



DLP

Policy and Practice for Developmental
Leaders, Elites and Coalitions

DEVELOPMENTAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Background Paper **07**

Workshop Report: Leadership, Integrity and Women's Coalitions: Mid-term workshop, Cape Town, 25-26 May 2010

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The Developmental Leadership Program (DLP) addresses an important gap in international thinking and policy about the critical role played by leaders, elites and coalitions in the politics of development. This growing program brings together business, academic and civil society partners from around the world to explore the role of human agency in the processes of development. DLP will address the policy, strategic and operational implications of 'thinking and working politically' - for example, about how to help key players solve collective action problems, forge developmental coalitions, negotiate effective institutions and build stable states.

The Developmental Leadership Program

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07

Key Research Questions
and Emerging Findings

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1. Introduction

The Leadership Program (LPDLEC)¹ held a workshop in Cape Town on the 25-26th May 2010 to review four of its ten on-going research projects.

The aims of the workshop were:

1. To ensure that LPDLEC research teams in different countries, working on different subjects, shared a common understanding of the overarching research questions and the approach to study them; and
2. To share first findings, learn from each other and give each other feedback on how to improve and develop the research and its policy implications.

The four LPDLEC research projects which were discussed were:

- **Women's leadership, elites and coalitions in Jordan and Egypt** by Mariz Tadros, Taghreed Hemdan and Hind Mahmoud;
- **The making of the Sexual Offences Act in South Africa, 2007**, by Rebecca Hodes, Jennifer Thorpe and Orly Stern;
- **The institutions of integrity and the integrity of institutions** by Minka Woermann and Eduard Grebe;
- **Data and profiles of African heads of state and government** by Monique Theron.

In addition, there was a session by Adrian Leftwich on the overarching research questions, key issues and methods. Heather Lyne de Ver presented the LPDLEC's analytical tools: The Political Analytical Tool (PAT) and the Leadership Database. A copy of the workshop program can be downloaded [here](#).

¹ Now known as the Developmental Leadership Program (DLP) see the website www.dlprog.org

2. Key Questions Asked

The research and policy program objectives of the LPDLEC are to explore how, when and why developmental leaderships and coalitions (human agency) have been able to act politically to pursue developmental objectives in diverse structural and institutional contexts. Whereas the international community has tended to look for structural and institutional solutions to developmental problems and dead-locks, this work aims to 'bring agency back in' to our understanding of the dynamics of development processes. It so seeks to recalibrate the analytical and explanatory balance between structure and agency with a much more focused investigation of the role of individuals and their organizations and the political strategies they have pursued in varying institutional contexts.

The key objectives of the LPDLEC research are to:

- Identify the factors (both agential and structural) which have facilitated or frustrated the emergence of developmental leaderships, elites and coalitions, rather than collusive or predatory ones;
- Isolate and explain the factors which have promoted their relative success or failure; and
- Develop policy, programming and operational recommendations that flow from the work.

Here are some of the questions asked in the projects:

- What factors have facilitated and frustrated the emergence of women's leaderships and coalitions around gender issues in Jordan and Egypt?
- What factors have influenced their relative success or failure in the different political and institutional contexts in Jordan and Egypt?
- What was the role of the Working Group on Sexual Offences coalition and its leaderships in shaping the content and in influencing the passing of the Sexual Offences Act in South Africa?
- What was the social and institutional context in which the South African Working Group coalition emerged? How did the coalition relate to state actors in trying to influence the content and framing of the Act?
- Can a useful conceptual framework be formulated for thinking about the role of ethics and integrity in leadership for development?
- Are there common empirical features among leaders that can be correlated to specific political phenomena such as democratic states and effective governance?
- Can the findings of this research contribute to how we "think and work politically" in the context of development policy and assistance?

3. Emerging Findings

- **Interplay between agency and structure:** A central hypothesis of the DLP is that the interplay between individual actions and strategies (agency) of leaders and the institutional context (structure) in which, and with which, they operate is a useful lens through which to study and explain developmental leadership and change. As the research projects progress, we find that focusing on this interplay between agency and structure is indeed useful.
- **Leadership as a process:** Studying "leadership as a process" rather than "leadership as the traits

of individual leaders” pushes us to look beyond the individual leaders and helps us gain an understanding of the structures of power and political opportunity in which progressive and reforming leaderships have to work, and how they frame their strategies and mobilize people and resources to advance their goals within such contexts.

Findings of the Jordan/Egypt project:

The project is identifying and studying a number of factors or variables that may explain the emergence and success or failure of women’s leaderships and coalitions in Jordan and Egypt. Of the six case studies selected, two are of coalitions deemed to have been successful, two unsuccessful and two are still in process of achieving their goals. The variables identified and studied so far include the following:

1. *The ‘trigger’ for the emergence of the coalition, its timing, and the response to it.*
 2. *The characteristics of the founders and leaders.*
 3. *Funding, internal and external.*
 4. *External influence.*
 5. *The nature, salience and scope of the issue.*
 6. *The formal and informal institutional context of politics, power and governance.*
 7. *The nature and power of the opposition.*
 8. *Framing the issue and strategies of influence.*
1. *The trigger, its timing, and the response to it:* In five of the six case studies it is possible to identify one or more specific triggers that led to the emergence of a coalition. These vary from a specific event (an international conference, a press campaign, a change in law elsewhere) to a combination of several events or changes, to the sudden availability of funding. However, a trigger is not sufficient for coalitions to emerge (see for instance the research project on Yemen, where in spite of triggers little response is being seen in the shape of coalitions. For more details click [here](#)).
 2. *The characteristics of the founders and leaders:* In all of the cases the leaders and founders are university-educated and well-connected women.
 3. *Funding - internal and external:* all of the coalitions established in Egypt receive foreign funding and were established with the assistance of donor money. However, there were differences in the extent to which there was already a local initiative or whether the initiative was taken by a donor. In the case of Jordan, two of the three coalitions received money from foreign donors. Given the importance of foreign donors for these coalitions, the researchers will further explore the role that donors play in influencing the success or failure of coalitions and the implications this has for policy.
 4. *External influence:* Not only is it important to study the extent to which Western and international organizations are an external influence on what happens nationally, but it is also important to study the role of donor aid to Egypt and Jordan from non-Western sources such as Arab and, in particular, Gulf countries. This non-Western aid is more difficult to identify and assess since a significant proportion of it is not documented and given through individual philanthropic acts. Nonetheless, given its suspected scope, it is important to examine its impact on social relations, values and norms, including gender dimensions.
 5. *Nature and scope of the issue:* Some of the coalitions have hugely ambitious goals, trying to change an array of political, social, cultural and economic issues. Others focus on a particular

law. There are no findings yet showing how the nature and scope of the issue affect the emergence and success or failure of the coalition.

6. **Formal and informal institutional context of politics and governance:** In both Egypt and Jordan the political situation is highly volatile and unpredictable. Spaces tend to expand and contract according to the political will of the government. Gender agendas do not necessarily advance progressively in a particular direction. For example, laws expanding women's rights passed at some point can easily get challenged or reversed at a later point. The project will investigate to what extent this factor has an influence on the failure or success of coalitions.
7. **The nature and power of the opposition:** In both countries, the opposition to the case study coalitions' goals come from (i) certain elements within the government who have vested interests in maintaining the status quo and/or maintaining perceived national security interests; (ii) the Islamic movement – such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and its offshoot the Islamic Front in Jordan; and/or (iii) the media and public opinion expressed through it (for instance by criticizing coalitions for being too “Western” and not following Arab or Islamic culture and values.) A perplexing question to be investigated is why opposition by the Muslim Brotherhood or Islamic Front is thought to have led to the failure of some coalitions, while other coalitions have managed to avoid active opposition by these Islamic groups.
8. **Framing the issue and strategies of influence:** Framing is about “packaging” messages appropriately according to the audience that is targeted by a coalition. The case study on Egypt looks at the extent to which the gender goals were framed in religious terms - showing that the goals are in compliance with Islamic jurisprudence – and to what extent this was deemed to have helped or hindered achieving the goals. In the case of Jordan, the Coalition on Domestic Violence, framed the issue in terms of protecting the family as a whole, instead of in terms of protecting or defending women's rights. The researchers will try to analyze to what extent the framing contributed or detracted from the success of the coalition.
9. **Other:** One of the findings to emerge from the research in Egypt is that, for coalitions to work, investing in process is just as important as investing in achieving purpose. In the case of the CEDAW coalition there was much investment of time and effort in the earlier years in strengthening the internal participatory mechanisms of decision-making, organizational cohesion and building a sense of collective identity.

Findings of the South Africa project:

The National Working Group on Sexual Offences was partly successful in determining the contents of the Sexual Offences Act and in improving its clauses to protect survivors of sexual violence. However, regarding other aspects of sexual offences law reform, the Working Group failed to achieve its goals and Working Group members were profoundly disappointed. Parliament had come to view the Working Group as a body of opposition to be excluded from the legal reform process, rather than a partner to government in formulating the most progressive sexual offences legislation. High-ranking government officials were likely to be the most powerful and influential actors in determining the Act's final content. The research project is studying what happened in the interplay between individual leaders and organizations (agency) and the institutional context of politics, governance, rules and bureaucracy encountered (structure). The South Africa project will identify and study variables that led to the emergence and partial success/failure of the coalition. A large number of these variables seem be similar to those identified for the Jordan/Egypt project.

Findings of the institutions of integrity project:

This project has drafted the outline of a conceptual framework for thinking about the role of ethics and integrity in development leadership. Theories of leadership and theories of institutions were reviewed, and the implications that these theories hold for our understanding of integrity were elucidated. In terms of leadership theories, a specific distinction was drawn between the agency and the systemic (or relational) leadership perspectives. Whereas the agential perspective views leadership as embodied within specific agents, the relational perspective sees leadership as a distributed, systemic process. In other words, although individuals take on leadership roles, the emergence of these roles is contingent on institutional and environmental factors, as opposed to solely being determined by individual attributes and choice. The relational view represents a more complex understanding of leadership, as both individual and contextual factors need to be accounted for.

The researchers argue that ethics and integrity in leadership is not solely about 'leaders with integrity,' but also about institutions of integrity and the integrity of institutions. The former refers to institutions that regulate social, political and economic life and which define ethically appropriate behaviour. The latter refers to sets of institutions which are consistent, effective and appropriate for the developmental needs of a particular society.

The research adopts a dynamic, relational view of leadership and institutions, incorporating insights from complexity and systems theory. A model of developmental integrity is proposed that is in line with the relational perspective on leadership. This model emphasises the interplay between structure and agency (a problem seldom dealt with in the literature on institutions). One of the key tenets is that while institutions define the structural conditions for individual behaviour (i.e. create opportunities, incentives and constraints on individual actions), institutions are also emergent properties that arise from the (cooperative and competitive) interactions between individual agents; and, that, in turn, emergent systemic structures create opportunities and constrain the behaviour of individual agents. Over time, feedback loops between the individual and institutional levels reinforce or undermine certain patterns of behaviour, which then become institutionalised in formal or informal rules, norms, policies, and laws – or are de-institutionalised. According to this view, leadership (i.e. agency) becomes an essential mechanism for contributing to the formation and maintenance of the structural properties of institutions of integrity and to the integrity of institutions.

The other participants of the workshop found the proposed conceptual framework useful, applicable and comprehensive, although further clarification and illustration of the framework is needed.

Findings of the African heads of state project:

The database is currently being populated. The process of collecting, collating and recording attributes of leaders requires thorough planning and extensive conceptualisation. Concepts need to be thoroughly operationalised in order to ensure consistency and accuracy when recording data. Therefore, the database's structure has been continuously revised and restructured in order to ensure the accurate collection and presentation of data. The researcher and database team provide guidance on how best to interpret fields and fill the database. Too few leaders have been entered into the database to come up with meaningful findings. However, ideas are emerging for database search questions. Preliminary questions that could deliver interesting results once the database is fully populated, relate to the educational background of presidents and their career history, as well as trends related to military rulers and presidents' role in democratization in Africa.

4. First Policy Implications

These ideas are still emerging and sharper policy messages with operational implications will follow as the research is finalized, but some pointers are worth noting.

Jordan/Egypt:

- Supporting coalitions, by both external and internal agencies, is different from funding projects. To be effective, support needs to be provided for a period of time that goes beyond the project cycle. Furthermore, attention needs to be given to supporting organizations to fulfil their goals rather than just fund the implementation of short, project specific initiatives.
- Making member organizations of coalitions compete for funds can seriously undermine cohesion of coalitions and successful collective action.
- Leadership is critical for the success of coalitions. The legitimacy of the leadership and the ability of the leadership to create cohesion and/or clear division of labour between members are crucial.
- If donors demand transparency, good governance, and internal democracy from coalitions, then they need to show these qualities themselves too.
- Donors must have an excellent understanding of the context and the relationships (including conflicts) that exist between coalition members of the coalitions they help found or fund.
- Donors must recognize the inherent pitfalls of donor-grantee relationships: the dependency of grantee on donor; the need to maximize funding by the grantee, the way funding influences grantee priorities, choices and actions.

South Africa:

- Civil society coalitions are potentially strengthened by incorporating key political figures in their coalitions in order to understand and navigate the political landscape more effectively.
- Civil society coalitions can be more effective when exploiting different channels (as opposed to one channel) within the institutional context in order to have legislation changed or passed.
- Civil society coalitions may be more effective than individual organizations in the context of law reform.
- Sustained strategic alliances and action between civil society organizations and government officials is necessary to influence parliamentary practice.
- Considering the previous four bullet points, being able to utilize prior networks in order to get access to the right people is crucial.
- Implementation of legislation is inevitably a challenge often involving severe resource constraints in developing countries. Passing legislation is not enough. Resources need to be available for implementation.
- The gender machinery that exists within parliament should be capacitated to fulfil its mandates and should be monitored by civil society.

Integrity project:

- This work is primarily aimed at clarifying how concepts such as 'ethical' and 'integrity' may best be used in the context of discussing development issues and leadership.
- The study will help to develop a better understanding of institutions, organizations and leadership that accounts for both structural and agential factors.
- The work will help policy makers to think more clearly about the relationship between individual integrity, the institutions of integrity and the integrity of institutions.
- This study will suggest improved ways of analysing the politics of leadership and its role in shaping both behaviour and institutional formation, maintenance and evolution.

5. Conclusions

The researchers found that the questions that the DLP asks and its focus on the interplay between agency and structure offer a useful framework with which to analyze coalitions and the change they seek to bring about. By framing the research in this way, attention is being paid to both the actions and strategies of individual leaders, coalitions and organizations and to the institutional context in which they act. The intention is that conclusions drawn from better analysis guided by the DLP's approach will lead to sounder policy implications and recommendations for development agencies and governments.

The review of the four projects at this early stage in the research was deemed useful as it enabled researchers to sharpen their approach and make sure they were on the right track. The final papers will be published on the DLP website (www.dlprog.org) towards the end of 2010.

DLP Publications

Research Papers

1. Jo-Ansie van Wyk (2009) "Cadres, Capitalists and Coalitions: The ANC, Business and Development in South Africa".
2. David Subudubudu with Patrick Molutsi (2009) "Leaders, Elites and Coalitions in the Development of Botswana".
3. Eduard Grebe with Nicoli Nattrass (2009) "Leaders, Networks and Coalitions in the AIDS Response: A Comparison of Uganda and South Africa".
4. Deborah Brautigam with Tania Diolle (2009) "Coalitions, Capitalists and Credibility: Overcoming the Crisis of Confidence at Independence in Mauritius".
5. Jo Beall with Mduduzi Ngonyama (2009) "Indigenous Institutions, Traditional Leaders and Developmental Coalitions: The Case of Greater Durban, South Africa".
6. Adrian Leftwich (2009) "Bringing Agency Back In: Politics and Human Agency in Building Institutions and States".
7. Junji Banno & Kenichi Ohno (2010) "The Flexible Structure of politics in Meiji Japan".

Background Papers

1. Adrian Leftwich & Steve Hogg (2007) "Leaders, Elites and Coalitions: The case for leadership and the primacy of politics in building effective states, institutions and governance for sustainable growth and social development".
2. Adrian Leftwich & Steve Hogg (2008) "The Politics of Institutional Indigenization: leaders, elites and coalitions in building appropriate and legitimate institutions for sustainable growth and social development".
3. Heather Lyne de Ver (2008) "Leadership, Politics and Development: A Literature Survey".
4. Heather Lyne de Ver (2009) "Conceptions of Leadership".
5. Adrian Leftwich & Steve Hogg (2010) "The Leadership Program: Overview & Objectives".
6. Adrian Leftwich (2010) "An Overview of the Research in Progress for the Leadership Program: Developmental Leaders, Elites and Coalitions".
7. Isabelle van Notten (2010) "Integrity, Leadership, Women's Coalitions and the Politics of Institutional Reform. Bringing Agency Back In. Mid-Term Workshop Report, Cape Town 25-26 May 2010".
8. Edward Laws (2010) "The 'Revolutionary Settlement' in 17th Century England: Deploying a Political Settlements Analysis".



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