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2004 Distinguished Lecturer

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Arnold Schwarzenegger's meteoric rise following Gray Davis' blazing crash has many people baffled. One could not see it coming, and explanations, ranging from Davis' personal shortcomings to the allure of a Hollywood star, seem to capture only a small part of the reason for the sudden turn of events (Bowler and Cain, 2004). This analysis wishes to add to the discourse by proposing that a certain political power constellation in the state favored a leadership style exemplified by Schwarzenegger. The study draws on community power research and the political leadership literature to conclude that hyperpluralistic conditions in California pushed to the forefront a person who was willing to play the role of a turnaround artist, change agent, or populist community builder.

However, the fact that Schwarzenegger subsequently succeeded to effect highly contentious legislative decisions, such as reversing the vehicle license fee increase, denying driver's licenses to undocumented workers, and getting Propositions 57 and 58 passed in the March 2 election, may also be due to the formation of a different power structure in the state – and the emergence of a different political leadership style personified by Maria Shriver. Rather than disintegrating into paralyzing hyperpluralistic infighting, California politics may be at a point where it can be molded into a partnership regime. In such a political structure, economic power is still held by a relatively small, white elite, but political power is increasingly dominated by the voting strength of racial and ethnic minorities. In a partnership regime, both sides recognize that it is in their best interest to respect each other's power and to collaborate rather than engage in turf battles. A governor may be successful in a partnership regime when he or she acts as a power broker or mediator between two main political camps. There is some evidence that Shriver has encouraged her husband to play this role and that the governor has been listening to his wife.

The following article describes six different community power constellations identified by urban scholars and matches the six types with appropriate leadership styles. The study then looks at some of the California governors to test the proposition that the model developed in urban research can also be applied to state politics, in particular to explain Gray Davis' fall from power and Schwarzenegger's ascendancy.

THEORIES OF COMMUNITY POWER STRUCTURES

Research on urban politics has identified a variety of community power structures. The patterns of influence over city hall range from highly concentrated to highly dispersed (Waste, 1986; Kweit and Kweit, 1999). The discussion in this study focuses on six major power constellations:

1. the political machine,
2. one elite in charge,
3. competing elites,
4. partnership regime,
5. pluralism, and
6. hyperpluralism.

These conditions are visible in local politics as well as in state politics to various degrees.

The power structure of a jurisdiction can be called a **political machine** when one political party tightly controls the legislature and executive branches, using legal and extralegal strategies and tactics to hold onto power. As a result, government jobs or contracts become rewards for loyalty and for effective work during the election campaign. Leaders and followers who come from a relatively humble background can thus use politics to improve their socioeconomic standing. Political machines gained influence in local and state governments in the later part of the nineteenth century, but the Progressive movement curtailed their power (Kweit and Kweit, 1999, 176-181). Political machines still operate in some cities and counties in California and, some would say, in certain policy areas at the state level, such as prison administration.

When wealthy economic interests collaborate to control a community or a state, the resulting power constellation has been identified as **elite politics**. The policy making process emphasizes efficiency and effectiveness over democratic inclusiveness, and elite interests are equated with the public interest in general. Members of the elite stratum are influential not only in governmental and economic affairs but also in education, culture, entertainment, and the media. Evidence in support of elite theory has been gathered using knowledgeable individuals in communities and studying the socioeconomic background of persons in positions of power (Hunter, 1953; Domhoff, 1967).

Regarding **competing elites**, two major interests are typically fighting for political control. The conflict can be over ideological differences, for example, a liberal versus a conservative elite. The conflict can also be between economic interests, such as the local growth machine versus global corporations (Molotch, 1976). Or, the competition might involve two demographic groups, for instance, Anglos versus minority interests. The categories are not mutually exclusive, but crosscutting.

When the two competing interests realize that they can gain more by working together rather than by fighting with each other, they may form a **partnership regime**. The description applies to informal, but relatively stable, coalitions, for instance, between a minority-controlled government and white-controlled downtown business interests (Stone, 1989). Minority leaders hold political power by controlling the majority vote, while business elites hold economic power by controlling investment decisions.

Political pluralism describes a situation in which power is dispersed among several major groups. Elections are contested among diverse economic, civic, and demographic interests, with no foregone conclusion as to which voting bloc or coalition might win. The dispersion of power and the lack of a stable governing coalition can also be observed during the policy making process. There is not one group or coalition dominating all major policy making activities. To get anything done, the groups have to be willing to bargain with each other and to make compromises. The result is a relatively fair distribution of benefits and burdens among the major political camps (Dahl, 1961).

A community power structure may drift into **hyperpluralism** when many factions are jostling for political attention and governmental benefits. No faction or coalition of fac-

tions is strong enough to win a majority in the legislature, especially not when major policy changes are under consideration. Two or more factions can create negative coalitions and keep other interests from obtaining a majority vote. The naysayers, however, may come from different ideological or economic camps and therefore cannot agree on an alternative course of action. The result is paralysis of the policy making process and the stalling of important government projects (Wirth, 1974; Yates, 1978; Waste, 1986, 122-124).

The literature indicates that the tenure for public executives is the shortest under hyperpluralistic conditions, because legislators and voters use the chief administrator as a scapegoat for their own policy failures (Whitaker and DeHoog, 1995). Although most managers may want to stay away from a highly fragmented community, it nevertheless offers challenges that a few secure executives may be willing to confront. The next section describes executive management styles in general, followed by a section in which the various styles are matched with the six community power patterns. Finally, the study looks at those matches that help explain the demise of Gray Davis and the rise of Arnold Schwarzenegger.

THEORIES ON EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT STYLES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

The literature from the fields of public administration and business administration makes a distinction between leaders and managers (Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson, 1996, 7; Rainey, 1997, 260; Vasu, Stewart, and Garson, 1998, 92). Administrators are leaders when they generate visions, identify missions, set goals, and provide the resources that will enable the organization to realize its goals. In contrast, administrators act the part of managers when they use the given resources and take the necessary actions to achieve the expressed goals. A great chief executive can do both—lead and follow through with that vision.

Changes in our understanding of proper administrative styles have paralleled the shift from the patronage system to the merit system. The former system conjures up the image of a poorly prepared but loyal yes-sayer, caretaker, or conserver (Downs, 1967). This image stands in stark contrast to the neutral competence of the professional administrator selected under merit system principles or chosen in nonpartisan elections. The political neutrality of the professional administrator is predicated on the politics-administration dichotomy or separation of powers, with the political side making public policy and the administrative component executing it (Harrigan, 1994, Ch. 10; Svava, 1998, 55).

When several groups vie for political attention, however, the chief administrative officer may receive mixed messages and competing policy directions. In this case, the advice is for the CAO to play the role of an umpire who ensures fair play, as competing political interests bargain and compromise over the distribution of public benefits and burdens (Dahl, 1961; Waste, 1986, 120-122). If the community needs more than a referee, the role of head coach or team builder has been suggested (Wheeland, 1994, 291).

More recently, the concept of the power broker has surfaced and been embraced as an appropriate role for managers to play in jurisdictions with major factions (Wheeland, 1994, 282). Administrators uncomfortable with the notion of brokering power may instead embrace the role of the mediator. It implies a level-headed person who can listen to all sides and get them to agree on a fair allocation of resources. Facilitator and negotiator are other terms used in this context (Denhardt and Hammond, 1992, 142; Morgan and Watson, 1995, 76; Morgan and England, 1996, 99).

Finally, some researchers cast the chief administrative officer in the role of community builder, catalyst, or policy entrepreneur. Such a person can communicate a vision and mobilize needed resources when the legislative body has abdicated this role (Luke, 1986; Nalbandian, 1987; Morgan and England, 1996, 382, 384; Nalbandian, 1999). However, such a role may also expose the appointed executive to unwanted public attention and shorten his or her tenure. Svava (1995) therefore cautions city managers not to exceed the role of “comprehensive professional leader.” Elected executives, however, can go further and cast themselves in the role of a populist leader, who understands the aspirations of common folks.

MATCHING COMMUNITY POWER STRUCTURES AND EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT STYLES: THE MODEL

The analysis suggests that machine politics demands the fewest administrative efforts, while hyperpluralism requires the greatest commitment and versatility. Table 1 shows the proposed matches in schematic form. To stay in office, elected or appointed chief executives must have a leadership and management style in tune with the prevailing power structure. The match need not be perfect but at least compatible in the long run.

Table 1. Matching Community Power Structures with Appropriate Executive Management Styles: The Model

Community Power Constellation		City Manager's Administrative Style
Machine Politics	=>	Caretaker
One Elite in Power	=>	Chief Executive
Competing Elites	=>	Power Broker, Mediator
Partnership Regime	=>	Power Broker, Mediator
Classical Pluralism	=>	Umpire, Facilitator, Coach
Hyperpluralism	=>	Community Builder, Catalyst, Change Agent, Turn-around Artist, Educator

A jurisdiction dominated by a political machine is likely to have an unreformed charter, and it is unlikely to have a council/manager form of government. However, if it does, the manager is not expected to exercise professional judgment in administering the city, since personnel management, fiscal management, procurement, and other important managerial functions are manipulated to meet the needs of the political machine. Accordingly, the best image that comes to mind to identify the appropriate managerial style is that of the caretaker. Such a person will do what he or she has been told to do. The city manager as caretaker will not take independent initiatives and will not question the propriety of the directives given by the council and other influential individuals. On the contrary, as caretaker, in the literal sense, the city manager will protect the interests of the entrenched machine. In this way, he or she may enjoy job security as long as the machine is in power.

The caretaker style contrasts sharply with the professional style of the chief executive. The CEO or CAO must be well trained in public administration or business administration and needs to use personal knowledge, skills, and abilities to manage the city efficiently and effectively. When one elite controls city politics, it tends to be in the hands of corporate leaders who accumulated wealth through shrewd and competent business practices, including employing capable managers. Such an elite then uses the same principles in running a city. City politics under elite control is relatively stable, and a competent city manager can remain in office by staying “above politics.”

When the power structure breaks apart into competing economic elites, the city manager must become immersed in politics. The chief administrator now has to play the role of the power broker and remind the competing interests that cooperation and compromise are to their mutual advantage. The city manager with a business background may be able to gain the trust of both camps and bring both sides to the table for mutually beneficial agreements. The appointed executive may also succeed by playing the role of the mediator. Such a person listens to both sides and engages them in interest bargaining. This means sharing with each camp the constraints under which the other side operates and searching for common ground (Fisher and Ury, 1991).

A partnership regime also requires the skills of a power broker or mediator. This regime type has been found in cities where one camp consists of powerful minority interests, who can control the majority vote on the council, while the other camp consists of investment interests, who may leave the jurisdiction if their economic demands are ignored. The city manager succeeding under these political conditions must gain the trust of the minority groups at the same time as enjoying the support of corporate interests. A personality type with a knack for brokering or mediating may prevail in such a political culture.

Under pluralist conditions, power is dispersed among several political interests. Since the power of individual factions is supposed to be kept in check by competing ones, the city manager is needed less as a power broker or mediator than as an umpire. In this role, the government executive is expected to ensure that the various political groups play by

the rules of the game, which means being willing to communicate with other groups, as well as being willing to bargain and to compromise. The city manager can act as the facilitator by bringing different interests to the table and ensuring that all major voices are being heard and that compromises are fair. To facilitate cooperation among the various groups, the chief executive may also play the role of head coach or team leader.

When factions are out to win at all costs and are unwilling to compromise, community politics can lead to stalemate or hyperpluralism. Political paralysis can especially occur when old elites refuse to yield to newly empowered camps. City managers who like to get things done quietly and professionally will be very frustrated in such a tense situation. A person who thrives on controversy, a community builder type, may be a better match. The community leader has the charismatic ability to lift the uncompromising factions above their stubborn demands by sharing a common vision around which a majority on the council can coalesce. Such coalition politics tends to be unstable, but at least it offers temporary solutions to the impasse created by hyperpluralism.

Under chaotic or highly complex conditions that defy simple solutions, public executives can also see themselves in the role of change agents, turn-around artists, or catalysts. They may be semi-retired professionals and financially secure. A long and respected career in public service may give them the stature to rally a majority on the council behind them. The role of the educator has also been proposed to cope with hyperpluralistic times. Analyzing various failures of American political institutions, including failures in political leadership due to the power of factions and ignorance of voters, Behn (1998) called on public managers to lead and to inform: "Educating the public about the broad mission, specific goals, and latest accomplishments can only help to improve governance" (p. 218). Elected executives may use populist rhetoric as an educational tool, to spread their message via radio and TV.

The next section highlights gubernatorial failures and successes by linking them to the distribution of political power in the state. The section rolls quickly through decades of political history to set the stage for the events of the last year, which saw the rise of Schwarzenegger from a bevy of Republican contenders and the demise of the Democratic governor.

CALIFORNIA GOVERNORS IN EARLIER YEARS

Since coming to statehood in 1849, Californians have elected the Republican gubernatorial candidate over the Democratic challenger by a ratio of about 2 to 1. Of 38 governors, 21 belonged to the Republican Party and 11 to the Democratic Party, with the rest running under other party labels (Governors of California, 2004). But some Republican governors showed significant independence from dominant economic interests as well as from social conservatism, and predicting policy directions based on party label has become somewhat elusive in California as it has been in the rest of the nation.

George Pardee (1903), a moderate Republican elected in 1903, served only one term because he angered powerful economic interests. He favored conservation measures, especially of forestland, and refused to take the side of the Southern Pacific Railroad monopoly during various policy skirmishes. His successor, James Gillett (1907), chose a more moderate approach, appealing to the railroads not to levy excessive charges or play favorites with shippers and localities, but overall he welcomed the railroads as engines of prosperity. Although the demographic composition of the state population had become quite diverse, political power was still in the hands of an elite stratum that could put its man in the Governor's seat (Rolle, 1969).

Hiram Johnson, from the reform wing of the Republican Party, spearheaded political changes favored by the Progressive movement after he was elected in 1910 (Starr, 2004). He supported state constitutional amendments providing for the initiative, referendum, and recall, which were highly popular with elected officials as well as with voters. The Senate passed the measures by a vote of 35 to one and the Assembly by a vote of 72 to zero. Voters ratified the amendments in 1911 with 168,744 in favor and only 52,093 opposed (Johnson, 1911; Ooley, 2004). The votes showed that new groups had gained in political power and that the railroads, large banks, and corporate land holdings were losing their monopolistic power over the economy and politics. But overall, the Republican Party retained control of the Governor's Office until 1939 (Rolle, 1969, 472; Rogin and Shover, 1970, 112; Grodin, Massey, and Cunningham, 1993, 69-75).

Unable to control the legislature and a more diverse constituency, Culbert Olson (1939), a Democrat, served only one term. He was replaced by a Republican, Earl Warren (1943; 1947; 1951), who straddled the ideological divide by basing his appointments on merit and not only on party loyalties. However, he did support the internment of Japanese-Americans during WWII, a decision he later regretted, and as chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, he was instrumental in breaking down color barriers.

During WWII, the defense industries added large-scale manufacturing corporations and subcontractors of various sizes to the economic mix in California. The job opportunities also encouraged migration to the state. After the war, military production was transformed for peacetime purposes, but then again mobilized as a result of the Cold War and Korean War. Earl Warren and the two subsequent governors, the Republican Goodwin Knight (1953; 1955) and the Democrat Pat Brown (1959; 1963), worked on infrastructure improvements that enabled the state to cope with the new complexities of the economy and the increased state population. In collaboration with national efforts, the state highway and freeway systems were improved. Water conservation and water development projects received considerable attention, and public education was put on a course toward excellence.

The post-WWII governors of California were leaders, not just managers. They had visions for the state and mobilized the resources to implement the visions. A closer look at historical events shows many ups and downs, but a wider perspective shows the governors as chief executives, who succeeded because they had the backing of powerful elites

(Hyink and Provost, 2001, 27). In subsequent years, the chief executive type was at times replaced by liberal or conservative populists, whose leanings galvanized opposing camps and led to a two-party state.

CALIFORNIA POLITICS AND THE FATE OF ITS RECENT GOVERNORS

In the 1960s and '70s, California politics slipped into hyperpluralism. Movements advocating civil rights, black power, Chicano empowerment, and feminist liberation, as well as antiwar protests, broke the body politics into ever smaller factions. A great communicator like Ronald Reagan (1967; 1971) could succeed in such a setting. Using the radio and TV, he could contain the unruly protesters and rally the majority of the voters behind his vision of a creative, self-sufficient society. Jerry Brown (1975; 1979), also a visionary, was right for part of the times and for some factions. In distinction to Reagan, he perceived government as a positive force in the economy and society. But several of his policies were unpopular, and he managed to unite traditionalists into a strong opposition (Harrigan, 1994, 251; Hyink and Provost, 2001, 29-33).

The subsequent Republican governor, George Deukmejian (1983; 1987), reverted to the role of the quiet, competent chief executive. His concern was to manage an efficient and effective state government. In contrast, Pete Wilson (1991; 1995) chose a combative tone in his early pronouncements and adopted the rhetoric of right-wing populism. His two terms became more controversial, when he was thrust into budget fights with the legislature. Wilson's approach won the election for the Republican candidate, but it hurt the Republican Party in the long run. The political power structure had become more pluralistic, requiring a leader who could play the role of umpire among competing camps (Lubenow, 1991; 1-17; 1995, 246-248).

In the beginning, Gray Davis (1999; 2003) assumed the role of the moderate chief executive. His campaign slogans emphasized his extensive expertise in various executive positions he had held over the years, and after election he tried to steer a middle-of-the-road course. But the state power constellation had moved toward hyperpluralism, reflected in a fractious legislature, which made it impossible to pass a balanced budget and other important measures. Also business developments had enabled a few to amass enormous wealth, which they used to gain political power and block legislative attempts to redress some of the economic imbalances in wealth. The energy crisis, legislative stalemate, and budget shortfalls gave opponents of Davis the chance to cast him as an inept manager and to deny him the mandate to head the state government.

According to post-election analysis, the opposition to Davis was not spearheaded by the state Republican or national Republican leadership, but by antitax conservatives (Lubenow, 2003, 170). Over time, several other developments fed into the stream of discontent, such as Davis' destruction of Richard Riordon as an opponent during the primary campaign. Also, recall supporters could rely on 45 radio talk show hosts to keep the recall campaign on the air and in the voters' minds on a daily basis (Lubenow, 2003, 189).

Talk radio was combined with Internet sites where voters could download recall petitions. The voluntary petition drive supplemented the paid petition drive financed by Representative Darrell Issa. In hindsight the recall campaign has been described as an antipolitician, antiestablishment groundswell (Lubenow, 2003, Ch. 8).

The times required a populist community builder, but Davis for the longest time put all his energy into fundraising and executive management, not in shoring up his political base (Lubenow, 2003, Ch. 8; Jones, 2003). And there was no strong base, because over his extensive governmental career, he had failed to heed some advice that is essential for anybody with political ambitions:

- On the way up the ladder of political success, do not break the lower rungs by ignoring your supporters and taking them for granted, or worse, treating them like underlings.
- When you break the lower rungs, the ladder will become wobbly and may not hold you when confronted with sustained opposition.

When Davis realized the lack of popular support, he tried to change direction and shore up the liberal base. But by then, it was too late to stop an opponent who could easily step from the screen role of *Übermensch* to the political role of savior.

THE SCHWARZENEGGER PHENOMENON

The antitax forces and recall proponents tabbed Schwarzenegger early on. In their political wisdom, they recognized that an outsider, an antipolitician, might be popular with the voters and that Schwarzenegger might be attracted to the campaign, since he did not have to run in a debilitating primary election (Lubenow, 2003, 177). And, Schwarzenegger was willing to play the part of a candidate in earnest. One can argue that he and his campaign staff knowingly or intuitively cast him in the role of a change agent and turn-around artist, which was the right role to play at the time, considering the hyperpluralistic stalemate in Sacramento (Jeffe, 2003).

After his election, Schwarzenegger continued to groom his larger-than-life image, and great care has been given to the staging of his public appearances. When his presence choked the small beach communities in Orange County with adoring fans, he moved his venues to the larger expanse of shopping malls. He is not satisfied signing bills in Sacramento but instead does so in visually and symbolically stark surroundings that play well on TV (Mathews, 2003; 2004b).

With Schwarzenegger's strong control of the discourse in the media and in Sacramento, his critics have a difficult time painting him as a quick-fix artist, who governs with smoke and mirrors (Skelton, 2004; Lopez, 2004). Like Reagan, Schwarzenegger seems to be surrounded by Teflon, and missteps don't stick. Changes in policies are not seen as waffling and lack of foresight, but accepted as part of the learning process (Ingram, 2003; Halper, Nicholas, and Rabin, 2004).

The Teflon coat may be in effect because Schwarzenegger's successes are not due to showmanship alone. He has surprised even his opponents with his willingness not just to act like a governor, but actually to be one. He is a quick study, educates himself about major policy issues, and then uses the readily available media to educate the public (Nicholas and Mathews, 2003a). His high popularity ratings have helped him to get even liberal legislators to vote his way and pull the state government out of its paralysis. His willingness to work with Democratic legislators has made him successful as a turn-around artist (Finnegan, 2004a; 2004b; 2004c; 2004d).

But there may be more to Schwarzenegger's successes. Under his leadership, the political power structure in the state may be coalescing into a partnership regime, with the liberal and conservative camps working together to achieve partial victories for each side. Liberal voters, as well as minority interests, are represented by the Democratic leadership in the legislature, and conservative, antitax, economic interests are protected by the Governor and his administration. This political constellation requires a power broker, which is a role Schwarzenegger apparently is willing to play (Mathews, 2004a; Finnegan, 2004a; Helfand and Halper, 2004). In recent months, the Governor has not only emerged as a visionary leader but also as a hands-on mediator and manager of conflict. In addition, he has acted as a team leader, speaking in terms of "we," not "I."

To act as a team leader, somebody had to assemble the team, a role Maria Shriver took on at a crucial moment. She assumed the role of a team builder, mediator, and turn-around artist, when things were going wrong. On Friday, December 5, 2003, the legislature missed the deadline and failed to vote to get Proposition 56 and 57 on the March 2 ballot, two measures the Governor needed to ease the budget crisis. That weekend the Governor and his wife attended a bipartisan conference in Palm Springs for the California Congressional delegation. Shriver took the opportunity to gain the backing of influential Republicans and Democrats for a resumption of the budget talks. When the Secretary of State granted an extension of the deadline, the Governor and the Democratic leadership negotiated for two full days and reached an agreement after a marathon session that started on Wednesday, December 10, at 10:00 p.m., and lasted well past midnight (Nicholas and Mathews, 2003b).

The agreement was risky for the Governor because he went over the heads of the Republican leadership to get the deal. But flexibility and daring are part of the mix that has given the Governor increased stature and loyal supporters, including Shriver, who continues her family's tradition of civic activism. In films, *Übermenschen* are successful because of their physical prowess. In reality, individuals are successful because of their ability to become team leaders, power brokers, change agents, or whatever the political conditions require to pursue the vision and action for a better future.

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