is likely to reinforce power dynamics as to who has control over resources. Fewer shared lived experiences may also inhibit deep connections or leader's ability to understand how to support the care and well-being of individuals and groups. As one member noted: "Lady

can understand the problems of another lady better, it doesn't matter from where she belongs….We are associated with this group due to Madam's [Rojiroti group leader] good nature" (FGD, Interview #26). Rojiroti leaders also felt that their identity was an important part of their role as a leader: "we belong to the same social group, same language and same culture" (Rojiroti Group Leader, Interview #2). Although ages varied among group leaders and group members, Rojiroti's women leaders could understand experiences of marginalisation related to gender and were similarly positioned by other experiences of marginalisation related to class and caste. Previous research has noted that a lack of attention to caste and class differences in microfinance organisations, and a lack of trust in leadership and poor communication among organisations, may impede a group from acting collectively for change (Lahiri-Dutt & Samanta, 2006); therefore, the relationships that Rojiroti women leaders were able to nurture, which led to affinity between themselves and group members, appeared to represent a form of leadership that challenged, rather than replicated unequal and unsupportive group dynamics.

Related to Wakefield's (2017) framework, an appreciation and an understanding of the intersection of social categories, and how they connect to social justice challenges and solutions is an important component of transformative leadership. Acting from this knowledge and understanding strengthened Rojiroti women leaders' ability to build and encourage strong relationships that support individuals and groups and is essential to the wider political processes required for transformation. However, with any focus on leadership and its potential to effect transformative change, even in circumstances where strong relationships are built, the power dynamics between leaders and groups must be considered and solidarity requires an active engagement with power dynamics (Sangtin Writers & Nagar, 2006). Thus, the above quotation "We are associated with this group due to Madam's [Rojiroti group leader] good nature" must be reflected upon. For any person to be associated with a helpful resource as a result of someone's good nature (rather than because it is their right) has the potential to replicate, rather than challenge, existing power relations, even if women come from the same social groups. Therefore, while the potential for social change through relationship building is apparent, more interrogation is needed about whether it materialises.

5.2. Leadership as Supporting Knowledge Transfer

As noted elsewhere, leaders' support to build skills and information has the potential to challenge inequitable structures (Subramaniam, 2011). Transformative leadership is based on a radical learning tradition where information and knowledge are an important part of the processes of empowerment and collective action (Blackwell, 2006). The direct role of Rojiroti's women leaders in supporting knowledge transfer was noted by numerous

SHG members in one FGD: "We were not even able to sign, but after formation of the group…our coordinator encouraged us to learn how to sign"; "After joining the group, all the wisdom opened up. We did not know how to sign, but didi [Rojiroti group leader] taught us how to sign. We learnt the way to talk to someone." Later in that same group: "Initially, not so many people come to us while we attended the group meeting, but now many people come to us, we talk to them and this increases our knowledge and understanding" (FGD, Interview #27). In another group, one member noted of the group leader: "Whenever she comes, she tells us some new things, so our level of understanding increases" (FGD, Interview #3). Multiple group leaders also explained how they shared knowledge on practical issues: "We also tell them about financial literacy, how to calculate rate of interest etc." (Rojiroti Group Leader, Interview #8). One leader gave examples of a range of information shared: "I helped members to open up their saving bank account and I have given advice to them about doctors and hospital" (Rojiroti Group Leader, Interview #10). The potential of sharing knowledge and information is linked to Wakefield's (2017) consideration that transformative leadership should challenge existing inequalities, in order to empower and enable others to act. In this context, where group members may not have had access to formal education opportunities, in part influenced by social norms that impact on the value given to women's education (Singh & Mukherjee, 2018), leaders supporting learning is directly addressing discrimination and marginalisation.

Knowledge transfer was not only limited to information about practical skills. In line with a transformative approach to leadership, that illuminates the invisible structures and systems which serve to perpetuate and normalise domination and oppression (Wakefield & Zimmerman, 2020), Rojiroti group leaders spoke of their role in challenging barriers to gender equality:

> In the group, I discuss about many things, it is not only about making receipts for loans, members have learnt to calculate their loans and interest on it. I discuss about their children's education, marriage etc. Social awareness is created, and we discourage child marriage or early marriage, for example. (Rojiroti Group Leader, Interview #1)

Related to Rojiroti women leaders' ability to build relationships, their strategies to challenge inequalities are informed by their own personal experience and situated knowledge of challenging conventional practices and discrimination in the face of similar barriers. In the transformational leadership literature, leaders who are able to inspire others to reflect on the way they do things, and to provide ways to challenge gendered norms, are more likely to achieve social change (Wakefield, 2017).

One SHG member provides an example of how knowledge supported women to fight for girls' right to education: "Earlier girls were exploited through domestic violence, dowry or for other things. They were forced to bring dowry. Education is being provided so that they can fight for their rights." Later in this same group, "Now no one dare exploit as girls get knowledge so that they can fight against exploitation" (FGD, Interview #20). Transformative and feminist leaders use tools and processes to surface harmful expressions of power within institutions (Wakefield, 2017); in this case, access to knowledge was considered to be crucial in enabling challenges to oppressive power. In previous studies of women's grassroots leadership, knowledge transfer has not always been an active part of women's grassroots leadership (Barrig, 1996). In direct contrast, Rojiroti women leaders actively sought to share skills, ideas and information, which appeared vital in supporting women to develop the necessary capabilities to contest power dynamics (Das & Dasgupta, 2013).

Inspiring shared vision, through individual and collective reflexive learning and unlearning, another key attribute of transformative leadership (Wakefield, 2017), was also clear through discussions about women leaders being role models. FGDs suggested that interaction with group leaders had led to shifting perspectives about girls' education:

> We have already said that when they [daughters] see us attending the meeting, they get inspired. They see she [Rojiroti group leader] comes to lead the meetings, so we tell them that she leads the meeting because she is educated. (FGD, Interview #20)

Rojiroti leaders also considered the role model effect that their leadership of SHGs could have on changing perspectives on girls' education: "We, the working women of Rojiroti, are role models for educating girls" (Rojiroti Group Leader, Interview #10). FPE has consistently challenged essentialist notions of identity, arguing that the symbolic meanings of place, practices and bodies are (re)produced through everyday activities (Nightingale, 2011). It could be argued that Rojiroti women leaders may have begun to challenge the boundaries of restricted behaviour. As gender is constructed, it can also be reconstructed through people's everyday practices (Elmhirst, 2015), such as when women who previously have not been in positions of leadership take up these roles. Using Ray's (2006) theory of aspiration building, the window of aspiration is formed by a zone of similar, attainable individuals; therefore, the fact that Rojiroti's women leaders come from similar social groups is likely linked to their ability to inspire shared vision, through their example of the potential that social change could have.

5.3. Leadership that Creates Space for Reflection and Skills for Action

As well as transformative leaders promoting collective learning and inspiring shared vision, Wakefield's

(2017) framework emphasises the importance of leaders empowering and enabling others to act, often as a result of processes of self-reflection. As one Rojiroti group leader explained: "I listen to all of the members' problems and discuss the solutions within the group…life is changing because women are becoming aware and independent" (Rojiroti Group Leader, Interview #7). This is often explicitly about raising awareness on areas of discrimination: "I counsel the members and make them more aware about their rights and social behaviour, transferring the skills of the debating for women in their household. I believe in division of work in the household, so I share this" (Rojiroti Group Leader, Interview #6). This is an important part of consciousness raising as it enables better understanding of gender-specific constraints in women's lives, as well as how to tackle them (Subramaniam, 2006; 2011), demonstrating the link between leadership and potential social change. In this example, the less tangible aspects of transformative leadership, namely nurturing relationships (Wakefield & Zimmerman, 2020), supported the development of a safe space for reflection and skill development.

There is extensive information about SHGs leading to women feeling more confident and being able to speak out. This is also associated with the literature on women's organisations (see Section 2) and is often related to the fact that SHGs provide spaces for dialogue and collaboration through "ongoing processes of learning, reflection, action, experience, observation and analysis" (Kabeer, 2011, p. 511). In line with this evidence, one of the Rojiroti group leaders considered how these spaces had enabled the challenging of existing power relations: "They can speak their mind now, whereas earlier it was not possible for a woman to share her views….Rojiroti has helped me and other members to support their families and becoming aware about things" (Rojiroti Group Leader, Interview #16). However, to be able to create a space where women can analyse their shared experiences of injustice and oppression in a way that empowers and enables them to act to challenge it requires leadership which fosters trust among group members.

Reflections from FGDs suggested that Rojiroti group leaders ensured that power was diffused within their groups, particularly encouraging collective leadership. For example, although Rojiroti group leaders facilitate meetings, they are organised by members and decision-making is shared:

> In our group, we fix the time while in other groups, the coordinator fixes the time. Here we say to our group leader to come as per our convenience. Suppose we have to go harvest paddy, we would call her earlier. At the time of sowing saplings, we call her early in the morning, but at the time of collecting grains from the harvested crops we call her at noon. (FGD, Interview #4)

Rojiroti group leaders play a facilitative leadership role that supports women to connect, interact and actively engage in leadership as a group. As noted in another group "when all of us sign the paper, only then is the loan approved….We take decisions with mutual consent" (FGD, Interview #27). The ability to share their perspective in an environment where leadership prioritised the power for group members to participate on an equal basis, appears to have built up trust and the potential to create spaces of openness where resistance can be cultivated (Wakefield, 2017).

Examples of how dialogue and reflection in groups led to the development of skills for action were also given, as one group member explained: "Here (in group meetings) debate takes place where we learn….It also gives financial literacy which helps us in discussing with male counterparts at home" (FGD, Interview #8). One member explained how these spaces had enabled her to challenge her husband's lack of support for their daughters' continuing education:

> My husband has said that they did not need higher education and he was opposing me, as he said that if she attained PG level degree, then education required for our son-in-law will be higher, but I am able to make more persuasive argument now since Rojiroti. (FGD, Interview #11)

These examples provide evidence of how Rojiroti group leaders demonstrated transformative leadership, through ensuring collective structures that developed women's skills in safe spaces of dialogue and reflection, which led to them actively challenge unequal power structures (Wakefield, 2017).

Noted less often in other studies is how women's organisations in this context build these skills among members, who go on to access to formal political positions. It appears that these spaces, where women had the opportunity to share life experiences, seek solutions to common problems, and practise diffused leadership, may have supported building women into "communities of practice" that facilitated their "struggles in the political domain" (Kabeer, 2011, pp. 513–514). For example, the confidence and skills members gained through their participation in diffused Rojiroti leadership structures led to them standing for more formal leadership positions:

> We get knowledge by discussing on problems and solution with each other. We did not know the name of each women prior to joining Rojiroti and now by sitting in the groups, we know each other by name also. I am representative of Panchayat Raj [local government]. (FGD, Interview #24)

Another woman in this group reflected on the importance of these spaces for improving confidence in their leadership, as well as developing practical ways

in which demands for change could be made: "With Rojiroti we are stronger at Panchayat….I am ward member for last three years and have learnt how to influence Panchayat….I prepare strategies to put forward our demands" (FGD, Interview #24). The collective leadership fostered by Rojiroti group leaders has led to the energising relationships that Wakefield (2017) considered vital for thriving transformative leadership. Although the exact changes women were making in these formal leadership roles were not mentioned, their ability to access these roles, which may not have been possible previously, indicates social change in itself.

6. Conclusion

Overall, this article's exploration of women's leadership within one grassroots microfinance organisation illustrates the importance of grassroots women leaders, who are able to organise around issues actively and address multiple forms of oppression in the process (Subramaniam, 2011). Driven by a strong sense of responsibility to those around them, and their recognition that taking up these roles could provide greater independence and opportunities, the ways in which Rojiroti's leaders worked were in line with understandings of transformative leadership (Wakefield, 2017). Drawing on data from seventeen interviews and thirty FGDs, this study extends the literature through its exploration of how grassroots women leaders took forward feminist and transformative leadership approaches to support social change. Analysis underscored by FPE highlighted that women's situated knowledge was particularly important for building strong relationships, supporting care and well-being of group members, and creating safe spaces for personal and collective reflexive learning which inspired shared vision and strategies for challenging of unequal structures.

These findings also highlight the attention that policymakers must pay to the ways in which programmes or services are designed, and the crucial role of women's leadership within them to avoid depoliticised, and ultimately harmful, approaches to empowerment. By taking on leadership roles, it appeared that Rojiroti's women leaders had been able to reconstruct ideas around gender roles and leadership which, combined with diffused and collective decision-making and skill development, challenged, rather than perpetuated existing inequalities. The space for dialogue and reflection, in an environment where leadership fostered trust and encouraged group members to participate on an equal basis also opened up opportunities for more women to lead. As recently argued by Wakefield and Zimmerman (2020), learning from this form of leadership that nurtures relationships and cultivates new approaches to decision making and action is critical to the current challenges facing sustainable and equal development and therefore these findings may also be relevant to activists mobilising to challenge inequality.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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About the Author

Rebecca Gordon recently completed her PhD, which explored the work of a grassroots microfinance organisation and long-term impacts on girls' education. She is currently a Research Fellow in Leadership for Inclusive and Democratic Politics.

Article

Local Participation or Elite Capture in Sheep's Clothing? A Conundrum of Locally Led Development

Aidan Craney

Department of Social Inquiry, La Trobe University, Melbourne, VIC 3086, Australia; E-Mail: a.craney@latrobe.edu.au

Abstract

This article discusses concepts of legitimacy and elite capture in locally led development through a case study of the Pacific-based Green Growth Leaders' Coalition (GGLC). GGLC is a fellowship of persons identified for their developmental leadership potential on issues of sustainability and economic growth. Members are recruited into an exclusive grouping dedicated to influencing positive developmental change through informal networks and political backchannels. With their membership representing people who both self-identify and are locally recognised as leaders, queries exist to the extent to which their efforts represent a shift towards greater ownership of developmental processes at local levels or simply reinforce elite capture of 'local voice' in the most aid-dependent region in the world. Rather than necessarily offering straightforward answers to questions of legitimacy and elite capture, the example of GGLC demonstrates how complex the notion of locally led development can be in practice.

Issue

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1. Introduction

Definitions of local leadership in development discourse are quite broad. For example, in Booth and Unsworth's influential article, 'Politically smart, locally led development,' the authors note that their conception of locally led projects are those that are owned, negotiated and delivered by "locals (broadly defined) [who] are more likely than outsiders to have the motivation, credibility, knowledge and networks to mobilise support, leverage relationships and seize opportunities" (2014, p. 13). This broad definition focuses on those with sufficient political capital to gather the support of donors, policymakers and others who can implement reforms, whether also local or outsider. Beyond general characteristics no distinctions are made, such as between wealthy, educated, urban people and those living subsistence lives in rural areas. Although there is a clear implication that local leadership consists of those individuals or coalitions with

a grounded understanding of the lived realities of local peoples, this is not explicitly stated.

Surprisingly little has been written of where concepts of local leadership and grassroots leadership may conflict or overlap. Local leadership connotes connection of the leader to understandings of the livelihoods needs and political economy of local spaces but bypasses discussion of how deep this connection runs and how legitimacy is demonstrated at the grassroots level. This is not to say that this matter has not been addressed at all. Mohan and Stokke, for example, critique "the new localism in development studies [which] has tended to essentialise the local as discrete places that host relatively homogeneous communities or, alternatively, constitute sites of grassroots mobilisation and resistance" (2000, p. 264) and argue for deeper understandings of the political economy of local spaces. Another space where these ideas are discussed is in McGuinness' edited volume, *Local First: Development for the Twenty-First Century*

(2012). Rather than writing of development that is locally led, owned or delivered the authors instead refer to 'Local First' practices that acknowledge power differentials not only between donor agencies and international Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) on one side and a generic conception of the 'local' on the other, but also at the local level. Hayman, particularly, writes of Local First development practices as incorporating not only central governments but also "coordinated but pluralistic provision by a range of local organisations—NGOs, entrepreneurs, lower tiers of government and other forms of citizen association for the remainder" (Hayman, 2012).

In this article, I interrogate notions of legitimacy and representation in relation to locally led development. To illustrate my argument, I draw on the example of the Green Growth Leaders' Coalition (GGLC). GGLC is an invitation-only fellowship of like-minded individuals living and working in the Pacific islands' region seeking to collaborate on strategies for advancing a vision of economic growth and development that is environmentally sustainable and amplifies Pacific cultural values. Drawing its members from high offices in government, development organisations, faith-based organisations, academia, the private sector and civil society groups, it is a prime example of an elite, locally led development initiative.

The article is divided into five sections. First, I discuss literature related to the extent to which local elites are seen to enhance or impede the widespread dispersion of benefits related to development interventions. I then provide information about GGLC, including its membership composition, to contextualise its operations as a locally led development initiative as well as the action research method by which I collected data. Next, I engage literature that discusses how leadership is contemporarily and historically conceptualised in the Pacific islands' region, including reference to literature on common traits of leadership in countries with small populations. I then use the case of GGLC to problematise the potential for a singular vision of what constitutes locally led development, as well as the role of elites in driving or impeding developmental gains at grassroots level. I conclude with reflections on how development donors and multilateral organisations could improve practices of supporting locally led development in ways that include and bring benefit to non-elites.

2. Elite Capture in 'Locally Led' Development Interventions

Questions of elite capture in relation to locally led development are not new. Cooke and Kothari's edited volume, *Participation: The New Tyranny?* (2001), expressly challenged notions that development interventions that espouse values of participation and inclusion are, by nature, participatory and inclusive. As Cornwall (2003) has noted with regard to the inclusion of women's voices in development interventions and Nyamugasira (1998)

of faith placed by Northern NGOs in the capacity of Southern NGOs to represent local concerns, ideas of participation and whose voice counts can and often are exclusive of all but a small subset of any population. Mohan (2006), too, has cautioned against conflating the views of local elites with those affected by development initiatives at grassroots level. Often it is the opinions and experiences of well-educated and well-connected men, in particular, whose voices are privileged as those of the 'local.'

Although there are clearly problems of representation whenever a homogenised subset—whether by gender, education, ethnicity or any other marker—assumes authority as a voice for a heterogeneous group, it is unclear to what extent local elites improve or impede developmental gains for citizens at grassroots level. There are those who consider the inclusion of local elite voices in development planning as inherently problematic, reinforcing power imbalances and undermining attempts to distribute developmental benefits equitably (Lewis & Hossain, 2008; Paffenholz, 2015; Waheduzzaman, As-Saber, & Hamid, 2018). Others contend that while this may be true of some elites, others explicitly work to ensure developmental benefits are widespread (Dasgupta & Beard, 2007; Mansuri & Rao, 2004), and that involving elites in intervention planning and implementation alongside non-elites can improve social capital for both groups (Abe, 2009; Lund & Saito-Jensen, 2013). Platteau (2004) argues that elite capture of projects does not necessarily mean that the benefits of interventions are thinly spread, though he advocates for the tight control of funds release by donors in a manner that runs counter to principles of locally led development.

Within the scholarship on elite capture in development interventions, a growing literature discusses greater nuance in the participation of elites and non-elites in achieving long-term change, noting how including both can increase social capital and that efforts to empower non-elites requires commitment to structural change beyond the parameters of isolated interventions (Musgrave & Wong, 2016; Rigon, 2014; Sheely, 2015; Warren & Visser, 2016; Wong, 2010). Wong (2010), in a comparison of development interventions—one which excluded local elites from decision-making processes and another that co-opted their engagement—notes that while excluding the elite does not diminish their influence, explicitly utilising their influence risks compounding their power in ways that may negatively impact on non-elites. He notes "the 'counter-elite' and 'co-opt-elite' approaches should not be seen as 'either-or'" (Wong, 2010, p. 15) and suggests that judicious incorporation of elite views into development planning in a manner that can critique their perspectives and include non-elites provides a better blueprint for local participation both in discrete interventions and in shaping long-term structural change. Wong's approach mirrors that of thinking and working politically, which recognises that there are competing interests in any development intervention

or reform effort, and that while developmental change requires reforming social and political structures achieving such reform requires co-opting the will of local people of influence (Teskey, 2017; TWP Community, 2016).

It is worth noting that the papers examining elite participation in development mentioned above tended to focus on discrete development projects with clear aims and intended processes. GGLC possesses neither of these. As I discuss below, its aim is a deliberately broad vision of an environmentally sustainable, economically prosperous, sovereign developmental future for Pacific peoples. It is a development project that does not adhere to heuristic categories such as 'big D/little d' or 'intentional/immanent' development but straddles and muddies such categories, exposing their reliance upon one another (Lewis, 2019).

3. Context: Leaders and the Green Growth Leaders' Coalition

The discussion in this article of GGLC as an example of a locally led development initiative is based on data drawn through an action research project that was conducted with GGLC that began in 2016. The action research project was aimed at providing insights and guidance about the process, logic and achievements of GGLC to its secretariat based at the International Union for the Conservation of Nature Oceania office (IUCN), its' funder, the Pacific Leadership Program (PLP) and GGLC, itself. While consent has been provided for the use of quotations in this article, it has not been provided for attribution of the quotations so they are completely deidentified.

GGLC was established in 2012 as a coalition of individuals sharing a commitment to advancing sustainable, locally led development in the Pacific islands' region. Membership of GGLC is by invitation from the secretariat based at the IUCN. Members are drawn from the upper ranks of a cross-section of government, industry and society. Although the vast majority of members are indigenous to Pacific states, this is not a requirement of membership. Individual members are identified and recruited based on two criteria: expected leadership capacity in their fields in the proceeding five years; and recognition of holding a broad shared outlook with other members that Pacific peoples should be responsible for envisioning and enacting their developmental futures in a way that is environmentally sustainable. The latter criterion is fundamental to the ambitions of GGLC. There is a recognition from members of a mission-like shared sense of purpose, with members remarking to me that this transcended differences of nationality, workplace affiliation and even philosophical outlooks. This shared sense of purpose for driving locally led development in the Pacific is an extension of previous articulations by seminal Pacific thinkers such as Wendt (1976), Hau'ofa (1994) and Crocombe, who stated: "Pacific people are not only entitled to, but obliged to, be actively in-

volved to the fullest possible extent in shaping their own future" (Crocombe, 1975, p. 1).

Unlike East Asian concepts of green growth that are tied to attempts to use technology to improve a double bottom line of economic growth and environmental sustainability (Kim & Thurbon, 2015; Moon, 2010), the GGLC approach to green growth is one that seeks to apply Pacific cultural values of environmental stewardship and sovereignty to achieve livelihood benefits for Pacific peoples (Dornan, Morgan, Newton Cain, & Tarte, 2018). Governed by the IUCN and funded by the Australian Aid program through the PLP, it facilitated annual meetings at multi-day retreats for members from 2012 until funding ceased with the closure of PLP at the end of 2017. These annual meetings allowed for multi-day conversations utilising the Pacific *talanoa* method that allows for emergent discussion with no fixed agenda (Halapua, 2000). As has been discussed elsewhere (Craney & Hudson, 2020), annual meetings provided an opportunity for members to consult with one another regarding development successes and challenges under the Chatham House rule (Chatham House, n.d.). One member described the benefit of the retreat format to me, saying, "It's not about networking...you network because of an opportunity....The *talanoa* is about building trust." The meetings also provided a space where members could set individual goals for how they individually hoped to progress locally led, sustainable development in the periods between annual meetings.

The action research approach took the form of an insider/outsider relationship (O'Keefe et al., 2014) with members of a three-person research team embedded in GGLC as participants, providing feedback to GGLC members, the secretariat and the donor. The purpose for the action research project was threefold: Monitoring the process and outcomes of the Coalition to the donor, documenting these processes and outcomes for insights to academic and practitioner development audiences, and providing critical feedback to the secretariat on how GGLC members understood the Coalition to function and their roles within it. Fundamental to the project was attendance at the 2016 and 2017 annual meetings in Fiji and Tonga, where I conducted formal and informal interviews with members. Attendance at the annual meetings allowed me to observe the frank discussion of members in the *talanoa* and contribute when called upon, reflecting upon themes that I had identified during the *talanoa* and through the process of the action research project in between meetings. Outside of the formal *talanoa* space I was able to develop rapport with Coalition members and have discussions that touched upon themes including their ideas for Pacific-led development, and the role and function of GGLC in achieving Pacific-led development.

Research continued beyond the annual meetings. During 2016 and 2017 the research team regularly engaged with Coalition members through face-to-face meetings, phone calls and emails asking for feedback

on GGLC as a concept and its processes, as well as a survey instrument to track how they were progressing with their individual goals for advancing locally led, sustainable development. The depth of my engagement with members outside of annual meetings was largely dictated by the members, themselves, and the time that they had available within their typically busy schedules. Communication of preliminary findings, feedback from GGLC members and suggestions for improvements based on these were relayed on a regular basis to PLP and IUCN. Although GGLC has not formally dissolved, its operations have slowed to dormancy since funding ceased at the end of 2017. As a result, the action research process has naturally slowed, too, though the research team continue communication with IUCN and individual members on an ad hoc basis. GGLC is discussed in this article in the present tense as this is how the core members continue to discuss the initiative, reflecting their intention to revive the project in the future.

A defining feature of GGLC is that it operates through a hands-off process. It does not take an active role in facilitating development interventions nor proposing frameworks or planning documents. Its preferred method of influencing developmental change is through members utilising their personal and professional networks to shape how decision-makers inside governments, donor agencies and development organisations approach development interventions. To this end, it has claimed some success in influencing formal development plans at national and sub-national level in parts of the Pacific region amongst other measures, though its arms-length approach means that the causal effect of GGLC involvement in achieving these outcomes is unclear (Craney & Hudson, 2020).

A particularly salient characteristic of GGLC's hands-off approach to influencing positive developmental change is that it turns the conventional diplomacy-development relationship on its head. International development policies and programs are regularly used to achieve diplomatic ends. Hillary Clinton has noted that "diplomatic objectives are often secured by gains in development" (2010, p. 14), while bilateral international development agencies in countries such as Australia and Canada have been absorbed by their foreign affairs departments under the guise of integration though more accurately representing assimilation (Yanguas, 2018, pp. 51–54). Although there is recognition of the growing role of development actors operating in diplomatic spaces (Constantinou & Der Derian, 2010) and a growing community of academics and practitioners advocating for applying political economic understandings to interventions (Hudson & Marquette, 2015; McCulloch & Piron, 2019; Teskey, 2017; TWP Community, 2016), there is scant evidence of development initiatives centring diplomatic approaches of relationship-building and networking as a core tactic. Of course, development actors do employ these tactics in their ongoing engagement with donors and other development actors, but net-

working is more generally used as a tool rather than a fundamental method of development work. For GGLC, however, networking and relationship-building is central both to how individual leaders are identified for membership, and the hands-off approach to influence that they favour.

Unlike bureaucratic interventions that connote the absence of politics and may avoid being critical of governments and implementing agencies (Ferguson, 1994), GGLC is highly political in its processes. Indeed, its approach of utilising personal and professional networks to attempt to effect change is a prime example of thinking and working politically (Leftwich, 2011). And while GGLC has not engaged in direct development interventions, nor even made public statements about positions that members hold, it is steadfast in its goal of Pacific-led environmentally sustainable development. Even when dealing with its major donor, GGLC asserted that locally led development required independence of thought, process and direction. That members participated in GGLC voluntarily in a way that did not risk the other social and professional positions that they held allowed members to assert independence and ensured that neither individual members nor the will of the collective was obsequious to the donor (Craney & Hudson, 2020).

4. Local Leadership in the Pacific

By its very nature of being an invitation-only collective consisting of people identified as current and future developmental leaders, the membership of GGLC reflects elitism. In a region marked by social processes dictated by hierarchy—traditionally through chiefly and big man systems—it is important to understand the role of elites in leadership processes in the Pacific. Chiefs, big men, elders, nobles and people holding offices of power are generally held in high esteem throughout the region. Large-scale policy and social reform planning needs the support of these people to have any hope of success.

On the surface this may appear to be a particularly undemocratic approach to leadership. As an Asian Development Bank report on Pacific governance from 2004 reads:

The modern and traditional systems of governance coexist uneasily. Whereas the former advocates individual merit, neutrality, equal participation, and the rights of the individual and the nuclear family, the latter demands priority and loyalty for kin and community, consensual and consultative values within the chief/"big men" traditional hierarchy, and traditionally defined roles for men and women. (Mellor & Jabes, 2004, p. 16)

This viewpoint, while worded in a seemingly neutral manner, carries connotations of a deficit of critical civic engagement within Pacific cultures. It fails to acknowledge both the widespread social support for traditional governance systems and also the range of socio-cultural mea-

sures of accountability that exist to support these systems. For example, of traditional Fijian governance practices, Ravuvu (1983, 1991) has written that they were highly democratic prior to European arrival, with chiefs being deposed if they failed to consult with and provide for their people. Fox (1967) has noted similar customs in Solomon Islands. Further, Ravuvu (1988) noted that the oppositional approach to politics that marks most Western liberal democracies is counterintuitive to traditional processes of decision-making and civic engagement in Pacific cultures. Members of the community seek to support leaders once a decision has been reached rather than seeking to expose flaws in the design or implementation of initiatives.

Claims that the Pacific is home to somewhat idyllic relations between leaders and the general public are not universally accepted, however. For example, Lawson (1996) has critiqued Ravuvu's claims of endogenous deliberative democracy as a wilfully naïve misrepresentation of consensus as a proxy for democracy that ignores how leaders can impose their influence. Lawson (1996) and Huffer (2005) have also commented that as many Pacific states gained sovereignty, elite classes co-opted colonial institutions that presented a façade of being democratic to buttress their own interests. Corbett (2015a) has noted that public perception of political leaders in the Pacific has also shifted from one of reverence in the 1960s and 1970s as more countries became independent to one where such leaders are now more likely to be associated with corruption and nepotism—a stereotype that he remarks does not adequately capture the good intentions that motivate most Pacific politicians and the challenges they face in achieving positive reforms in countries with small economies and limited bureaucracies. Perhaps the best articulation of the complexity of Pacific governance is provided by Duncan (2014), who notes: "The culture of the Pacific presents challenges to those attempting to bring about change. Communal and egalitarian values are held very strongly; although to an outsider, this sits oddly with the power that the elite hold within communities."

Part of the challenge in understanding the role of elites as development enablers or inhibitors in the Pacific in comparison to other parts of the world relates to the social closeness that marks relations of elites and non-elites. Even as systems designed to replicate liberal democracies become more embedded in Pacific societies and change how leadership is practiced, the smallness of Pacific states presents greater opportunity for connection between leaders and the general public (Teaiwa, 2005). This is a phenomenon that Corbett and Veenendaal have noted of politics in small states, writing, "Politicians are more than just legislators: They are family or clan members, friends, neighbours, or colleagues" (2019, p. 7). With all Pacific states, except for Papua New Guinea (PNG), considered to be small states due to having populations of less than one million people, the impact of interpersonal relationships in terms

of governance and leadership may result in deeper understandings of the needs of people across boundaries of class, wealth and other social indicators (Corbett & Veenendaal, 2018). Closeness of social ties arguably provides a layer of social accountability not possible in larger states in exposing leaders to the realities of everyday life for the general populace and in limiting their willingness to fracture social bonds.

This is not to suggest that the picture of leadership in the Pacific is uniformly utopic. Instances of civil unrest ranging from riots to civil conflict have been evident across the region in countries including Fiji, Kanaky/New Caledonia, PNG, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu in the short period of the 21st century to date. The common theme across all of these instances being a lack of livelihood opportunities and access to resources (Lee & Craney, 2019; Teaiwa, 2005). The necessary breakdown of political and social leadership at the time of these instances demonstrates that while the smallness of their populations may limit issues of social distance, institutions and leaders are not immune to criticism in these societies.

It needs to be noted that closer social ties do not equal shared backgrounds and struggles. Hau'ofa (2008) noted characteristics associated with a Pacific social elite across politics, business and civil society that delineates members from the broader public. He wrote: "The ruling classes of the South Pacific are increasingly culturally homogenous: they speak the same language, which is English [and] they share the same ideologies and the same material lifestyles" (Hau'ofa, 2008, p. 13). Consisting mostly of individuals with English-language university educations who operate as heads of government ministries, multilateral organisations, private corporations and beyond, Hau'ofa would likely apply this label to the members of GGLC. Although the elites that Hau'ofa wrote of were not limited to politics, parallels certainly exist between these elites and the politicians in small states that Veenendaal and Corbett argue utilise their "higher levels of education than the average citizen…to control the policy agenda" (2015, p. 539).

Local leadership in the Pacific can be seen to have fundamentally democratic traits but also be emboldened by distinct differences between elites and non-elites. Pacific leaders operate in a liminal space where they can be alternatively and simultaneously be seen as elites and/or trusted members of their communities. Whether relating to those with traditional hereditary titles or the emerging cosmopolitan global citizen, lesser social distance is evident in Pacific societies through the closeness dictated by their small sizes while greater social distance is perpetuated through differences in wealth, education and access to decision-making power, as well as the continuation of traditional practices of hierarchical deference. As Corbett (2015b) notes, leadership in the Pacific is very much the domain of elites.

The elitism of GGLC membership is not necessarily contradictory to it being genuinely locally led. Indeed,

the vast majority of its members are citizens of Pacific states who have crafted careers based on their capacity to lead development institutions in the private, public and civil society sectors at sub-national, national, sub-regional and regional levels. If one were seeking examples of local development leaders in the Pacific each one of GGLC's members would be suitable for selection. The fact that the members of GGLC would be considered exemplars of local leadership in the Pacific does, however, beg questions of whether developmental leadership can or should be the domain only of elites.

5. Discussion: Problematising Locally Led Development through the Example of GGLC

The GGLC offers a particularly rich and complex case study for interrogating the risk of locally led development interventions falling prey to elite interests. On one hand the members of GGLC represent the epitome of an unrepresentative elite disconnected from the everyday livelihoods and poverty pressures that development has customarily been focused upon. GGLC is an invitation-only group displaying all of the traits of Hau'ofa's new social elite through its members' educations, professions and mobility. Further, its concerns for reshaping how development is conceived and practiced in the region are based on long-term visions that are the privilege of people not concerned with how they will put food on the table or uniforms on the backs of their school-aged children. On the other hand, the members of GGLC come from a region marked by small populations and social closeness where hierarchy and representative leadership are not seen as anathema, and where accountability is addressed at street level or around the kava bowl on an ongoing basis. This reflects long-established norms of deliberatively democratic and representative civic engagement for Pacific peoples.

As heads of government ministries, industries, NGOs and more the GGLC certainly consists of the elite while remaining clearly locally led. In fact, GGLC represents what McCulloch and Piron (2019) identify as the most genuine form of local leadership in that it is an initiative that is entirely locally driven. GGLC was created by local people operating to a vision that they created through processes that they determined. Their commitment to adhering to their own vision of development and working through influence rather than distinct acts that demonstrate simpler lines of causality remained steadfast even when ongoing funding was at risk (Craney & Hudson, 2020). It is important to note that the members of GGLC do not explicitly refer to themselves as 'locals,' though they do position themselves as such within conversations by discussing how Pacific values and ways of working compare and contrast with those of foreign governments and development agencies. Reflecting on the quality of discussion possible utilising *talanoa* as opposed to meetings with strict agendas, one member remarked that it was "conducive for greater, more intimate discus-

sions. People spoke more freely, they felt more comfortable, there was an air of respect for one another. It was very Pacific. Everything was very Pacific and I appreciated that." Although they are important for being able to articulate ways of working that complement or contrast with development orthodoxy, concepts such as 'locally led development' should be acknowledged as outside impositions from the development community onto communities in receipt of development funding and assistance.

The greater question regarding the legitimacy of GGLC applies to the extent to which locally led development should represent grassroots developmental concerns. Development programs, policies and projects may be more efficiently implemented and have better results if they incorporate locals as designers, implementers and evaluators (Hayman, 2012) but if the locals engaged represent a cosmopolitan social elite there is a risk that such interventions will simply mirror those that would normally be designed by outsiders. This is one of the concerns at the heart of Mohan's appeals not to conflate elite and grassroots voices as an imaginary homogenised 'local' when he writes, "grassroots development…seeks to move the focus away from elite perspectives to those of the marginalized. It also opens up the question that if we can 'hear' these non-elite voices, will new social forms unfold?" (2006, p. 165). The challenge of working with elites was noted by staff within the PLP—the agency that funded GGLC—who noted that donor agencies providing support to local elites is suitable for some development initiatives but not all. On certain issues where the status quo needs to be disrupted, such as women's rights, driving change is easier with the support of local elites but their co-option needs to be managed carefully so as not to further marginalise activists or be met with fierce resistance (Denney & McLaren, 2016).

At the heart of the concern related to the extent to which elites should be centred in locally led development interventions is the fear that elite voices will drown out those of the non-elite at grassroots level and use their influence to bolster their own status or financial position. As Paffenholz writes of elite involvement in peacebuilding: "Elites use the state as well as other hybrid governance arrangements as sources of income, power and legitimacy, penetrating these structures with the explicit aim of undermining them for the sake of their own well-being" (2015, p. 864). With corruption being a site of significant concern in Pacific states (Corbett, 2015a, 2015b), elite led development initiatives risk being seen as fronts for personal gain. Concerns of corruption, nepotism and the general use of political influence to improve personal ends are problematised by development initiatives such as GGLC, though. By avoiding project-based interventions it is unclear how members would strategise for their involvement to reap personal dividends. What benefits are there for elites in promoting an opaque vision of development? That members remained engaged for years despite limited awareness and acknowledgement of their influence in shaping

development planning documents at sub-national and national levels (Craney & Hudson, 2020) demonstrates that the members of GGLC are minimally concerned with personal gain through their involvement in the initiative. Either this or they have poor political nous—which is highly unlikely given their established reputations as leaders. Interestingly, when an earlier draft of this article was shared with some GGLC members for comment, one remarked that the exclusivity of only engaging leaders was at least partly motivated by a belief that if citizens saw trusted local leaders advocating for reforms then they would be more likely to support such efforts.

It is worth noting that matters of legitimacy and whether GGLC represents a case study in grassroots-engaged development or in elite capture of concepts of locally led development are not the concern of GGLC, itself. Again, this exposes a differentiation between how development efforts are framed by outsiders such as donors, evaluators and academics as opposed to by local persons embedded in development work through all facets of their lives. The members of GGLC recognise the exclusivity of the Coalition, but view this positively as a means through which members can develop their leadership skills and be motivated by the broad shared vision that they hold for a developmental future that is locally led and environmentally sustainable. Multiple members described to me that the annual meetings address a lack of space in the Pacific for leaders to engage in critical reflection and peer mentorship with one saying, "I don't think we have enough of those opportunities to critique ourselves." Another member remarked:

> The Coalition is a space of people who believe in the same cause and who are engaged in different fora, but can come together in that space to discuss common issues, like common environmental issues, that we as the Pacific are facing.

They also recognise that exclusivity risks limiting their impact in the longer term. To address this, they do not express intentions to invite new members who do not exhibit leadership traits or to include leaders that are not seen to share their sense of purpose. Rather, they identify and offer mentoring to emerging leaders. This was reflected by a member who advocated "identifying potential leaders…as early as university" for mentoring by Coalition members with the potential to include them in the *talanoa* space. Given the hierarchical nature of most Pacific cultures, it is worth noting that some of the younger members who attended annual meetings that I observed expressed that sharing a space with established leaders was initially "very daunting," viewing these leaders as "very seasoned professionals" but that they became comfortable with support from these established leaders. One member told me that she was pulled aside during a tea break and advised: "[To] just speak my mind and not to worry." It is also worth noting that while men comprise approximately two-thirds of the membership

of GGLC—with rotating membership making it impossible to determine fixed numbers—there is a rough gender parity amongst younger members. This reflects both the increasing influence women leaders are having in the region compared to even the recent past and also an awareness from the secretariat of the benefits of a more diverse membership base. Contrasted with these means by which GGLC appears to promote greater inclusivity in its recruitment practices, one member cautioned against expanding the selection criteria for membership too much. They stated that the Coalition needed to continually consider: "Being a little bit careful about how inclusive you are, so that it doesn't dilute the level of conversation, because we don't achieve our goals if that's the case—you're constantly trying to bring them up to speed, etc."

By foregrounding diplomacy and networking as tools to achieve developmental ends GGLC explicitly engages the elite status of its members. This is not a collective that is seeking to pass itself as a grassroots organisation, nor does it seek to deny space for grassroots voices in developmental processes outside of its own work. Rather, it has worked to include the perspectives of grassroots citizens at times, such as in the formulation of a development plan for the Ha'apai region of Tonga (Craney & Hudson, 2020). If there is any consideration that GGLC, as a locally led development initiative, presents itself as representative of grassroots voices this is a misrepresentation made totally on the behalf of the individual's imagination.

6. Conclusion

In recent years the push for development practices that are led, owned and delivered by locals has moved beyond an ethical philosophy to a concept that has gained favour as likely to lead to more effective and sustainable development outcomes (Andrews, Pritchett, Samji, & Woolcock, 2015; Booth & Unsworth, 2014; Hayman, 2012; McCulloch & Piron, 2019). Coupled with the practice of a growing number of international NGOs relocating head offices from Western satellites to developing country bases (Williams, 2018), it is clear that the future for designing and implementing development initiatives must and will be driven by people at the local level. Never has this seemed more pertinent than in the shadow of the global Covid-19 pandemic, which has demonstrated that human movement across international borders is not as free as it previously seemed and that the engagement and embeddedness of foreign actors can be disrupted at short notice. This necessitates an increased focus from donors and multilateral organisations about how they can best support development initiatives that are genuinely locally led, owned and driven.

Definitions of locally led development remain opaque, though. Are all initiatives that include the participation of local peoples—of whatever status and to whatever extent—examples of locally led development? Should participation be representative of a broad swathe

of communities or will inclusion of limited subsets of the population suffice?

This is an issue for consideration of donors and multilateral organisations much more so than for local development actors—elite and non-elite, alike. Supporting locally led development should not be an exercise of funding initiatives advanced by local citizens followed by ticking a box related to engaging the voice of locals. True support for locally led development requires an acknowledgement of the plurality of voices at local level and concerted effort needs to be made to capture the voices of peoples from different walks of life. Hayman's (2012) vision of Local First development that captures perspectives from a cross-section of society offers some guidance in how to achieve this in a way that seeks to empower the political capital of the broader community rather than just relying on the political capital of already established leaders to promote change (Booth & Unsworth, 2014). Further, commitment to locally led development includes being aware of whose participation is not being included and why, recognising that some voices may not need to be included while others should be but cannot for various reasons.

The example of GGLC demonstrates the need for foreign agencies to critically contemplate who is meant by 'the local' and how a diversity of voices and experiences are captured. The example of GGLC should be understood as complex and not representative of other locally led development initiatives. Unlike most initiatives, it does not support specific projects, have fixed goals or operate with a staff reliant on donor funding for their livelihood. Further, it needs to be recognised that the political and economic context that it operates within is specific to its locality. The smallness of Pacific states makes discussions about elite capture and locally led development in the region very different from similar conversations in large and very large states.

In this article I do not attempt to offer a set of guidelines for what local leadership should look like and who it should involve. Neither am I interested in providing a judgement on the extent to which GGLC presents as locally led and representative of Pacific communities. Instead I seek to highlight the important point that who and what is considered as local leadership is dependent on context, content and the subjective concerns of those engaging with ideas of local leadership from practical or philosophical perspectives.

Acknowledgments

Conflict of Interests

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About the Author

Aidan Craney is an Honorary Research Fellow with the Institute for Human Security and Social Change and a Lecturer in the Department of Social Inquiry at La Trobe University, as well as an International Development Consultant. His research looks at youth livelihoods and adaptive development practices in the Oceania region.

COGITATIO

Article

Leadership, Identity and Performance: The Nature and Effect of 'Prototypicality' in Indonesia

David Hudson [1,*], Claire Mcloughlin [1], Anna Margret [2] and Yolanda Pandjaitan [2]

[1] International Development Department, School of Government, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, B15 2TT, UK; E-Mails: d.e.hudson@bham.ac.uk (D.H.), c.mcloughlin@bham.ac.uk (C.M.)
[2] Cakra Wikara Indonesia, Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social and Political Science, University of Indonesia, 16424 Java Barat, Indonesia; E-Mails: annamargret@cakrawikara.id (A.M.), yolanda.panjaitan@cakrawikara.id (Y.P.)

* Corresponding author

Abstract
What makes a leader worthy of support? The article uses novel survey and experimental data from Indonesia to test the proposition that identity trumps performance for citizens perceptions of their political leaders. The results confirm theories of 'prototypicality'—leaders that best reflect and represent the identity of the group tend to be more trusted and have a licence to fail. We argue and show that the dimensions of identity that matter most varies and is context specific. In the Indonesian context religious identity is most important. But the data also suggest that this varies across space, time, and follower identity: We show that gender matters, as women are less easily persuaded by prototypicality. We conclude by reflecting on the implications for leaders, politics and support for leadership development.

Keywords
Indonesia; leadership; prototypicality; social identity theory; women in politics

1. Introduction

1.1. Leadership Choices in Global Perspective

What makes a leader worthy of support? Across a variety of different contexts, people evaluate leaders based on a range of factors; from their leadership style, to the position they inherited or obtained through talent and ability achieved (Corbett, 2019), to certain characteristics they display, such as competence, strength or charisma (Aaldering & Vliegenthart, 2016). Why people choose leaders matters because it sets criteria against which citizens judge them as successful or not. It can influence whether people confer or withdraw support and, in turn, how far those leaders are responsive to people's interests. From a development perspective, understanding how people evaluate leaders is therefore key to understanding when and how change happens.

Leadership is not an individual 'heroic' act (Andrews, 2016). Rather, it is "a process of social influence in which one person is able to enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task" (Chemers, 2002, p. 1). All leaders need followers and leadership works through a political process of interaction between followers' evaluations and leaders' actions (Hudson & Mcloughlin, 2019). In practice, we often see puzzling relationships between what might be perceived to be in followers' interests, and how leaders act: Charismatic leaders can be extremely popular, but ultimately ineffective at driving change, while transformational leaders may be extremely effective at improving lives, but highly unpopular. By uncovering what's going on beneath the surface of

the leader-follower relationship, we can therefore start to unpick when and how it might be enabling or disabling progressive, developmental reform. For example, if we want to understand why leaders sometimes retain their legitimacy when they fail to deliver on their promises, or when leaders who do deliver may fail to hold onto power, we can examine how followers are evaluating them.

In this article we test how people evaluate leaders, with an emphasis on the power of identity in shaping this evaluation. The social identity theory of leadership predicts that people are more likely to support leader 'prototypes'—leaders who reflect and represent the identity of the group that they themselves most closely identify with (Hogg & Knippenberg, 2003). In turn, being a prototypical leader can have important effects on how people evaluate these leaders, as compared to non-prototypical leaders who may be seen as relative outsiders. Using a survey experiment in Indonesia we test the core propositions of this theory. Our contribution to this nascent literature is novel in two ways. First, much of the existing literature has been confined to the social psychology, management or organisational sciences. We expand this to test whether and how this theory holds in the public, political domain. Second, we extend this literature from its focus on developed countries in the West, to an Asian setting.

We argue—and our findings confirm—that identity (and prototypicality in particular) is a key (possibly the key) way that citizens perceive, assess and therefore support or not their leaders. The implications of this are many, profound, and questionably progressive—though potentially so. We find that identity typically trumps performance when it comes to citizen assessments of trust, capability and protection. The results of our survey in Indonesia add much detail to the more general thesis. Plus, we argue, that the specifics of the Indonesian case underline the point that the particular dimensions of identity that matter in each context is precisely that: context specific. Identity matters, but which dimensions matter vary. In the Indonesian context we find that religious identity trumps ethnicity. We also use a variety of different survey questions and techniques to show that while many people say that gender is not a key category, respondents' revealed preferences show that it typically is. We also confirm that prototypicality primarily works through people's assessment of trustworthiness. Finally, and importantly, the effects of prototypicality are not uniform—in our data women are less easily persuaded by prototypicality and the provincial context matters.

The article proceeds as follows. First, we set out the core propositions of the social identity theory of leadership, reviewing findings from past research. Second, we set the scene for our study by describing why these questions are pertinent in the case of Indonesia, and outline the methodology we used to explore them in this context. Third, we present the findings for each of our research questions in turn. Finally, we conclude with implications for Indonesia and, more widely, for understanding the role of identity in leadership for development.

1.2. The Social Identity Theory of Leadership

A popular theory from the leadership and social psychology literature says that other things held constant, people evaluate leaders based on their identity. This social identity theory of leadership predicts that people will look for leaders who reflect the identity and characteristics of the group they feel most closely associated with (Hogg & Knippenberg, 2003). The underlying premise is that individuals perceive leaders through the lens of their social group because groups "define who we are, and influence what we think, feel, and do, and how others perceive and treat us" (Hogg, van Knippenberg, & Rast, 2012). Indeed, people look to leaders to define their group identity, and whether this is more or less shaped by attributes such as ethnicity, religion, gender, or by certain values or traditions. Leaders who reflect and embody this identity can be thought of as 'prototypical' leaders. Such a leader would be likely be considered a typical group member—'one of us'—and as such, someone who best understands and is willing to defend the interests of the group.

Looking or behaving like a prototypical leader matters because it can have real effects on how followers evaluate them. In the literature, there are two particularly striking propositions about the effects of prototypicality on follower perceptions. First, people are more likely to endorse, trust and support prototypical leaders. In other words, they are more likely to judge 'ingroup' members more favourably than 'outgroup' members with the same characteristics (Marques & Paez, 1994). Empirical tests carried out across a broad suite of contexts seem to confirm a strong preference towards prototypical group leaders (Reicher, Haslam, & Platow, 2018). These and other studies explain this preference because people tend to think that prototypical members are more likely to be invested in the group, inherently trustworthy, and better able to promote group interests.

Second, because of their identity, prototypical leaders can behave differently to non-prototypical leaders without the same consequences as non-prototypes. Some studies have found that because prototypical members are perceived to be more legitimate and trustworthy, they may not always need to act in followers' interests, be effective, or act fairly, to retain support. Sometimes they can retain this trust even when they are ineffective at delivering benefits for the group. In other words, while non-prototypical leaders may have to perform well to gain trust, prototypical leaders can sometimes are granted a 'license to fail' simply because of their identity (Giessner, van Knippenberg, & Sleebos, 2009; Hogg & Knippenberg, 2003). Some lab experiments even suggest that identity can override perceptions of fairness; people may support prototypical leaders whether they are considered fair or not (Ullrich &

Christ, 2009). Because people trust prototypical leaders, it may also be the case that such leaders have more latitude to diverge from group norms, or seek to change them (Abrams, de Moura, Marques, & Hutchison, 2008). In other words, prototypical leaders may also have more leeway to be transformational—to push the boundaries of norms, and even go against the interests of the group, while retaining their legitimacy. So, while the idea of identity trumping merit may be a cause of concern, it is also worth flagging that, conditional on prototypical leaders' motivations, values, and priorities, this could be good news for progressive, developmental change. Developmental leadership will often involve bending or breaking social norms and existing institutions to bring about change (Hudson, Mcloughlin, Marquette, & Roche, 2018). Prototypicality may help do this—for good or for ill.

A small but significant body of empirical work has investigated the conditions under which these prototypicality effects hold, and how strongly. One key question, recently addressed by Baretto and Hogg (2017), is how much variance in leadership evaluation can be attributed to protoypicality, versus other important dimensions of assessment, such as leadership style or personality. Overall, they found a strong effect of prototypicality on trust, and a moderate effect on evaluations of effectiveness. Likewise, elsewhere, several factors have been found to moderate the prototypicality effect. These include how strongly members associate with their group (Giessner et al., 2009), and the leader's gender (Hogg et al., 2006). The prototypicality effect has been found to weaken when individuals face uncertainty about their own self-identity (Rast, Gaffney, Hogg, & Crisp, 2012).

While this new theory and emerging body of research is producing robust and increasingly nuanced findings, it has also been limited in scope. The majority of analysis to date has been located in the organisational and management sciences, or social psychology. All of the 35 selected studies that Baretto and Hogg (2017) examined in their metanalysis addressed prototypicality in organisational settings, or via lab experiments. This study seeks to address some of these gaps and extend the utility of the social identity theory in other spheres of public life. It offers a novel test of the social identity theory, by examining the relationship between prototypicality and support for political leadership in Indonesia.

2. Examining Prototypical Leadership in Indonesia

2.1. The Indonesian Case

The research set out to test some of the key propositions that arise from the social identity theory of leadership in the Indonesian context. Following the standard in this field (van Knippenberg, 2011), our approach first identifies what prototypical leadership looks like across our research site, and then examines the effects that being a prototype, or non-prototype, has on leader evaluations. Several aspects of our approach are relatively novel within this nascent literature. First, our approach is based on respondents' preferences for the social identity characteristics of leaders, rather than on any preconceived assumptions or hypothetical constructs. In this way, we can develop a perceptions-based, empirical picture of what a prototypical leader actually looks like and crucially, demonstrate how those prototypes vary across individuals with different identity characteristics, as well as across spaces. Second, while the majority of previous studies have measured the effects of leader prototypicality on leadership evaluations in terms of either trustworthiness or effectiveness, we compare the effects of prototypicality versus non-prototypicality on both of these dimensions of assessment. Finally, we experiment with the effect of 'failure' on evaluations of prototypical versus non prototypical leaders, again showing how this effect varies across the demographics of the respondents.

Indonesia is a pertinent case for two reasons. First, it was an authoritarian regime for over 30 years, only experiencing direct elections of their leaders since mid-2000. Indonesia's "transition to electoral democracy" (Bunte & Ufen, 2009, p. 12 can be traced to 1999, when the country had its first democratic election following the resignation of Suharto from his three-decades Presidency that also marked the end of the New Order Regime. During that period, Indonesians had regular five-year general elections, but saw no transfer of power, while all local leaders were appointed by the national government. Against such centralized power structures and strong military role, support for the political leadership was taken for granted. The first direct elections happened in 2004 for the President and in 2005 for local government leaders. As such, Indonesians have recently learned firsthand the importance of having the knowledge to assess the effectiveness and trustworthiness of a leader that they could now directly choose. Second, direct local elections in Indonesia have seen rampant money politics (Aspinall & Mas'udi, 2017) and "identity-based mobilizations" (Davidson, 2018) impeding vertical accountability between constituents and their leaders.

The link between identity and leadership is particularly salient for Indonesia. As the world's largest Muslim-majority country, with a heterogeneous ethnic and sociocultural background, identity politics can be readily mobilized for support or resistance in elections. A number of scholars have highlighted how the rise of religious intolerance and identity politics, coupled with hardliner populists, may pose a potential stumbling block to the growth of democracy in Indonesia (Bourchier, 2019; Fealy, 2013; Hefner, 2019; Menchik, 2019; Mietzner, 2014; Power, 2018). In the context of a country flagged as potentially facing democratic stagnation (Mietzner, 2020), understanding people's perception of trustworthy and effective leadership may provide important insights into how to move forward.

2.2. Data and Method

To study people's perceptions of what makes a leader effective and trustworthy in Indonesia, we focused on the lowest elected level of political leadership. In Indonesia, this is the heads of districts, the *Bupatis* or *Walikota*. We surveyed 5 provinces: Jakarta, North Sumatra, West Java, East Java, and South Sulawesi. These were chosen because they are among the most densely populated areas, and also because each has particular political dynamics which allow us to test whether the theory holds across different contexts. In all five provinces, there are various ethnic groups with diverse dialects and local languages. In North Sumatra, the practice of clientelism in politics is strong, as reported by survey and election reports (Bawaslu, 2019). North Sumatra is also known to be home to a significant portion of Indonesia's Christian population. As the capital city, Jakarta is an important political, cultural and economic hub. It also represents a 'melting pot' of various ethnic groups migrating to make a living in the city. West Java is a business and political centre, and also the native homeland of Sundanese people, who form the largest ethnic group. This province is known to be politically conservative, with a predominant religious (Islam) influence. East Java is the second most populated province after West Java. While ethnic Javanese make up the majority of the population, the province also has a significant portion of minority groups. This province is the home of Nadhatul Ulama, the biggest Muslim mass-organization in Indonesia. South Sulawesi is widely known as having a political system predominantly influenced by dynasty politics, strong traditional communities as well as religion.

Purposive non-probability sampling was used to select the provinces, as per above, but once we had identified our survey locations we used a stratified sampling frame that targeted a representative sample by gender and age within the five provinces of interest. Weights were used to correct any remaining differences between the sample and provincial population, the distribution across the provinces is shown in Table 1. The respondents were taken from an online panel. The final sample was 2,003 respondents. The fieldwork was conducted by Deltapoll in partnership with Viga.

We collected a range of demographic data on survey respondents, including their age, gender, province, profession, level of education, religion, ethnicity, personal monthly income. We also collected a range of attitudinal data, including their self-reported personality, religiosity or strength of faith, position with respect to traditions.

The survey contained three parts, and the methodology was tailored to address three research questions, set out below. The first is the following:

RQ1: What does a prototypical leader look like, and does this vary by individuals, groups and across different parts of Indonesia?

In order to understand what a prototypical leader looks like in Indonesia, respondents were asked a number of questions about their group identity and the characteristics they think leaders should have. Respondents were first asked to indicate the three most important characteristics that matter to their group identity. The options were: age, gender, ethnicity, religion, education, province and nationality.

Respondents were then asked to construct two different leader profiles. Based on social identity theory, we identified seven key characteristics for them to select from: gender, age, faith, ethnicity, leadership style, religiosity, and attitude towards existing traditions. Each of these characteristics could be selected on a number of levels, which are shown in Table 2. Respondents were told that the first leader profile should represent the kind of leader that they personally would prefer to see in power. The second leader profile should look like the kind of leader they believe is most likely to represent the wider interests of the group that they identify with. They were told that the two profiles may look the same or be different from one another.

The second research question is the following:

RQ2: What effect does prototypicality have on perceptions of trustworthiness, effectiveness, and representation of interests?

To test the difference a prototypical leader makes on people's perceptions of trustworthiness, effectiveness, and representation of their interest, our 2,003 respondents were then randomly assigned to two groups. The first group were shown a leader profile that matched their prototypical leader (Group P)—i.e., the kind of leader they had identified as most likely to represent the wider interests of the group that they identify with. The sec-

Table 1. Survey sample by province.

	East Java		Jakarta Special Capital Region		North Sumatra		South Sulawesi		West Java	
Respondents	483		624		246		128		522	
Age mean	33.4		32.2		31.2		31.8		31.5	
Age standard deviation	15.0		13.9		16.3		16.4		13.0	
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Percentage	49.4%	50.6%	49.1%	50.9%	49.6%	50.4%	50.3%	49.7%	48.9%	51.1%

Table 2. Leaders profile characteristics and levels.

	Levels				
Gender		Female		Male	
Age	27 years old	37 years old	47 years old	57 years old	67 years old
Religious faith	Muslim	Protestant Christian	Catholic Christian	Hindu	Buddhist	Confucian
Ethnicity	Jawa	Sunda	Batak	Madura		Betawi
	Bugis	Tionghoa	Bali	Makassar		An ethnic group of East Nusa Tenggara
Religiosity	They do not regularly attend a place of worship	They observe major festivals, but do not regularly attend a place of worship	They regularly attend their place of worship	They have a very strong faith and make religion central to their life and work		
Tradition	They want to restore traditions and return things to how they were	They want to protect existing traditions to keep things how they are	They tend to overlook existing traditions and go their own way	They want to abolish existing traditions and replace them with a new vision		

ond group was shown a randomly created leader profile that was non-prototypical (Group NP). Both groups received a manifesto statement from either their prototypical leader or a non-prototypical leader. The manifesto statement was identical for the two groups, the only difference being the leader profile (see Figure 1 for an example).

Respondents were then asked to indicate the extent to which they: (1) could trust this leader, (2) thought they would be a capable leader, and (3) felt the leader would represent their interests. All responses were on a scale of 0 to 9, where 0 indicates strongly disagree and 9 indicates strongly agree.

The third research question is the following:

RQ3: Are prototypical leaders more likely than non-prototypical leaders to be supported, even when they are ineffective?

Next, we wanted to find out whether people judge the performance of prototypical and non-prototypical leaders differently. The literature suggests that prototypical leaders can retain trust and legitimacy even if they fail or go against followers' interests, while non-prototypical leaders struggle to build trust or legitimacy even when they deliver developmental goods.

To test this, we added a second randomisation where the respondents kept their prototypical or non-prototypical leader profile but were given further information about whether the leader was successful or failed to achieve their manifesto goals (see Table 3 for the statements). Of the group that kept their prototypical leader profile, half of them were told that five years later the leader had been successful. The other half were told that their prototypical leader had failed. The same treatment was given to the group who had a non-prototypical

Leader Profile
Male
37 years old
Muslim
Javanese
They are able to get things done
They regularly attend their place of worship
They seek to protect existing traditions to keep things how they are

"I am proud to be selected as your representative. My number one priority in office is to reform our community's schools and health clinics to make sure that they go to the people most in need and are the people who will benefit the most. Reform will not be easy and it will involve many costs. but I am determined to succeed."

Figure 1. Example leader profile and manifesto.

Table 3. Success and failure treatments.

Success treatment	5 years later, at the end of their term of office, this leader had successfully delivered on their promise to reform the schools and health clinics in the Kabupaten. The reforms were hard won, but resulted in improved literacy levels and access to essential medicines.
Failure treatment	5 years later, at the end of their term of office, this leader had failed to deliver on their promise to reform the schools and health clinics in the Kabupaten. The reforms were unsuccessful: the investment and hard work was wasted and there was no improvement in literacy levels or access to essential medicines.

leader profile. Half of them were told that five years later the non-prototypical leader had been successful, and the other half were told that the non-prototypical leader had failed. In effect, the randomisation meant that the sample was evenly split across four treatment groups, as per the 2 × 2 shown in Table 4.

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1. Results

3.1.1. Research Question 1

Our first question went as follows:

> Many people belong to a larger group of people because of a shared culture, history, background, interests or identity. Thinking about the group(s) of people you identify most strongly with, please indicate the first, second and third most important characteristics that matter to your group identity.

As shown in Figure 2, the most common response was nationality, where 67% of respondents selected 'being a fellow Indonesian' as their first, second, or third ranked most important characteristic. This is followed by having a shared religion (61% of respondents ranked this option), education (47%), age (45%—though note 19.5% ranked it first), ethnicity (27%), region (27%), and finally gender (26%).

We also then modelled respondents' choices to see whether different sub-groups of our sample tended to favour different characteristics. We collapsed the three ranked choices into a single outcome variable of 'chosen' (1) or 'not chosen' (0) and ran a series of binary logistic regressions on each group identity characteristic. We then calculated the average marginal effects, mean-

ing we can report here the average change in probability of a characteristic being chosen by different respondent characteristics compared to a baseline category, averaging over all other observations in the sample. We looked to see whether the respondent's gender, age, education, ethnicity, province, religion and religiosity predicted the likelihood of selecting the seven group identity characteristics shown in Figure 2. We do not report the full results here, but identify the key substantively and statistically significant predictors.

Being from the same religion was the second most frequently mentioned category for respondents. Those who identify as being ethnically Betawi or Minangkabau were more likely to select religion, as are respondents from West Java. But identifying as Muslim or Hindu are the most important predictors of selecting religion (increasing the probability of selecting by 47% and 39%, respectively). Respondents' religiosity matters too. Those who regularly attend their place of worship were 16% more likely to select and those who make their faith central to their life were 18% more, compared with those who only attend for major festivals. Taken together these results suggest a stronger prioritisation of religion as a key identity category for these two faiths (compared with Christians, Buddhists, and those of other faiths) and all individuals with stronger religiosity (regardless of faith).

Finally, being the same gender mattered more for male respondents; they were 14% more likely than female respondents to say that being from the same gender matters to their group identity. This tells us that men identify with fellow men more than fellow women identify with fellow women, as a category of group identity.

In order to understand the importance of identity further, we then asked our respondents to 'build' their own personal ideal leaders and what they believed would be a prototypical leader for their identity group. This time

Table 4. The four treatment groups based on prototypicality and non-prototypicality and policy success and failure.

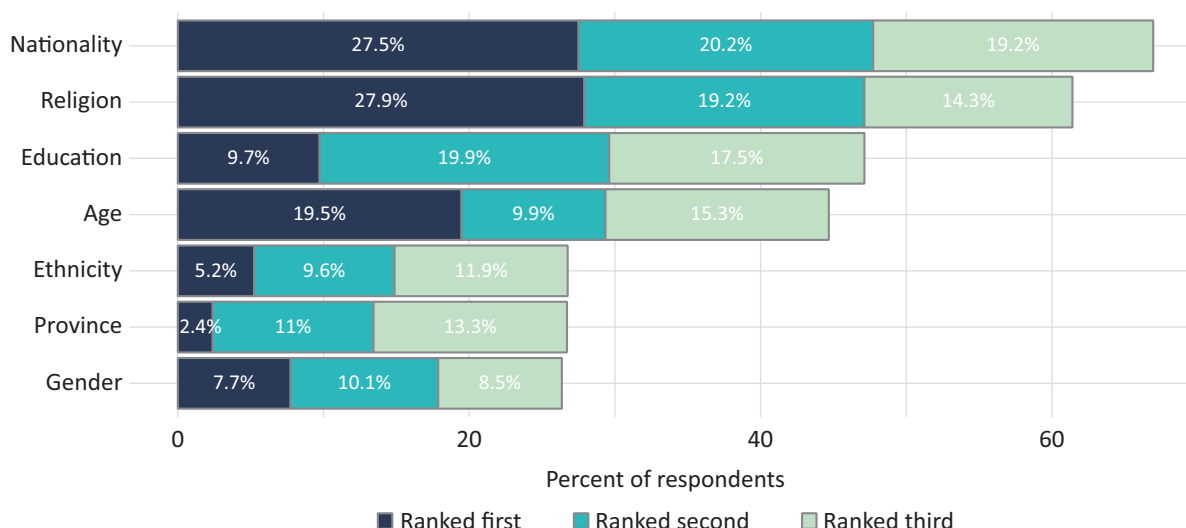|	Prototypical leader profile	Non-prototypical leader profile
Success treatment	Group PS (25.3% of sample)	Group NPS (24.0% of sample)
Failure treatment	Group PF (24.1% of sample)	Group NPF (26.6% of sample)

Figure 2. Most important characteristics for group identity. Notes: Sample: Deltapoll | Indonesia | 24–28 December 2018 | n = 2,003 | Question: Many people belong to a larger group of people because of a shared culture, history, background, interests or identity. Thinking about the group(s) of people you identify most strongly with, please indicate the first, second and third most important characteristics that matter to your group identity.

we asked respondents to consider the following dimensions of identity: gender, age, religion, ethnicity, religiosity, but also their personality type and attitude towards traditions. The options offered to respondents are shown in Table 2.

While there is no single prototypical leader among respondents, several patterns emerged in respect to our key criteria:

As for gender: A whopping 86% chose a male leader and only 14% chose a female leader. While women were more likely to choose a female leader than male respondents, they still only chose a female leader 18% of the time compared to only 10% of men. Respondents from North Sumatra are most likely to prefer women leaders (23%) and those from West Java were the least (9%).

As for age: Given the choice of a 27, 37, 47, 57, or 67-year old leader, 46% of respondents preferred a 47-year old.

As for religious faith: 79% of respondents preferred a Muslim leader. As expected, this was mostly driven by respondents selecting their own faith, with 94% of Muslims selecting a Muslim leader, 63% of Protestant Christians selecting a Protestant Christian leader and 62% of Catholic Christians selecting a Catholic Christian leader. Notably, while respondents of more minority religions did still favour their own, they were more likely to nominate a Muslim leader. For example, although 47% of Hindus favoured a Hindhu leader, 40% chose a Muslim leader.

As for ethnicity: 60% of respondents choose a leader with the same ethnicity as them. Men were more likely to do so (64%) than women (57%). East Javanese (74%) respondents were most likely to choose a leader with the same ethnicity as them and South Sulawesi respondents were the least likely to do so (40% of the time).

As for religiosity: In terms of the importance of a leader's faith, 52% wanted a leader who had a very strong faith and made religion central to their life and work and another 37% wanted a leader who regularly attended their place of worship. There were no significant differences between men and women. West Java (58%) were more likely to choose a leader who have a very strong faith and make religion central to their life, and respondents from South Sulawesi were least likely (39%).

As for tradition: A majority (59%) chose a leader who would protect existing traditions to keep things how they are. There were no significant differences between men and women respondents, or across the provinces.

As for personality: When given the choice between a leader who was either (1) honest and fair; (2) humble and forgiving; (3) able to inspire people to follow them; (4) confident and outspoken; or (5) able to get things done, 66% of respondents want a leader to be honest and fair. There were no significant differences between men and women. Jakarta Special Capital Region (19%) were more likely to choose a leader who could get things done than respondents from North Sumatra (9%).

In sum, we note three clear trends from the data. First, respondents tend to 'design' leaders that embody their own personal characteristics and those of their group. Second, this effect is strongest in terms of religious faith, but weakest in terms of gender—where large majorities among both women and men prefer male leaders. Here, shared perceptions of prototypicality at the group level clearly outweigh any sense of shared female identity. This also confirms the last placed position of gender in Figure 2. Third, and finally, where respondents are in a minority group, they are less likely to select their own 'type' and defer to majority characteristics. This was illustrated by 4 in 10 Hindu respondents

nominating a Muslim leader as best placed to represent the wider interests of the group that they identify with. Together, these results, descriptively, confirm the presence of prototypicality in leader selection in Indonesia. But what effect does prototypicality have on citizens' perceptions of leaders and their support. This is what we turn to next.

3.2. Research Question 2

Having been allocated to read the manifesto statement from either a prototypical or non-prototypical leader, as explained above, we measured people's trust, perception of effectiveness, and belief that the leader would protect the interests of the respondent's group. Figure 3 shows the difference in responses between the two groups.

The results demonstrate a clear effect of prototypicality. Prototypical leaders are more trusted, scoring an average rating of 7.6 as opposed to 5.5 (a 39% increase). Prototypical leaders are considered more capable or effective, scoring an average rating of 7.6 versus 5.6 for the non-prototypical leader (a 35% increase). And prototypical leaders are felt more likely to protect the interests of the group, scoring an average rating of 7.5 versus 5.3 for the non-prototypical leader (38% increase). Taken together, this suggests that, along these key indicators of support, prototypical leaders are getting a boost of roughly a third over and above their non-prototypical rivals.

The marginally stronger effect for trust (and interests) is supported by previous studies that suggest prototypicality is more closely linked to trust than effectiveness (Van Lange, 2015). They confirm the in-built relationship between prototypicality and trust that lies at the core of social identity theory; these leaders are trusted

because their identity is more closely tied to the identity of the group, and trusting them is akin to trusting the group identity (Van Lange, 2015).

3.2.1. Research Question 3

Finally, we wanted to see whether prototypicality effects would still hold when respondents were updated on the actual performance of leaders. Specifically, would success or failure outweigh identity? Figure 4 shows the difference in responses on our three indicators of interest across the four groups, as described in the data and methods section: prototypical successful leaders, prototypical failed leaders, non-prototypical successful leaders, non-prototypical failed leaders.

A consistent story and hierarchy emerge. First, successful leaders are consistently perceived as more trusted, capable, and likely to represent people's interests than unsuccessful leaders. Second, prototypical leaders are consistently perceived as more trusted, capable, and likely to represent people's interests than non-prototypical leaders. But third, even when successful non-prototypical leaders are still perceived as less trusted and likely to represent people's interests than unsuccessful prototypical leaders. Only perceptions of capability are statistically indistinguishable between successful non-prototypical leaders and failed prototypical leaders. In sum, identity overrides reported success or failure in the evaluation of leadership: Failure is punished more harshly when leaders are non-prototypical. Success cannot, in other words, consistently match the effects of prototypicality on positive evaluations of leadership. In short, there is an in-built protection for prototypical leaders. Their identity provides a buffer against failure. On the other hand, non-prototypical leaders seem to face a glass ceiling in terms of how far their
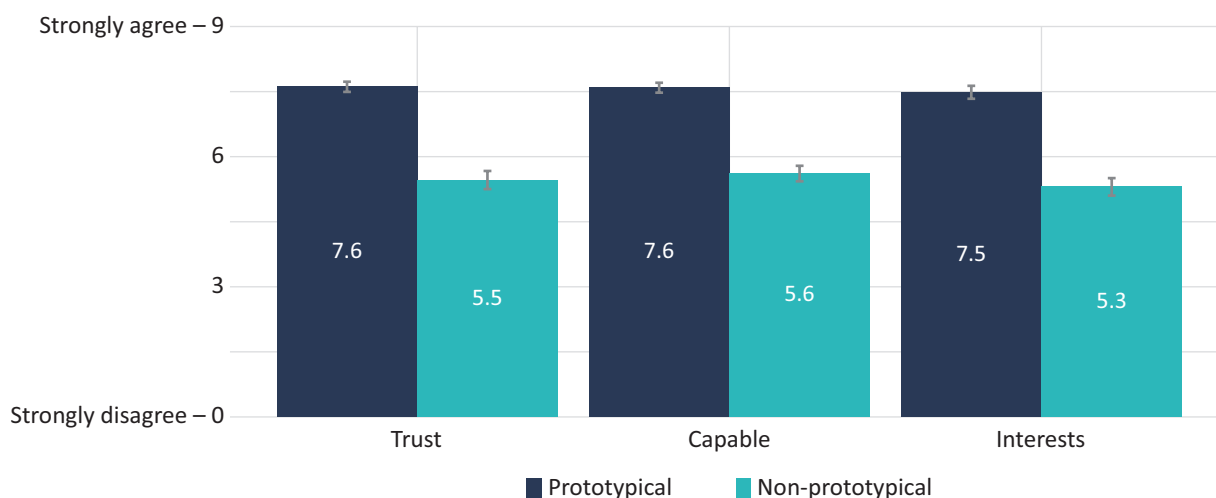

Figure 3. The effects of prototypicality on trust, capability, and interests. Notes: Sample: Deltapoll | Indonesia | 24–28 December 2018 | Sample size n = 2,097 | Data weighted to be representative at the Province | Question: I could absolutely trust this person as a Bupati/Walikota | This person would be a very capable leader as a Bupati/Walikota | This leader would represent my group's interests as a Bupati/Walikota.
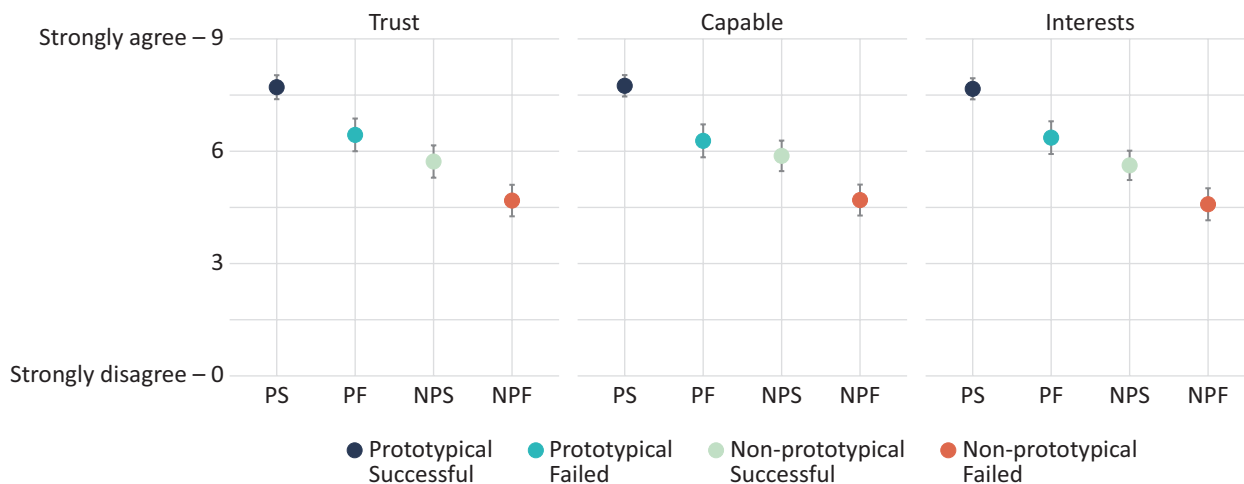
Figure 4. The effects of leader success and failure. Notes: Sample: Deltapoll | Indonesia | 24–28 December 2018 | Sample size n = 2,003 | Data weighted to be representative at the Province | Question: I could absolutely trust this person as a Bupati/Walikota | This person would be a very capable leader as a Bupati/Walikota | This leader would represent my group's interests as a Bupati/Walikota.

success can build perceptions of their trustworthiness and capability.

We looked to see if there are any statistically significant and substantively interesting differences in how different groups in our sample responded to the second experimental treatment. Notably, women responded differently to men to the extra information about success and failure. Female respondents were more likely to punish prototypical failure and more likely to react positively non-prototypical success compared to men—in other words, woman weighed the importance of the new information about success and failure more strongly against the identity of the leader, meaning the identity effects of prototypicality were smaller for women. In terms of age, the 40–59 age group appear unique in upgrading both non-prototypical success and prototypical success—so it's not that they adjusted their view of the importance of identity, per se, but that they rewarded successful leaders regardless of it. University degree holders upgraded prototypical successful leaders too, but were not different to non-degree holders in relation to the other three treatments. Finally, in terms of religiosity, respondents who make faith central to their lives were unique in rewarding prototypical success more than those at other levels of religiosity, and punished successful but non-prototypical leaders in terms of trust and capability, but not interest.

4. Discussion

Our findings suggest that identity trumps performance and that ethnic identity matters less than religious identity and attitudes around tradition and conservatism in Indonesia. We use this final section to reflect upon these findings within the Indonesian context and flag up other observational studies that support the experimental findings presented here. We acknowledge there may be

a gap between reported perceptions of leadership in a survey experiment and actual voting behaviour. By triangulating with previous studies of voting behaviour in local elections in Indonesia we reflect on robustness of our results. These studies illustrate the dynamic trends of Indonesian voters' support and assessment of the candidates. Plus, we use these discussion to underline the fact that the dimensions of prototypicality vary over space and time and are always contingent.

Prasetyawan (2014) examines the two local elections in Jakarta (2007 and 2012) and emphasises how the dynamic relations between ethnicity and voting patterns needs to be understood within the relevant political context. The relations between ethnicity and voting changed in magnitude between the two election cycles, due to a shifting political context and pressing issues that Jakartans were confronted with, i.e., flood. Prasetyawan (2014) argues that while ethnicity remains important notably, in the 2007 election, the capabilities of leaders gained more importance than ethnicity in the 2012 election. This trend continued into the 2017 Jakarta election as people's voting behaviour suggested performance, programmatic politics, ideology and religion could trump ethnic considerations (Aspinall, 2017). The significant relations between identity and support for political leadership in Jakarta local elections appear to have shifted over the period.

In 2007 Jakarta experienced its first direct local election. Here ethnic identity was predominant. Jakarta had never had a native Betawi Governor. The 2007 election was won by Fauzi Bowo, a long-term bureaucrat and a Betawi. His competitor was Adang Dorojatun, a party elite, a retired police general, of Sunda ethnicity. During the campaign, both candidates played the ethnic identity card to secure votes. However, in 2012, this changed with a non-native Jakartan winning. In the 2012 election, Joko Widodo was elected Governor with his Deputy

Basuki Tjahaya Purnama or more popularly known as Ahok. Widodo is Javanese and was mayor of Solo. Ahok is a Christian, Chinese, and was Bupati of East Belitung in 2005, and then won a seat in the national parliament from a district in Bangka Belitung Province in 2009. Together they won 53% votes against the incumbent—a native Jakartan, alongside his deputy, a fellow native Jakartan, and retired military general. The outcome of the 2012 local election in Jakarta illustrates the dynamic and fluid nature of identity for Jakartans at the time (Hatherell & Welsh, 2017). Therefore, the salience of identity, and which dimensions, should always be understood in context—and ethnicity is often not always the main determining factor.

Ahok confirmed his candidacy in 2016 for the following year's election. Despite his reputation for controversial policies and leadership style, support for Ahok had been consistently strong and commentators believed he could win in the first round of election (Aspinall, 2017). However, during the campaign period, Ahok was charged with blasphemy and put on trial through to 2017, meaning that the election was between three pairs of candidates, one of whom was in court. Meanwhile, conservative Muslim groups arranged a series of demonstrations, massive prayer meetings, and rallies to condemn Ahok and demand heavy legal sanctions. Yet the results of the first round of the election saw Ahok winning 43% of the vote, while his contender Anies Baswedan only got 40%.

If the blasphemy case was beneficial for the other candidates, it was not enough to outvote Ahok in the first round. But, the court's decision of two year's jail sentence for Ahok has been referred to as a historical turning point for politics in Indonesia, of rising religious intolerance and the ascendance of hardline conservative Islam (Bourchier, 2019; Hefner, 2019). Equally, though, others have argued that the 2017 Jakarta election should not be understood simply as failed pluralism and religious tolerance. Despite the large campaign condemning Ahok as a menace to Islam and the fact that he lost in the second round of 2017 election, there is still a significant proportion of Jakartan voters who favor programmatic politics, amid the rising of organized conservative Islamist groups that press forward with identity mobilization.

Another study, of the 2010 local election in Medan city, North Sumatra, conducted by Aspinall, Dettman and Warburton (2011), suggests that while identity can be utilized by candidates to mobilize votes, the question of which identity is more politically salient is contingent on other factors such as voters' access to resources. The multiple candidates in the first round of the election were from the majority religion, although they came from various ethnic groups. At this first stage, the cross-community background of candidates was used to attract votes. When there were two candidates left in the second round, however, the focus was switched to religious identity which was used to mobilize votes from various ethnic groups to beat a minority candidate in order to preserve their access to resources. Again, a pattern reflected in our survey data. The case shows how the political salience of identity is constructed, and can shift through electoral campaigns. Another study by Fossati, Simandjuntak, and Fionna (2016) offers an analysis on data from surveys conducted in the city of Medan in North Sumatera, Samarinda in East Kalimantan and Surabaya in East Java, immediately after the local direct elections in 2015. Indications from the survey data suggest that ethnic considerations play a marginal role in the behaviour of voters, even if the report admits that it did not specifically discuss ethnic politics. Xue (2018) cites a report of voters' behaviour conducted by Ananta, Arifin, & Suryadinata (2004), which shows that ethnicity is a less important factor in the direct election of local leaders in South Sulawesi and Bangka Belitung, compared to West Kalimantan where ethnic consideration is more important to the voters. Interestingly, South Sulawesi emerges from our survey data as something of an outlier context too. We believe that taken together these findings suggest that despite the significance of ethnicity, other intervening factors such as pressing political issues at the local level may mediate the effect of ethnic identity mobilization.

5. Conclusion and Implications

This study offers new empirical evidence that supports the social identity theory of leadership, but in contrast to the bulk of previous studies, shows this effect in a non-Western setting, in the political domain. The overall finding from this research is that identity matters for people's willingness to support leaders. There is a significant effect of identity on perceptions of how effective leaders are in Indonesia. These leaders have a built-in reservoir of trust based on their identity, that can buffer them against repercussions from ineffectiveness. This analysis shows that citizens assess their leaders based on their identity primarily and their performance secondarily. It may well be true that persistent poor performance and neglect will eventually overwhelm prototypicality—but in recent years we have seen a good many political leaders test this, seemingly to beyond breaking point.

Our results presented here, though, have added some detail to the more general thesis. First, at least in the current Indonesian context, religious identity trumps ethnicity. Secondly, while many citizens will say that gender is not a key category, our exercise in inviting respondents to build their own prototypical leader overwhelmingly revealed that it is typically a male leader that is preferred. Thirdly, we showed that prototypicality primarily boosts people's trust. But fourthly, that the effects of prototypicality are not evenly manifested—most importantly women appear to be less encouraging of prototypical failure and less dismissive of non-prototypical success than men are, and that in certain contexts (here, South Sulawesi) prototypical leaders are viewed more skeptically.

It is important to stress, however, that the nuances of these findings illustrate that the prototypicality effect is

not generalisable across Indonesia or beyond, because leadership evaluation is always situational. Leaders are evaluated in a proximate context of their organisation or sector, as well as in the distal context of a particular cultural and political system (Aviolo, 2007). While the overall results are consistent and clear, it is possible to identify outlier cases where prototypicality does not trump effectiveness—future work can and should seek to test the relative importance of different dimensions of identity, for example through focus groups and or leveraging conjoint experimental techniques. The findings here would also be strengthened by testing for clientelism and patronage, testing for a more diverse set of leadership behaviours or outcomes than simply success or failure, by using field or natural experiments to test real world voting or electoral behaviour (not just survey outcomes).

From a development perspective, this study suggests there is further value in testing the prototypicality effect across diverse settings. The pattern across much of the world—developed and developing—is that leaders are often not responsive to followers' interests, and do not work towards inclusive development, nor deliver on election promises. These leaders are, however, not always unpopular. Prototypical leaders may have considerably more room for manoeuvre in the sense that they can fail but still be perceived as trustworthy. On the other hand, non-prototypical leaders may have to work harder to gain trust through effective performance or appealing to sub-groups in the population that are more likely to weigh effectiveness against identity. Finally, for those wishing to support leadership, whether domestically or from the outside, the results underline the importance of thinking politically about the significance of identity, not just thinking technically about effective leadership. Leadership development training and support can help leaders think about how they present or narrate their connection with their followers—without this, effective leadership may not be enough.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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About the Authors

David Hudson is the Professor of Politics and Development in the International Development Department at the University of Birmingham. David's work focuses on the politics of development, in particular on the role of coalitions, leadership and power in reform processes and how development actors can think and work politically as part of the Developmental Leadership Program, migration and migration-decision making, and how people in rich countries engage with global development issues as part of the Development Engagement Lab.

Claire Mcloughlin is Lecturer in Political Sociology in the International Development Department at the University of Birmingham. Claire's research focuses on the political sociology of vital public service delivery in conflict-affected and divided societies. In particular, she is interested in the politics of distributive justice and procedural fairness in service delivery, and the historical processes that embed welfare provision in social contracts. Claire currently conducts research on the politics of development and leadership for the Developmental Leadership Program (DLP), for which she acts as Deputy Director (Research).

Anna Margret is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Political Science, Faculty of Politics and Social Sciences, University of Indonesia. She is also the Chair of Cakra Wikara Indonesia (CWI), a policy research institute based in Jakarta. Her work and publication can be found particularly built around the narratives of nationalisms and citizenship, research methodology, gender and politics especially looking at the debates around the politics of representation and women's political participation in Indonesia.

Yolanda Pandjaitan is a Lecturer at the Department of Political Science, University of Indonesia. She is also the Research Director at Cakra Wikara Indonesia, a policy research institute based in Jakarta. Her area of expertise includes Indonesian electoral system, political party system, and women's political representation in Indonesia. She writes extensively on those issues and has been involved in a number of advocacy research related to the revisions of laws on elections and political parties in Indonesia since 2001.

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