

 [Is scholar-leader an oxymoron? by Maureen O'Hara](#) by Louise S. [2014, May 30]

Kirk,

The project to introduce appreciation of human depths into policymaking is in my view urgent and I hope that whether you are elected President of Division 32 or not, you will still keep the pressure on and if there is anything my colleagues can do to assist, please call on us.

The work of Tony Marsella, Louise and many others on this task force might provide a treasure trove of resources for such a project. My colleague Graham Leicester of the International Futures Forum (and co-author of *Dancing at the Edge*) wrote a paper a few years ago entitled, "Policy Learning: Can Government Discover the Treasure Within". It is available in the IFF website www.internationalfuturesforum.com

The phrase "the treasure within" comes from the title of the Delors Report written in 1989 to the OECD document describing the human competencies considered core to success and happiness in the 21st century around which education should be focused. These are "learning to know", "learning to do:", "learning to be" and "learning to be with"--plenty of scope in these last two for attention to human depths or "psychological literacy".

In my view the main reason depth psychologists have not been as successful in getting on the public agenda as Maslow, Rogers, Fromm and psychodynamic psychologists hoped, is that over the decades we narrowed our focus too much on the private therapeutic sphere and not enough on the pedagogical, developmental, political and social transformation applications of our practice. The behavioral economists have been much more successful in making the case for the use of psychology in public policy. (Not always benign) . Also our positive psychology brethren are currently having a huge impact on policy makers with "happiness science", projects such as Comprehensive Soldier Fitness project, and Subjective Wellbeing Index.

In my view this is because the kind of psychology the policies are based on lies squarely within the received view of Western modernist science and so does not threaten the conceptual frames of policy makers --or institutional power arrangements. Depth psychologies--at least emancipatory depth psychologies--that question the epistemological, moral and metaphysical (Miller) grounds upon which they stand, are a much harder pill for policy makers to swallow, undermining as they do reality claims that keep established power in place. .

We have found in Europe and Latin America that it can be done but one has to be "canny" about it. What one offers has to actually solve a problem the policy makers already know

they have. A good example would be the rise of "co-production" projects that put the creative potential of citizens themselves in the center. One elder care project (The SHINE project) that IFF is involved in engages well elders--often women in their sixties and seventies--sometimes even eighties, who want something meaningful to do such as looking out for each other visiting and having conversations with other elders who are shut in. It's a mutual gift --both parties gain companionship and a sense of being cared about and it reduces health care costs. And it is subversive of dysfunctional legacy bureaucracies--like the good therapist who seeks to loosen the hold of maladaptive habits to make way for more creative and expansive possibilities. An important factor though, is it has to be authentic. If it isn't neither party gets much from it. Key to the process is trust, empathy, dignity, solidarity, and the sense that one's personhood is respected. Precisely what lies at the heart of what humanistic depth psychology has to offer.

All power to you, Kirk.

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While we cannot eliminate hunger, we can feed each other. While we cannot eliminate pain, we can hold each other. While we can't improve upon the nature of reality, we can make things better for each other while we're here. Mark Nepo

 [2009--Shouting at the Hebrews](#)

 [Comment by J. I. \(Hans\) Bakker](#) by Louise S. [2014, May 30]

Dear Maureen, Kirk, and others,

This is a stimulating discussion and certainly relevant to those interested in the discipline of psychology, especially "humanistic" psychology, but also psychology more generally. Then there is social psychology. There is also the perspective of psychiatry, psycho-analysis and psycho-historical study.

But I would like to add the dimension of "sociology", especially Neo-Weberian comparative historical sociology and Neo-Marxian studies of alienation, etc. I have just attended the International Social Theory Consortium conference in Knoxville, Tennessee, at the University of Tennessee. I do not believe there was a single psychologist or social psychologist present.

But the sociologists, political scientists and economists who did attend (about 75 in all) emphasized some of the same themes as in this dialogue. (Some sessions did not, of course).

We are all in our little disciplinary boxes and our "divisions" or "sections" or specific research institutes. The political decision-makers rarely pay any attention to any of us, no matter how many books and articles we publish and no matter how careful and clear our analyses. It is not a matter of the right methods or methodologies. It is not even a matter of the right theorists or the most ivy league types of schools, from Oxbridge on down. With very, very rare exceptions (e.g. Czech Republic) politicians are not academics! Most seem to have obtained "gentleman's C" degrees at prestigious places (due to network connections and of course "cultural capital").

So that is why I have chosen to write about Henry Kissinger. He was considered a true scholar and academic. Indeed, his 1954 Ph.D. dissertation (which was published as a book almost immediately) is solid work. But my main point in my paper is that he essentially did not continue to grow academically. My basic question is: What would have happened if a really good instructor had gotten Henry to see that his study of 19th century Europe was only that. What would have happened if Henry had accepted the offer to go to Chicago (when Harvard turned him down) and had spent another ten years expanding his knowledge of China, East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia and Southwest Asia ("the Orient"). I came to this realization reading his quite good book on China and suddenly understanding that his recently acquired knowledge of China would have done him a lot of good if he had had it when he was meeting with Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai. Moreover, I personally also feel he could have incorporated the idea of patrimonialism found in Max Weber's *Economy and Society*. (Ironically, there are some footnotes in Henry's book on China which do use Weber's ideal type model, but that just stays in the footnotes and is not central to the story Henry Kissinger and his co-writer try to tell.)

Here is a question: Has there ever been an example of a true academic, widely read and fully educated in the best sense of the word, who has also been a political leader? I am not talking about a Platonic "philosopher king" since Plato seems to have advocated a non-democratic approach to things (at least according to Karl Popper and, I believe, Alvin Gouldner). Was there ever a real scholar who also had real power? Was there ever, to make the situation even more complex, a well balanced person who was a scholar and an effective politician? Or is that simply asking for too much?

(Some might contend that President Barack H. Obama is a true scholar since he does have some academic credentials, but obviously he also did not continue to study in the way I am speaking of here. Bill Clinton seems to not have been a serious law student and seems to have used his time in the U.K. well enough, but not for strictly scholarly pursuits, etc.)

Was there ever a psychologist who was a scholar-leader?

Max Weber's twin essays on "Wissenschaft ["science"] as a Vocation" and "Politics as a

Vocation" are relevant here. Weber the scholar played much more minor roles in terms of political decision-making than one might have expected. (He seems to have had some input at Versailles in 1919.) His wife Marianne was a politician-scholar and comes close to what I mean.

(I myself also feel that M. K. "Mahatma" Gandhi, the politician, was also a bit of a scholar, at least one sense, but that is highly contentious!)

What do you think, Kirk? Maureen? Louise? (I suppose the Mandarin ideal could be evoked here, but that is pre-European Enlightenment and not "Wissenschaftliches" knowledge, more literary etc.)

Cheers, from the state of Virginia,

Hans

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 [Comment by Louise S.](#) by Louise S. [2014, May 30]

Dear Hans,

My answer is that scholar-leader is possible only in the framework of Plato and Confucius, namely not democracy, because the scholar-leader won't get majority votes. There were many scholar-leaders in Chinese history, except you don't consider their pursuits scholarship. A more inclusive framework would be intellectuals. Can intellectuals be political leaders?

Cheers,

Louise

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 [Comment by Hans J. I. Bakker](#) by Louise S. [2014, May 30]

Dear Louise,

You make a very good point: scholars versus intellectuals.

Yes, intellectuals can be political leaders, especially if we broaden the use of the term "intellectual".

But really top notch academic scholarship (of the type Kissinger really only accomplished in his Ph.D. dissertation of 1954) is very, very rare, even among academics and intellectuals!

Someone like J. van Buitenen (spelling?) who translated most of the Mahabharata from Sanskrit to English before he died (and left some of it unfinished) will "never" have time to ALSO be a significant political leader (except perhaps very briefly, say five years, in university circles).

Sincerely,

Hans J. I. Bakker
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 [Comment by Bhawuk](#) by Louise S. [2014, May 30]

namaste Hans:

Professor Woodrow Wilson was a professor at Princeton, and later its president (1902-1910) and then the US president from 1913 to 1921. Perhaps he meets your criterion.

Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, the second president of India was a professor of philosophy, and a well known scholar with many publications.

Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of India wrote *The Discovery of India*, which could be considered a scholarly work. He was one of the three visionaries of Non-Aligned Movement that shaped the diplomacy of cold-war days for the rest of the world not aligned to US and USSR.

If you consider Kissinger, you may also consider John T Dunlop, Labor Secretary, who was a scholar. There are other economists who have served as secretaries in US government.

Have a wonderful week.

Bhawuk
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 [Comment by Maharaj](#) by Louise S. [2014, May 30]

Hello!

I would also suggest considering Sri Aurobindo

Warmly
Maharaj
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 [Comment by Emily Maynard](#) by Louise S. [2014, May 30]

Hello:

I have been following this listserve for a few years -- it's quite a refreshing divergence from what I normally come across in clinical psychology in the USA -- and thought I'd contribute a few scholar-leaders who immediately come to mind.

Dag Hammarskjöld, former Secretary-General of the United Nations, was a Swedish PhD-level economist who entered public service in Sweden as an economics consultant. He was a complex and multifaceted figure who, in addition to his economic and political service, was a poet.

Salvador Allende, former president of Chile, was a medical doctor who did doctoral research on mental health and criminal delinquency, being interested in social factors that contributed to mental illness and criminality. He was later minister of health of Chile before being elected president. He also wrote a scholarly work called *La Realidad Médico Social de Chile* (The social and medical reality of Chile).

The late senator Paul Wellstone, of my home state of Minnesota, USA, was a professor of political science at Carleton College for 20+ years before entering political office.

A few other Latin American leaders come to mind as having medical backgrounds and a scholarly bent (Juscelino Kubitschek of Brasil, Michelle Bachelet of Chile), but perhaps someone with further knowledge could contribute more Latin American examples.

Best,
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 [Comment by J. I. \(Hans\) Bakker](#) by Louise S. [2014, May 30]

Dear Emily and others interested in this topic,

All three of your suggestions are excellent. I would like to see further discussion of them as well as Ignatieff and Havel. Maybe we could make up a kind of "final list"!

Cheers,
Hans
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 [Comment by Maureen O'Hara](#) by Louise S. [2014, May 30]

I appreciate the discussion trying to identify politician scholars . I would like to say, however , that my comment about politicians not being equipped for the roles they must play was not referring to intellectual or academic achievement . I was talking about psychological maturity- what many would call wisdom . The sense one gets (OK, the sense I get is that there are no grownups in the house . There is no sign of a grasp of the emotional complexities of governance, of empathy for the other, of reflective self awareness of their limits and openness to embracing errors and learning from them.

The DAVOS boys and their chums are just that , boys--privileged but to my eyes and ears emotionally boys nevertheless.

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