Article

Leadership Models in Armenia: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives

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Abstract

This paper addresses historical and contemporary issues of leadership in Armenia. Five leadership models have been acknowledged in Armenia during its four thousand year history: Monarchic, Church, National, Communist, and Democratic Leadership. Each model has been presented within its historical context and analyzed in light of current leadership behaviors in Armenia. The results of the study show that (a) current Armenian leaders seem to reflect the behaviors and attitudes of the historical leadership models above; (b) history should matter in leadership studies to understand leadership behaviors, in this case in Armenia, and how the past continues to shape their current worldviews and social identities; and (c) democracy imported to Armenia from the West, with little considerations of the historical characteristics of the Armenian people, has not produced the desired democratic reforms since 1991 independence. Perhaps an integrative approach to all five leadership models is necessary to address leadership challenges in Armenia today.

Keywords

Armenia, leadership, monarchy, church, national, communist, democratic

Definition of Terms

Armenian Church. The Armenian Church in this paper refers to the Armenian Apostolic (Orthodox) Church founded by St. Gregory the Illuminator in 301 AD.

Deductive approach. In this paper, the *deductive approach* refers to the use of the deductive method of reasoning to move from the general concepts of Armenian leadership models observed throughout history to more specific hypothetical conclusions on leadership behaviors among contemporary Armenian Church, national, and democratic leaders.

Ethnographic research refers to the study methods of culture both prehistoric and contemporary through participant observations, interviews and/or questionnaires, conversations, and so on. The *emic perspective* is used for data analysis. ***Emic perspective*** refers to an anthropological research method that seeks to understand the culture from within ("through an insider's view") to help the researcher think and act as a native. Thus, the aim of *emic* research is to enable an outsider to gain a sense of what it means to be an insider.

Historiography. The term *historiography* in this paper refers to the historical method of studying the history through which the historical knowledge is obtained and transmitted about the history of leadership characteristics, traits, and styles in the context of the Armenian culture.

Leadership. This refers to both one's leading and following behavioral functions in a cross-cultural or multicultural context and time. *Leadership* is perceived as a nonstatic human behavioral function: in one situation, one may follow, in another, lead, and vice versa.

Leadership behavior. This refers to leader's intrapersonal attitude and interpersonal behavioral response to situational variables such as leaders and followers in community and/or organizational context.

This paper addresses major historical leadership models in Armenia from more than four thousand years of the nation's history. The historical Armenia was located in Eurasia between three seas: the Mediterranean, Black, and Caspian. According to available historical sources, Armenians originate from three people groups: (a) Paeonian people of the Balkans, (b) the remnants of the Khayashan people, and (c) a mixture of "Urartians" with indigenous people of the Armenian highlands with their Indo-European dialect. The Armenian monarchy lasted from the Bronze Age to the end of the 14th century AD. After accepting Christianity as a state

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religion in 301 AD, the Armenians modeled church leadership that exists today. Beginning in the 16th century, the rise of Armenian national identity under the yoke of Tatar-Mongols, Egyptian Mamluks, Turkic tribes, and later, Ottoman sultans produced a national leadership model in Armenia that aimed for national independence and struggled against foreign investors. Due to Socialist movements in Europe and the Bolshevik revolution in Russia in 1917, the eastern provinces of Armenia joined the revolutionary movements in Transcaucasia and—after the newly formed national government in Armenia was overthrown in 1920—came to power as Communist leaders and governed until the collapse of the Soviet Union. Since 1991, the newly formed government of independent Armenia has "embraced" Western democracy and "free-market economy" as the ethos of its constitution. For the most part, this rapid shift from totalitarian to democratic form of governance, and from Soviet centralized economy to free-market economy, was the result of the demand of the time for political and economic survival rather than people's ideological paradigm shift.

Armenia has been in the crossroads of one of the most intense geopolitical regions of Eurasia since the fall of the Soviet Union. After more than 20 years of independence, Armenia continues to be a transitional country with its massive economic and political problems. Forty-two percent of the country's population lives at or below the poverty level. Due to the severe economic conditions in Armenia, people are leaving the country to find jobs in Russia, Europe, and North America. Thus, two thirds of the Armenian population live outside Armenia. The country is currently suffering from a high unemployment rate as well as a lack of accountability among leaders in public offices and the business sector. During the last presidential election in 2008, for instance, ballot stuffing, intimidation of poll workers, vote buying, and other irregularities were not unusual (U.S. Department of State, 2012). Even the parliamentary election in 2012 was not exempt from vote buying and ballot stuffing. The corruption continues to be high among leaders who occupy public offices (Martirosyan, 2009). A group of oligarchs controls the entire economy of the country (Masis Post, 2011). The disheartening reality of Armenia and the Armenian people raises questions that deserve answers.

It was in 1991, a few months before the fall of the USSR, when Gerard Libaridian, Professor of Modern Armenian History at the University of Michigan wrote, "Will the new leaders of Armenia be able to translate their vision into a strategy and the strategy into programs? Can the redefined nation-state succeed where the ideological empire failed? Can democracy provide what ideology could not?" (Libaridian, 1991, pp. 7-8). After more than 20 years of Armenian independence and so-called democratic government, I feel compelled to ask similar questions about the leaders of Armenia. Why has Western democracy not been working? Will it ever work? If not, what type of democracy or form of governance is more culturally relevant to the Armenian people? Can we learn useful leadership lessons from the nation's history to help us face the 21st century's economic, political, social, cultural, and global challenges? Finally, what is the future of Armenian leadership?

To find answers to these questions, I have taken on the task of studying Armenian leaders and leadership models, from prehistoric times to the present expecting to attain new perspectives and answers to the aforementioned questions for the 21st-century Armenian leadership.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to assess five major historical and contemporary models of indigenous Armenian leadership to be able to understand the relationship between the past and present, and whether or not the current leadership behaviors are the product of the nation's history.

Objectives

The research objectives are to understand current Armenian leadership in light of five major historical and contemporary leadership models: Monarchy (2500 BC-1375 AD), Church leadership (301 AD-present), National leadership (1675-present), Communist leadership (1920-1990), National leadership (1988-present), and Democratic leadership (1991-present).

Method

By using the historiographical and ethnographic research (participant observation: emic perspective) methods, this paper follows the deductive reasoning around the following hypothesis: history matters in leadership studies. One may observe historical leadership models to understand their influence on leaders' and/or followers' present behaviors and perhaps foresee upcoming challenges and how to respond to those challenges.

Research Questions

Research Question 1: What are the Armenian leadership models in Armenia observed throughout history?

Research Question 2: What are the relationships between current Armenian leadership behaviors and the nation's leadership history?

Research Question 3: What leadership lessons can be learned from the history of Armenia to face the 21st century's economic, political, social, cultural, and global challenges?

Research Question 4: What is the future of Armenian leadership having in mind the leadership models of the past and present?

Research Design and Conceptual Framework

To gain new knowledge and perspectives about Armenian leadership of the past and present, I have chosen *historiography* to search historical data collections for Armenian leadership themes.

First, I have used key historical sources to identify various leadership traits that existed in Armenia from its beginning. Armenian and non-Armenian sources are used to collect the necessary data for leadership analysis. I have identified leadership traits within the nation's history and categorized them under the following major historical leadership themes: Armenian monarchy, Armenian Church leadership, Armenian national leadership, Armenian Communist leadership, and Armenian democratic leadership. Then I sought to acknowledge the above themes' unique contributions to and influences on the development of the Armenian worldview and perception of leadership (whom the leaders were and what the society's expectations were) throughout generations.

Second, I have observed the above historical leadership themes in light of current Armenian leadership by using the *emic perspective* of my own 35 years of experience as a native Armenian and an insider to the Armenian culture, as well as an expatriate, an outsider to the Armenian culture through ongoing visits, interactions, and observations.

Delimitation

This study is limited to observe Armenian public leaders both historical and contemporary within five historical leadership models: monarchic, Church, national, Communist, and democratic in the context of historical Armenia and current Republic of Armenia. Other leadership models among Armenians in the Armenian Diaspora is beyond the scope of this study.

Findings

What have been the main traits and characteristics of Armenian leadership in Armenia? To be able to answer this question, it is necessary to hear what the Armenian historiography has to say about Armenians. In light of the historiographical data, five major Armenian leadership themes have been identified: Monarchy (2500 BC-1375 AD), Church Leadership (301 AD-present), National Leadership (1675-present), Communist Leadership (1920-1990), and Democratic Leadership (1991-present).

Armenian Monarchy (2500 BC-1375 AD)

The first and the longest historical trait of Armenian leadership that had a lasting impact on the development of preservation of the Armenian people are the Armenian monarchy. According to Moses Khorenats'i, the father of the Armenian historiography (padmahayr), Haic or Hayk marks the beginning of the Armenian monarchy around and beyond the shores of Mount Ararat (Transcaucasia) in 1779 according to the Jewish calendar or the Septuagint 2663 (Chamchyants, 2005; Khorenats'i, 1978; Soultanian, 2003).

From the *Haykazuni Dynasty* of the Bronze Age (2492/2107 BC) until the *Lusinian Dynasty* of Modern Era (1375) nearly 88 monarchs ruled Armenia known as Great Armenia, Lesser Armenia, and the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia (Chamchyants, 2005).[1] The Armenian historical leadership has primarily been monarchical through the family lines beginning the Haykazuni dynasty of the Bronze Age (2500 BC) to the last dynasty of the Armenian kingdom, Lusinians of Cilicia, the 14th century AD (Der Nersessian, 1969). During the above period, nearly four millennia, seven pan-Armenian dynasties ruled Armenia: Haykazuni dynasty, Urartu dynasty, Ervanduni dynasty, Artashesian dynasty, Arshakuni dynasty, Bagratuni dynasty, and Rubenian-Hetumian-Lusignan dynasties of Cilicia (Bournoutian, 2005; Burney & Lang, 1972; Lang, 1980; Douglas, 1992; Redgate, 1998; Zimansky, 1998).

The Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia under the rules of Rubinian, Hetumian, and Lusinian dynasties from 1075 to 1375 AD marks the end of the *Armenian Monarchy*. This period has been the longest period in the history of the nation where monarchic-autocratic style of leadership was dominant and decisive for the nation's survival. From the middle of the seventh to the end of twelfth century, Arabs conquered the Armenian land and devastated cities and villages (Ghevond, 1982).

After the fall of the Cilician Kingdom, the next five centuries until the beginning of the 19th century, the Armenian urban civilization transformed into a rural existence and the country turned into a state anarchy until mid-18th century. After the collapse of Seljuk power in 1300s, Turkomen nomads gain power in Asia Minor and western part of historical Armenia under the rule of Osman. The latter's followers, the Osmanlees or Ottomans, later founded the largest and most enduring empire in the history of Islam called Ottoman Empire. This marked the beginning of a dark age for the Armenian remnant in the west. In the eastern part of Armenia, Armenians fell under the Persian rule in 1603 and later under the rules of Russian Czars in 1829. Thus, Armenians from the majority population became a minority group ever since the Seljuk Turks conquered Armenia, followed by rules of Young Turks from the west and Persians and Russians from the east. Later Armenians struggled for individual and ethnic survival during the Armenian genocides that took place from 1894 to 1923 under three Turkish authorities: Ottoman Empire, Young Turks, and the current Republic of Turkey (Howard, 2001; Kinzer, 2001; Nyrop, 1980).

Armenian Church Leadership (301 AD-Present)

The second major leadership trait among Armenians observed in this paper is the Armenian Church leadership.

The only existing institution that traces back to the 4th century is the Armenian Apostolic Church. Not any other institution survived since those days, including kingdoms and dynasties. Thus, the Armenian Church, with its unique leadership traits and characteristics, has a significant influence on the life of the Armenian people even today.

The Armenian conversion from paganism to Christianity as a state religion in 301 AD marks the birth of the Armenian Church and its patriarchal and hierarchical leadership in Armenia. Gregory the Illuminator, according to Agathangelos's account, was the founder of Christianity in Armenia, which became the first Christian state in the world (Thomson, & Howard-Johnson, 1999).[2] Frend (1972) asserts, "the official conversion of the [Armenian] kingdom had taken place 'from above,' that is through the conversion of the ruling dynasty and an influential part of the aristocracy" (p. 309).[3]

With an objective look into Khorenats'i's *History of the Armenians*, one may easily observe a top-down Christianization of Armenia by the royal order of Kings Trdat, which is not seen in Agathangelos's *History*. Some pagans Armenians apparently were forced to accept Christianity. Interestingly enough, the pagan resistance to Christian faith and the further presence of paganism in Armenia in the early stages of Armenian Christianity has been confirmed in Pawstos's (1989) *History*. According to Ormanian's chronological chart, which begins in 302 AD and ends in 1911, there were 127 Patriarchs, out of which only 6 were from the Gregorian family line (Ormanian, 1912). Eppler (1873) identifies seven levels of clergy in the Armenian Orthodox Church: doorkeepers, readers of the liturgical materials or the Scripture, exorcists, carriers of the torch, the lower deacons, the archdeacons, and the priesthood—bishops, archbishops, patriarchs, and the Catholicos, who oversee all Armenian Orthodox Churches in the world. Ormanian (1955), however, lists four degrees of hierarchy: (a) the supreme Patriarch or Catholicos; (b) the Patriarch or special Catholicos, exert, or primate; (c) the archbishop or metropolitan; and (d) the bishop. The latter asserts the traditional participatory role of ordinary people in doctrinal, discipline, as well as ecclesiastical election matters within the Armenian Church that dates back to the earliest periods of its existence. For instance, from electing the local parish priests to the Catholicos, the supreme patriarch of the Armenian Church, lay members, comprising princes, satraps, deputies, and representatives of people, cast the majority votes (Ormanian, 1955). He goes on to say that, "of all Christian communities, the Armenian Church is the one wherein the democratic spirit excels in all its vividness and truth" and that the presence of the laity is justified in the ecclesiastical assemblies and councils (pp. 136-137).

Education and literacy occupy a central place in the lives of Armenian Church leaders. Beginning from the Golden Age of the Armenian era (5th century AD) to the middle of the 20th century, the Communist era, most historians, philosophers, theologians, and scientists were either Catholicoses, bishops, or vartabets (celibate priests) of the Armenian Church (Kurkjian, 1964; Nersoyan, 1963).

The Armenian Church functioned both as a government as well as a religious institution not only before the last Armenian kingdom of Cilicia but also after its fall in the later 14th century. As a result, the Church has taken the role of a government to preserve tradition and national identity, sometimes at the expense of spiritual and moral guidance (Libaridian, 1999, p. 126).

With the rise of political independence in 1918-1920 and subsequently communism in 1920-1990, the Armenian Church was weakened due to massive persecutions of clergy and church abolishment. During the Soviet reign, a new category of Armenians emerged—atheists, who were anti-Christian socialists. The first decade of the Soviet regime marked (a) the ideological battle against the Church via the apparatus of the militant atheism to diminish the image and the authority of the Church among the Armenian people and (b) the physical destruction and annihilation of ancient Armenian churches, monasteries, and Christian literature. The forceful separation of the state and the church affected all levels of Armenia's social life: ideological, educational, cultural, economic, and political.

The post-Communist period since the 1991 independence began with the rise of the Armenian Church's authority and a total ignorance on the part of government leaders concerning Christianity in Armenia. This sudden freedom and ideological vacuum as a result of the fall of the Communist regime has created enormous anxiety and confusion among both religious and secular leaders.

Armenian National Leadership (1675-Present)

The third leadership trait among Armenians examined in this paper is the national leadership. National leaders have historically held an important place in the development of Armenian ideology of leadership. Leaders in legendary literature, political-military leaders, writers and poets, and national heroes whose primary goal was national independence and the freedom of the motherland from foreign dominators have all influenced Armenian life.

As a result of two and a half centuries of war between Ottoman and Persian Empires (1473-1746), Russia and Turkey (1768-1918) including the Armenian genocide in Turkey (1895-1915), and later the Russian regime in Armenia before and after the Bolshevik Revolution, left Armenia with few Armenians. The remnants of the Armenian people survived primarily outside of the historic Armenia (Nersisian, 1972). The people and its leadership in exile formed a new model of leadership: national leadership of Diaspora around various nationalistic parties and religious communities (Aghayan, 1976).

Armenian literature has been one of the most effective tools for the development of ideal national leadership in the

Armenian mind, whom the leaders are and what makes one an exemplary leader (Raffi, 1955). Patriotism and nationalism have become milestones within the diverse literature genre, epic stories, legends, ancient mythology, biographical writings, and so on. One of the earliest and prominent legendary heroes was Hayk, the forefather of the Armenians, whose courage and fearless battle against Bell's outnumbered and powerful army brought a great victory and freedom to Hayk's family from his most threatening enemy. Thus, throughout the centuries, Armenians, always in the minority, continued to believe that the numerical superiority of an enemy in battle did not guarantee victory. Another example is the Avarair or Vardanank War in 451 AD—Armenians resisted the Persian king Hazkert's (Yazdgird II) forceful conversion from Christianity to Zoroastrianism (Elishe, 1982; Parpetsi, 1985). After the Council of Chalcedon, due to church doctrinal and political reasons, Armenia was divided into Byzantine and Persian Armenia.

Novelists and poets such as Raffi (Hagop Melik-Hagopian), Hovhannes Toomanian, Derenik Demirjian, Khachatour Abovian, Mikael Nalbandian, Rafael Patkanian, Berj Proshiants, Daniel Varoujan, Hagop Paronian, Vahan Terian, Mouratsan, Nar-Dos, Avetik Isahakyan, Yeghishe Charents, Aksel Bakounts, Vahan Totovents, Parouyr Sevag, Silva Kaputikian, Hovhannes Shiraz, and others have significantly impacted the new generation of Armenians of the late-19th and the 20th centuries. While Russian and Georgian intellectuals and revolutionaries followed German philosophical ideas of socialism, Armenians adopted a more nationalistic course. Eastern Armenian writers and poets followed the romanticism of the Western writers by magnifying ideas of patriotism, justice, and freedom among Armenians. Like their counterparts in the Balkans, Poland, and Bohemia, they too embraced the concept of rebellion and resistance to foreign dominations (Bournoutian, 1994).

The history of the 19th-century Eastern Armenia marks a colonial period in which Armenia was under Russian and Iranian domination without national sovereignty. During that period, Armenia did not exist geographically on the global map. The entire Transcaucasus was considered a part of Southern Russia. As a result of World War I and the two Russian revolutions (1905-1907 and 1917), major political and territorial changes took place in Armenia. First, in April 1918, a federative republic, independent from Russia called the Transcaucasian Federative Republic, was formed by Georgians, Armenians, and Azeries. Second, a month later, in May 1918, the first Republic of Armenia was formed. It can be said that the founders of the first Republic of Armenia were representatives of national leaders on behalf of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (*Hai Heghapokhagan Dashnaktsutiun*). The latter lasted about a thousand days until the Communist Bolsheviks took over the government in 1921 (Bournoutian, 1994) by forming the so-called second republic: Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic. During the period of the first Armenian massacres in Turkey in 1895 to the fall of the first Armenian republic in 1921, a number of volunteer military commanders and warrior-groups led by popular commanders such as Andranik (Terzibashian, 1942; Mnatsakanian & Hogopian, 1991), Dro (Gevorgian, 1991), *Garegin Njdeh* (Bournoutian, 1994), and independent warriors called *fidayies*—Arabo, Mgo Shahen, Gevorg Chaush, Agbiur Serob, Hagop Sargavag (deacon), Hrair, Smbat, Mourad, and others—rose to protect their own country and fight for national independence. The lives and heroic acts of these people were recounted as sources of inspiration for the Armenian people for many generations. Many stories, songs, and novels have been written about them.

Armenian Communist Leadership (1921-1991)

The third noteworthy Armenian leadership trait is found in the era of Communist regime in Armenia from 1921 to 1991. The first seeds of Marxist ideology in Armenia were planted in the 1880s. Armenian students in Europe first attempted to translate *The Communist Manifesto* in 1887. By the end of the 19th century, Armenians had already published the works of Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, and other Communist propagates in Armenian. In the beginning of the 20th century, some Armenian revolutionary Marxists, such as Bogdan Knouniants (1878-1911) and Stepan Shahoumian (1878-1918), participated in the formation of a new type of Marxist party in Russia. They became close partners of Vladimir I. Lenin.

Communist leadership in the former Soviet Union, and particularly in Armenia, was grounded on the materialistic ideology of Marxism–Leninism. The theory of historical and dialectical materialism developed by Marx and Engels advocates the notion of maintaining the physical existence of human beings as biological species (Christensen, 1994), and the production and reproduction of the means of subsistence as a foundation for communal life. Communist leaders called for liberation of the masses from existing social injustices and inequalities and advocated for common ownership and control over the resources and production. The expected outcome believed to be a just and communal society. However, the Marxist theory of class struggle for social justice in Armenia, as well as in other Communist countries, fell short in its practical implementation.

Moreover, Marxist philosophical anthropology, namely, the view of moral character, is another significant issue. It was expected that human class-consciousness create willingness to strive for a better world and to bring social change or progress to society. Subsequently, according to Marxist–Leninist theory, the rise and the development of morality must be contingent upon the rise and the development of the social consciousness (De George, 1969).

Collectivity of leadership was the highest principle of the Communist Party in the former Soviet Union, including in Armenia. Lenin held that a collective form of leadership was a critical criterion for Party functioning. Lenin felt that such

a form would safeguard the Party from one-sidedness in decision making. Yet, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union soon after Lenin's death fell short from its own core leadership principle of collectivity. Stalin came to power and imposed himself as the final and ultimate power source for the Party. Although the "cult of the individual personality" was condemned after Stalin's death (Christensen, 1994),[4] his leadership led the country into a tyranny and annihilation of innocent lives in Armenia and in other socialist republics within the former Soviet Union.

The first Bolshevik revolutionists became the ideal leaders or role models for their contemporaries and for the next generation. As a result of this new style of leadership, some were inspired by these ideas from childhood. Others who were more advanced in years adopted a method of self-enforcement for change (Mead, 1955). Mead also observed three behavioral patterns in Bolshevik leadership: (a) behavior that is traditional and pre-Soviet, (b) a behavior adopted in adulthood through self-enforcement, and (c) new Soviet behavior that is grounded in childhood through discipline and education. From the beginning of the Communist era, the Soviet authorities trained their cadres in the Communist ideal personality. This new indoctrination created an ideological tension between the traditional Armenian Christian faith and the faith in communism and for its cause. On one hand, for a Christian, the concept of good and bad has been categorized by Christian scriptures, on the other hand, for a Communist, it is the Party that is authorized to define good and bad for the society. For a Christian, one may either transgress or obey the given principles, while for a Communist, it is the capacity to maintain "disallowed attitudes" and openness for self-criticism and group-criticism. Moreover, in Christian behavior, there is to be no hatred toward enemies, Communist leadership left no room for love toward the Party's enemies such as traitors and spies, while trying to instill love toward the Party and the country (Mead, 1955).

Thus, mistrust among people was one of the reasons that millions of innocent people, including committed Communist leaders, were executed and/or imprisoned under the common epithet "enemy of the people" during the Stalin reign of 1930s and 1940s. All the early Armenian Marxist-revolutionists died at an early age. Their opponents or enemies under various circumstances executed them. Thus, in later Communist literature, these people were heroes of the time. They became role models for generations to come. Therefore, not surprisingly, hundreds of thousands of young men and women gave their lives for their country and for Soviet society during World War II, and some granted the title of National Hero. They continued to live in literature, films, and on the lips of students at all levels of education. The Soviet authorities carefully designed school programs so that the above ideal leaders would inspire and shape the new generation with patriotic fervor and ideals.

Armenian Democratic Leadership (1991-Present)

The fifth and the youngest Armenian leadership model is the democratic leadership. In August 1990, for the first time in the history of the nation, the newly formed Armenian Parliament officially declared independence from the Soviet Union and voted for its first democratically elected President, Levon Ter-Petrosyan (Libaridian, 1991). Today, the Republic of Armenia has her third elected President. However, according to the international and local observers of elections, the second and third presidential elections fell short from the international standards of fair and democratic elections. Incidents such as selling votes, electoral frauds, and the use of brutal force by police or military were not exempted from all three preceding elections from 1996 to 2008. It is true that people of Armenia made a conscious choice in moving from totalitarian hierarchy to independent democracy in 1990. However, it is hard to argue for a democratic worldview fully embraced by the society and its leaders. Rather, democracy seems another imposed ideology, much like Communism for 70 years. Under democracy, the so-called democratic leaders in Armenia live and act like monarchs. For instance, in less than a decade, a new generation of millionaires and billionaires emerged in Armenia. The lifestyle of these newly emerged "kings" is a reminder of ancient Armenian monarchic rulers with their luxurious palaces, fancy transportation means, expensive and wasteful food parties and weddings, and numerous house-servants. However, according to the report of the Armenian government, 34.6% of Armenia's population lived below the poverty line in 2004, 23.5% in 2008, and 28.7% in 2009 by falling back to the level of 2005-2006.[5]

During Ter-Petrosyan's presidency, the middle class, once representing the majority of the Armenian population during the Soviet regime, disappeared partly because of the collapse of the Soviet centralized economy and the economic blockades by Turkey and Azerbaijan over the territorial dispute of the Nagorno-Karabakh since 1991. Moreover, the 1988 earthquake that devastated and destroyed cities and hundreds of villages, by taking away more than twenty-five thousand lives, created massive homelessness, poverty, and economic dependency on foreign aid. Although the 1995 Constitution insured peaceful transition of power between various political parties, fundamental differences arose between the governing elite and as a result, a consensus was not reached and the first president resigned in 1998 (Libaridian, 2007).

During the Kocharian administration (1998-2007) the dispute with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh remained unresolved. According to Libaridian (2007), although Armenia joined the Council of Europe and the World Trade Organization, the former became weary of the progress of democracy in Armenia, while the latter limited benefits to Armenia due to its economic situation.

Thus, it can be said that the democratic leadership in Armenia inherited all of the above leadership models: monarchic authoritarianism, Christian hierarchy, Communist totalitarianism, and patriotic nationalism. The situation is complex and there seem to be no single strategy to have all at once, "an independent Armenia that is also free and democratic, rich and without corruption and depravity" (Libaridian, 1999, pp. 156-157). Thus, the question to be addressed in further research is, "What it means to be a democratic leader in the context of the Armenian historical worldview embedded in the cultural habits of the Armenian people?"

Discussion

What do the above historical and contemporary leadership models teach us and what are the implications of those lessons for the country's 21st-century economic, political, social, cultural, and global challenges? To be able to answer these questions, let us highlight some historical facts and lessons learned from each model to be able to understand the current leadership behaviors in Armenia.

Armenian Monarchy

1. For four millennia, the Armenian leadership has primarily been monarchical through seven pan-Armenian family lines beginning the Bronze Age (2500 BC) to the 14th century AD.

Implications: One may easily observe the monarchic behaviors of current leaders in Armenia. For instance, today's most public leaders in Armenia, much like monarchs, appoint their family members, relatives, and close friends to various leadership positions in both public and private sectors. Leadership successions have been perceived and practiced in Armenia as family successions. The country being small, both geographically and population-wise, it is nearly impossible to avoid favoritism in hiring processes for public offices. Thus, those who know each other treat one another with special favor.

2. Monarchic-autocratic style of leadership was dominant and decisive for this period.

Implications: As mentioned earlier, current leaders in Armenia act and behave as ancient kings. Many of them carry the names of Armenian Kings (e.g., Hayk, Tigran, Arshak, Gagik, Ashot, Yervand, Bagrad, etc.). They are as autocratic and authoritarian as their assenters were during the monarchic era. Some leaders feel entitled to exercise unlimited authority and freedom in decision making with little, if any, accountability toward others. Today's public leaders possess extreme wealth and lead a lavish, luxury, and royal-type lifestyles.

3. After the fall of the Cilician Kingdom in the 14th century, Armenians lost their independence and for the next five centuries, until the beginning of the 19th century, they lived and survived under foreign regimes: Ottoman, current Turkish, Russian, and the former Soviet Union.

Implications: A significant number of Armenians today believe that Armenia will not survive without foreign powers. This mind-set of dependency seems to be the product of the nation's survival history under foreign oppressors in the last 600 years. For instance, although the country regained its independence in 1991, today's Armenia is politically and economically dependent on Russia's strong military presence in Armenia and the economic investments of the Western world.

Armenian Church Leadership

1. Leadership from top-down. The Armenian Church leadership has been top-down since its beginning. The newly converted King Trtad invited St. Gregory the Illuminator to become the first Catholicos or Supreme Patriarch in the beginning of the 4th century. Thus, this era marks the beginning of Church-and-State relations and its impact on the development of hierarchical leadership in the Armenian Church.

Implications: The Armenian Church today seeks the State's participation and support to carry out its mission in the society, much like in the time of the King Trtad.

2. Leadership from bottom-up. Despite the fact that the Church leadership was primarily hierarchical and male dominated, the Church was able to mobilize clergy and laity for church administration, education and enlightenment of the nation, and preservation of the Armenian church tradition, language, culture, and faith from early-5th century until today.

Implications: Despite the fact that the church leadership continues to be predominately hierarchical and paternalistic, the relationships between clergy and laity have often been perceived as collaborative. For instance, the laity is given authority in church governance, and elections of the church leaders. Thus, the church continues to maintain and exercise spiritual authority among the Armenian people, be the vanguard for human development and education, and remain the most powerful institution called for the preservation of Christian and cultural identity of the Armenian people.

3. From late-14th until early-20th centuries, the Armenian Church played dual leadership roles, spiritual and political, in the life of the Armenian people.

Implications: The church leadership continues to see its dual role in the society, which often causes confusion and tension between civil and spiritual authorities. Constitutionally, the Church and State are separated. However, since the independence, both clergy and laity see the role of the Armenian Church to be important not only in spiritual but also in political life of the nation. Moreover, the Armenian Church feels entitled to occupy a special role in the life of the nation among other Christian denominations in Armenia.

4. Leadership of powerlessness and persecution. As a result of Soviet persecution, many clergymen lost their lives. Thousands of churches and Christian communities were destroyed in both cities and villages.

Implications: The Communist era fundamentally changed the role and the image of the Church leadership among ordinary people. A new generation of atheist Armenians emerged, who devalued the Armenian Church's spiritual role in society. These spiritual leaders were prohibited to provide spiritual nurturing and Christian education to their flock. However, a new generation of clergymen emerged in the Church as compromisers with the Soviet government and KGB (Komitet Gosudarstvenniy Bezopasnosti [Committee of Government Security]). This generation of clergymen still exists in the church.

5. Leadership of transition and confusion. Since the 1991 independence, the Armenian Church has been in transition. The Church and the society still struggle in redefining the Church's role in today's society. Constitutionally, the Church is separated from the State.

Implications: On one hand, the Church is eager to restore its 4th-century role of Church–State partnership; on the other hand, it continues to face opposition from its own secularized and post-Soviet society as well as the secular state of the Republic of Armenia. Another key player for Church–State separation is the European Union (EU), which sets the latter as criteria for Armenia's membership with EU. As a result, the tensions are being escalated between the newly formed democratic institutions and the centuries-old Armenian Church, the preserver of the Armenian identity, culture, and people.

Armenian National Leadership

1. The Armenian people, in both western and eastern Armenia, have invested profound trust and hope in national leaders to obtain freedom and independence. The military commanders and those who dedicated their lives for the freedom of Armenians have become national heroes and exemplary leaders for the Armenian people. The Armenian nationalist sentiment of early-20th century advocated political freedom through violent resistance. This notion carried through the Soviet era and found support with current Armenian national leaders' understanding of justice and freedom for the Armenian people. This notion is still strong among national leaders who are in power in Armenia today.

Implications: It was during the period of post–World War I revolutions when the Armenian society was most secularized. Some turned their back to the Church and Christianity by advocating for violent and armed revolt against the nation's enemies. This anti-Christian propaganda provided a fertile soil for Communist ideology to prosper in Armenia in early-20th century. Later, as seen in history, the Bolsheviks were able to overthrow the first Armenian Republic in 1920. Interestingly enough, unlike the above period, the national leaders in cooperation with the Armenian Church leaders were able to mobilize Armenians in Armenia and around the world to defend Nagorno-Karabakh, a newly declared and independent state from the Soviet Socialist Azerbaijan in late 1980s and early 1990s.

2. As seen above, the Armenian literature has shaped the national identity of Armenians and fueled energy for the formation of national leadership in Armenia for years. Epic heroes and legends created exemplary images and ethos for national leadership for more than a hundred years. Writers of the 19th and 20th centuries, by using historical incidents, produced patriotic and ideal leadership models for generations to follow. Their utmost expression was found in the stories and lives of national-military leaders. In the midst of the struggle for independence and the loss of national sovereignty, national leaders provided hope for the future. The fact that national patriots did not spare their lives for the independence of Armenia has had a tremendous moral impact on the Armenian people. These patriots felt responsible for protecting their homes, villages, cities, and the entire country from enemies at the cost of their own lives.

Implications: The national leadership with its patriotism, social responsibility, and love of one's own people and the country, continues to influence masses and exercise moral authority in Armenia today.

Communist Leadership

1. To the disappointment of many Soviet Communists, beginning from the early stage until Gorbachev's *Perestroika* in late 1980s, Marxist predictions for a rich, prosperous, and just society just did not realize. This led to ideological, economic, and political vacuum and later—corruption.

Implications: As a result of the deterioration of the Soviet ideology, people resisted following Communist leaders, who themselves were not ideal models for a society of justice and equality.

2. Armenian women played a significant role in Communist society more than ever in the history of the nation. Ironically, Communists were less discriminatory against women than was the Christian Church in Armenia. Women in the Soviet society were encouraged to receive education and take leadership roles. Twelve percent of Communist leaders in the former Soviet Union were females and Armenia was not an exception.

Implications: The Communist era produced a significant number of educated, professional, and self-reliant women in the Armenian society, who later became political as well as organizational leaders for the Republic of Armenia.

Democratic Leadership

1. The democratic leaders in Armenia, who were both former Communist leaders or Party members and national leaders started well in early 1990s but soon became corrupt due to lack of accountability and moral character. Within few years, a newly emerged millionaires formed oligarchy took control of the country's entire economy and political life.

Implications: Armenia became one of the poorest countries in the world with more than 40% poverty and below the poverty rate. Millions of Armenians have left the country from late 1990 until today for physical and economic survival. The middle class, once formed during the Soviet era, disappeared and the gap between rich and poor increased significantly.

2. As mentioned above, most election results were either falsified, bought, or imposed on ordinary citizens. People, due to their financial needs, were seduced to selling their votes openly to politicians who offered monetary rewards.

Implications: Due to voting frauds, selling votes, and stuffing, people not only lost faith in elections and the democratic processes of governance but also became corrupt themselves by participating in those immoral behaviors.

Result

The historical data and the contemporary situation of Armenia's public leadership behavior indicate the following relationships that continue to exist between current Armenian leadership behaviors and the nation's historical models of leadership:

- Millennia-long monarchic mind-set is still present in the memories and behaviors of those who occupy leadership positions in Armenia. Most males not only carry the names of ancient Armenian kings but also their lifestyle and leadership styles.
- Armenian Church Leadership is a contemporary with it hierarchical structure and mind-set. The same hierarchical subordination is present in the society between leaders and followers, male and female, and in other community and organizational relationships. Moreover, the Armenian Church continues to be the role of spiritual hegemony for the Armenian people. People submit to the authority of the Church and respect their leaders. Thus, the Armenian Church's impact on the Armenian society and its historical legacy, including its influence on today's political processes, cannot be minimized or ignored.
- National Leadership. The Armenian literature, both pre-Christian and post-Christian eras, continues to inspire and shape the Armenian worldview. Patriotic writers of the 19th- and 20th-centuries Armenia, including scientists, artists, and national and church heroes occupy the pages of Armenia's history and educational textbooks from elementary to high school, and from college to university education. One of the brightest evidence of this is the Armenian currency, the dram. The pictures on 1,000, 5,000, 10,000, and 20,000 drams bills are the faces of Yeghishe Charents (poet), Hovhannes Toumanyan (poet-writer), Avetik Isahakyan (poet-writer), and Martiros Saryan (painter). Moreover, most streets and towns are names after national warriors, poets, writers, artists, church leaders, and political leaders who fought for the nation's independence. These leaders were not necessarily democratic leaders in its Western understanding.
- Although the Communist leadership externally disappeared, internally it continues to exist. Today's most political leaders are the product of the Soviet society. They have been trained and educated during the Soviet era and most of them have seen only Soviet style of leadership. These leaders lacked alternative models of leading, managing, and governing. In fact, some Communist leaders or the Party members, right after the collapse of the Soviet Union, were transformed into democratic leaders overnight. For instance, number of cabinet members of the first President of Armenia, Levon Ter-Petrosyan, and members of the first Armenian Parliament, were either former Communist leaders or members of the Communist Party. Thus, those of us who grew up during the Soviet era see no difference between Communist leadership styles and current democratic leadership styles. The names seem to have changed but leaders' behaviors and worldviews remained the same.

- Armenian Democratic Leadership. The Western democratic form of governance seems foreign to today's Armenian leaders. It has been more than 20 years since the democratization process began in Armenia; however, it did not produce the expected results, despite the fact that all the necessary democratic institutions, laws, and governing policies were created by the support of Western powers and foreign investors. In other words, the existing democratic system has not been working well for the people of Armenia. As mentioned above, most presidential and parliamentary elections have been handled undemocratically both by the voters and candidates. Instead, the so-called democratic leaders in Armenia demonstrate monarchic behaviors through their autocratic style of leadership and wasteful lifestyles. Finally, despite the fact that the country continues to struggle with high unemployment rate and extreme poverty, the democratic leaders who are in power continue to become richer more than the Communist leaders at times. The leaderships of the Republic of Armenia seem more corrupt than the Communist leaders in the former Soviet Socialist Republic of Armenia.

Conclusion

Out of five leadership models, three are visible today: Church, National, and Democratic leadership. However, the other two, Monarchic and Communist, continue to exist invisibly in the memories as well as in the behaviors of Armenian leaders today. Thus, it can be said that the past leadership models are very present in Armenia both visibly and invisibly.

This study shows that the indigenous leadership history of Armenia has significantly impacted leaders' behaviors. For instance, as a result of enduring under oppressive rules in the last 600 years, today's leaders seem dependent on foreign aid and lack confidence in the nation's ability to maintain national independence. Thus, it can be said that history should matter in leadership studies and that human behaviors are the product of one's past experiences that shape people's personal as well as social identities.

This study also shows that democracy cannot be exported from the West or imported to Armenia without considering the historical characteristics of the Armenian people. Thus, the democratic mind-set must be present in people's worldview in the first place before anticipating any behavioral, social or organizational change, in this case in Armenia. Moreover, the presence of democratic institutions seems insufficient to bring about the desired change. The fact that democratic laws and policies that have existed in Armenia for nearly two decades have not sufficiently democratized the country is evidence of the Western failed attempts.

It is evident from the study that one leadership model has not been sufficient to fully address the leadership challenges in Armenia. Perhaps the integration of all five leadership models may offer some solutions to the leadership problems that exist in Armenia today.

Recommendation for Further Research

This study has its limitations, which makes difficult to recommend solutions to the discussed leadership problems in Armenia. There seem to be other variables in the leadership context of Armenia that deserve attention and further study. For instance, the Armenian cultural worldview cannot be ignored, because it shapes the leaders' identity and influences their behavior and leadership style. Thus, there seem to be a need for further research and study about Armenian leadership behavior in light of leadership styles and cultural characteristics to be able to gain anthropological understanding of why leaders in the Armenian cultural context behave the way they behave. Therefore, to address the leadership issues in Armenia holistically, one may acquire further knowledge in the areas of cultural characteristics and leadership styles.

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Notes

1. Sources that acknowledge other kingdoms in Armenia such as Ani, Vaspurakan, Kars, and Syunik are beyond the purpose and the scope of this study. The goal was not to present an exhaustive list of all Armenian kings and princes through ages, but rather to acknowledge Monarchy as the dominant leadership style of Armenians from Bronze Age until the second half of the 14th century.
2. Agathangeghos's *History of the Armenians*, Trans. and a comm. Robert W. Thomson (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press 1976), 331-347. Thomson gives details about various versions of the texts of Agathangelos in the introduction part of the above work (1976, xxi). He has done an extensive and comparative study of Agathangelos. He distinguishes eight versions of this antiquity that have been translated and developed throughout centuries: in Armenian text, three Greek texts, three Arabic, and a Karshuni version. The earliest Armenian text of the History of Agathangelos available today is the Mechitarist library version at Vienna, Austria (1891, No. 56).
3. Frend (1972) goes on to say, "This gave Christianity from the outset the characteristics of a national movement, a symbol of identity in the face of the rival empires of Rome and Persia. The old pagan priesthood tended to merge into the new ecclesiastical hierarchy. The relationship between the head of the church, or Catholicos, and the king resembled that of the ruler and chief minister, and for more than a century the Catholicate

was occupied by a member of the house of Gregory the Illuminator" (p. 309).
4. Yakovlev's "Collectivity of Leadership—The Highest Principle of Party Leadership," where the author attempts to go back to Lenin's leadership principles, was published in *Communist* (No. 11, July, 1953, pp. 28-38), only after Stalin's death.
5. Republic of Armenia, IMF Country Report No. 11/191. Washington, DC: (Government of the Republic of Armenia, 2011) *International Monetary Fund*. Page 24.

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