

CONTEMPORARY LEADERS AND POWER

Well-known leaders and the power modes they exemplify



Nelson Mandela



Tony Blair



Barack Obama



Angela Merkel



Nicolas Sarkozy



Dominique Strauss-Kahn



Margaret Thatcher



Vladimir Putin

Patronage	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Meritocracy	✓			✓			
Charisma							
Force							
Manipulation			✓		✓		✓
Fear							✓
Populism	✓						
Inheritance		✓					
Election							✓

Mandela was able to rule through meritocracy, populism and charisma. Since other rulers have taken over, they have gone back to the more traditional dependence of African leaders on tribal patronage. Forming a dynasty was of little interest to Mandela, but things might change now...

When Blair announced his departure/retirement, his ability to dispense patronage and gain active support dried up – but he managed inheritance (succession) very closely, handing over to Gordon Brown, honouring an agreement they had made much earlier.

Obama can't win another term so his supporters are diminishing; he came in on a meritocracy ticket, but this was not enough; the American system would seem to support the use of manipulation, with the checks and balances of the governmental system, lobby groups and fund-raising activities.

Merkel seems to be admired internationally but it's hard to say where her power resides – her administration does not necessarily favour meritocracy, few around her are charismatic, she is acceptable but not madly popular, perhaps she enjoys the patronage of bankers and financiers, whom she manipulates?

The former French leader Sarkozy is planning a comeback – his charisma, especially compared with the rather grey current leader – might be his strongest card.

The brand of manipulation wielded by Strauss-Kahn when at the International Monetary Fund – especially used with female colleagues – was seen as unacceptable and inappropriate when it was widely exposed.

It was said of Thatcher that when she had been in power for several years, the people who had not received any patronage from her realized they probably wouldn't and were waiting for the next political era.

Putin would seem to use the power of patronage to a considerable degree. Those refusing to accept his patronage and the obligations that go with it may find themselves imprisoned. He certainly uses fear, manipulation and election as techniques to retain his power base. He juggles position power between being president and Prime Minister.