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Stranger than Fiction: A Qualitative Thesis Examining Leaders, Followers and the Distribution of Power in the 2016 United States Presidential Election

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A Qualitative Thesis Examining Leaders, Followers and the Distribution of Power

in the 2016 United States Presidential Election

By

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

Abstract

Historically, the leadership literature mentions the role of followers only in passing. New research is emerging about the importance of followers and the role they play in the distribution of power between leaders and followers. Using Kellerman's theory of leadership as a theoretical framework, this study positions engaged voters as "followers" in the 2016 Presidential election, and examines their perceptions of the election and its relationship to the distribution of power between leaders and followers. The findings reveal that in a context marked by dissatisfaction, political polarization and technology, followers in this study want change, but cannot or do not envision it beyond the bounds of the current governmental system.

Introduction

Power is one of the key dynamics in the relationship between leaders and followers. In general, leaders are thought to have power by virtue of their position and authority. For some time now, I've had the sense that followers are exerting their own power by openly expressing opposition and challenges to the power and authority held by elected leaders and long standing American institutions. Over the past year, I watched protests, both peaceful and violent, on the streets of American cities following videos showing police officers shooting and killing often unarmed African Americans. Here in Minnesota, just a few short miles from my home, Philando Castile was shot and killed during a routine traffic stop on July 6, 2016 (Fuber & Perez-Pena, 2016). Days later, protesters expressing their objection to this perceived use of excessive force, shut down I-35 southbound at University Avenue during the morning rush hour causing miles of stopped traffic (Walsh & Harlow, 2016). These protests were examples of followers demonstrating against the authority of an institution-the police.

In other countries, followers have also expressed their unhappiness with elected leaders and long standing institutions. In June 2016, the citizens of the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union, shocking not only world political systems but also the global economy, causing world financial markets to plummet and the British Pound to lose 10% of its value (Hunt & Wheeler, 2016). Events like the Castile demonstration and the Brexit vote raised my awareness that followers are increasingly and openly expressing their dissatisfaction, prompting me to wonder how follower behavior is affecting leaders.

These events make me wonder, what is going on? My perception was that there is a disconnect between what leaders are doing and what followers need and/or want. In turning to

the literature, I found limited research about followers or about the dynamics of how the balance of power moves and shifts between leaders and followers. In considering how I might learn more about both the current dynamics going on in the world specific to leaders and followers, I turned to the 2016 American Presidential Election.

The 2016 Presidential election offered a fascinating microcosm for studying the distribution of power between leaders and followers. Most news agencies and pollsters projected a Hillary Clinton victory (Vogel & Isenstadt, 2016). Against all expectations, Donald Trump won the election, stunning both Republicans and Democrats (Flegenheimer & Barbaro, 2016). Like Al Gore in the 2000 Presidential election against George W. Bush (Desilver, 2011), Clinton won the popular vote (by more than 2.8 million votes (Krieg, 2017)), but the result is the same – her opponent won the all-important Electoral College votes. A total of 77,744 voters in three states, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Michigan, delivered the Electoral College votes of those states to Trump, earning him the Electoral College win (McCormack, 2016), making Trump President.

This study asked the question "What can the 2016 Presidential Election tell us about the distribution of power between leaders and followers?" and revealed that little has changed in the traditional distribution of political power between leaders and followers in the context of Presidential elections. Through semi-scripted interviews of four politically-engaged United States voters and two leadership scholars, then using open and *a priori* coding, I found those interviewed raised no objections to the American three-branch system of government or the Constitutional process that elects the United States President, namely the Electoral College system. This allegiance to the formal "balance of powers" was in spite of the fact that the participants were dissatisfied with politicians and political parties, they feel the effects of

increasing polarization across political viewpoints and personal relationships and finally, they believe technology influences these feelings.

Ultimately, and contrary to Kellerman's theory, participants expressed no concern about, or opposition to, the three-branch system that controls political power in America: the Executive, Legislative and Judicial Branches of government. Further, none of my participants called for change in the Electoral College system that controls how America elects its President. As a result of this research, I concluded that voters in the 2016 Presidential election want change but cannot or do not envision it beyond the bounds of the current governmental system.

In order to support this finding, I begin by describing the purpose of my research and defining key terms used throughout this paper. Next, I set out the theoretical framework of my research, which relied on Kellerman's (2012) theory that the balance of power between leaders and followers is an equilateral triangle in which context is just as important as leaders and followers themselves (p. xxi). This is followed by a statement of the problem which describes the context of the 2016 American Presidential election, specifically noting key issues for, and perspectives of, followers going into the 2016 Presidential election cycle, namely the economy, views of political figures, and increasing populism and polarization.

After laying this groundwork, the Literature Review describes the historical research on followers and highlights two emerging frameworks for studying followers. Next, I review current research and perspectives for understanding and interpreting follower behavior. Finally, I summarize research on political polarization and the impact of technology for and on followers in order to explain the dynamics influencing follower behavior in the 2016 American

Presidential election. I conclude by describing my methodology, detailing the findings, and then provide analysis of my research in the Discussion and Implications sections of this paper.

Throughout the paper, I use the term "distribution of power" because "balance" infers there is an equal distribution of power. Because this research is focused on the 2016 American Presidential election, I use the term "leaders" to mean political parties, political candidates and the American political system which is a democracy, which is to say that the context of my study is unique to American and could not easily transfer to many other countries. I use the terms "follower(s)" and voter(s)" interchangeably to identify the US electorate, exercising their Constitutional right to vote in the 2016 American President election. Finally, I rely on Kellerman's (2012) definitions of power, authority and influence. Power, for example is the ability of a leader to influence followers to do what the leader wants, by force if required, regardless of what followers want. Authority is a leader's ability to get what he or she wants based upon position or rank. Influence is the ability of followers to modify the behavior or decisions of leaders (p. xxi).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical frame for this study stems from Kellerman's (2012) theory of Leadership as an Equilateral Triangle. Specifically, I employ her description of leadership as an equilateral triangle, and her explanation of the contextual factors affecting the relationship between leaders and followers, to understand the context for this research as well as to analyze the data. I further employ her definition of *contextual expertise* in order to understand how leaders can maintain effective relationships with followers, even in difficult circumstances. This framework suited

my research well as it provided specific topics I could explore with interview participants to answer my central question

Leadership as an Equilateral Triangle

Kellerman (2013) uses the equilateral triangle analogy to expresses the idea that leaders, followers and context play equal roles in the balance of power. The equilateral triangle is particularly important because, as Kellerman cautions, it is detrimental to think that any one of these elements of the triangle is more or less important than the other (p. 137). Kellerman's theory hinges on the idea that leaders often overlook the importance of context. As I interpret her theory, context in and of itself has no power or authority, rather it has the ability to influence how leaders and followers interact with each other in any struggle for power. For example, if my daughter wants to spend the afternoon with me seeing a movie but I want to spend the afternoon with her at the beach, one of us must exert power to get what we want. I could use my financial power to get what I want by telling my daughter I will not pay to see a movie. Alternatively, I could rely on my parental authority to insist we go to the beach. My daughter could try to influence me by telling me the movie received good reviews and how much she wants to see it. However, if it starts to rain, I am more likely to relinquish my power and/or authority to agree to see a movie. Why? Because the context of the day has changed.

To better explain Kellerman's theory and its relevance to my research, I detail each part of the triangle.

Leaders.

Essentially, Kellerman cautions that political leaders must be aware of the contexts affecting followers, from what is happening in followers' lives on a local level to their perceptions about how national and global events affect them.

Kellerman (2012) describes how political leaders are chosen:

"In theory at least, we presume that people get elected president or prime minister, or for that matter mayor, because they *deserve* to, because their capacities attest to the legitimacy of their claims to power, authority and influence . . . Further, we believe that political leaders hold to their end of the bargain when government is functional – when it protects against threats foreign and domestic" (p. 71).

Kouzes and Posner (2012) identify three leadership skills particularly relevant to Kellerman's observation. They say effective leaders model the way, (pp.77- 95), inspire a shared vision (pp. 101-126) and enable others to act through building relationships and trust (pp. 214-240). As to leaders specifically, Kouzes and Posner say leaders appeal to followers when they are credible (p. 74) and are only able to inspire a shared vision by paying attention to what is happening around them; leaders must "appreciate both the whole and the parts" (p. 109). Kellerman's equilateral triangle makes the same observation on a broader scale. Leaders must be aware of the larger contexts in which followers are living.

Kellerman and Kouzes and Posner stress the importance of followers by cautioning leaders to pay attention to the needs of followers. Leaders who do not appreciate their followers' points of view or circumstances will face challenges to their power and authority.

Followers.

In Kellerman's (2012) theory, followers today are restless and harder for leaders to satisfy than in the past. She attributes this reluctance to follow without challenge or objection to changes in culture and technology, saying followers today have higher expectations and know more about leaders than ever before. Kellerman describes followers in search of leaders in the following way:

> "But the best reason, certainly the ideal reason, to follow, is that we want to follow-because we genuinely believe in the integrity and competence of those with power, authority and influence. Small wonder, then, that when merit matters most, and when merit is viewed as meager or even absent altogether, disappointment and disillusionment set in.

> America has come to be considered nearly ungovernable . . . Since so many leaders seem to so many followers to be inept or corrupt, hapless or greedy, Americans have changed, gradually but ineffably into a nation of malcontents: unwilling to support those in charge unless they must, and unable ourselves to fix what is broken. Add to this disappointment and the fact that many followers increasingly feel entitled and act emboldened, you have a difficult mix, one spelling trouble for individuals and institutions not only in the United States but, as we know by now, the world over" (Kellerman, 2012, p. 72-73).

Kellerman says essentially, that followers want leaders they can trust and respect. In the absence of trustworthy, reliable leadership, followers will act on their unhappiness in any number of ways. An example of this was the protest against the police shooting of Philando Castile. Kellerman addresses the idea that Americans are ungovernable specifically in her thinking about the role of context in the balance of power between leaders and followers.

Context.

Again, Kellerman say context has the ability to influence how leaders and followers interact with each other in any struggle for power. Importantly, she notes it is detrimental to think the role of context is any more or less important than leaders or followers (Kellerman, 2012, p. 137). Kellerman asserts that three contextual factors play a critical role in the balance of power between leaders and followers: history, a decline in respect for authority and technology (Kellerman, 2012, p. 3-65; 2013, p. 137-138). This section will explore each of these factors.

History.

Kellerman say leaders must pay attention to the history of power between leaders and followers. Over time, history has shown over and over how followers have diminished the power of leaders. Kellerman (2013) points to a number of historical events to demonstrate how the power of leaders has decreased and the power of followers has increased. First, Kellerman discusses revolutions like those that took place in England (1668), America (1776) and France (1792) saying each served to ". . . redistribute power, authority and influence . . . from those who have and giving it to those who did not" resulting in fundamental changes to these countries and societies (Kellerman, 2012, p. 10).

She believes the American Revolution is particularly critical for today's American voter. The democracy established following the American Revolution set out the idea that people should govern themselves—"government not only of the people, but by the people"- and according to Kellerman, this form of democracy remains a powerful collective concept in America (Kellerman, 2015, p. 34-35).

Kellerman (2012) also highlights more recent historical events in which regular people, followers, shifted the balance of power (p. 16-19). In America, she points to the civil rights movement and one of its leaders, Martin Luther King, Jr. (and other movements of the 1960s and 1970s) saying about followers, "Individuals and groups heretofore at the margins--experienced a new sense of entitlement from which nearly no one was exempt . . ." (p. 20). Kellerman believes the social movements in American in the 1960s and 1970s "changed relations between leaders and followers forever, first in the United States and then elsewhere" (p.20).

Shirky (2011) says the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989 represented a "shift in the balance of power between the state and civil society that led to the largely peaceful collapse of Communist control" (p. 28). This fall was driven in part by the policies of Perestroika (the move toward a communist-capitalist economy) and Glasnost (the easing restrictions on personal expression in the Soviet Union) implemented by Mikhail Gorbechev after he came to power in 1985 (Exploring 5 reasons, 2016).

These examples are relevant to my research in that they show what can happen when political leaders do not listen to the needs and concerns followers. When followers go unheard or otherwise feel overlooked by their leaders, they will exert their own power, the power of numbers to change the way things are done. Further, followers can turn to history to see that they can indeed force leaders and the systems they operate in to make change.

Decline in respect for authority.

On the topic of respect for authority, Kellerman observes that today followers are more likely to question leaders due to the spread of democracy worldwide and follower participation. Here Kellerman (2013) says, "The change is cultural, contextual, which is why we are quicker to

belittle our leaders and slower, much slower, to bestow upon them our adulation" (p. 138). Kellerman points to the decline in trust of American institutions quoting sociologist Laura Hanson:

> "We have lost our gods. We lost faith in the media. Remember Walter Cronkite? We lost it in our culture: You can't point to a movie star who might inspire us, because we know too much about them. We lost it in politics, because we know too much about politicians' lives. We've lost it-that basic sense of trust and confidence-in *everything*" (in Kellerman, 2015, p. 78).

Kellerman (2015) provides three explanations for this decline in trust. First, technology empowers followers by providing easy access to information and also makes it easier to openly criticize leaders. The internet and social media provide the means by which followers can learn what they want to know and express their frustrations. As expressed in my findings, people interviewed felt strongly that technology has changed the game in the struggle between leaders and followers. Second, Americans feel a loss of control; leaders and institution they once trusted are no longer reliable. This is seen in recent protests against the use of deadly force by police officers across the country. Finally, Americans have concluded our position in the world has diminished by our own standards, or in comparison to other countries (p. 79). My findings on this topic also support this explanation. Interviewees expressed concern that the United States is no longer viewed as a world leader in terms of strength and power.

Technology.

Kellerman says today, technology levels the playing field for leaders and followers in the following observations:

> ". . . it is the first time in human history that information has been democratized--that we all have nearly unbridled and instantaneous access to information about even the ostensibly high and mighty. . . The impact of these regular invasions into the lives of leaders is impossible to calculate precisely.   What we do know is this: they diminish and demean leaders and elevate and embolden followers." (Kellerman, 2012, p. 36)

Kellerman suggests the balance of power is between leaders and followers, but to ignore context as a critical part of that balance demonstrates failure to understand what it means to lead and/or retain power. Essentially, Kellerman says if leaders don't understand the context in which they are leading, they will lose power because followers will take action to remove them from power whether by voting for alternative candidates or through social unrest, thereby transferring power.

Contextual Expertise as a Leadership Competency

Kellerman (2013) describes three levels of contextual competence need by leaders saying they must understand: ". . . the immediate context (e.g. the small group), the more distal context (e.g. the organization within which the small group is embedded), and whatever the other contexts relating to time and space (e.g. the contemporaneous economy generally)" (p. 138). In other words, effective leaders are able to appreciate what is happening around them on a number of levels (that provide contextual information) that leaders should use to inform their decisions. Kellerman calls this ability "contextual expertise" (p. 4).

Critical to my research about the 2016 Presidential election, Kellerman (2015) says distal context is ". . . the larger circumstance within which all Americans are situated in the second decade of the twenty-first century" (p. 4). Today, Globalization is an important feature of this larger circumstance. While technology and trade benefit Americans through lower prices on consumer goods, globalization has also caused the loss of American jobs (Working Nation, 2016), a concern mentioned by my research participants.

Kellerman (2015) also identifies additional factors that impact rapidly changing contexts (technology, media, the economy, innovation, competition, law, risks, culture and trends, to name a few) that leaders cannot afford to ignore or dismiss (p. 9; Kellerman, 2017). Essentially, Kellerman say no one can lead effectively in a vacuum; if you want to lead, you must be aware of, and more importantly, pay attention to what is happening around you. From technology, to culture, to followers, leaders will make better more informed decisions if they master contextual expertise.

Kellerman's theory provided an excellent framework for exploring my central question; What can the 2016 Presidential election tell us about the distribution of power between leaders and followers? It allowed me to explore what followers think and feel about specific contextual factors affecting them in relation to the 2016 American Presidential election. This brought me to the central finding of my research: there has been no change to the way power is distributed in the election of an American President.

Statement of the Problem

As Kellerman (2013) notes, context is critical to understanding the balance of power between leaders and followers. Because my research examined the distribution of power

between leaders and followers in relationship to the 2016 American Presidential election, here I describe the setting of the election to provide an understanding of the contextual factors that influenced this election cycle. Using Kellerman's factors; history, the decline in respect for authority and technology, I describe a background for the 2016 Presidential election relying on polling data and research literature to illustrate the concerns of voters and challenges faced by leaders in the 2016 election.

Prior to the 2016 American Presidential election, Democrats held the Presidency for eight years. Research has shown that when one party holds positions of power, like the Presidency, over an extended period of time, voters are more likely to make a change (Sides, Tesler & Vavreck, 2016, p. 65).

As the 2016 Presidential cycle began, American voters were just emerging from the Great Recession that began in 2008 (Sides, et al., 2016, p. 54). At the height of this recession, the unemployment rate in America was nearly 10% (p.53). In early 2016, unemployment had dropped to 5%, ". . . below its median value over the 60 years from 1948 to 2008" (p. 54).

Research conducted in early 2016 showed most Americans think the government does not do enough to help the middle class (Pew Research, 2016a, p. 2, 5). Today ". . . there are now roughly as many adults in middle-income households as in lower- or upper-income households-a decided shift from four decades ago, when middle-class Americans were clearly in the majority" (p. 2). Across all participants in this Pew study, respondents said that good jobs are difficult to find (p. 14). During the 2016 Presidential election cycle, nearly one third of Americans believed the economy was in "poor" condition (Pew Research, 2016b, p. 36).

It is not surprising then that in July 2016, voters listed the economy as the top issue in this election. Pew (2016d) found:

"Overall 84% of registered voters say that the issue of the economy will be very important to them in making their decision about who to vote for in the 2016 presidential election; slightly fewer (80%) say the issue of terrorism will be very important to their vote . . ." (p. 31).

In July 2016 only 58% of voters felt Clinton and Trump addressed issues important to them. This is down significantly from 79% in 2008 and 72% in 2012 elections (p. 34). These findings indicate a feeling among voters that neither candidate addressed the issues most important to them.

It was also apparent that, overall, voters were not happy with political leaders. In a November 9, 2016 blog post, Kellerman (2016) described the American electorate as "angry and frustrated" about a number of issues including politicians in general who are perceived as ineffectual and unable to get anything done. To her point, in 2015, 57% of Americans surveyed about their feelings toward the federal government expressed they were frustrated (Pew Research, 2015, p. 28). The same survey showed 22% of respondents were angry with the government (p. 28).   In October 2016, these results were largely unchanged (Pew Research, 2016e, p. 57; see also, Sides, et al., 2016, p. 51). These observations go directly to the importance of context in Kellerman's theory. In years running up to the 2016 election, voters were struggling financially and frustrated with government for an extended period of time. These two elements of context expertise (the economy and decline in respect for authority) should have given leaders an indication that change was coming.

Further, American voters were not very excited about either Trump or Clinton. In late October 2016, just weeks prior to the election, just 35% of potential voters surveyed thought Clinton would be a good or great president, while only 27% said the same of Trump (Pew Research, 2016e, p. 10). The same voters said both Clinton and Trump were hard to like with scores of 59% and 70%, respectively (p.11). Similarly, voters felt Clinton (56%) and Trump (65%) had poor judgment. Only 33% of respondents felt Clinton was honest, Trump's rating on the same question was only slightly higher at 37% (p. 11). Voters were also concerned about potential conflicts of interest for both candidates with 42% expressing concerns about Clinton and 38% about Trump.

The American voter was largely unimpressed with their presidential options in 2016. Voters feel leaders are corrupt and deceptive and expressed a growing sense of anger directed at those they feel are insiders (Pew Research, 2015). In a 2015 survey, 75% of those surveyed said elected officials lose touch with the people quickly; 74% felt elected officials "don't care what people like me think" and 74% think elected officials put their own interests first rather than the county's (Pew Research, 2015, p. 72; Pew Research, 2016b, p. 20).

On top of this, Americans view America's position in the world as reduced. In a February 2017 Gallup survey, only 32% of Americans said they were satisfied with America's position in world. This is down considerably from a similar survey in February 2002 when 71% of respondents said they were satisfied with America's position in the world.

These Pew and Gallup studies align with Kellerman's claim that American electorate has less respect for authority than it has in the past. Kellerman holds that this decline in respect for authority affects the balance of power between leaders and followers.

According to Oliver and Rahn (2016), this frustration and unease of voters in the 2016 Presidential Election points to a new wave of populism. Populism is ". . . a type of political rhetoric that pits a virtuous "people" against nefarious, parasitic elites who seek to undermine the rightful sovereignty of the common folk" (p. 190). Populist movements, regardless of their motivation, share a number of characteristics which include "anger at the federal government, anomie, nativism, conspiracism and fundamentalism" (p. 198).

Specifically, Oliver and Rahn (2016) found that those individuals who favored Trump and another Republican candidate, Ben Carson, reported the highest average scores for all three populist markers considered in their research (p. 199). Oliver and Rahn noted "This is particularly striking for Trump's supporters. They score the highest in mistrust of expertise and national affiliation of the entire sample; they also score second highest in political marginalization" (p. 199).

Azari and Hetherington (2016) compare the presidential elections of 1896 (William McKinley v. William Jennings Bryan) and 2016 (Trump v. Clinton) (p. 93). In both elections economic populism played an important role. At the end of the nineteenth century, there were concerns about trade openness affecting ordinary workers (p. 101). Similar concerns were raised by both Republican and Democrat candidates in this election cycle. Azari and Hetherington note "Economic populism—specifically the abuses of corporations and banks against ordinary citizens—has been a dominant theme in the candidacy of Bernie Sanders. Donald Trump . . . has emphasized the need for protection against "bad trade deals" (p. 101-102).

Oliver and Rahn (2016) say the climate is ripe for populism when political parties ". . . do not respond to the desires of large sections of the electorate. We call such conditions a

'representation gap'" (p. 194). Oliver and Rahn say this representation gap was strongest during the mid-1990s and again in 2016 (p. 196). They point to the following similarities between the 1990s and 2016 Presidential election that provide yet another historical reference point when thinking about whether this is a redistribution of power taking place between leaders and followers:

> "Both had populist "nonpoliticians" vying for office; in the '90s it was Pat Buchanan . . . and H. Ross Perot. Both periods were characterized by expressions of heightened racial tension (the Los Angeles riots and Rodney King in 1992 and the O.J. Simpson trial in 1995; and Black Lives Matter in 2015) and concerns with immigration (California's Proposition 187 in 1994; the border crisis in Texas in 2014). Both periods followed economic recessions and particular catastrophes in the financial sector (the savings and loan crisis and the Great Recession)" (p. 196).

Pew Research (2014) supports Oliver and Rahn's observations about a representation gap in the current election cycle; among politically engaged voters, political divisions are at their highest levels in since 1994 (p. 6). The comparisons of Azari and Hetherington and Oliver and Rahn drawn here are informative; they are examples of how American history repeated itself in the 2016 election cycle.

The third element in Kellerman's context is technology. Every participant in my research felt technology played a considerable role in the 2016 Presidential election. From the ability to easily access information to the opinions of others on their social media feeds, each person interviewed spoke about the influence of technology in the 2016 election in some way.

Importantly, participants also noted the influence of misinformation or fake news often propagated on social media.

Today, use of technology is pervasive. In America, only 13% of the population does not use the internet (Anderson & Perrin, 2016). Use of social media is on the rise. "On a total population basis (accounting for Americans who do not use the internet at all) . . . 68% of all U.S. adults are Facebook users, while 28% use Instagram, 26% use Pinterest, 25% use LinkedIn and 21% use Twitter" (Greenwood, Perrin & Duggan, 2016). Around the globe, more people are connected by the internet and mobile phones: In 2015, a median of 87% of people in advanced economies use the same technologies (Poushter, 2016). All of this means that people everywhere have more information and can connect with others like never before.

Specifically, followers increasingly use social media to mobilize collective action. A number of researchers endorse this idea. Wolfsfeld, et al., (2013) say "Social media should be seen as facilitators of protest rather than causes" (p. 120). Sandoval-Almazan & Gil-Garcia (2014) hold that "The internet and Web 2.0 technologies have become a perfect complement for social protests, empowering citizens with different tools to accomplish their primary goal: protest" (p. 365). Finally, Shirky (2011) says ". . . social media have become coordinating tools for nearly all of the world's political movements . . ." (p.28).

While Kellerman does not specifically address partisanship in her theory regarding context, I feel it is important to understand increasing polarization in the context of the 2016 election. In 2014, a Pew Research study noted "Today, 92% of Republicans are to the right of the median Democrat, and 94% of Democrats are to the left of the median Republican" (2014, p. 6). This represents a doubling of partisanship, from 10% in 1994 to 21% in 2014 (p. 6). As a

result, the middle (those who "take a roughly equal number of liberal and conservative positions") has shrunk from 49% to 39% over the same two decades (p. 20). A 2016 study of partisan politics highlights the negative reactions Republicans and Democrats have toward each other saying "Overwhelming majorities in both parties (87% in each) have at least one of these negative feelings about the other party-frustration, fear or anger" (Pew Research, 2016c, p. 51).

Followers in the 2016 election were not only angry and frustrated with politicians, they are angry with each other. Participants in my research spoke openly and with contempt about their dislike of the opposing party and described fractures in their personal relationships resulting from political affiliations. This breakdown of personal relationships due to politics feels different to me somehow in the wake of the 2016 election. I explored this further in a conversation with Professor Wendy Rahn at the University of Minnesota, an expert scholarly source. She explained her current thinking about causes of polarization resulting from the fall of the Soviet Union:

> "Well, one thing that I've kind of speculated about, but I don't really have all that much hard evidence is actually the end of the Cold War. By removing a kind of powerful ideological enemy to the United States made it easier for people to look for difference internally in the United States . . . When this very threatening, powerful, ideologically opposed to the American way of life, empire disintegrates, that group distinction is no longer operating, so they need to look internally. I think that that's part of what is fueling some of the differences between Republicans and Democrats, is that people, for better or for worse, need to have an enemy. Now that enemy is people from the other party" (Rahn, personal communication, February 23, 2017).

Rahn's thinking on this idea that Americans are missing a common external enemy is compelling. Edelman (1988) agreed when he said "The creation of domestic enemies . . . fragments the population into hostile groupings and so minimizes the likelihood of a unified challenge to the power structure" (p. 87). Without a common enemy, populist ideas and rhetoric, the "us versus them" message, will turn Americans against each other. The more deeply divided Americans become, the more difficult it will be to implement potential and meaningful political change.

Rahn (personal communication, 2017) also talked about the phenomenon of "affective polarization" saying:

"There's pretty good evidence, for example, that when people move, they make their choices based on underlying values and political predispositions, that people who are of a minority political viewpoint in a community are much more unhappy with that community. There's evidence that parents don't want their children marrying someone from the opposite party. This phenomenon is sometimes referred to as "affective polarization" . . . It's actually, in many cases, it's actually much stronger than even racial hostility." (See also, Sides, et al., 2016, p. 59.)

This was the setting for the 2016 Presidential election: Voters with access to limitless information about Presidential candidates they did not particularly like, concerns about the economy, America's position in the world, and increasingly unhappy with government, its leaders and each other. This complex context set the stage for this examination of leaders, followers, and the distribution of power.

Literature Review

In this section, I provide an overview of follower research generally and recommendations for future research focusing specifically on how followers view and behave in relation to leaders. This review is important because it describes the evolution in the research on the role of followers and acknowledges that researchers seek to better understand the changing power followers have in relation to leaders by considering the role of followers in new ways.

To better understand Kellerman's theory, it will also address what the literature says about the psychological motivations of followers or why people follow and increasing polarization in the American electorate. These topics are relevant to my research to explain the motivations of voters and the impact of polarization in the 2016 election. Finally, I review the influence of technology; specifically the impact of Web 2.0 technologies in relation to the 2016 Presidential election and how advances in technology affect the way followers feel about and interact with leaders.

Overview of Research on Followers

A search of scholarly literature for the term "leadership" returns more than 1.1 million journal articles. Comparatively, a search for the term "followership leadership" returns just over 5,300 journal articles and books combined. To say there is a gap in the study of leadership and followership is an understatement. However, there are a number of researchers now turning their attention to the role of followers.

Historically, little attention has been paid to the followers and their role in the leadership literature (Kellerman, 2014, p.18-19; Sy, 2010, p. 72; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014, p. 89). Therefore, it is instructive to understand at the outset of this review the types of follower research conducted

in the past and new directions follower research can (or should) take to better examine important role played by followers.

Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe and Carsten (2014) set out an explanation of followership theory: ". . . *followership theory is the study of the nature and impact of followers and following in the leadership process*" (p. 96). This means that "the construct of followership includes follower roles (i.e., a position in relation to leaders), follower behaviors (i.e., behaviors in relation to leaders), and outcomes associated with the leadership process" (p. 96). According to Uhl-Bien, et al. (2014), in their meta-analysis of the historical treatment of followers in leadership research, followers have been studied in three categories: leader-centric, follower-centric and a relational view, each of which are summarized here (p.85).

The leader-centric view of followers, as first set out by researcher Fredrick Winslow Taylor, describes followers as subordinate, needing to be directed and led (Taylor, in Uhl-Bien, et al., 2014, p. 84). Next, follower-centric literature considers how followers assign leadership. Meindl (1990) identified a process of "social contagion" whereby followers, who are collectively spurred to action of some type, focus on the group leader, often attributing the leader with more charisma than he or she actually possesses (in Uhl-Bien, et al., 2014, p. 86; see also, Popper, 2011, p. 32). Also included in the category of follower-centric research is social identity theory of leadership. This theory considers a leader's effectiveness based upon his or her ability to influence and motivate followers to cooperate with and achieve the leader's objectives (Chemers; Hogg; Van Knippenberg & Hogg, in Uhl-Bien, et al., 2014, p. 87). Finally, relational approaches view leadership as a "mutual influence process" that takes place between leaders and followers (p. 87). In 2001, Lord, Brown, Harvey and Hall (in Uhl-Bien, et al., 2014) put forth a connectionist model of leadership, in which they argue that leadership is created out of multiple

factors like ". . . context, task and the personal qualities of both leaders and followers . . ." affecting how followers view their leaders (p. 87).

Uhl-Bien et al., (2014) identify two newer theoretical constructs in the followership research: role-based and constructionist approaches. "Role-based approaches are consistent with Shamir's descriptions of "reversing the lens" (Shamir, in Uhl-Bien, et al., 2014, p. 89) in leadership research by ". . . consider[ing] how followers influence leader attitudes, behaviors, and outcomes" (p. 89). This approach considers ". . . how individuals enact leadership and followership in the context of hierarchical roles" (p. 90). In some of the earliest research of this type, Kelly (in Uhl-Bien, et al., 2014) defined the perfect follower as ". . . participating in a joint process of achieving some common purpose" (p. 90).

Constructionist approaches to the study of followers ". . . see followership and leadership as co-constructed in social and relational interactions between people" (DeRue & Ashford; Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien; Shamir, in Uhl-Bien, et al., 2014, p. 89). A feature of this approach is that constructionists believe that leadership and followership ". . . do not necessarily align with hierarchical roles" meaning that in some instances, leaders become followers as part of their interactions with others (p. 94).

Uhl-Bien, et al., (2014) suggest that to study followers, future research should address ". . . how followers view and enact following behaviors in relation to leaders" (p.96). This type of inquiry can be used in future research to understand followership in the context of the 2016 Presidential Election. In particular, it is important to learn how followers view leaders. To do so, follower research identifies reasons people choose to follow, which I now address.

Psychological Explanations for Following

Everyone follows on some level. Popper (2011) identifies three psychological

perspectives that explain why people follow: psychodynamic, psycho-cognitive and social

psychological perspectives.   As I reviewed my research data, it became clear to me that these

perspectives were imbedded in participants' responses to questions about history, the decline in

respect for authority, and technology, the elements of context in Kellerman's theory. Therefore,

I will briefly touch on Popper's first two perspectives and more fully explore the social

psychological follower perspective as it is most relevant to my research.

> **Psychodynamic perspective.**

From a psychodynamic perspective, people follow based on an ingrained longing for

protection developed during childhood (Volkan, in Popper, 2011, p. 29). This psychological

position is similar to attachment styles which are developed in infancy based on satisfaction of

basic needs and connection with the caregiver or parent (Rholes & Simpson, in Popper, 2011, p.

30). As adults, followers revert to these most basic needs-for safety and security-when faced

with threat or crisis. Perceived insecurity can result in psychological homogeneity or group

identification, which also provides followers with strength and security (Durkheim, in Popper,

2011, p. 30).

> **Psycho-cognitive perspective.**

Psycho-cognitive followership is driven by sense-making or ". . . the attempt to make

sense of events out of the huge overload of information existing around us" (Wieck, in Popper,

2011, p. 30). Rather than reacting to stress, followers assign leadership as an ". . . informative

response to explaining and interpreting a complex reality" (p. 30). In this process, followers

assign leadership based on leadership clues such as language and behavior (p. 30). In other words, followers are drawn to leaders who exhibit and communicate strength or authority that can be easily understood, providing comfort to followers.

Social Psychological Perspective.

In this perspective, the leader functions as a symbol or the ". . . ultimate embodiment of a social group" (Cooley; Durkheim; Lindholm, in Popper, 2011, p. 31). Here, followers assign leadership based on the need for consistency and to feel good about themselves (Festinger; Jones; Shamir, in Popper, 2011, p. 31).

In a study of social identity theory related to leadership, Rast III, Hogg and Tomory (2015) sought to understand how leadership preferences are influenced by followers' willingness to process information (the need for cognition) about leaders in times of uncertainty (p. 135). Their research found that in a situation of uncertainty, participants with low interest in processing information quickly concluded the leader should be someone who most strongly represents the values of the group (p. 142). Alternatively, followers more willing to expend cognitive energy in situations of uncertainty were more likely to consider a non-prototypical group member as the leader (p. 142).

Shamir and Eilam (2005) discuss the impact of authentic leadership on followers saying that those who lead from a place of authenticity (with self-concepts and actions in alignment (p. 398)), are more likely to attract authentic followers. To do this, leaders who can effectively express a narrative or life-story about themselves, provide followers vital information they need to make a decision to follow a particular leader (Shamir & Eilam, 2005, p. 408).

Authentic followers share a leader's beliefs, values and convictions. Further, they judge the leader worthy of their position based on the leader's values rather "than on mere conventions of an appointed office or the desire for personal power, status or other beliefs" (p. 401). Ultimately then, leaders are appealing when followers identify with the leader's narrative because it coincides with followers' beliefs (Popper, 2011, p. 31).

Distant and Close Leadership.

Popper (2011) identifies specific context-bound models to consider the psychology of followership: distance and close leadership, differences between groups/social networks and heterogeneity of followers (p. 31). Of these contexts, distant v. close leadership is most relevant to the 2016 American Presidential election.

In the context of distant v. close leadership Popper's (2011) social psychological perspective holds that "The more distant the leader, the more he may be seen by followers as richer material for narratives that arouse identification" (Popper, 2011, p. 32). It is easy to imagine the two narratives followers could tell about Trump and Clinton. From a positive perspective, Trump stands for the little man and wants to protect America (Manning, 2017). In a negative narrative, Trump is a dangerous demagogue who will divide America (Cassidy, 2017). Clinton followers identify positively in a narrative describing a strong woman with a lifetime of service and political experience ("The Case for Hillary", 2016). Clinton detractors would say she is a consummate insider, mired in controversy and protected from legal action against her (Westwood, 2016).

Polarization

Pew research referenced previously indicates Americans are politically polarized.   My research findings also confirmed that, at least among my participants, voters in this election felt the effects of this polarization. Seeking to confirm the observations made by participants and the Pew research, I reviewed recent literature to both confirm the presence of polarization and understand what drives this polarization.

Johnston, Jones and Manley (2016) studied spatial polarization in Presidential voting across three spatial scales: America's nine census divisions, the 49 states that make up the divisions and more than 3,000 counties in these states. Using official election data published by each state following Presidential elections from 1992 through 2012 and measuring Democratic voters (Johnston, et al., 2016, p.768), they confirmed the American electorate has become more polarized over the 20-year period studied (p. 769).

In study of ideological engagement and polarization, Jewitt and Goren (2015) found that over time regular Americans are more engaged in policy issues than in the past, closing the gap between themselves and political elites in ideological beliefs (p. 100). They point to polarization in political elites and changes in news media since the 1970's (the 24-hour news cycle and the availability of news with specific ideological bents (p. 86)) as factors in this change in the way everyday people engage in and hold partisan political beliefs.

In a different type of study, Westfall, Van Boven, Chamber and Judd (2015) sought to learn how "everyday Americans perceive polarization between Democrats and Republicans" (p. 145) by analyzing factors that shape perceptions of polarization. Factors identified by Westfall, et al., were categorized into two groups of Democrat or Republican, strong party

identification and the extremity of an individual's attitudes on partisan issues (p. 146). Using

data collected from 1968 to 2008 by the American National Election Study (ANES), Westfall et

al., (2015) found that actual and perceived polarization has nearly doubled between 1968 and

2008 (p. 149). Another important finding of this study is that ". . . partisans' perceived

polarization of the opposing group is always substantially more exaggerated than the perceived

polarization of one's own group" (p. 152). In other words, the more strongly people identify as

either Democrat or Republican, the more acutely they perceive polarization between the parties

(p. 152).

Technology

Again, in this study, I use the term "technology" to describe use of internet and Web 2.0

(social media) technologies in the 2016 Presidential Election. This section of the literature

review addresses if and how voters saw technology influencing the distribution of power

between leaders and follower. I first review the role of technology as it is used by politicians and

then the ways technology connects followers to each other in new and powerful ways.

As early as 2006, politicians began including use of social media as a campaign tool

(Gulati & Williams, 2013, p. 577). Gulati and Williams (2013) studied the use of Facebook by

candidates for U.S. House and Senate seats in the 2012 election cycle. As the 2012 elections

began, 64 of the 66 (97%) of Senate candidates had a Facebook page (p. 582). Just over 90% of

House candidates were also using Facebook in the 2012 election (p. 582). By comparison use of

Facebook by both groups in 2008 was slightly lower for Senate candidates (90%) but

dramatically lower among House candidates (50%) (p. 583). Gulati and Williams found

candidates that adopted use of social media early were typically challengers who understood their constituents were using the internet and social media in increasing numbers (p. 579-580).

There are also studies of social media usage in presidential campaigns. Hong and Nadler (2012) looked at how Twitter usage by presidential candidates translated into what they call "'candidate salience' or the amount of on-line public attention" received by candidates related to their own use of Twitter and mention of them in traditional media (p. 457). Using the Twitter activity and media reports about seven Republican presidential candidates between December 26, 2011 and January 16, 2012 (pp. 457-458), Hong and Nadler found that tweets from the candidates themselves generated a slight increase in public attention in the form of re-tweets, it was not significant. (p. 459). Candidates were much more likely to receive attention on social media after they were mentioned by traditional media sources (p. 459).

Gross and Johnson (2016) looked at Twitter usage by Republican candidates in relation to their Twitter communications with or about each other to measure negativity. While my research is not focused on negativity, Gross and Johnson note reasons why the study of Twitter in political campaigns is so powerful when saying:

> "Twitter provides a new means for candidates to directly engage one another without a gatekeeper and for researchers to build our understanding of the social dynamics of campaigning . . ." (pp. 751-752).

In another study of Twitter usage by voters in the 2012 Presidential election, Penney (2014) studied how Twitter users' online activities could influence others in what Penney calls and "instrumental form of political participation" (p. 71). Importantly, Penney points to Pew data from 2012 showing that:

". . . a significant portion of the US electorate claims to be influenced by content that

circulates via social media platforms . . . a quarter of US adults who use social media

networking sites say that they have become more active about a political issues after

viewing posts or having discussions about it on these sites, and 16% claim that they have

changed their viewpoints regarding a political issue by engaging in such activities."

(Rainie & Smith in Penney, 2014, p. 75).

Penney (2014) interviewed 25 participants about their intention when they tweeted an

unflattering YouTube video about presidential candidate Mitt Romney. His finding showed that

those interviewed fell into three areas of intention: to specifically persuade others (pp. 79-81), to

simply provide others with information (pp. 82-83), and to invite conversation about the video

(pp. 83-84). Based on his finding, Penney concluded ". . . those motivations of influencing

public opinion are more common than has been previously suggested in previous research on

political social media activity . . ." (p. 84).

Next, numerous researchers note the power of social media, or Web 2.0 technologies, to

bring people together. Hwang and Kim (2015) say "Social media facilitate the harnessing power

of people who have similar ideas by disseminating information quickly and broadly on a

network" (p. 478). "The principal feature of social media is co-creation by the users. Web 2.0

provides the platform for this collaboration, spanning all connected devices to encourage

creations, organization, linking and sharing of content" (Chun, Shulman, Sandoval & Hovy;

O'Reilly, in Sandoval-Almazan & Gil-Garcia, 2014, p. 368). Li (2016) says:

"Through social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, the networked population is gaining greater access to information, communicating more freely, and building stronger rapport through various on-line groups (p. 49).

In sum, Web 2.0 technologies are important because they provide platforms for regular people to communicate and connect with others on a wide range of topics (Shirky, 2011, p. 28).

It is also important to note the role of social media in connecting people to take action. Enjolras, Steen-Johnsen and Wollebaek (2012) conclude that "Social media seem to represent an alternative structure alongside mainstream media and established political and civil society organizations in that they recruit members in different ways and from different segments of the population . . ." (p. 904).

The Role of Technology in Grievance or Triggering Events.

Use of technology by followers to organize protests, specifically social media, has been studied by researchers focused on the impact of technology. Wolfsfeld, Segev and Sheafer (2013) briefly discuss the importance of grievance in creating an atmosphere that moves followers to action (p. 116). LeFebvre and Armstrong (2016) note the influence of grievance in study about the protests in Ferguson, Missouri saying ". . . when grievances are directly attributed to a structural out-group such as political leadership, law enforcement, or other institutional organization, protest behavior becomes increasingly attractive, as more normative modes of engagement are perceived as lacking efficacy, and institutional attributions become increasingly pronounced" (Simon & Klandermans; Smyth, in Lefebvre & Armstrong, 2016, p. 3). Oliver and Rahn (2016) also comment on the importance of grievance saying "Populism . . .

allows the individual's problems to become grievances of "people like us," reducing individual responsibility and shifting blame outward" (p. 192).

Followers can lose respect for leaders due to a "triggering event". Sandoval-Almazan and Gil-Garcia (2014) say that most triggering events have three characteristics: they break the status quo of society, they are autonomous and people organize around them (p. 369).

An excellent example of a triggering event can be found in the Arab Spring protests of early 2011. In December 2010, a college-educated street vendor in Tunisia named Mohamed Bouazizi, set himself on fire after being publicly humiliated by police (Sandoval-Almazan & Gil-Garcia, 2014, p. 369; Lange, 2014, p. 8). In a related incident in Egypt, a 28-year-old man, Khaled Said, was dragged out of an internet café and beaten to death by police after posting a video showing his attackers ". . . divvying up seized narcotics and cash" (Lange, 2014, p. 9; see also Sandoval-Almazan & Gil-Garcia, 2014, p. 369). Images from both of these events polarized followers, igniting ". . . years of accumulated tension, desperation and frustration in the Egyptian and Tunisian people" (Lange, 2014, p. 9). These two triggering events lead to wide spread protest in Egypt organized using social media platforms, that ultimately toppled the government of long-time dictator, Hosni Mubarak (Fadel, 2011).

In Kellerman's analysis, the Mubarak regime fell because of its long history of oppressing Egyptian citizens, by failing to respond to the needs of its citizens and the power of technology to bring together a frustrated citizenry that was ready for a change.

Summary

This literature review highlights challenges of voters in the 2016 Presidential election. In the search for leadership, voters looked for someone they could identify with, who spoke to their

needs through a narrative that most closely aligned to their view of themselves as an American. Voters did this in a setting of deep political polarization. To help choose their leader, voters increasingly rely on technology, the internet and social media, to gather information. They also used social media to influence (or be influenced by) others by expressing their own points of view about the election and candidates. In addition, it points to the necessary evolution in the research of followers to better understand their power to influence leaders.

Method

To understand how followers view the distribution of power in the context of the 2016 Presidential Election, I conducted semi-scripted interviews of four politically-involved people. The intent of this study was to answer the question: What can the 2016 Presidential Election tell us about the distribution of power between leaders and followers?

Data Source

In order to answer this question, I sought to interview four voting United States citizens who were politically involved. I further defined "politically involved" as people who had watched all three Presidential Debates; voted in the election; and identify themselves politically as Republican, Democrat, Libertarian, Green Party, etc. These criteria were developed to ensure I interviewed participants who were engaged in the 2016 Presidential election cycle and would have insights and opinions about the issues and candidates.

These participants were relevant to my research question because I wanted to learn what participants could tell me about questions related to context as identified by Kellerman in her equilateral triangle of leaders, followers and context.

To recruit participants, I used my LinkedIn network to solicit volunteers. I sent the invitation via LinkedIn messaging to approximately 300 individuals and received 7 responses.

Upon receiving responses, I asked potential participants to confirm 1) whom they voted for in the election; and 2) if they met my criteria for being politically active. By taking these steps, I identified four participants to participate in my study. By design, two of my participants voted for Donald Trump and two voted for Hillary Clinton. This was done to ensure I had data from both partisan perspectives to compare and contrast. In addition, two participants had experience working political positions and/or with political campaigns. Each participant agreed to participate in an interview of approximately 45 to 60 minutes.

Data Collection

I conducted semi-scripted interviews with each participant. Prior to each interview, participants reviewed and signed an Informed Consent for a Research Study form (Appendix A). All interviews were conducted in January 2017. Three interviews were completed prior to President Trump's inauguration on January 20, 2017 and one shortly after this date.

For the purpose of preparing my findings, each interview was recorded and transcribed using Rev.com. In addition to recordings, I took detailed notes during each interview to record participants' emotional reactions to questions asked. In all of my record keeping, I assigned each participant a pseudonym to protect their identities. Trump voters interviewed were assigned the names Gloria and Ingrid. Clinton voters were assigned the names Henry and Emma. I met with Ingrid and Henry in person for their interviews. Gloria and Emma were interviewed by telephone.

I used a semi-structured interview method in order probe each participant's comments and thinking as it related to my research question. I met with the participants in locations that provided them a safe setting for sharing their thoughts and to gather additional data from their

tone of voice and body language (Cresswell, 2016, p. 127). Using Kellerman's theory that context affects the balance of power between leaders and followers, each participant was asked the same initial series of interview questions, asking follow up questions to further explore participants' thinking on the questions, about the 2016 Presidential election covering the following topics: history, the decline in respect for authority and technology (see Appendix B for interview protocol).

Data Analysis

The complexity of my interview data cannot be overstated. Each transcript is a window providing a glimpse at the vastness and variety of the American psyche, showing that voters, despite their collective American experience and ideology, viewed the 2016 American Presidential election in starkly different ways.

I reviewed each transcript multiple times employing open coding to identify common themes and responses (Maxwell, 2013, p. 107). I then used *a priori* coding to create extensive tables in order to analyze responses for the three topics addressed in my interviews (p. 108). These tables allowed me to see each participant's responses to each question in context with each other, allowing me to identify similarities and differences in their responses. Creating these tables was time consuming but was invaluable as I could then review all responses to specific questions I used to generate my findings based upon the themes identified during the process of open coding.

Overall, participants expressed dissatisfaction, feelings of polarization, concern for America's position in the world and opinions about political authority and power and technology.

In addition to these four interviews, I spoke with two expert scholarly sources about my findings. These interviews were also recorded and transcribed in the same manner used for research participants. I emailed Professor Wendy Rahn at the University of Minnesota and asked if she would speak with me about my research. Professor Rahn is the co-author of "The Rise of the *Trumpenvolk*: Populism in the 2016 Election." After providing Professor Rahn my Findings and Interview Inventory, I met with her on February 23, 2017 to discuss my research and impressions. I also contacted Professor Barbara Kellerman, whose writing and theories heavily influenced my research topic and interview methodology. Professor Kellerman also agreed to speak with me about my research and I talked with her by telephone briefly on March 3, 2017.

Findings

My interview data revealed little has changed in the traditional distribution of political power between leaders and followers in the context of Presidential elections. Contrary to Kellerman's theory, participants expressed no concern about, or opposition to, the three branch system that controls political power in America: the Executive, Legislative and Judicial Branches of government. Further, none of my participants called for change in the Electoral College system that controls how America elects its President. In seeking to understand the distribution of power between leaders and follower in the 2016 Presidential election, I found myself considering what was not said by research participants. My analysis led me to conclude that voters in the 2016 Presidential election want change but cannot or do not envision it beyond the bounds of the current governmental system.

In this section, I review the themes of dissatisfaction, the internet and social media, and polarization in participants' responses to questions about history, the decline in respect for

authority and technology in connection with the 2016 election cycle. I conclude by addressing data specific to the ultimate conclusion of my research: though participants want change, they envision it within the existing distribution of power, looking to their leaders to make change. They assert power by voting for their desired candidate within the longstanding system of American Presidential elections.

Dissatisfaction

The first key finding of this study was that dissatisfaction was widespread among the participants. I use the term dissatisfaction to refer to participants' frustration with the election and with voters along party lines (Republican/Democrat). Specifically, all four participants expressed dissatisfaction with political parties and political leaders, a desire for something different, and what they see as a decline in America's position in the world. I offer the data related to each of these sub-themes below.

Political Parties and Politicians.

Participants consistently expressed frustrations with not only the opposing party, but their own party throughout their interviews. Trump supporters were unhappy with the Republican candidates in general. Gloria in particular noted chaos in the Republican Party's nomination process saying:

"The people [sic] that didn't want something different, but didn't have a solution was the Republican Party itself . . . there was dissension among the ranks. What did we have, 16 candidates or some crazy number when we started on the Republican side?"

Ingrid expressed her frustration with Republican candidates saying:

"I just wasn't pleased with really anybody, and there was something I think that intrigued me about Donald Trump . . ."

Clinton voters faced the same challenges when assessing the state of their own candidates and party. Each was interested in Bernie Sanders, but were uncertain he was a truly viable candidate. Henry questioned Sanders' ability to execute on his campaign promises and Emma believed that Clinton's nomination as the Democrat candidate was a forgone conclusion saying:

"Hillary [was] up. It was her turn. I think that was an influence, too."

Desire for Something Different.

Trump voters interviewed in particular, were adamant that change was needed in this election. They expressed animosity towards Democrats and Obama in particular. Ingrid noted with agitation that:

"I think people are fed up with Washington. It's the same old, same old people that run for office and get elected. People are sick of some of the old people that are there . . . [the] Pelosis, the Harry Reids, and it's just like what are they accomplishing? What are they getting done? . . . I think people were tired, I mentioned this earlier, but people were tired of nothing happening in Washington."

Gloria felt:

. . . I firmly believe that this country voted for something different. I don't think we necessarily are excited about what we got, but I do believe that we voted for it to be different, because the paths that we were headed down were almost frightening.

. . . I think he [Trump] was more a general appeal for the people that didn't really know, but they knew they wanted something different. I don't think they voted necessarily for him, I think they voted for something different.... I think most people that created the win for the president-elect voted for change, and we didn't have a choice. Like we didn't have A, B, C and D, we only had A and B. We knew we didn't want B, so we voted for A.”

America's Position in the World.

Three participants interviewed spoke directly to their concern about how America is perceived in the world. Most interesting in these comments is that they provide insight into the different ways voters view American power in the world.

Republicans Gloria and Ingrid lamented the decline in America's strength. In many ways, their comments focused on the perception that America is no longer a superpower in the world, especially in terms of military strength, patriotism and respect. Ingrid feels that:

“I think going as a country, I think we're soft, I think that people aren't standing up for certain things on behalf of America, and it's kind of scary . . . I mean I'm concerned for the future of our country. . . America needs to be great again. I mean at one time we used to be one of the greatest countries in the world, and you look at us today and we're really not.”

Gloria also expressed concern about America's position as a world power:

“I think we've slid from the superpower that we need to be to preserve our freedom.”

Gloria also spoke about the American psyche and place in the world in connection with the events of September 11, 2001, saying:

"It was a realization of we're vulnerable. If we're going to be the greatest nation on earth, we can't be vulnerable in any way. . . We're living in a new age."

Clinton voter Henry also spoke about America's world posture, but in very different terms. Henry was not focused so much on what I will call "traditional" American power as identified in the comments of Gloria and Ingrid. Rather, Henry spoke of how America's position as a world leader on social issues and climate change could be diminished under the Trump administration:

"Now we're going to have a seismic shift and we're going to go backwards in many areas, while the rest of the world is going forward . . . I think there will be other countries in the world that step up to be what the U.S. once was. I think from the world perspective, our country is now a joke, and it will be . . .

We're going to go backwards. Gay rights is [sic] going to go backwards. Health insurance is already backwards, and it's going to go more backwards . . . we were at the point where we were going to leap forward and leap ahead of all these other countries in doing climate change, and all the kind of things that we would need to do in this age, and to maintain our status. Now we're going to do the opposite."

In these vastly different interpretations of what constitutes America's power in the world, we see ideological divides that will be reviewed in findings of polarization below.

Feelings of dissatisfaction expressed by participants are supported in numerous Pew Research studies referenced herein that illustrate deep dissatisfaction in the American electorate with political parties and leaders on a number of topics, including indicators that voters have less respect for leaders now than in the past.

Internet and Social Media

All four participants had much to say about the impact of technology, specifically the internet and social media, on the 2016 Presidential election. All agreed that social media and the internet influenced this election. Participants also acknowledged the impact of social media saying not only was it pervasive, but they believed they were influenced by posts made by others on their own social media feeds. Some participants noted the difference in this election cycle to prior Presidential elections. Below, I report my data specific to these observations.

Henry felt strongly that the internet and social media influenced the 2016 election in ways they had not during prior elections:

> "I think without social media, this election would be totally different. I think even if you
> look at even our election four years ago, it was not to this degree. I certainly don't
> remember, in the 2012 election, the amount of just postings you'd see on Facebook and
> the amount of just people attacking people and trolling people . . . Obviously we had the
> Internet. It's just that our political system was able to stay above complete lunacy.

Gloria largely agreed with Henry's observation about the role of the internet and social media in this election saying:

> "I think it was incredibly impactful. I think you might have had a different result if it was
> even 10 years ago where not everybody had a smartphone . . . I mean, 10 years ago, I
> wasn't on Facebook every day. During the political season, there's more shit on Facebook

than you could possibly imagine. You don't know if it's true or not, but people can be led by that whether it's true or not."

In comments regarding the influence of social media on voters, Ingrid and Emma emphasized the power of individuals to sway others. For Ingrid, the idea that posts to social media were from "real people" was important:

"Huge, I mean everything was everywhere, you have Twitter, the social media played a huge part of it. . . Well I think social media was pushing different, because people were pushing it out all the time, just different things, comments, and anyone out there. They're uncensored . . . it's real people talking; it's real people saying things. . . "

Acknowledging that she may also be influenced, Emma observed:

"I'm not on Twitter, but I see things that people re-Tweet on my Facebook, or even see stuff too, limited, on Instagram. Just what I was seeing on my own feeds, I guess, this is influencing me. . . I think social media has been a big influence in that, too, where it's like anybody can go out there and say, 'This is what I think, and if you're not with me then you're against me,' kind of thing."

Gloria also noted the power of social media to connect people and call them to action saying:

"If you have the power to communicate and reach people that you don't know en masse, you have power like people have never had before . . . You can create a flash mob to dance, for no better example, in a mall. Within like an hour, you can gather a thousand people that don't know each other to do this. You can mobilize pockets of the community

in a hurry. . . Any way you want to get people to the polls, you want to rally them around, you can use all of those social outlets that you have available to you."

Participants in my study reinforce the role of technology in Kellerman's theory of context in the balance of power. Participants identified changes in technology and use of social media as influencers in the 2016 election.

Polarization

I use the term polarization to represent the increasing differences in how Republicans and Democrats view the world. During my interviews, these differences were seen on a variety of topics including its causes and party politics. Data gathered from participants regarding how increasing political polarization has affected their personal relationships will also be summarized.

Origins of Polarization.

I asked participants about historical events leading up to the election of Trump as President. Their responses on a number of causal events, much like their comments on America's position in the world, speak to how collective experiences are interpreted in different ways.

Henry noted the change in political rhetoric (from civil to acrimonious) following the hearings on Supreme Court nominee Robert Bork in the late 1980 and the influence of cable news that provides news with ideological bents. Other participants agreed with Henry that the media is now a driver of polarization.

The economy was another factor named as a cause of polarization. Gloria commented on the housing collapse in 2008 saying:

"I think the economic crash, let's call it, in 2008 when the market took a dive, I think that was incredibly impactful. Again, now our financial system was vulnerable. It's all about being vulnerable."

Aligning with Gloria's comments on the economy after 2008, Ingrid noted loss of American jobs as causal factor:

"I think the lack of jobs . . . They're all gone, they went to Mexico . . . . . A lot of those [new] jobs that are created are part-time, they have no benefits, they're temp contract jobs, and that still doesn't solve the problem of how people are going to just get health care, or get a 401K."

Three participants also spoke of how the 2008 election of Obama was a factor in creating the current atmosphere of polarization. Henry feels strongly this was the most critical driver of the current polarization in American politics. In these comments, polarization around race cannot be ignored. Henry says:

"I would say . . . the biggest turning point was when Obama got elected, because the Republicans, their first, and I had never seen this in my lifetime, where the first thing they do the minute the guy gets in is say, "We're going to do everything we can not to work with him." That was something that never ... There were political disagreements, but nothing like that had ever happened again. There's only one difference between Obama and any other guy that ever got elected to be President.

Q: What's that?

A: That is that he's black."

Gloria also felt the election of Obama was a turning point. Like Henry, she commented on race, but in a very different way, saying:

"I think even him being an African-American president. I'm not opposed to that, I want the most qualified guy to be there, but I don't want you to ever use that card or not use that card . . . I think he [Obama] used race in a way that was really detrimental to the country. I think he pushed the boundaries of religion that shouldn't be pushed. We're still one nation under God, so far."

Emma also spoke about Obama saying:

". . . Barack Obama's election ... I mean, I loved him. That was the first time that I've ever donated to a political candidate, because it was like I believed in him so much . . . I don't know, for me, I think that's when it really started to seem polarizing."

Party Polarization.

All participants interviewed had strong opinions regarding the party they voted against. While they spoke on different ideas, each expressed concern and dismay, boarding on animosity, about the behaviors or attitudes of the other party or its voters. Clinton voter Emma expressed frustrated with Trump followers generally saying:

". . . I'm not sure that people had respect for what was currently in place [the Obama administration]. When I say people not having respect for what was currently in place, I guess I mean Donald Trump voters . . ."

Henry directed a good deal of anger at Republicans saying:

"I think that they disrespected an honorable guy [Obama] . . . This is really the

Republicans in our country, they created Donald Trump . . . He [Trump] just was the guy

that channeled all of their hatred that had been bubbling up for eight years. . . I think

there's only one party that can be blamed for bringing it to a level that no one has ever

seen, and when you knowingly de-legitimize a President [Obama] on a completely

fabricated story that you know is fabricated, that he was not born in the U.S., and you

propagate that to people who you know are going to fall for it, you have to take some

responsibility."

Henry also has concern about what the Republican Party could do with control of the Executive

and both houses of Congress saying:

"They're going to burn the whole system. The whole system is going to get burned down

because all the things that got us to the [2008 Housing] crash, which we barely have

started to make headway from, will happen again. . . The divide is going to get greater.

The people who are richer are going to get richer, and the people who are working class

are not going to move up, so the divide is going to become greater. I don't see any way

that this works out well in the short term for the country."

Republican participants had strong feelings about Democrats too. Gloria thinks

Democrats who disavow Trump (like Henry) are unpatriotic telling me:

"People now are taking the position that "he's [Trump] not my president." Well, he is

your president. Just like I didn't like Obama, but unfortunately he was my president . . .

He [Obama] is my president. I don't like him, but he is my president. For them

[Democrats] to make that distinction, I think that's very misleading and very non-

patriotic."

Ingrid expressed similar sentiment for those not happy about Trump's victory:

"It was like when Barack Obama won the election eight years ago, was I happy? No . . .

but we [Republicans] accepted that, we didn't cry about it . . . We just went about our

way and we accepted it, and we have respect for that . . . Now I see such a difference, in

how people have accepted, and mostly not accepted future president Trump in his role,

and are just really I think, dishonoring the person who's going to be sworn in tomorrow."

Polarization of Personal Relationships.

Three participants described loss of friends, threats and concerns about maintaining

friendships with people who have opposing political points of view. These disclosures taken

together indicate a new level of political polarization that now threatens to permeate personal

relationships. Henry reported receiving a death threat on social media:

"I got a death threat on Facebook from someone I knew since college over my posting of

a gun control article from the LA Times."

Ingrid commented that "I've probably lost some friends over this, and it's like whatever."

When I asked her to explain why she felt that way, she described with resignation and sadness

that as a Trump voter, others:

". . . look at you like you're a racist. Like you truly believe in some of the things that he's

planted, that people have made him out to be, and I'm not. Then I've been very careful not

to argue with my friends on Facebook or make comments . . . Now basically I think I'm

> looked upon differently . . . I've told people why I voted for him [Trump] and I don't
>
> know, I think people are mad, they're angry . . ."

Emma is now wondering what to do with some friends on her social media accounts, saying:

> "Every now and then, because I do have conservative friends . . . [who] would post stuff
>
> and it would definitely infuriate me. I was like, okay, well, now what do I do? Do I block
>
> this person? I think then we kind of all become insulated in our own beliefs. It's like,
>
> you're either with us or you're against us."

This fracturing of personal relationships due to political affiliation, reported by three of the four participants interviewed, represent a deepening level of polarization that should not be ignored.

Political Power and Authority

Three participants acknowledged the role of government in establishing authority and power. During the interviews, no one called for radical change to the American political system. In fact, participants want and expect political leaders to operate within the three branches of government, the Executive, Legislative and Judicial Branches. Included in this part of our discussions was the acknowledgement that Electoral College governs the election of President, regardless of the popular vote totals. Again, participants, while they did not express great enthusiasm for the Electoral process, did not call for changes to this process. I provide a review of this data below.

Authority of Government.

When asked what gives people political authority, Republican Gloria identified the three branches of American government, the executive, congress and the judiciary at saying:

"Well, we have a three-branch government system that still exists and functions. We might not like all parts of those functionalities, but it exists with checks and balances as it was designed several hundred years ago. I think all of those groups have authority, as they should for their portion of the government."

Henry shared Gloria's thinking on political authority saying:

"The only thing that gives them authority is people following the rule of law. Once people don't want to do that, it's going to be difficult."

Emma mirrored Henry and Gloria when she said:

"Well, I think our laws give people authority. We have rules in place that give a president authority. I think people elect people, so that gives them authority. . ."

Observations about the Electoral College also go to how political power and authority are distributed by the electorate. Clinton voter Emma said:

"I mean, I don't like it that he [Trump] was elected, but I'm not saying that ... Based on the system that we have, I do think he was fairly elected because we have this Electoral College in place."

Ingrid also mentioned the role of the Electoral College:

"I mean people voted for a certain reason, okay whether or not he won the popular vote, he won the electoral vote, and that's the way our constitution is written, and that's what we go by, and so he won."

In these comments, participants clearly support the American system of government and Electoral College process.

Respect for the Executive Branch.

Participants were asked about respect for authority. In their responses we see uncertainty about the level of respect Trump has (or will have) as President. Two of those interviewed acknowledged that Trump was elected and deserves the respect commanded of the role of President. That being said, no participants gave Trump ringing endorsements. Trump voter Gloria said:

"I don't know that I respect Trump. I respect that I believe he's a patriot . . . I want to respect a patriot because they love America . . ."

Emma said:

"It feels like it's [respect for authority] declining, especially with my more progressive friends. So many of them have said, 'Donald Trump is not my president' . . . I don't think it's contributing to a solution. I don't know what the solution looks like, but I know it's not what's going on right now."

Henry, however, was vocal about his lack of respect for President Trump asserting:

"I would not consider that guy [Trump] my President. I have no respect for him. I would not have said that about George Bush, either George Bush. I would not have said that

about President Reagan . . . all three of those people were decent guys. I think they acted

with a certain level of respecting the Constitution and the country . . .”

The uncertainty about and overt refusal to respect President Trump expressed by

participants goes, again to Kellerman's theory that the decline in respect authority affects the

way followers grant power to leaders.

Discussion

Again, the overall findings of this study are that as followers, 1) the participants do not

want to change the system for distributing power in American Presidential elections; 2) they are

dissatisfied with politicians and political parties, America's position in the world and each other;

and 3) they feel the influence of changing technologies and polarization in their daily lives.

In this section, I discuss my primary finding (that followers have not changed the

distribution of power in the 2016 American Presidential election) and the three related themes

(Dissatisfaction, Internet and Social Media, Polarization) in relation to the existing literature.

No Change in the Distribution of Power

In my research no one, including Clinton voters, called for change to our Constitutional

system. In fact, participants pointed to the rule of law and the three branches of American

government as sources of authority and political power. At best, followers in this election

redistributed power **within the system itself**, if only to see what may happen as a result. Rahn

(personal communication, February 23, 1997) made the following observation when I asked her

about this idea:

"Well, you know, we've had other Constitutional crises, like Watergate, which was a really shattering event for people's belief in government trustworthiness. We've never really recovered, except for these short spike[s] of rally 'round the flag kind of things, or Regan as a charismatic leader . . . Trump campaigned on the system is broken. I think that really resonated with people. I don't think they were thinking about the Constitutional system so much as in kind of day to day operations of government. That short of actually making fundamental changes to the Constitutional structure, really the only thing you can do is change the people who occupy those positions. I think that's want people want."

Dissatisfaction

On Dissatisfaction, my findings correlate strongly with Pew Research on American public opinion about political leaders, those in the opposite party and America's current position in the world. In Kellerman's theory, these findings go directly to declining respect for authority among followers. Kellerman says the decline in respect for authority makes leading more difficult. Followers are now more willing challenge leaders.

During our discussion, Rahn (personal communication, February 23, 2017) commented she feels voters are using their personal experience(s) to fill the gap created by declining respect for authority:

"I think what's come in to fill the vacuum of declining authority is personal experience. People don't trust anything else other than their own experience. The problem with personal experience as a guide is that there's no way to engage it."

Findings related to dissatisfaction also identify that voters wanted something different in the 2016 election. In our conversation, Rahn noted voters in this election cycle were hurting when she observed:

"I think that people were feeling neglected, especially by the institutions that control American culture, because those are coastal, those are urban. They weren't seeing themselves in any of those institutions . . . There's a lot of social pathology out there that wasn't being attended to. I think people who voted for Trump did so for, not because they themselves necessarily were distressed, but they saw that their communities were. It wasn't selfish." (Rahn, personal communication, February 23, 2017).

My research also found that people were concerned about America's position in the world but for different reasons. Republican participants spoke of their worry that American was becoming weak. Gloria said, "I think we've slid from the superpower that we need to be to preserve our freedom. If we could get back to that, I'm all for it." Henry however, spoke about how America's position in the world could be diminished based upon backwards movement on topics like health care and climate change. Here again, Gallup (2017) supports these findings when they identify that only 32% of respondents feel American is most important county in the world.

Popper's (2011) social-psychological perspective of follower motivation may explain these findings. In this psychological perspective, followers look for a leader who expresses a narrative that closely matches their own view of the world (p. 31). Based on this perspective, Gloria and Henry's differing thoughts about why or how America's position in the world is

declining reflect their own feelings and explain why Gloria supported Trump and Henry

supported Clinton.

Internet and Social Media

Kellerman believes advancements in technology have changed the dynamics of power

between leaders and followers. Interview participants agreed that technology played a major role

in the 2016 Presidential election, especially social media. The literature on the impact of social

media, or Web 2.0, supports these perceptions (Hwang and Kim, 2015, p. 478; Chun, Shulman,

Sandoval & Hovy; O'Reilly, in Sandoval-Almazan & Gil-Garcia, 2014, p. 368).

Here then we see that researchers and regular people recognize the power of the internet

and social media to influence individuals.

Polarization

Another significant finding coming out of my research goes to increasing polarization

across politic association and personal relationships. Comments made by research participants

demonstrating political polarization closely align to Pew Research (2014) that showed deepening

polarization (p. 6, 20; see also Pew Research, 2016c, p. 51). An explanation for the polarization

found in my data can be seen research by Westfall, et al., (2015) that sought to understand how

Americans themselves view increasing polarization. Westfall, et al., found that perceptions of

polarization can be exaggerated especially among those who are politically engaged (p. 155).

Rahn observed that increasing political polarization strains people's relationships:

"I think the partisan control of government is really up for grabs. We're a really polarized

country, but majorities are like, knife-edged. It raises the stakes, I think, for people"

(Rahn, personal communication, February 23, 2017).

As I interpret these findings, follower dissatisfaction and polarization as a cycle that is

influenced, supported and perpetuated through the internet and social media. It is hard to see this

cycle ending without some type of significant disruption that either unites Americans or change

in the way a President is elected.

Implications and Limitations

This study, and its primary finding that participants ultimately defer to the existing

distribution of power between leaders and followers, is significant for many reasons. However,

most relevant to my research question is the fact that my primary finding did not correlate to

Kellerman's theory about the role of context in the balance of power between leader and

followers in the context of the 2016 Presidential election. In considering this, I consulted

Argyris' theory of double-loop learning to better understand the implications of my research.

Argyris (2002) says that "single-loop learning occurs when errors are corrected without

altering the underlying governing values" (p. 206). In other words, when we employ in single-

loop learning any problem solved is likely to replicate the existing outcomes because the

underlying system that created the problem still exists. Argyris (2002) then defines double-loop

learning saying that "double-loop learning occurs when errors are corrected by changing the

governing values and then the actions" (p. 206). Argyris (1977) says in organizations, double-

loop learning happens under the following conditions:

". . . if double loop learning occurs, it would be because of: (1) a crisis precipitated by

some event in the environment (for example, a recession or a competitor producing a

better product); (2) a revolution from within (a new management) or from without

(political interference or takeover); or (3) a crisis created by existing management in

order to shake up the organization."

Argyris' (2002) theory of single versus double-loop learning would suggest that voters in

this election implemented a single-loop learning solution to the problem. According to Argyris,

there are many reasons why most change efforts rely on single-loop learning. In this case, the

reasons that participants did not call for a change in the underlying system of governance could

include that they cannot envision changing the Constitutional system or do not yet have a

compelling reason to call for systemic change to this system. In Argryis' (2007) analysis of

double-loop learning, to change the way Americans elect their President would require a

groundswell of support from outside the system to force a change (a social movement or

revolution) or if some type of Constitutional crisis arises during the Trump Presidency that forces

corrective action. It is difficult to say if Americans are ready or willing to openly challenge this

Constitutional system. Rahn (personal communication, February 23, 2017) talked about how

difficult that type of change can be:

"They [followers] probably recognize, too, it's kind of impossible to change. It's just so

difficult for any kind of Constitutional change to be made. You're kind of stuck. It's sort

of, you know, you kind of have to love it, because you don't have other alternatives."

Based on my finding that participants did not call for actually changing the system that

American uses to elect their President, we might similarly predict that a single-loop solution will

again be employed in 2020 when American return to polls to elect their president, i.e., the Electoral College system will continue to determine the outcome of Presidential elections. This seems likely because, as Argyris (2002) argues, double-loop solutions are difficult to envision and rare to undertake.

That said, as Kellerman (personal communication, March 3, 2017) noted about followers in the 2016 Presidential election, "There's no looking at this country, at this moment without taking the followers into account." I agree.

The 2016 Presidential election, both the campaign itself and the resultant Trump Presidency, are fertile ground for extensive follower research. Uhl-Bien, et al., (2014) suggest that to study followers, future research should address ". . . how followers view and enact following behaviors in relation to leaders" (p.96). This type of inquiry can be used to understand followership on multiple levels subsequent to the 2016 Presidential Election.

Through my research, I have come to see the election of Trump as a triggering event rather than a shift in the way power is distributed between leaders and followers. For researchers of followers, Trump's election presents new research opportunities.

Events since President Trump's inauguration on January 20, 2017 provide excellent examples of follower behavior that researchers can study to better understand follower behavior as well as if or how it influences leaders directly. In less than three months, millions of American voters have taken to the streets in protest, inspiring similar protests worldwide (Chira & Alcindor, 2017; Przybyla & Schouten, 2017). In droves, followers have attended local town hall meetings with federal representatives and senators, expressing their support and (more often) displeasure for policies and actions of the Trump Administration (Gabriel, Kaplan, Alvarez &

Huetteman, 2017). It is too soon, of course, to state what impact this increased activism on the part of followers will have on the decision making of members of the Legislative Branch, but it certainly presents a situation ripe for study of followers.

Participants' comments about America's position in the world also raise an interesting area for further study. Based on my interviews, it appears there may be divergence among Americans about their views of America as the greatest nation in the world. Do followers think our position in the world is contingent solely upon military strength and respect or does America need to do more to address current global issues to maintain its position as a world leader? I suspect the answer may differ based on political affiliation.

Most concerning in this research is what I view as increasing polarization in personal relationships as a result of political positions. While this outside the scope of my research, it would be interesting to look at historical examples of deep personal polarization to understand if America is heading toward a future social upheaval that could ultimately change the American political and social landscape.

My findings are limited by the timing of this study, which was conducted largely prior to President Trump's inauguration, as well as the number of research participants. In addition, because I interviewed politically engaged participants, their perceptions of polarization may have been exaggerated.

Conclusion

Leading is difficult. Kellerman holds it is made increasingly difficult if leaders ignore context, what is happening across a broad myriad of issues in the lives of followers from the economy, technology, declining respect for authority and culture among other factors. Time will

tell if followers truly shift the balance of power between them and their leaders in the current atmosphere of dissatisfaction and polarization. What is clear from my research is that, at least as it relates to the way Americans elect their President, the system used for that purpose remains intact and currently, unchallenged.

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Appendix A

ST CATHERINE UNIVERSITY
Informed Consent for a Research Study

Study Title: Stranger Than Fiction: The 2016 Presidential Election, Leaders, Follower and the Distribution of Power

Researcher(s): Shannon Casey, Graduate Student in St. Catherine University's Masters of Arts in Organizational Leadership Program

You are invited to participate in a research study. This study is called Stranger Than Fiction: The 2016 Presidential Election, Leaders, Followers and the Distribution of Power. The study is being done by Shannon Casey, a Masters' candidate at St. Catherine University in St. Paul, MN. The faculty advisor for this study is Assistant Professor Sharon Radd at St. Catherine University.

The purpose of this study is to understand how people perceive the Kellerman's factors of context (history, a decline in the respect for authority and technology) in the 2016 Presidential Election and the distribution of power. This study is important because research about followers is an understudied area in research about leadership. Approximately four (4) people are expected to participate in this research. Below, you will find answers to the most commonly asked questions about participating in a research study. Please read this entire document and ask questions you have before you agree to be in the study.

Why have I been asked to be in this study?

You have been asked to participate in this study because you are politically active and voted for either Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton.

If I decide to participate, what will I be asked to do?

If you meet the criteria and agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do these things:

- Answer a brief survey to determine if you meet the criteria of "politically active".
- Speak with me to schedule a time for your interview, either in person or by telephone. This will take no more than 5 minutes.
- Execute this Informed Consent for a Research Study and provide it to me prior to your interview.
- Participate in an interview. This will take 30 to 45 minutes.
- Potentially respond to additional questions or provide clarification after the initial interview. This will take 15 to 20 minutes.

In total, this study will take approximately 75 minutes for an interview and potentially for follow up questions or clarification, over no more than 2 sessions.

What if I decide I don't want to be in this study?

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide you do not want to participate in this study, please feel free to say so, and do not sign this form. If you decide to participate in this study, but later change your mind and want to withdraw, simply notify me and you will be removed immediately. Your decision of whether or not to participate will have no negative or positive impact on your relationship with St. Catherine University, nor with any of the students or faculty involved in the research.

What are the risks (dangers or harms) to me if I am in this study?

There is a low level of risk involved in this study. That being said, some participants may experience emotional frustration or agitation when discussing the 2016 Presidential Election.

Participants can choose not to answer question(s) that they feel cause any undue stress or agitation. Additionally, participants can choose with withdraw from the study.

What are the benefits (good things) that may happen if I am in this study?

The benefit of participating in this study is that information you provide will expand the research regarding followers and the important role they play in leader/follower relationships.

Will I receive any compensation for participating in this study?

You will not be compensated for participating in this study.

What will you do with the information you get from me and how will you protect my privacy?

The information that you provide in this study will be audiotaped and transcribed. Then your responses will be combined with information provided by other participants. Your name will be removed from the data. I will keep the research results on the hard drive of my personal computer in a password protected file and only I and the research advisor will have access to the records while I work on this project. I will finish analyzing the data by the end of December, 2017. I will then destroy all original reports and identifying information that can be linked back to you.

Any information that you provide will be kept confidential, which means that you will not be identified or identifiable in the any written reports or publications. If it becomes useful to disclose any of your information, I will seek your permission and tell you the persons or agencies to whom the information will be furnished, the nature of the information to be furnished, and the purpose of the disclosure; you will have the right to

grant or deny permission for this to happen. If you do not grant permission, the information will remain confidential and will not be released.

Are there possible changes to the study once it gets started?

If during course of this research study, if I learn about new findings that might influence your willingness to continue participating in the study, I will inform you of these findings

How can I get more information?

If you have any questions, you can ask them before you sign this form. You can also feel free to contact me at 612-385-3941 or slcasey@stkate.edu. If you have any additional questions later and would like to talk to the faculty advisor, please contact Assistant Professor Sharon Radd at 612-600-5420 or siradd@stkate.edu. If you have other questions or concerns regarding the study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you may also contact Dr. John Schmitt, Chair of the St. Catherine University Institutional Review Board, at (651) 690-7739 or jsschmitt@stkate.edu.

You may keep a copy of this form for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I consent to participate in the study and agree to be audiotaped.

My signature indicates that I have read this information and my questions have been answered. I also know that even after signing this form, I may withdraw from the study by informing the researcher(s).

_____

Signature of Participant   Date

_____

Signature of Researcher   Date

Appendix B

Research Instrument
Interview Inventory

Purpose of Interview

In this interview, I will explore participant's thoughts about the elements of context in Kellerman's equilateral triangle: history, a decline in respect for authority and technology. I also want to learn how these participants view the roll of followers (voters) in the 2016 Presidential Election. Finally, I want to find out if participants feel there has been a shift in the distribution of power between leaders and followers as a result of Trump's election.

Interview Objectives

1. Learn what historical events participants feel influenced the 2016 election.
2. Understand what influenced each participant's vote in the 2016 election.
3. Understand the perceptions of participants about the respect for authority and how it has changed over time.
4. Learn what participants think about the role of technology in the 2016 election.
5. Understand how participants view the distribution of power in the 2016 election.

Introduction to Interview

Thank you for agreeing to speak with me about my research. Today we'll discuss the 2016 election; the historical events that affected this election; the state of respect for authority in America, and technology. Finally we will discuss if/how you believe followers have affected the distribution of power between leaders and followers.

We'll start with some preliminary questions:

Describe the history of your political involvement

How did you decide to be involved?

Who were the key leaders in this election?

Tell me about your connection to the candidate you voted for?

Now let's talk about the 2016 presidential election:

History

Thinking historically, what events brought us to the point we are at today?

Respect for Political Authority

Who had authority now?

What gives people authority today?

How important is respect for authority?

How has respect for authority changed in the last 10 years?

Influence of Technology

What role did technology play in creating the context for this election?

How did technology affect this election specifically?

Distribution of Power

If you think about how power was distributed in the 2016 election, who has power now?

What observations do you have about this distribution of power?