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An attempt to predict evaluation of current and former leaders by examining characteristics of their followers

Jessica A. Golub
Loyola University Chicago

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

AN ATTEMPT TO PREDICT EVALUATION OF CURRENT AND
FORMER LEADERS BY EXAMINING CHARACTERISTICS OF THEIR
FOLLOWERS

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

BY

JESSICA A. GOLUB

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

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VITA

Jessica Golub was born in Chicago, Illinois.

Ms. Golub graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from Vassar College in May, 1987, after having majored in biopsychology. During that time she did research with Dr. Martha McClintock at the University of Chicago, and with Dr. E. Barry Keverne at Cambridge University, England. Following graduation, she spent a year studying philosophy at the Université de Grenoble, France.

Ms. Golub is presently pursuing a doctorate in Clinical Psychology at Loyola University of Chicago. During her first year she was awarded a research assistantship with Dr. Linda Heath. She has worked for two years as a therapist at Loyola University's Doyle Center, and will spend another year at Loyola University's Counseling Center.

Jessica A. Golub

Loyola University of Chicago

An Attempt to Predict Evaluation of Current and Former Leaders By
Examining Characteristics of Their Followers

The purpose of this study was to examine individual differences in responding to a change in leadership. It has been shown that there is often polarization of affect when a new leader arrives. Either individuals tend to idealize the former leader and are thus less able to invest in the new one, or conversely, they tend to rate the new leader positively and therefore must debunk the former leader. This study attempted to isolate variables that might predict which way followers would react to a leadership change. It was hypothesized that people high in narcissism and repression would idealize the former leader and be less able to invest in the current leader. On the other hand, those with a more pro-authority attitude would rate their current leader favorably and consequently debunk their former leader. Questionnaires were sent to faculty members at three campuses of a midwestern university. Subjects were asked to rate their current and former leaders, as well as to fill out personality questionnaires designed to assess levels of repression, narcissism, and attitude toward authority. The hypotheses were not supported by the current study. There were significant relationships, however, 1) between narcissism and those who rated their current leader more favorably than most in their department, and 2) between narcissism and favorable ratings of the current leader more recently

appointed (six months prior to study as opposed to 18 or more months before). Possible explanations for the findings are discussed.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| ACKNOWLEDGMENTS | ii |
| LIST OF TABLES | iv |
| Chapter | |
| INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| Introduction of Question | |
| The Rebecca Myth | |
| Criticizing the Former Leader and Subscribing to the New One | |
| Attitudes Toward Authority | |
| Overview and Hypotheses | |
| METHOD. | 11 |
| Subjects | |
| Procedure | |
| Statistics | |
| RESULTS | 13 |
| DISCUSSION | 23 |
| REFERENCES | 28 |

LIST OF TABLES

| Table | Page |
|---|------|
| 1. Correlation Coefficients of All Five Dimensions of the Leader Evaluation Scale for Ratings of Current Leaders . . . | 13 |
| 2. Correlation Coefficients of All Five Dimensions of the Leader Evaluation Scale for Ratings of Former Leaders . . . | 14 |
| 3. Descriptive Statistics of Predictor and Criterion Variables. . . . | 16 |
| 4. Scores on the G.A.I.A.S. of Individuals in Different Roles. . . . | 17 |
| 5. Correlations (Two-Tailed) Between Leader Evaluations and Narcissism, Attitude Toward Authority, and Repression Using All Subjects (N=81). | 18 |
| 6. Multiple Regression of Leader Evaluations Onto Narcissism, Attitude Toward Authority, and Repression (N=77). | 19 |
| 7. Regression of Current Leader Ratings That Were Higher Than Average of That Department Onto Narcissism, Attitude Toward Authority, and Repression (N=47). | 20 |
| 8. Correlations Between Leader Evaluations and Narcissism, Attitude Toward Authority, and Repression Using Values of Subjects Whose Chair Had Changed Eighteen Months Prior (N=56). . . . | 21 |
| 9. Correlations Between Leader Evaluations and Narcissism, Attitude Toward Authority, and Repression Using Values of Subjects Whose Chair Had Changed Six Months Prior (N=25). | 22 |

INTRODUCTION

Human society contains millions of groups and subgroups. We are made up of different nations, different religions, different careers, different pastimes, and different political persuasions. For almost every group, we have at least one leader. For a variety of different reasons, the individual assuming the leadership responsibilities can only hold that position for a certain amount of time, and then another individual takes his/her place. For example, the president of a country steps down and a new one is elected, a new minister is hired, or a director retires and a new person is promoted. Surprisingly, not much research has been conducted on the effect of leadership succession on group members.

There have been a few studies on this process. Kotin & Sharaf (1967) noted that in the process of leadership succession there seems to be a "polarization of affect" that accompanies the loss of one leader and the substitution of another. That is, either group members idealize the former leader and do not accept the new one, or they see the new leader as a savior of the group and debunk the former leader (Heller, 1989). Thus when leadership changes, two different outcomes have been described. In the first outcome, termed the "Rebecca Myth" (Gouldner, 1954), group members idealize their former leader as one might idealize a former relationship. In the second outcome, group members undergo a paradigm change in order to subscribe to the ideals of the new leader. Meanwhile, in order to make sense

of their new allegiance to a new and different leadership style, they criticize their former leader's style (Heller, 1989). What makes some group members idealize their former leader and others criticize their former leader's ways in order to accept the new leader?

The "Rebecca Myth"

In some circumstances, group members may idealize the former leader and criticize the new leader. Members may even idealize a former leader who had been criticized while in power (Gouldner, 1954). This phenomenon may also occur in relationships and in various situations. For example, soldiers may complain about being in the army, and then after their term is over they may reminisce nostalgically and long for the "good old days," seemingly forgetting the bad times (Werman, 1977). The "Rebecca Myth" refers to this process. The term was coined by Gouldner (1954) and originates from the idealization process of a former significant other that occurred in a novel by Daphne DuMaurier. In this novel a widower was unable to emotionally commit to his new wife because he continued to idealize his late wife. This process in romantic relationships may be familiar to the reader: after a couple decides to separate or break up, the members of the pair begin to idealize what they had. Some authors suggest that this idealization of the relationship stems from an unwillingness to mourn its ending (Geahchan, 1968; Gorkin, 1984; Kaplan, 1987; Schneider, 1988). Geahchan suggests that by idealizing the former individual, one can avoid the feeling of loss that occurs when a relationship ends. That is, instead of giving up the "object," it remains in a nostalgic relationship (Geahchan,

1968). As long as one idealizes a former relationship, he/she is not free to invest in new ones (Kleiner, 1970; Werman, 1977). In addition, as long as one longs for an idealized nostalgic relationship, all new objects in one's life seem to fall short of one's idealized expectations (Werman, 1977),

While one may think that having trouble letting go must be due to resistance to giving up a pleasant relationship, Werman (1977) reminds us that we may idealize past relationships that were not satisfying in an attempt to master our accompanying feelings of rejection, rage, and guilt. For example, a way of dealing with a traumatic childhood experience of feeling rejected by a parent may be to idealize that relationship, and to deny the pain involved (Werman, 1977). It has been hypothesized that damaged trust between child and primary caregiver can cause frequent and painful nostalgic yearnings (Peters, 1985).

Similarly, idealization can also be utilized as a defense in order to deny emotions associated with death. Death can be conceptualized as a permanent loss of a relationship. It thus makes sense that individuals having difficulty accepting the loss would employ the same mechanism of idealization in order to "keep the relationship alive." Research has supported this hypothesis, showing that hospital staff members working with the terminally ill employed idealization along with other defenses as a method of coping (or not coping) with the loss (Homer, 1984). Thus idealization is often seen as a mechanism to avoid acceptance of separation (Van der Kolk, 1983).

Although nostalgic idealizations seem to be very common, some people employ it more than others. What kind of people would be more

likely to use idealization as a defense against mourning? Geahchan suggests that among other things, narcissism and repression are evident in those who need to idealize instead of let go (Geahchan, 1968). Also, individuals who manifest symptoms of borderline personality disorder are more likely to split their object world into "only good" and "only bad" (Gorkin, 1984), thus idealizing some while diabolizing others. Idealization may also be more prevalent in individuals who have endured or are currently experiencing a separation from a significant other (Gorkin, 1984). Sands arrives at five characteristics that seem to be found in individuals prone to nostalgic yearnings: narcissism, unresolved grief, inadequate separation, traumatic loss or disappointment that causes archaic relating styles, and "...strategic retreat from the dangers of immediate involvement to a romantic nostalgia that preserves a lost object and a sense of self" (Sands, 1985).

Criticizing the Former Leader and Subscribing to the New One

Although there are instances like the ones just described where individuals idealize the former leader, partner, or caregiver, and therefore are unable to invest in the new one, it can also occur that one undergoes something similar to a paradigm change (Kuhn, 1962) and subscribes to the new leader's style and values. Kuhn explains that we work from a paradigm, or a basic frame of reference from which to understand and organize information. When a piece of information cannot be understood using our paradigm, an "anomaly" exists. Sometimes these anomalies lead to a revolution through which a new paradigm is accepted that can account better for the new information. Although Kuhn referred to groups rather than

individuals in his theory, his ideas might be helpful as a metaphor to understand what occurs when a new leader has a different style from the former leader. If one subscribes to the new style which is different from the old, it is necessary to debunk the old in order to make sense out of why one gives her/his allegiance to the new ways. Heller (1989) describes two mechanisms involved in a paradigm shift that help people resolve the curious fact that they used to see things so differently. These mechanisms are termed "annihilation" and "rewriting history." Annihilation refers to destroying an old world view by seeing it negatively. She gives the example of "I was lost but now I'm found." Rewriting history refers to recounting the past inaccurately in order to make it fit into one's changed world view. In Heller's (1989) study, members of an organization spoke about the former leadership inaccurately in order to feel more comfortable about their transfer of allegiance.

The process of succession has been conceptualized by some as dual in nature: although the new leader is creating his/her regime, the old ways must also be destroyed by both leader and followers in order for the transition to be effective. This annihilation mechanism just described can be conceptualized as part of this destructive process, whereby loyalties to former leaders and policies are destroyed. Biggart (1977) terms this a "creative-destructive" process that she witnessed and documented when the U.S. Post Office was re-organized. Gephart (1978) has documented a case where leadership succession took the form of status degradation of the departing leader. Smith and Simmons (1983) have found that outgoing leaders are sometimes even scapegoated.

What makes some people go to the extreme of rewriting history in order to transfer their allegiance to a new leader? Why is it necessary for some people to be invested in their current leader perhaps regardless of her/his qualifications? What makes some people need to feel that their current leader is more competent than the last?

Attitudes Toward Authority

Attitude toward authority has been defined as a "...predisposition to respond favorably or unfavorably towards a range of authority figures or institutional authorities" (Rigby, 1985). What makes some people more accepting of authority than others? It has been hypothesized that early awareness of separateness from a primary caregiver leads to idealization of that caregiver as omnipotent, and devaluation of the self as helpless (McGlashan, 1983). In a similar vein, Hispanics in one study who had recently been separated from their homes were found to perceive their parents as omnipotent and perfect, and transferred that perception to other authority figures in their lives after losing the parental object in order to get "emotional refueling" from those surrogate authority figures (Tylin, 1982). Idealization of other objects may, in other words, be an attempt to retrieve a lost experience (Daniels, 1985).

Freud recognized the tendency for many to idealize the current leader. He explained this phenomenon as putting the leader in the place of one's ego ideal (Freud, 1921). Other authors discuss the psychodynamic perspective of splitting, whereby an individual splits off good parts of himself and

projects them onto the leader. Still others, such as self psychology proponents, suggest that individuals experience a need to idealize others because of an attempt to fulfill selfobject needs (Shapiro, 1990; Kohut, 1977, 1984; Weinstein, 1987). Regardless of what actually occurs intrapsychically, these people idealize individuals who are currently in positions of authority.

Investigators have found that acceptance of authority can be correlated with other personality characteristics. Individuals who respond favorably towards authority figures tend to have a significantly lower tolerance for ambiguity, lower tolerance for complexity, and tend to be significantly less creatively independent (Rump, 1985; Kischkel, 1983). They also tend to be more conservative and traditional, as well as more apt to subscribe to religion perhaps due to the answers that it can provide to puzzling questions (Rump, 1985). Thus those who are more accepting of authority tend to prefer a simple, unambiguous world (Rump, 1985).

In contrast to the simplicity and order that pro-authority individuals value, the process of leadership change can be chaotic and ambiguous. The change "...disrupts comfortable, familiar work groups and routines" (Heller, 1989). Because of this, members may experience "emotional disturbance" (Jackson, 1953). More specifically, the unknown quality of the future may arouse both hope and fear in followers (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Instead of experiencing the uncertainty involved in not being sure how one feels about the new leader, or wondering what the future will hold being led by an individual whose leading style is unknown, might not pro-authority individuals convince themselves that the new leader is competent and in

control of the situation? It would seem to be too anxiety-provoking for them to entertain the notion that perhaps the new leader is not qualified or has not figured out how to lead the group effectively. If the new leader is not in control, then who is? This uncertainty and lack of order involved in not having a competent authority figure for the group may be intolerable for pro-authority individuals who are dependent on the leader to "show the way" without hesitation. People who need to feel that someone is in charge may endow authority figures with qualities that these figures may not actually possess. In a need for direction, some individuals may subscribe to religion to avoid the concept that perhaps the world has no director or no ultimate meaning. Members of religions around the world have endowed their gods with omnipotence and perfection, which seems to soothe those that worry or fear the future ("Don't worry, God knows what He's doing; everything happens for a reason"). In fact, both male and female adolescents (Rigby & Densley, 1985) and adults (Rigby & Rump, 1979; Rigby & Rump, 1984; Rump, 1984) who expressed a belief in God were significantly more pro-authority than were individuals who were not religious.

Overview and Hypotheses

Several things have been mentioned that might be able to predict whether subjects will idealize the current leader or the previous leader. It has been found that pro-authority individuals are less tolerant of ambiguous situations. These people may need to see the current leader as competent in order to avoid the anxiety-provoking feeling of not being sure of the new leader. Since those who show a more positive attitude toward authority tend to have a lower tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty, and be less

independent, they should have a greater need to see their new leader as competent. Thus the more accepting of authority subjects are in general, the higher ratings they should give their new leader. In order to reconcile the fact that they are rating their current leader positively, since there will be differences between the current and the previous leader, pro-authority subjects will need to rate their former leader more negatively. In employing the mechanism of annihilation, they will undergo a paradigm shift and subscribe to the new leader's style. Another point that was made is that individuals who are more repressed and narcissistic have a more difficult time letting go of past relationships, and thus idealize them in order to keep them alive. They thus have a more difficult time investing in a new relationship. If this is the case, we would expect these people to idealize their former leader and be less invested in the new leader.

In order to test the ideas presented here, faculty members at a large midwestern university were asked to rate their current and former chairpersons on a number of leadership dimensions. They were also asked to fill out part of the General Attitude Toward Institutional Authority Scale (GAIAS, Rigby, 1982), as well as the narcissism subscale of the Personality Diagnostic Questionnaire-Revised, and the Controlled Repression-Sensitization Scale derived from the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI).

In sum, it is hypothesized that during a change of leadership, where allegiance will be placed by group members will in part depend on certain aspects of group members' personalities. Although there are "real" differences between different leaders in terms of their competence,

friendliness, and other important characteristics, it is hypothesized that other variables having nothing to do with the leaders themselves are involved in their evaluations. These variables have more to do with the needs and personality development of the followers. It is these variables that will be the subject of this investigation.

METHOD

Subjects

Subjects were 81 full-time faculty members from a midwestern university. Faculty members came from 15 departments on three different campuses. Subjects thus ranged in age, but all were adults. Departments chosen to participate in the study were those that had experienced a change of chair within the last 18 months. This list of departments fulfilling this requirement was acquired through the office of the Dean of Faculties and the Office of the Provost. The departments that experienced a change six months prior to data collection were: finance, communications, philosophy, accounting, and management. The departments that experienced a change of chairperson 18 months prior to data collection were: english, natural science, theology, political science, psychology, counseling and human resource development (in school of education), and education leadership, policy studies, orthopaedic surgery, and obstetrics & gynecology from the school of medicine.

Procedure

Subjects were sent a questionnaire to fill out that included five items assessing subjects' evaluations of their current and previous department chairpersons (order alternated; half of subjects evaluated the current chair first, half evaluated the former chair first). Following these items were nine items from the General Attitude Toward Institutional Authority (G.A.I.A.S., Rigby, 1982). Three items were used from each of 3 subscales assessing

attitudes toward the police, the law, and the army. Items eliminated from the full scale were: those with lowest item-total correlations, items assessing attitudes toward teachers, and items that based on the judgment of the researcher were most apparent as to what they were trying to get at. Items two, three, and eight were reverse-scored. Following these items were the Controlled Repression-Sensitization Scale derived from the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) assessing repression, and the narcissism scale from the Personality Diagnostic Questionnaire-Revised, assessing narcissism. A letter was sent with the questionnaires explaining that this data would be anonymously used for this author's research, and requesting volunteer participation. Subjects were also told that this research was being done by a graduate student doing her master's thesis on individuals' evaluations of leadership. Faculty members were sent two mailings of the letter and questionnaires two weeks apart.

RESULTS

The Leader Evaluation Scale was first examined to see how well the five different items correlated with each other in an attempt to see if they were tapping the same construct. While correlations between ratings of current and former leaders were not significant, ranging from .0046 to .1612, there were high and significant correlations between all five items (competence, likeability, fairness, level of investment, and degree of concern for the future of the department), within both the current and former leader evaluations (see Tables 1 and 2). The ratings on the five items were therefore summed to form composite scores of ratings of current and former leaders.

Table 1.--Correlation Coefficients of All Five Dimensions of the Leader Evaluation Scale for Ratings of Current Leaders

| | <u>Competent</u> | <u>Likeable</u> | <u>Fair</u> | <u>Invested</u> | <u>Concerned w/future</u> |
|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Competent | 1.000 | .6432** | .6044** | .7948** | .7461** |
| Likeable | .6432** | 1.000 | .8222** | .5647** | .5999** |
| Fair | .6044** | .8222** | 1.000 | .5583** | .6780** |
| Invested | .7946** | .5647** | .5583** | 1.000 | .8123** |
| Concerned w/future | .7461** | .5999** | .6780** | .8123** | 1.000 |

**p<.01

Table 2.--Correlation Coefficients of All Five Dimensions of the Leader Evaluation Scale for Ratings of Former Leaders

| | <u>Competent</u> | <u>Likeable</u> | <u>Fair</u> | <u>Invested</u> | <u>Concerned w/future</u> |
|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Competent | 1.000 | .7366** | .7936** | .6084** | .5620** |
| Likeable | .7366** | 1.000 | .7616** | .6095** | .5656** |
| Fair | .7936** | .7616** | 1.000 | .6974** | .6275** |
| Invested | .6084** | .6095** | .6974** | 1.000 | .7068** |
| Concerned w/future | .5620** | .5656** | .6275** | .7068** | 1.000 |

**p<.01

In order to control for "real" differences among the departments between current and former leaders, the overall mean for each department on each of the criterion variables was subtracted from each score. For example, the mean composite score of current leader evaluation for department #1 was subtracted from everyone's current leader evaluation score from that department. This was done to control for differences between departments in terms of their perceptions of both their current and former leaders. Then the former leader rating was subtracted from the rating of the current leader to produce a relative score reflecting the difference in ratings between the two leaders. These difference scores were used as criterion variables in the regressions.

Scores on narcissism and repression were formed by summing the number of true-false items endorsed by the subject, whereas scores on attitude toward authority represented the average rating of the five-point scale (i.e., the sum of values endorsed was divided by the number of items answered). The latter procedure of averaging the ratings was employed in order to correct for a small number of subjects who failed to answer every item of the authority scale. The former procedure of summing the narcissism and repression scales are standard scoring techniques for those measures. It should be noted that the score used on the narcissism scale was a total score, and should not be used to assess whether subjects reached the threshold of five, which would indicate support for narcissistic personality disorder (DSM-III-R). To calculate a score that would be comparable to the threshold score, a different scoring procedure should be used (i.e., items 1 & 2 count as one, and items 3 & 4 count as one). Since subjects did not always endorse the pairs in the same way, it was thought that more information would be gained by allowing the greater variability attained when each item counted as separate. In addition, it was unlikely that many subjects in this normal population would score at the high end of the spectrum (i.e., with a personality disorder), thus making the standard scoring procedure inappropriate for the purpose of this study. High scores for narcissism and attitude toward authority indicate higher levels of narcissism and a more positive attitude toward authority, whereas high scores for repression indicate a low level of repression.

Descriptive statistics for the predictor and criterion variables are reported in Table 3. The range of values found for attitude toward authority

and narcissism was limited. (This lack of variability may be problematic, as will be discussed.) Although it looked as though people in general evaluated their current leader more favorably than their former leader, this difference was not significant, $t(76)=-.17$, $p=0.86$.

Table 3.--Descriptive Statistics of Predictor and Criterion Variables.

| | <u>Authority</u> | <u>Narcism</u> | <u>Represn</u> | <u>Current</u> | <u>Former</u> | <u>DS</u> <u>(C-F)</u> | <u>DS</u> <u>not</u> <u>corrected</u> |
|-----------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------------------|--|
| Possible Scores | 1-5 | 0-11 | 0-30 | 5-35 | 5-35 | | |
| Mean | 3.164 | 2.728 | 8.938 | -0.001 | 0.000 | 0.001 | -4.438 |
| Mode | 3.110 | 2.000 | 5.000 | -1.500 | -7.430 | 2.620 | 0.000 |
| Median | 3.110 | 2.000 | 8.000 | -1.000 | -0.900 | 0.570 | -3.000 |
| Range | 3.560 | 9.000 | 17.000 | 29.360 | 31.740 | 49.780 | 50.000 |
| St.Dev. | 0.682 | 1.924 | 4.299 | 4.456 | 6.165 | 7.377 | 8.735 |
| Skew | -0.127 | 0.949 | 0.418 | 2.173 | 0.363 | 0.461 | 0.009 |
| N | 81 | 81 | 81 | 77 | 78 | 77 | 80 |

Note: A negative score on rating of leaders indicates liking the leader more than most people in that department, while a positive score indicates liking the leader less than most in the same department.

Note: "DS not corrected" is the difference score between the two leaders not corrected for confound of department. A negative value indicates the rater prefers the current leader, while a positive value indicates the rater preferred the former leader.

Table 4 indicates how the present sample scored relative to other populations on attitude toward authority. The relatively liberal stance of the faculty may have ramifications for the outcome, as will be discussed. There is no normative data from a normal population yet available on the narcissism scale, as it has been used thus far with patients in order to diagnose personality disorders. The lack of variability of narcissism ratings may thus be due to the scale's greater sensitivity with a pathological population.

Table 4.--Scores on the G.A.I.A.S. of Individuals in Different Roles
(Rigby 1982, 1987)

| <u>Role</u> | <u>Attitude Toward Authority</u> <u>M (total score/# items)</u> |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Prison Officers | 4.04 |
| Mothers, Fathers of Undergraduates | 3.83, 3.75 |
| British Conservative Party | 3.41 |
| Undergraduates | 3.38 |
| Probation Officers | 3.28 |
| Australian Liberal Party | 3.24 |
| Professors in this Study | 3.16 |
| British Labour Party | 2.87 |
| Australian Labour Party | 2.61 |

Correlations were calculated among all variables to assess the overall pattern of relationships. The relationship of primary interest was that of the

current-former leader evaluation difference score (DS) with the predictor variables. The strength of the relationship of DS with attitude toward authority was .087; that of DS with repression was .000; that of DS with narcissism was .103. The only relatively high correlation between any of the variables was that of narcissism with repression, $r(78)=.405$; $p<.01$; see Table 5.

Table 5.--Correlations (Two Tailed) Between Leader Evaluations and Narcissism, Attitude Toward Authority, and Repression Using All Subjects (N=81)

| | <u>Narcissism</u> | <u>Authority</u> | <u>Repression</u> | <u>Current</u> | <u>Former</u> | <u>DS</u> |
|------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------|-----------|
| Narcissism | --- | -0.0342 | 0.4045** | 0.1658 | 0.0211 | 0.1031 |
| Authority | --- | --- | 0.0444 | -0.0027 | -0.0952 | 0.0872 |
| Repression | --- | --- | --- | -0.0477 | -0.0515 | -0.0004 |
| Current | --- | --- | --- | --- | 0.0346 | 0.5756** |
| Former | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | -0.7930** |
| DS | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |

** $p<.01$

The composite scores of leader evaluation (current, former, and DS) were regressed onto the three predictor variables of narcissism, attitude toward authority, and repression. There were no significant relationships. (See Table 6.)

Table 6.--Multiple Regression of Leader Evaluations onto Narcissism, Attitude Toward Authority, and Repression (N=77)

| | <u>R square</u> | <u>St.Error</u> | <u>Beta</u> | <u>Signif. F Change</u> | <u>F</u> | <u>Sig. F</u> |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------------------|----------|---------------|
| CURRENT | | | | | | |
| Narcissism | 0.0275 | 4.4236 | 0.1657 | 0.1497 | 2.119 | 0.1497 |
| Authority+ | 0.0450 | 4.4431 | 0.0101 | 0.5145 | 1.1471 | 0.3359 |
| Repression | | | -0.1467 | | | |
| FORMER | | | | | | |
| Narcissism | 0.0000 | 6.1091 | 0.0005 | 0.9967 | 0.00002 | 0.9967 |
| Authority+ | 0.0099 | 6.1614 | -0.0942 | 0.6950 | 0.2438 | 0.8655 |
| Repression | | | -0.0336 | | | |
| DS | | | | | | |
| Narcissism | 0.0106 | 7.387 | 0.1031 | 0.3721 | 0.8062 | 0.3721 |
| Authority+ | 0.0220 | 7.444 | 0.0947 | 0.6549 | 0.5484 | 0.6508 |
| Repression | | | -0.0579 | | | |

Looking at a standardized residual plot, it was noted that there was substantial deviation from linearity in the data. In order to see whether this deviation was affecting the regression analysis results, the data were split into groups of scores greater than and less than zero to see if linear relationships might be differentially applicable to individuals scoring at different ends of the spectrum. For example, the data was examined to see if the predictor variables might account for a significant amount of the variance for people who liked the current leader more than the average person in the

department, versus those who disliked the current leader more than the average person in the department. Regressions were thus re-run for both of these groups on all three dependent variables to see if the pattern of relationship differed between the two.

Although splitting the data in this way showed no significant relationships between most variables, there was a positive and significant relationship between narcissism and the rating of the current leader in individuals who rated the current leader more favorably than the average person in the same department ($R^2=.108$, $F(1,46)=5.47$, $p<.05$; see Table 7). The direction of this relationship is opposite from what was predicted.

Table 7.--Regression of Current Leader Ratings That Were Higher Than Average of That Department Onto Narcissism, Attitude Toward Authority, and Repression (N=47)

| | <u>R square</u> | <u>St.Error</u> | <u>Beta</u> | <u>Signif. F</u> <u>Change</u> | <u>F</u> | <u>Sig. F</u> |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|----------|---------------|
| Current ratings >average | | | | | | |
| Narcissism | 0.1083 | 1.6091 | 0.3291 | 0.0239* | 5.4673 | 0.0239* |
| Authority+ | 0.1435 | 1.6133 | -0.0918 | 0.4214 | 2.4007 | 0.0809 |
| Repression | | | 0.1912 | | | |

It was hypothesized that the amount of time since the change of leadership occurred might affect ratings of leaders. The data was therefore split into groups whose chairs had changed six months prior to the study and those whose chairs had changed eighteen months or more before. While in the 18 month group there were no significant correlations between leader

evaluations and the three predictors of repression, narcissism, and attitude toward authority (see Table 8), the group of departments whose chairs had changed more recently showed a significant correlation between narcissism and rating of the current leader, such that as narcissism of the rater increased, so did his/her rating of the current leader ($r(23)=.63, p<.01$; see Table 9).

Table 8: Correlations Between Leader Evaluations and Narcissism, Attitude Toward Authority, and Repression Using Values of Subjects Whose Chair Had Changed Eighteen Months Prior. (N=56)

| | <u>Narcissism</u> | <u>Authority</u> | <u>Repression</u> | <u>Current</u> | <u>Former</u> | <u>DS</u> |
|------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------|-----------|
| Narcissism | --- | -0.0064 | 0.4608** | 0.0341 | -0.0207 | 0.0630 |
| Authority | --- | --- | -0.0034 | 0.1225 | 0.0112 | 0.0756 |
| Repression | --- | --- | --- | -0.0987 | -0.1134 | 0.0141 |
| Current | --- | --- | --- | --- | -0.0471 | 0.6262** |
| Former | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | -0.8028** |
| DS | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |

** $p<.01$

Table 9.--Correlations Between Leader Evaluations and Narcissism, Attitude Toward Authority, and Repression Using Values of Subjects Whose Chair Had Changed Six Months Prior. (N=25)

| | <u>Narcissism</u> | <u>Authority</u> | <u>Repression</u> | <u>Current</u> | <u>Former</u> | <u>DS</u> |
|------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------|-----------|
| Narcissism | --- | -0.1298 | 0.2896 | 0.6315** | 0.1617 | 0.2636 |
| Authority | --- | --- | 0.1644 | -0.2992 | -0.3384 | 0.1275 |
| Repression | --- | --- | --- | 0.0852 | 0.1039 | -0.0436 |
| Current | --- | --- | --- | --- | 0.2894 | 0.3853 |
| Former | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | -0.7718** |
| DS | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |

**p<.01

The ratings of leaders from departments whose chair had changed six months prior to data collection were compared with those from departments who experienced a change of chair eighteen months prior to data collection. There were no differences between the two groups of departments on ratings of current chair ($t(75)=0.00$, $p>0.95$), former chair ($t(76)=0.00$, $p>0.95$), or the difference score between current and former leader ratings ($t(75)=0.00$, $p>0.95$).

DISCUSSION

Investigators have traditionally noted a "polarization of affect" accompanying a change in leadership (Kotin & Sharif, 1967; Heller, 1989). At times followers have been noted to idealize the former leader and be unable to invest in the current leader (Gouldner, 1954; Werman, 1977). Followers have also been shown, however, to criticize the former leader and form a strong allegiance to the current leader (Heller, 1989; Gephart, 1978; Smith & Simmons, 1983). It had been hypothesized that individuals who are more narcissistic (Geahchan, 1968; Sands, 1985) and who employ repression more often as a defense (Geahchan, 1968) would be likely to idealize the former leader and therefore be less available to invest in the new one. On the other hand, it was hypothesized that individuals who have more positive attitudes toward authority would need the lack of ambiguity afforded by a positive perception of a current leader (Rump, 1985; Kischkel, 1983). In order to reconcile their positive feelings about the current leader even though he/she may have a different leadership style, it was thought that these individuals would have to debunk their former leaders (Heller, 1989).

Overall, the predictor variables of narcissism, attitude toward authority, and repression accounted for little if any of the variance seen in the evaluation of current and former leaders. The two relationships that were statistically significant were 1) between narcissism and rating of the current leader in those who rated their current leader more favorably than most in their department, and 2) between narcissism and favorable ratings of the

current leader more recently appointed (six months prior to study as opposed to 18 or more months before). However, because of the small samples in these groups and the overall number of calculations performed, it is difficult to rule out the possibility that these significant correlations are simply Type I errors.

Several things may have led to the lack of significant relationships in the sample as a whole. One possible reason for the negative finding is that a select population was sampled. All were professors, with graduate educations, living in the same city and working for the same institution. As was seen by their scores on the G.A.I.A.S., the respondents tended to endorse items that were consistent with a more liberal ideology. Limited variability of respondents may have narrowed the variability of the kinds of responses received. In addition, the relationships between leaders and professors may be quite specific to this type of situation; the chairpersons are likely to have a relatively low amount of power, and may not have frequent significant interactions with professors. The chairpersons may not have been elected by the constituents, and they may lead in a manner specific to being chairpersons in a university, which may differ from leadership behavior found in other settings.

In addition, the 39% response rate may have worked to bias the sample even more. In other words, those who were willing to respond to the questionnaire may represent a particular type of individual, which may restrict the range of scores. Indeed the range and standard deviation on the variables of narcissism and attitude toward authority were restricted such that finding significant correlations between them and other variables would

be difficult. There was also a restricted range of ratings of leadership, especially for the current leader. While 68% of respondents rated their former leader favorably, 91% of respondents rated their current leader favorably. Without enough people representing both professors satisfied and dissatisfied with both current and former leaders, it is difficult to find significant relationships between those ratings and the predictor variables. Another factor that may have restricted the range of leader ratings is that respondents may have worried about the ramifications of rating their current chairs poorly; they may have doubted whether confidentiality would truly be upheld.

Another factor that may have affected the data is the finding that repression and narcissism are significantly correlated such that people who endorse repression items are less likely to endorse narcissism items. It is thus unclear whether an accurate measure of narcissism was collected. It has been found that items assessing narcissism are difficult for subjects to endorse (personal communication, Dr. Hyler, 3/92), and those who are more repressed may even have a more difficult time admitting to narcissistic behaviors. It has been suggested that in future study the items on the measure of narcissism be scrambled with other items to decrease the difficulty in endorsing those items (personal communication, Dr. Hyler, 3/92). In addition, to gauge the usefulness of subjects' endorsements in a future study, it would be helpful to administer a validity scale along with the PDQ-R Narcissism scale (personal communication, Dr. Hyler, 3/92).

A final possible reason for these findings is that no relationship exists between narcissism, attitude toward authority, repression, and leadership

evaluation. There are a number of factors which could influence peoples' perception of both current and former leaders, and the degree to which these other factors were important in the present study may have limited the amount of variance which could be attributed to individual difference variables like the ones studied here.

The finding of a significant relationship between narcissism and positive rating for the current leader needs to be replicated with a larger sample. If, however, such a replication is found, one might interpret this finding as follows. Individuals with narcissistic tendencies may feel better when associated with important people, such as those in power. Narcissistic people's friends and associates may reflect on themselves, and thus the more positively they can evaluate those with whom they associate, the higher they can evaluate themselves. However, this finding does not support the hypothesis suggested in this study that narcissistic individuals would idealize previous leaders and thus have difficulty investing in the new ones.

Another interesting finding was that although the relationship of narcissism and current leader evaluation was not significant when examined using all respondents, it was significant when the only respondents examined were those whose chairpersons had changed more recently (six months before as opposed to 18 or more months before). It is possible that the raters' narcissism affects people's ratings initially, before they have a lot of information about the new leader. The effect of narcissism may dissipate with time, so that individuals' assessments of the new leader are based increasingly on the actual performance of the leader, rather than on the rater's own characteristics.

In general, the current findings showed no support for the idea that narcissism, repression, and need for authority are useful for predicting how people will respond to changes in leadership. Thus, future research should look to other variables, or other types of variables, to further understand the relatively unresearched phenomenon of leadership change.

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The thesis submitted by Jessica A. Golub has been read and approved by the following committee:

Dr. Scott Tindale, Director
Associate Professor, Psychology Department
Loyola University of Chicago

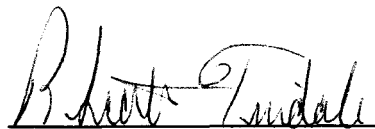
Dr. Ralph Levinson
Associate Professor, Psychology Department
Loyola University of Chicago

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9/2/92

Date



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