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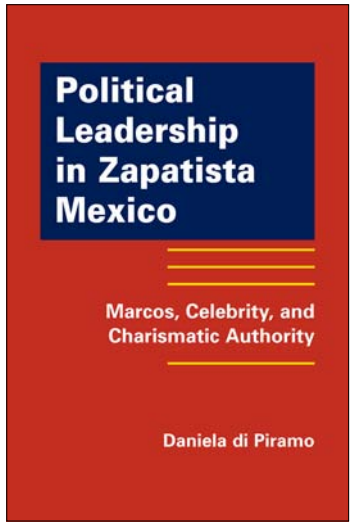
Political Leadership in Zapatista Mexico: Marcos, Celebrity, and Charismatic Authority

Daniela di Piramo



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ISBN: 978-1-935049-21-0 hc

FIRSTFORUMPRESS

A DIVISION OF LYNNE RIENNER PUBLISHERS, INC.

1800 30th Street, Ste. 314
Boulder, CO 80301
USA
telephone 303.444.6684
fax 303.444.0824

This excerpt was downloaded from the
FirstForumPress website
www.firstforumpress.com

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1
Charismatic Authority in Latin America

Sometimes academic inquiry arises from the sensation that there is something puzzling, something about a person, place or event that has not been explained adequately. The inspiration behind this book falls in that category. First, let me tell you a story. In Mexico, for the past decade, we have observed a movement that may substantially challenge some of the normative ideas about the nature of charismatic authority and political transformation in Latin America and elsewhere. In a matter of days after the 1994 Zapatista Rebellion, Mexico's memory was jolted and the rest of the world alerted to the existence of a place called Chiapas, an Indian-based movement whose members called themselves Zapatistas and a masked man who claimed he was not the leader, but nevertheless very conspicuously voiced the plight of thousands of oppressed Maya peoples. The Chiapas Rebellion (as it came to be known) was successful in at least one respect: it captured global imagination. Intellectuals, academics and journalists debated various issues that seemingly arose from this event in this previously unknown part of the world. What is the Zapatista Movement about? Why are the Zapatistas wearing masks? What exactly do they want from the Mexican government? Is this a post-modern movement? Why are they not attempting to seize power?

Marcos and the World: A Strange Encounter

Much of the attention was centered on the frequently described as *charismatic* 'spokesperson' of the Zapatista Movement, Subcomandante Marcos, who at various stages of the unfolding drama caught the attention of the national and the international media. In academic circles, as well as in the press, Marcos has been given many labels: masked hero, philosopher, revolutionary, poet, shaman, intellectual, guerrilla, erotic symbol and 'professional of hope'. He has been hailed a 'Jesus-like icon'; the *Los Angeles Times* describes him as "the overnight

messiah of Mexico's hard-core political left" and Stavans speaks of "a tragic hero, a Moses without a Promised Land". Marcos has been characterized as a pseudo-guerrilla pop star in cyberspace and for many scholars and observers alike he possesses star-quality.[1] Cueli speaks of Marcos' personal magnetism as instinctive and magic, allowing him to elect the moments and adequate spaces for his actions, with a touch of personal seduction. For others, he rates as "perhaps the most famous Mexican in history" or, as García de León argues, as the personification of a type of popular hero who has no precedents in the history of the country. At the same time, Marcos is often identified as belonging to a long tradition of Latin American guerrilla heroes from Enriquillo in 1518 to Che Guevara in the 1960s. He has also been considered the latest popular hero in a tradition of activists that includes Superbarrio and El Santo, Mexican 'social wrestlers' who "utilized performance and media strategies to enter in the political 'wrestling arena' of contemporary Mexico".[2]

There is no doubt that Subcomandante Marcos is a controversial and enigmatic political figure who has sparked debate on a number of points: the purpose of the mask, the puzzle of whether he is 'a leader' or 'the leader' of the Zapatista Movement and whether he should join the official political system. Questions have been asked as to whether he is central or marginal to the movement and what his role really encompasses. At the heart of all these issues the common theme remains the nature of his authority. Is Marcos only a spokesperson for the Zapatista Movement, is he really only a delegate and a humble servant of the Indians of Chiapas and of all oppressed peoples? Or is he a new hero, the only hope left at the 'end of history'? This is what he might epitomize to a number of activists from various anti-globalization and social justice movements, to several European intellectuals, to Italian anarchists, to the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo and to portions of the Mexican civil society. Others have taken the completely opposite view, arguing that Marcos is the typical Latin American *caudillo*, nothing more, nothing less, just as authoritarian and personalistic. Marcos, they tell us, is solely motivated by personal political ambition. Romero states the following:

> Marcos is the caudillo-although he denies it-of an armed uprising in the country of surrealism: within one hour of having declared the war-and at less than 10 kilometres from the enemy post-Marcos takes possession of a 'public dialogue' with dozens of tourists and curiosity seekers; then he answers the downpour of 'rockets' … with a bombardment much more intense than that of weapons: dozens of

> communiqués through which … he won more battles than the Federal government.[3]

Marcos is accused of masterfully seducing a legion of national and international scholars and the media with his copious and eloquent writings, with his carefully crafted image and his political theatrics. He is also accused of manipulating the Maya peoples of Chiapas, who arguably need a 'representative' able to mediate between them and the government. In real life, according to the Mexican government, Marcos is the fifty something middle-class *mestizo* Rafael Sebastián Guillén, former Marxist activist and UNAM (Autonomous Mexican National University) academic. So far, nothing is out of the ordinary. This is another charismatic revolutionary, another Latin American guerrilla or at worse, another *caudillo*. But is he? Calling Marcos another charismatic Latin American revolutionary leader is controversial in more ways than one. The Indigenous people might object to the use of the word 'leader' (this is how we have come to be saddled with the somewhat inadequate media term 'spokesperson') while the traditional left cringes at the term 'revolutionary' being used so loosely. To compound the situation, those who have tried to classify Marcos as a post-modernist leader (presumably to explain the peculiarities of the situation) have been spurned by a large section of the academic world unwilling to abandon their long-held modernist ideals.

A mysterious man, a pipe-smoking insomniac who loves the night, literature and talking about death, Marcos tells various interviewers in his softly spoken manner that he is not the leader or even one of the leaders of the Zapatista Movement. For a few years, until the start of the Other Campaign in January 2006, he was out of the public eye, presumably hiding in the Lacandona Jungle (some say in Europe). From January 2006 to the end of the elections in July Marcos was campaigning openly, but remained steadfast in his refusal to join the institutional political system. Never having attempted to 'seize power', his revolutionary credentials are in serious doubt. His writing skills are not. His criticisms of the Mexican government, of the neo-liberal project, of the traditional vanguard method of revolution and of human greed are nothing if not cutting. Although he offers no answers to political riddles, his ideas on why there is a need to reformulate the political process (but with no prescription of method or outcome) are articulated in his writings in an appealing and original manner that has earned him the admiration of thousands of people.

But Marcos' ambiguous self-conceived role as 'spokesperson' to the Zapatista Movement, his meteoric rise to celebrity status befitting a

post-modern revolutionary icon, not to mention his middle-class Marxist background, seem at odds with his anti-authoritarian and anti-personalistic political discourse. They also seem at odds with the sort of progressive politics the Zapatista Movement has been busy promoting: an empowered civil society, a non-hierarchical concept of power and the rejection of predetermined political doctrines. To make matters more confusing, Marcos sends out what can only be interpreted as mixed messages. On the one hand, he signs most of the communiqués, admits that the EZLN (the Zapatista Army of National Liberation) is a vertical hierarchy, confesses that power is something he has to watch continuously and that he has a significant amount of influence in the Zapatista Movement. On the other hand, his general rhetoric downplays his personal importance and emphasizes that the real leaders of the movement are the Mayan communities of Chiapas. He continuously reminds us that his role is but temporary and that he is merely creating political space for the people to take charge of their lives. Indeed, it seems that the nature of his authority has raised even more debate than his political ideas. By default, if nothing else, Marcos' authority is charismatic, yet it would be grossly inaccurate to position him as the typical Latin American charismatic leader. All the same, it still may not be wise to dismiss the personalistic element and romanticize Marcos as the ultimate bearer of political integrity.

The approach that I take in this book was prompted by curiosity as to what the ambiguities we observe in Marcos' role signify and, furthermore, what they reveal about the concept of charismatic authority. An analysis of Marcos through the lenses of charisma is admittedly somewhat unusual, given that he *appears* to be the antithesis of personalism. Moreover, he is often analyzed in a theoretical vacuum, his 'unique' position accepted unquestioningly. Yet this simplistic reading of the situation is inadequate, that is, placing Marcos outside the Latin American political tradition or outside the Marxist tradition and holding him up as the quintessential post-modern hero is just as inadequate as positioning him in these contexts without substantial qualification.[4] It is imperative to refine our understanding of the situation and do justice to its complexity; this can only be done by confronting the ambiguities that are obviously there and by making an objective assessment of the tensions and contradictions that still surround this fascinating political figure.

There are obvious benefits in studying Marcos through the lenses of charismatic authority. For a start, by doing so we can obtain a much richer picture without missing out on interesting nuances; this, in turn, allows a more balanced assessment of his political actions and ideas.

Furthermore, this approach allows us a better insight into what is, at the best of times, an opaque concept: charismatic authority. The theoretical premise of this study is that there is a tension at the heart of charismatic authority, between its transformative potential and its personalistic dimension. Therefore, through a specific interpretation of Marcos' actions, this book contributes to a deeper understanding of the nature of charisma and charismatic authority.

I contend that the ambiguities we can observe in Subcomandante Marcos' role and the strategies he employs to deal with them illustrate this tension extremely well. Moreover, it seems to me that these ambiguities reflect not just his own consciousness of the contradictory dynamics of charismatic authority when employed in service of an egalitarian socio-political cause, but also his wish to move beyond any form of personalism. Marcos knows that his own charismatic authority has been useful for building moral capital and for achieving a number of immediate and pragmatic political short-term goals, such as the mobilization of the Indigenous people of Chiapas and global recognition of their plight. Moreover, with his innovative use of modern communications technology he was able to project his charisma globally, achieving cult status on the international stage and gaining certain broad political advantage thereby. At the same time, Marcos has been striving to resist the 'negative' personalistic consequences of charisma that threaten to undermine his central political values, corrupt his own character, and destroy the Zapatistas' long-term goals.

What emerges very clearly are serious limits to the effectiveness of charismatic authority as an agent of 'political transformation', particularly if by this term we mean progressive, *sustained* social and political change characterized by projects based on social justice and egalitarian notions rather than on political opportunism. Personalism is also inevitably at odds with the transformative and progressive vision of an awakened and politically conscious civil society able to listen to a message rather than one captured by fantasies about the personality conveying it. This is exactly the sort of damage Marcos wishes to avoid, but in his attempt to tread a path between 'controlled' personalism and anti-authoritarianism he inevitably runs up against these limits. While the ambiguities inherent in this situation are not new, what is different about Marcos is that he confronts and attempts to transcend the problem of personalism and self-glorification in a way that no other leader or political figure has done before. His resistance to the trap of charismatic authority is evident not only in his actions and discourse, but also in many of his strategies, particularly his creation of a masked alter-ego

that is meant to function as a blank space upon which each person may read their own meaning.

Certainly his use of personal power and charisma to achieve a number of limited or short-term political goals confirms what Weber had suspected, that is, the transient importance of the individual in the transformative political process. At the same time Marcos' attempt to control his own personal political power is an indictment of its—charismatic authority's—potential to hinder certain political outcomes, for instance, a vibrant civil society. His deep mistrust of personal authority is partly fuelled by what he perceives as the generally problematic set of relations between charismatic or cult figures and the rest of society, where the emphasis on personalities, inflated by the media, can and all too often does obscure political messages. Moreover, while cultural determinism should be avoided, one cannot fail to note that Marcos comes from a specific cultural context where, without a doubt, the personalistic authoritarian element has flourished in all its different flavors.

As a matter of fact, the Subcomandante is the perfect example of a political charismatic figure who aims to resist what he sees as the political (and perhaps the moral) fate of Latin American charismatic leaders. Most dangerous of all to Marcos is the self-defeating model of revolution historically adopted by the traditional left. From his perspective, given that he is himself a product of a Marxist tradition that tends to exalt revolutionary vanguards, there is much to be learnt from history, particularly Castro's case, as it highlights perfectly well the potentially corruptive effects of charismatic authority on the post-revolutionary process. There could not have been a better lesson for Marcos than the Cuban Revolution, or one that could have better illustrated the failure of left-wing revolutionary movements to create a political system that addresses the injustices of liberal democracies and capitalism *on the basis of a truly egalitarian political process*.

The Cuban Revolution was an amazing historical event masterminded from above. It began with some truly progressive and innovative ideas that were outlined in one of the most remarkable political statements in the history of revolutionary discourse, *History Will Absolve Me*, written in 1953 by Castro during his imprisonment.[5] Apart from the offerings of social justice and political representation, the economic and social achievements of the initial phases of the revolution served to improve the living conditions of the majority of workers, peasants, women and black people.[6] Indeed, only months after seizing power, Castro introduced the Agrarian Reforms that benefited a large section of the population, as well as a number of other socially

advantageous reforms (particularly in health and education) that are outlined in the 1960 First Declaration of Havana.[7] Nevertheless, in this process of political transformation eventually charismatic authority and coercive force coalesced to become the means to an end (the protection of the revolution), whilst dissenting voices were silenced and both liberal and democratic ideals were seriously compromised.

The historical lesson is that the use of charismatic authority to establish a progressive political program can, ironically, be a self-defeating exercise producing a system based on very similar relations of power to the one it was meant to replace. It should be noted that this particular appraisal of the traditional left is part of a broader criticism of political systems in general (including Western democracies) by the Zapatistas for failing to create the conditions for an autonomous civil society and for, ultimately, depriving individuals of their dignity. Marcos learns from history and attempts to avoid cult status, *caudillismo* and vanguardism with a strategy of 'disengaged engagement', in which he consciously distances himself from his own political persona even while employing it. In this way he hopes to become a mere social and political catalyst or a temporary facilitator, assisting the creation of the conditions that will galvanize people into organizing themselves politically so that they are able to speak and act on their own behalf. Yet his reliance on charismatic authority, even thus limited, constantly threatens to extol his own role and simultaneously undermine his attempt to radically 'democratize' politics at both local and global level, while his reluctance to fully deploy that authority might invite political impotence in the long run. In a nutshell, the attempt to utilize the mobilizing power of charismatic authority, while evading its corruptive effects, is a clear acknowledgment that such authority is both a tempting asset and a dangerous trap.

Revisiting Max Weber

At this point, it is useful to provide a brief overview of the genesis and evolution of the terminology that is central to various discussions in this book. The New Testament defines 'charisma' as a theological term, a gratuitous and transitory gift of God's grace that enables human beings to perform exceptional tasks.[8] Alternatively, the term 'charismatic' is frequently used to describe spiritual revival movements or communities whose members claim to possess charismatic powers.[9] Much more damagingly, in contemporary secular popular Western culture many celebrities have been called 'charismatic', from Princess Diana to Madonna, from Xanana Gusmão to Barack Obama. This label, more or

less loosely, is used to accommodate virtually anyone from leaders of mass movements to people in every walk of life, any individual who either has extraordinary impact on others or has a very smart public relations manager on their payroll. In the academic world the picture is much the same, as the term has been adopted by a vast number of disciplines that span from the sociological to the political, from the psychological to the historical and down the intricate alleys of organizational theory. In many cases interpretations confuse preconditions with manifestations; often charismatic leaders become virtually indistinguishable from transformational leaders and analysis levels tend to slip and slide from the macro or sublime to the micro or mundane.[10]

Almost inevitably, despite the differences, academic work dealing with this concept looks back to Max Weber, the German philosopher credited with the transposition of charisma from the religious to the political realm.[11] In fact, Weber made an important distinction between the sociological concept of charisma in *The Sociology of Religion* [1922] and that of charismatic authority as part of his well known political typology in *Economy and Society* [1922, 1968]. In the former Weber analyzed *charisma* as a transformative social force within the broad context of the history of religion and magic. Following anthropological debates in Europe led by Marett, Mauss, Wundt and Preuss,[12] and aligning magic and religion as essentially the same phenomenon, Weber identified charisma within contexts such as pre-animism and shamanism.[13] By contrast, the concept of *charismatic authority* is presented in his political writings as an 'ideal-type' or as a specific instantiation of charisma.[14] Here charisma refers to:

> A certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional qualities or powers. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a 'leader'.[15]

The problem that arises is that, as Riesebrodt points out, "Weber developed the concept of charisma in two different contexts but never sufficiently clarified their different meanings, implications and levels of abstraction".[16] Other scholars confirm that this distinction was not sufficiently clarified by Weber and the resulting conceptual obfuscation continues to haunt much of the literature on the subject.[17] These theoretical ambiguities are partly due to complexities inherent in

Weber's methodology as it aimed to address the conceptual gaps between historical specificity and sociological generalization, attempting to bring order to disordered realities by clarifying the relationship between ideas and subsequent events.[18] Hence, we understand Weber's typology of the legitimate modes of authority as a sociological device and his secular theory of charisma as part of the causal explanation of the history of Western rationalization.

Although the focus of this study is on charismatic authority rather than charisma, it should be emphasized that this transposition from the sociological to the political realm is far more significant than has been previously acknowledged. Central to this transposition was the idea that the power unleashed by religion in the social realm might be replicated in the political sphere by extraordinary leaders who have the gift of being able to mobilize the masses by creating an emotive bond with them. These leaders are thereby able to transform the political and social system with the force of their personal power, legitimized by their followers' faith. Weber judged charismatic authority to be truly revolutionary and was concerned at what he perceived as restrictions on the spirit of human creativity and imagination imposed by rationalism and bureaucracy. Still, he did not delve into the internal dynamics of charismatic authority or on the possibility that its contradictory dimensions might have a limiting and potentially corruptive effect on socio-political transformation.

A closer look at Weber's notion of charismatic authority is necessary at this point. In his political writings, Weber proceeded to define power (*macht*) as the imposition of an individual's will upon another person (despite possible resistance from the latter) and domination (*herrschaft*) as the manifestation of that power. By contrast, authority is a specific form of power that is sustained by a belief system that legitimates it in the social sense; hence it does not rely solely on coercion, but includes an element of voluntary obedience from the subject. Each form of authority system, as described by Weber, is legitimated by a different set of beliefs in the legality of normative rules and the right of those in authority to issue commands. The first ideal type of legitimate authority in Weber's typology is traditional authority, which rests on the established belief in the sanctity of tradition. The second ideal type, bureaucratic or rational authority, is legitimated by formalistic belief in the supremacy of the law.[19] The third ideal type is charismatic authority, a system that rests on direct devotion to the leader, who is obeyed by virtue of his or her personal attributes. Weber specified that this form of authority acts as a revolutionary force in response to a crisis, challenges the established order, disdains routine

mundane tasks and calls for a new concept of human relationships.[20] The charismatic individual is portrayed as a creative actor in a mechanical and disenchanted world, whose role is essential to social and political transformation, but whose capacities are endangered by the historical drift towards bureaucratization (the iron cage) and rationalization.[21]

It would be, however, far too simplistic to interpret Weber's work on charisma as wholly antagonistic to rationality and order, and charisma itself as *merely* an irrational and disruptive force. For example, in 'Politics as a Vocation' (written in 1918 and strangely neglected by academics debating these issues), Weber recognizes the dangers of passionate morality and the benefits of an ethic based on rationalism.[22] What exactly Weber meant by 'rationalism' needs to be qualified. The distinction provided by Eisenstadt between substantive and organizational rationalism enables a rather sophisticated interpretation of Weber's ideas. Substantive (or pertaining-to-values) rationalism is understood to be the drive towards the constant regeneration of what could be termed the 'inspired organization of ideas'. While charismatic authority exists in a state of constant tension with organizational rationalism (for the latter is often a constraint), it is ultimately the means to a substantive rational end—that is, a quest for change in social order and organization when the system itself has become irrational.[23]

Weber's charismatic individual who aspires to change or revolutionize the existing system has been aligned by some scholars to Nietzsche's *Übermensch*, given that they both act outside conventional boundaries and set new values for themselves and their followers in their heroic attempt to elevate mankind to a higher level.[24] But although Weber might be somehow indebted to Nietzsche, this identification of the charismatic leader to the *Übermensch* is, to a point, misleading. Weber's notion of charismatic authority is more complex than the glorification or the isolated struggle of the individual, because it attempts to link human thought and ideas to changes and continuities in the social order. Weber, as a sociologist more than as a philosopher, invests the charismatic individual with social and political purpose.[25] Charismatic rule entails commitment to an ethic or to an exemplary way of life, initially through the formation of an emotional consociation with the followers rather than through the institutional route. The prophet was Weber's central charismatic figure, although he recognized that shamans, political demagogues, revolutionary leaders and military heroes can also be charismatic leaders. These figures project inspiration from divine or supernatural powers and are the embodiment of an ideal rather than of a law or regulation; in the political context, they might

head innovative social movements and convey a strong message that is meaningful to or resonates with their followers.

Charismatic authority is precarious and, as Weber admits, "charisma is fated to decline as permanent institutional structures increasingly develop".[26] It is the personal significance of the leader that makes charismatic structures inherently unstable, eventually causing the shift from the very temporary exercise of pure charisma to its routinization, the process through which charisma is gradually diluted and transformed into either traditional or legal/rational authority.[27] This process is the result of both practical and structural constraints that in a sense 'force' these leaders to engage with the institutional system as a way to keep the charismatic relationship alive as long as possible, albeit in diluted form, and also as a way to preserve socio-political transformations made during their regime. The problem of succession is particularly acute in charismatic rule, as it is apparent, for instance, in Castro's case. According to Weber, this problem might be resolved through charismatic forms that are either hereditary (personal) or of office (as an impersonal quality inherent in bureaucratic structures or movements). An example of the latter is the way several contemporary political parties in Argentina identify themselves as part of the Peronist Movement and an example of the former would be Indira Gandhi (in relation to her father Jawaharlal Nehru).

Weber also made it plain that in its pure form the charismatic claim depends solely on the acceptance of followers; it is faith that cannot be coerced and that will break down if the leader's mission is not recognized by the followers or if it fails to benefit them.[28] Similarly, as Weber stipulated, it is the duty of those to whom leaders address their mission to recognize them as charismatically qualified.[29] The importance of the followers in situations of charismatic authority can be traced to Pauline theology, which defined the charismatic group as simultaneously governed and governing. Paul not only defined charisma as a unique personal gift and as the highest source of holiness in order to legitimize his role as apostle, but he also extended that gift (in diluted form) to his disciples. By stressing the interdependence between leader and follower, Paul's charismatic theory was charged with all-inclusive egalitarian overtones, while mindful of the disequilibrium induced by charismatic individualism.[30] This proposal was rather radical at the time, for it challenged the orthodox belief that the Holy Spirit dwelling actively in the Church makes this institution impersonally charismatic.[31] Paul's objections to the spiritual aristocracy of the church turn our attention to the dynamics between the congregation and the unique, self-contained charismatic leader. This is a significant point, first because it

highlights the issue of institution vis-à-vis the individual and second, because it brings into prominence the question of interdependency between the individual and the group, and therefore the crucial relationship between the *recognition* of charisma (by the followers) and its *validity or legitimacy*.

There is no evidence that Weber was directly influenced by Paul, but as much of the literature accounts or implies,[32] Weber 'borrowed' the term 'charisma' from Rudolph Sohm's *Kirchenrecht* (1892). When introducing the concept of charisma in his typology of legitimate authority, Weber acknowledges that:

> The concept of 'charisma' ('the gift of grace') is taken from the vocabulary of early Christianity. For the Christian hierocracy Rudolph Sohn, in his Kirchenrecht, was the first to clarify the substance of the concept, even though he did not use the same terminology.[33]

Sohm's theological interpretation of the concept had in turn borrowed from Pauline theology, asserting that only certain individuals (apostles, prophets and teachers) have a calling (*beruf*) to teach as a task (*aufgabe*) instigated by God. This call is the gift of charisma, and individuals who possess this gift have the moral authority to lead the community. In *Kirchenrecht*, Sohm establishes the authority of charisma as a form of divine organization in opposition to the authority of human ecclesiastic law. This was illustrated by his study of the transformation of the early Christian ecclesia into the bureaucratic organization of Catholicism.[34] For Sohm the Christian ecclesia is therefore not based on legal-human but on charismatic-divine organization. Every true membership, as every office, is based on charisma carried by individuals and not resulting from the power of the institution or of the congregation.

But Sohm was no democrat and, unlike Paul, he was not concerned with universal inclusion. As Smith contends, law and bureaucracy were rejected "not because they *limit* popular sovereignty, but as *fruits* of popular sovereignty".[35] Subsequently, in Sohm the gift of grace was unevenly distributed and there is no sense of the importance of the recognition of the followers in the act of validation of charismatic authority. Moreover, as Riesebrodt clarifies, Sohm's emphasis on the divine (where authority is not socially constructed but divinely given) was informed by his agenda of strong commitment to the Protestant faith, as well as by his belief in the unquestionable nature of this type of authority.[36]

Weber followed Sohm closely in some respects, particularly with regard to the interpretation of charisma as a form of authority, the emphasis on the individual and the contrast between charisma and bureaucracy, although Sohm had denied the possibility that the 'gift of grace' could become embedded in institutionalized office. Weber substantially revolutionized Sohm's ideas in other ways, as several authors have argued.[37] For instance, while Sohm believed the charismatic gift to be truly divine and hence independent of the followers, in Weber the charisma of a person is functional only because the followers voluntarily perceive it as such. Another departure from Sohm's ideas was Weber's extension of charismatic authority to a variety of figures such as revolutionaries, madmen, warriors and magicians. Charisma was virtually transformed into a political, secular and revolutionary value-free notion, whereas for Sohm the notion remained pedagogic and specific to Christianity.[38] In 1961 Friedrich questioned Weber's value-free treatment of the concept of charismatic authority and its undifferentiated treatment of political and religious leaders, concluding that "Weber's typology is basically unsound and should be discarded". More recently, in a book published in 2007 entitled *Charisma: The Gift of Grace, and How it has Been Taken Away from Us*, Philip Rieff did much the same. Other scholars have modified the typology, some adding another category.[39]

There is still considerable debate about Weber's work in this area and on the usefulness of the concept of charismatic authority as a device to explain or understand various political and social phenomena.[40] Weber's emphasis on political agency is, to be sure, another contentious issue. A section of the scholarship comments on his treatment of the role played by individuals as agents of social meaning and transformation and on his positioning of the charismatic individual outside and against the institutional order. Excessive focus on the individual is oftentimes a source of apprehension, partly because it has very undemocratic connotations. Along similar lines in an interesting paper that critiques Weber's methodological individualism, Hutt reminds us of Bourdieu's distaste for the way in which Weber removes his charismatic individual from the surrounding material conditions.[41]

Although Weber did identify some broad character traits that he deemed essential to a skilled politician, such as passion and a sense of responsibility in 'Politics as a Vocation', his work is by no means a psychological appraisal in the Freudian sense. Weber was not a social psychologist, but a political sociologist who never attempted to systemize a set of personality traits that would distinguish a charismatic leader from other leaders. While it is true that he always brought

questions of relations underlying systems of domination back to the motivations of individuals, he did not offer a systematic conceptualization of the structural conditions that might give rise to these motivations and he did not propose a theory of society that makes its stability dependent upon the sharing of common values.[42]

Similarly, it is important not to misunderstand Weber's ideas on legitimacy as fixed or in terms of a single motivation that would explain, alone, why the people follow a charismatic leader. Parkin raises the point that Weber makes no iron-clad distinction between obedience that derives from conscious commitment and that which is more subconsciously based on self-preservation or even self-interest.[43] In the case of charismatic regimes history shows that obedience is always more freely given at the beginning of the regime, when the leader inspires the most awe and faith in his followers. With regard to the possibility of a coercive element, it can be argued that this possibility is never completely absent from any political system. It could well coexist with charismatic authority and perhaps even eventually overtake elements of voluntarism and faith, particularly when the enchantment of the followers and the legitimacy that the charismatic leader derives from it fade over time—a case well demonstrated by Castro's political trajectory in Cuba.

Perspectives on Charisma and Charismatic Authority

From Weber's work we can travel along many roads. The literature on charismatic leadership can be divided in five broad disciplines: political psychology, political science, organizational theory, cultural studies and religious studies. But long before the term 'charismatic' was in vogue, the idea that 'great men' or great individuals shape world history had been present in Western culture for centuries. Carlyle, in *On Heroes and Hero-Worship*, published in 1872, introduced one of the earliest typologies of hero-types. Of course the concept of 'ideal leadership' can be identified before Carlyle's time in the writings of Aristotle and Plato. Leadership was considered an ethical or moral pursuit until Machiavelli challenged this view when he wrote *The Prince* in 1513, a book on how to seize and maintain political power. The novelty of these ideas was the squarely-placed emphasis on the role of the individual leader, particularly in terms of mastering the inevitably unpredictable world of politics. Machiavelli asserted that rigidity of character is the reason for the ability of flighty *fortuna* (fortune) to get the better of mankind. Since capricious *fortuna* favors the bold, the *virtú* (virtue) of a Prince is redefined as the ability to respond to changeable circumstances in a

manner that will achieve the desired ends with little or no regard for the intrinsic nature of the response.[44] Clearly, Machiavelli was offering a formula for political strategy that could be understood to include an element of charisma (although he did not call it so), a vitality that—once freed from conventional morality—is instrumental in overcoming obstacles. Nevertheless, for all his insights on human nature, Machiavelli's work did not attribute any extraordinary powers to the Prince, who remains a strangely impersonal character able to learn the art of pragmatic politics dispassionately. Similarly, while acknowledging their importance in political terms as a source of vital energy for republics, Machiavelli did not analyze the masses or the 'common people' in great detail. In *The Prince* they remain an impersonal entity, whereas in *The Discourses* he treats them largely as political actors subject to forces that leaders manipulate.

The concept of 'the masses' or 'the crowd' was not systematically analyzed by scholars until the late nineteenth century, when the emergence of psychology and psychoanalysis as proper disciplines enabled not only detailed empirical studies of leaders, but also of the masses or crowds as phenomena of their own by theorists like Freud and Le Bon.[45] In his famous 1897 book *The Crowd* Le Bon argued that crowds are social phenomena that display three symptoms: lowering of faculties, intensification of emotional reactions and disregard for personal profit. In a mass or crowd, not only are individual differences lost, but the crowd "demands a God before anything else".[46] For Le Bon, excessive admiration for leaders paralyzes the use of critical faculties:

> We know to-day that by various processes an individual may be brought into such a condition that, having entirely lost his conscious personality, he obeys all the suggestions of the operator who has deprived him of it, and commits acts in utter contradiction with his character and habits.[47]

This analysis goes a long way in elucidating how charismatic leaders can impose their will and be obeyed blindly. In *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, written in 1921, Freud elaborated on the central concept of a split ego or the division between ego and super-ego, along with mechanisms of identification or transference to explain the nature of group cohesion in terms of libidinal ties. These themes were taken up by his disciple Erikson and applied to a number of leaders' identity crisis and transference. His work on Gandhi and Luther is renowned for its psychological insights; the author also correlates attempts to create positive identity with submission and

devotion to strong leadership in the case of the followers.[48] Fromm, in *Escape from Freedom*, written in 1961, established the connection between social conditions and individual psychology that was the beginning of a useful bridge between psychoanalysis and sociology.[49] Other studies on leadership that examine authoritarian or totalitarian leaders were heavily influenced by Freud's work, often portraying leaders who ignite fear in society and cause individuals to relive the experience of paternal domination, for instance Hannah Arendt's groundbreaking *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, written in 1967.[50]

A large portion of the scholarship continues to take into account psychoanalytical factors to explain the presence, motivations and behavior of charismatic leaders. One theme that seems to arise regularly in this sort of literature relates to the circumstances surrounding the birth of charismatic leaders, particularly claims of illegitimacy and subsequent lifelong predisposition to feelings of inferiority and social marginalization. The fact that both Juan and Evita Perón and Castro were illegitimate children has been noted by scholars.[51] Complex psychoanalytical issues have often given way to the 'trait approach', a search for more superficial personal characteristics of the charismatic leader, such as physical attributes, behavioral patterns and personality traits.[52] Broadly speaking, the stereotypical charismatic has strong physical presence, boundless energy, deep intuition, a sense of timing, uncanny foresight and irresistibly persuasive powers. This search for a set of specific personality traits and attributes has proved to be highly speculative and removed from reality, as there are leaders who have enthralled the masses whilst displaying different and sometimes diametrically opposite characteristics to the ones listed above.[53]

The psychological approach basically tells us that what transforms charisma into charismatic authority is either the psychological disposition of the crowd or that of the leader, and certainly the relationship between them. There is some agreement in the literature that leaders endowed with extraordinary qualities but unable to develop strong emotional bonds with followers could not be termed 'charismatic'.[54] Also, undoubtedly some of the research in psychology and psychoanalysis has produced interesting outcomes. All the same, charisma cannot be *related* to a specific set of personality traits, physical attributes or skills, given that throughout history there have been many allegedly charismatic leaders who have totally different personalities, capabilities and styles. For what do Perón, Mussolini, Gandhi, Sukarno, Hitler, de Gaulle, Castro, Kenyatta and Kennedy have in common in terms of personality traits, other than the fact that they have all been called 'charismatic' leaders? It is true that there are traits that might be

more common among charismatic leaders: most of them are powerful speakers, emerge from the middle classes, are psychologically complex people, educated and so on. But there are always exceptions. It is obvious that ultimately there is no fixed set of traits that make up a charismatic leader. Moreover, two leaders might have similar psychological patterns or character traits, but one might either not be charismatic or fail to develop his or her charisma into charismatic authority (the external conditions might not be there), while the other might succeed.

We can consider the psychological approach useful in terms of a more nuanced approach to the study of charismatic authority, but this approach cannot be relied upon exclusively to define the phenomenon or to explain *why* and *when* charismatic authority arises. Political and social situational factors need to be taken into account. This book takes the view that charisma is a personal attribute of the individual *unrelated* to the rest of his or her character traits and that the possession of this attribute in itself is not a sufficient condition for the charismatic individual to become a charismatic leader. Charisma may be a gift of nature, but those who become charismatic leaders are made so through circumstances and timely presence. These circumstances will be partly determined by structural factors. Echoing Weber, a widely held view is that charismatic leaders usually emerge in times of crisis, when basic social values and the legitimacy of both the government and of the existing institutions are brought into question. Often personal rule is equated with the weakness of political institutions and, as we shall see, this is a widely accepted assessment of the Latin American political scene, although it is understood that institutionalization is, eventually, a necessity.[55] In these circumstances, a charismatic leader and his or her message are often relevant and meaningful to the people, particularly when they offer a solution to perceived socio-political malaises. As Friedland suggests, "if genuine charisma is to be understood, analysis must be directed towards the social situation within which the charismatic figure operates, and the character of his message".[56]

People believe that a charismatic leader is able to resolve the crisis, being endowed with extraordinary power and correspondingly her or his message must appear as the only viable solution, even salvation from disaster and reinstatement of 'meaningful' values like the community and the family. This is what Kane in *The Politics of Moral Capital* refers to as 'moral capital', or the accumulation of moral prestige and credibility that assist a leader in the attainment of specific political goals, including legitimacy and rational justification of political actions. Moral capital, Kane states, "will accrue to leaders who effectively

articulate, defend and symbolize these values".[57] These transcendental offerings are normally articulated in an official doctrine or ideology, but not necessarily in a dogmatic fashion, so that the leader is conveniently able to control ideological positions and alter the criteria of success with regard to his or her actions. Furthermore, these leaders often define the political situation by creating or reinforcing the idea of an 'enemy' to national security and survival, in order to emphasize the politically strategic 'us and them' predicament.[58] It should be noted that these strategies are commonly but not exclusively used by charismatic leaders.

One area that has been particularly successful in its application of the situational approach to charismatic authority is that of post-colonial integration studies. By 1958 Edward Shils had drawn an interesting connection between nationalism and charisma, arguing that the processes of modernization and post-colonial nation-building require charismatic authority for the important transition from traditional to rational-legal authority. The role of political charisma in post-colonial integration as the fusion of faith and nationalism has been analyzed in relation to several charismatic leaders, for instance Prince Sihanouk in Cambodia, Nehru in India and Prince Nkrumah in Ghana.[59] It should be noted that while it becomes essential to incorporate features of charismatic leadership to systemic changes such as new forms of political integration, to do so can be problematic for these leaders, for the creation of a secular, legal institution such as the nation-state is not easily reconciled with continuing charismatic leadership. The general problem becomes one of either reduction of the charismatic basis of post-traditional legitimacy or the fulfillment of transference of loyalties, in order to give the new political system an independent normative base and stability.[60]

Both psychological and situational factors are important in either locating the sources of charisma or in explaining its transformation to charismatic authority in particular political situations, yet neither of these approaches provide a complete picture. As history has shown, resolutions to crises do not necessarily include charismatic leadership. In a well-known work entitled *The Spellbinders—Charismatic Political Leadership* Willner confirms this verdict: crises and psychic stress are not always the preconditions accompanying or causing charismatic leadership and mission/ideology factors are conducive but not sufficient (or even necessary) to catalyze charismatic rule.[61] A symbolic-mythological approach to charismatic authority had been proposed by Willner and Willner in 1965. This approach preserves the primary importance of the individual charismatic leader but anchors it to the relevant cultural and historical context, by connecting the leader to

meaningful myths, sacred figures, symbols and national heroes that shape the political culture of the relevant society. The authors identify several manifestations of charismatic leadership, including the utilization of ritual and ceremony, the mode of handling crises, the assimilation to one or more of the national dominant myths, the performance of heroic feat, the explicit projection of personal qualities and outstanding rhetorical ability. But, amongst this mélange, they argue that what is particularly relevant for the validation of charismatic leadership is the role of myth. In other words, charismatic leaders arise when other means of legitimizing authority fail and when they are able to evoke and associate themselves to sacred symbols of the country's culture.[62]

The use of cultural and historical paradigms by charismatic leaders may seem to contradict Weber's idea of charisma as innovative, but the process needs to be understood as a two-way experience: the leader is constituted by the political culture and simultaneously plays a part in reshaping it. Such leaders not only identify themselves with established mythologies and symbolisms, but will typically attempt to create new ones in order to individualize themselves, prolong their power and claim their 'rightful' place in national history. Overall, the symbolic-mythological approach is appealing because it connects the individual to the existing social order, hence managing to relate the two different levels of analysis quite effectively. The weakness of this approach is that it cannot conclusively guarantee that these connections between the leader and the cultural symbolic order may not occur with a non-charismatic leader.

Another approach to the study of charisma and charismatic authority interprets the phenomenon as reflective of the diffusion of the sacred into the secular, placing emphasis on its messianic quality. Although religion has traditionally been regarded as a stabilizing integrative force in society, Hunt uses the French Revolution as a model to argue that religious ideas and practices can promote social regeneration or change rather than integration or stability through the establishment of new rituals and symbolic representations.[63] More specifically, an interpretation of charisma as a religious agent of change is provided by Norton, where the Christian mythology of the Trinity is representative of the union and the inseparableness of authority (the Father), representation (the Son) and charisma (the Holy Spirit).[64] In practical terms liberation theology is a good illustration of religion as a transformative agent.

Finally, a totally different view held by some scholars is that charisma and the ensuing authority are prefabricated or deliberately

constructed through the manipulation of techniques of mass persuasion. Ratnam includes propaganda and skilful management as factors that explain the existence of charismatic leadership, while Loewenstein states that mass propaganda and technology-enhanced media have the power to either confer charisma or intensify it. One should note that this view of charisma is still very much in vogue; as late as 2008 Gundle argues that in the contemporary context charisma becomes 'showmanship'.[65] Modern charisma, in other words, is seen as a set of techniques and devices used by 'rational' leaders and their respective propaganda machines to transcend and veil the use of rationality in politics in what can be summed up as the 'exploitation of irrationality'.[66]

It is true that modern media enable psychological, geographical and cultural distance to be overcome, thereby giving the illusion of immediacy and intimacy to the relations between leader and follower. Perhaps as a reaction to the possibility of charismatic politics being little more than a play choreographed and acted out without an 'authentic' star, some of the scholarship has reservations about the authenticity of the concept in contemporary politics. The obvious counter-argument is that the use of modern technology and the fact that charisma is manifested differently do not necessarily imply that the star of the play is not 'authentic'. What I most emphatically disagree with is the view (held by some of my distinguished colleagues) that all charismatic leaders are 'constructions' and therefore that charisma per se may not exist. This view is flawed for a number of reasons. The first is that the media has only played a relatively important role in politics the last seventy or so years while charismatic leaders have been around for much longer; moreover, spin doctors and the like can really only work with what must be already there. In other words, the media machine cannot create charisma from nothing; it can only enhance. The second reason is that if charisma was something that could be borrowed, stolen, bought or manufactured, then surely most leaders on earth would borrow, buy or steal it, as to do so is politically strategic and rational.

Some Important Definitions

An important point that arises from our brief journey throughout the various interpretations is that the distinction between charisma and charismatic authority remains unclear or at least unexplored by the scholarship. The failure to identify these two concepts as separate obscures the fact that while charismatic authority retains the transformative or revolutionary impetus that Weber had identified from charisma in the religious context, it is also a personalistic form of

political power, often authoritarian. The tension between these two dimensions is what concerns us. In order to address this issue, definitions of 'charisma' and 'charismatic authority' will be advanced then the problem posed by charismatic authority will be discussed.

As both terms are rather 'slippery', definitions are no easy feat and far from being conclusive. Moreover, there are no clear criteria for determining in absolute terms who should be labeled 'charismatic' or who actually is endowed with charisma. This predicament is not unusual in political science and other disciplines such as sociology, where many concepts are ambiguous and dependent on the context to which they are applied for an accurate definition. However, what is particularly difficult in this case is that any analysis of political charismatic authority hinges directly on the qualification of the link between micro (agency) and macro (structure) levels, a problem that other complex concepts in politics (for instance, democracy or liberalism) arguably do not have to confront to this degree. I will not attempt to categorically define charisma or charismatic authority. Instead, I will limit myself to the formulation of working definitions of these concepts for the purposes of this book. Following Weber, charisma will be considered a personal attribute of any individual who is able to fascinate, allure or influence other people in an intense and rapid manner. It is not an attribute of a group or an institution, but a personal attribute that is *unrelated* to any other specific personality or behavioral trait or to the individual's psychological and social circumstances. In other words, individuals of any description, psychological makeup, culture or social status can potentially be described as charismatic. An individual who possesses the initial personal attribute of charisma might be able (and willing) to convert it into political charismatic authority.

Just what is charismatic authority? It is often said that politics is about power. Charismatic authority is just that, a form of personal political power—that is, the power to influence others effectively and intensely in the way they view the world. It is the power to command deference, obedience, devotion, compliance or cooperation (or a combination of these) *mainly* on the basis of personal appeal. As Kane reminds us in *The Politics of Moral Capital*, it is also important to keep in mind the distinction between moral and charismatic authority, in the sense that a leader might have moral authority and not be charismatic.[67] It should be noted that although most charismatic leaders do rely on a moral element as part of the 'package' (usually evident in their discourse), their authority is largely based on their personal appeal and that it is this appeal that elicits intense emotive responses from their

followers. To put it bluntly, the charismatic leader fascinates, mystifies and excites.

But how does a personal attribute develop into a form of political authority? The first point that needs to be asserted here is that it does so only under certain conditions. Essentially, as Eisenstadt puts it, the individual needs more than the charismatic gift or a set of extraordinary qualities; he or she needs "the ability, through these qualities, to reorder and reorganize both the symbolic and the cognitive order".[68] The second point is that four specific conditions need to be present. Of these four conditions, two are essential to the uniqueness of this form of authority. The first is that initially (at least) the person must rely predominantly on their personal appeal rather than on traditional political institutions, legal-rational mechanisms or ideology. Second, they must be capable of forming an intense *public* rapport or bond with an audience or a following.

The other two related conditions are *not* exclusive to charismatic leaders. The third condition is that the leader must have the ability to represent and articulate a vision or a set of transcendental values that are relevant to the people of that society at a time when the established values and social norms appear (and probably are) contradictory, dissatisfactory, ineffective or inadequate. The fourth condition is that the leader must be revolutionary, innovative or anti-establishment in some fashion. This does not mean that the political vision or objective needs to necessarily be left-leaning; a leader could be ideologically conservative in terms of long-term socio-political goals, yet revolutionary in leadership style and relatively progressive in the way he or she shapes the institutional system to achieve these objectives or goals.

These conditions, I believe, distinguish charismatic authority (a form of political power) from charisma (a personal attribute). Of course, the charismatic individual must operate in the public sphere to be able to fulfill these conditions. In addition, the development of charismatic authority will be facilitated by a number of external general preconditions, although they will not be sufficient in their own right. A precondition can be defined as a long-term feature of the political system. It should be noted that this is quite different to a crisis, which implies a more immediate state of affairs—usually a collusion of elements that, if serious enough, induces or requires rapid change. Favorable preconditions might include specific features of the political culture of a country (like weak institutions), a particular collective psychological predisposition, a political vacuum, absence or

insufficiency of political representation for a specific sector of society, *or* an intense crisis.[69]

Furthermore, in this book the expression 'charismatic authority' will be used in preference to 'charismatic leadership', for although in practice these expressions are interchangeable, strictly speaking their meaning is quite different. The term 'leadership' usually denotes a position, either formal or informal, while the term 'authority' implies a power relation between two parties, as it emphasizes *authority over* something or someone. Of course, a political figure may possess charismatic authority without being the official leader of an organization, an institution or a country. A charismatic figure outside the political system may not lead formally, but might be able to exert political influence at perhaps an even deeper level than a member of an official institution. Hence, the effect that these charismatic figures have on those they lead or influence does not directly depend on their inclusion in the formal political system. Also, history shows that most charismatic leaders have authority over their followers (effectively lead) before they enter the official political system and that some never enter it at all.

I might add that stereotypes are not useful when attempting to define a difficult concept. A charismatic individual or leader does not necessarily have to be flamboyant, extroverted or a good orator, nor does his or her childhood necessarily need to have been traumatic or difficult. Similarly, it is not useful to rely on overly facile expressions such as, for example, the qualification of charismatic leaders as 'opportunistic' or as 'everything to everyone', given that both these behavioral traits in politics are not exclusive to charismatic or other types of personalistic leaders. The phenomenon referred to as 'ideological convergence' that has produced what are known as catch-all parties has, in practice, made party leaders more prone than ever to be 'everything to everyone'—this is why we see conservatives claiming to be 'greenies' and labor party leaders claiming to be conservative.[70] As Machiavelli argued, *all* political leadership is about using opportunities cleverly. Furthermore, charisma can exist in a form that is *almost completely* beyond the explanatory powers of the human mind (for instance, shamanism), but the mystical dimension is also present in the more secular contexts (to varying degrees), given that the phenomenon is fundamentally based on the *personal* faith of the followers in the leader and his or her attributes. Ultimately, in a philosophical sense, this is what secular charisma is—faith in the human spirit—and this is certainly what Weber was postulating.

As noted above, one obvious difficulty in attempting to clarify the terminology is the need to distinguish between charisma and different levels of popularity, celebrity, personal appeal or magnetism that a leader may possess. Despite the blurred line that too often exists between charisma and mere popularity or personal appeal this book does not endorse the use of the term 'charisma' as appropriate to describe the deliberate construction of a political personality or celebrity. It stays faithful to a Weberian definition of the concepts and consciously avoids the rather loose usage of the term 'charismatic' that is commonly employed by the media and by some scholars. Having said this, it is obvious that being charismatic does not preclude being a celebrity. The issue remains very contentious: political figures might possess personal appeal enhanced by the media and successfully constructed into effective political spectacle but may not fulfill any of the four conditions listed above. In this case, I would argue that what they have is popular appeal and celebrity status, but not necessarily charismatic authority or charisma. Their authority might be rational-legal, combined with appealing presence, as in the case of Clinton or even Blair.[71] It may also be that a famous political figure is personalistic rather than charismatic—for instance, Saddam Hussein or Augusto Pinochet, who relied on the military to ensure obedience and never struck an emotive bond with their people.

The Problem of Charismatic Authority

Now we need to go back to the perceived problems raised by charismatic authority, that is, the tension between its transformative and its personalistic dimension. It is easy to see that these dimensions are not going to necessarily coexist in harmony: as the personalistic/authoritarian dimension flourishes, the transformative counterpart might be undermined. At the theoretical level the issue central to this book is whether there are serious limits to the effectiveness of charismatic authority as an agent of transformation. Earlier I noted that Weber considers charismatic authority a secular political concept, albeit one that incorporates a number of characteristics from the realm of religion and magic. Under certain conditions that arguably reduce the rationality or functionality of an existing social and political order, the charismatic leader becomes a possible (some would argue even necessary) element for the viability of processes of social and political regeneration. But Weber, concerned as he was with the external restraints of bureaucracy and organizational rationalism, did not dwell on the possibility of *internal* practical difficulties and limitations

to this process of regeneration caused by the personalistic and potentially corruptive dimension of charismatic authority. The question therefore becomes whether charismatic authority as a form of personal power can fulfill its transformative potential, or whether it inevitably becomes limiting or corruptive of this potential. In other words, the issue is whether the search for validation, legitimization and prolongation of power at the personal level limits or overtakes the original impetus towards social and political transformation of a system.

We know that charismatic rule often offers a way out of political crisis or stalemate conditions in political systems that face great difficulties in achieving political stability. Leaders begin as inspired agents of change, with visions and goals that are responsive to the conditions of society at that particular time. This is when their authority is rapidly and intensely transformative, capable of many accomplishments: building moral capital, inspiring the people, shaping socio-political institutions and redefining 'universal' values, social meanings and collective identities. Juan Domingo Perón is a clear example of the power of charisma. He was able to challenge the status quo and establish a bond with the unrepresented *descamisados*, the Argentine working class. This was achieved through populist symbolic and discursive practices, including the rituals that were generated by the events of October 17, 1945, when he was jailed (due to opposition within the military) and subsequently freed to appease the masses whose emotions gave rise to a unique political spectacle on that fateful day. He was then able to establish himself in the Argentine political imaginary by making a connection between his own person and national collective consciousness within the continuum of history.[72] The bond with the people legitimized the basis of his political power and enabled him to carry out a number of innovative institutional reforms, many of which were beneficial to the working classes materially as well as in terms of political and social identity.

But although revolutionary in style, Perón was far from radical as his political goal was preventative in nature: a social order and a corporatist state that would resolve what he perceived as the 'social problem' of Argentina, with the ultimate aim of preventing class struggle, social chaos and radical revolutionary activity. In other words, he was seeking reform in order to avoid revolution. Nevertheless, he was still too radical for that section of the army and the oligarchy that he never captivated and by 1955 he was ousted. It should be noted that his popularity was already on the wane when that happened—historians like to trace this decline back to Evita's death in 1952—and he had become increasingly authoritarian in the political decisions he made. We can see

here that the transformative element is subdued by excessive personalism and, as a consequence, a leader might no longer be responsive to social conditions or to the needs of the people. Their once innovative visions of a brave new system of government dissipate, becoming instead timeless personal projects. As this process unfolds, charismatic leaders often fall prey to the building of personality cults whilst struggling to keep their grip on political power; inevitably, their charismatic hold fades and they begin to stifle dissent and eliminate opposition, often indiscriminately. Essentially, instead of charisma being used as a means (a temporary one) to catalyze a process of political transformation, the authority it generates or preserves becomes the end in itself. The problem is particularly acute in the case of leaders who head movements that claim to be progressive, egalitarian or anti-authoritarian, and supposedly inclusive of civil society in the political process they promote. In this case, as mentioned above in relation to Castro, the personalistic element of charismatic authority is not only limiting, but also at odds with (or corruptive of) ambitious political goals that aim to, somewhat idealistically, prove Hobbes and Machiavelli wrong and build a political system on the basis of an *improved* version of human nature.

To understand the origins of the problem of charismatic authority adequately, we must go back to Weber's notion of interdependence between the individual and the group. He tells us that "what is alone important is how the individual is actually regarded by those subject to charismatic authority, by his 'followers' or 'disciples'". Elsewhere he states that "it is recognition on the part of those subject to authority which is decisive for the validity of charisma".[73] As mentioned at the start of this chapter, there are similarities between Pauline theology and Weber's adaptation of the concept. It should be noted, however, that an important aspect of Paul's ideas does *not* feature in Weber's notion of charismatic authority, namely the possibility that the followers might become endowed with some of the charisma of the leader and, consequently, able to lead. Paul states that "all these [spiritual gifts] are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills …. For the body does not consist of one member but of many".[74] Moreover, this is what Falco accredits to Paul:

> The distribution of the gifts of grace pretends to anatomize the very concept of the leader in whom all extraordinary powers are concentrated. Although a particular gift might distinguish one recipient from another in the congregation, the implication is that everyone will receive the gift in some form and that everyone bears a responsibility

> at some time to lead the others …. Pauline charismatic theory might be defined as … resulting not in pure egalitarianism but in a dialectic between graceful leadership and leaderless grace.[75]

This type of interaction between the leader and the group is absent in Weber's political conception of charismatic authority. To be fair, Weber did speak of charisma as a change in the followers' attitudes from within, telling us that "charismatic belief revolutionizes men 'from within' and shapes material and social conditions according to its revolutionary will … from a central *metanoia* [change] of the followers' attitudes". However, the impetus and direction for political change remains the prerogative of the leader. Moreover, Weber specified that not everybody can access the spiritual gifts with which a charismatic leader is endowed.[76]

In politics, Paul's brand of egalitarianism could (ideally) be applied to the idea of a self-determining civil society, whose members are all potentially capable of leading as well as following. A charismatic individual can most successfully trigger this process, but as discussed above, in practice and over a prolonged period of time this sort of leadership becomes increasingly hierarchical, posing some serious limitations to the possibility of socio-political transformation. Essentially this means that usually these leaders are only revolutionary or transformative from above, not quite in line with Paul's dialectic of 'graceful leadership and leaderless grace'. That is, until Subcomandante Marcos, whose words and actions show us that although charismatic authority is never completely tamed this sequence of events can certainly be challenged and perhaps even revolutionized.

Structure of the Book

To conduct a worthwhile and historically meaningful study of Subcomandante Marcos and the Zapatista Movement it is necessary to first take our minds to Latin America. This is the task of Chapter 2, where it will be argued that notwithstanding national cultural differences, in this part of the world personalistic rulers are a historical well-entrenched feature of the political culture. We will also see that charismatic authority, as a type of personalistic rule, takes a number of specific forms. The most traditional of these is the *caudillo*, the local boss or chief, a figure that arose as a result of decentralized political systems and one that historically precedes the populist leader and the revolutionary guerrilla. The other common type in modern history is the populist leader, who portrays himself as the embodiment of the people

against the establishment. Mexico itself has had its fair share of *caudillos* and populist charismatic leaders. One example is Antonio López de Santa Anna (who ruled from 1833 periodically through to 1855), an eccentric old style *caudillo* who buried the leg he lost in battle then had it disinterred and buried again in grandiose style. Another example is Porfirio Díaz (1877–1910), a more modern *caudillo* who achieved economic and political stability through co-optation, clientelism, constitutional manipulation and by encouraging foreign investment. We must not forget, of course, the famous progressive populist president Lázaro Cárdenas (1934–1940) and Emiliano Zapata, the hero of the Mexican Revolution.

Apart from leadership, it is also essential to understand other political institutions as well as the political culture of the country and to this end the Mexican political system will be characterized as authoritarian corporatism and as extremely effective at neutralizing opposition through cooptation tactics, repressive means and patronage driven networks of *caciques* and *caudillos*. These dynamics are evident in Chiapas, in addition to a number of other short and longer term political and economic factors that coalesced to produce fertile conditions for the rise of the Zapatista Movement. The picture that emerges from the political and economic context is useful as it reveals what can be interpreted as motivating factors behind Marcos' political thoughts and actions. Accordingly, his political trajectory will be interpreted in terms of both his recognition of the institutional and cultural context and his attempts to circumvent the features of this political system that he views as potentially damaging. It will become apparent that much of what is normally perceived as 'post-modern' politics is in fact his resistance to the Latin American brand of personalism and his wish to avoid the mistakes of the traditional revolutionary vanguard.

In Chapter 3, after introducing the Subcomandante, I argue that he deliberately used his personal charismatic appeal to construct and project an image that gained him moral standing and political credibility within and beyond national boundaries and that gave him the ability to mediate between diverse political spaces. Marcos successfully alerted the Mexican nation and the rest of the world to the suffering in Chiapas. Furthermore, he was successful in achieving a number of practical political objectives that benefited and legitimized the Zapatista Movement. These included the gathering of necessary support to protect it from obliteration by the Mexican government, the projection of it as nationally relevant, the establishment of a dialogue with the intelligentsia and networks of political activists, and a rapport of sorts

with some of the more left leaning media. The Zapatista Movement itself is understood to operate at three levels. Locally, it attempts to resolve the injustices suffered by the Maya peoples of Chiapas through a set of Indigenous rights-based demands. Nationally, it attempts to reform the political system in order to achieve government accountability and a more participatory form of democracy. Globally, it critiques and challenges the neo-liberal project by encouraging global networks of resistance.

Chapter 4 offers an overview of some of the political ideas of the movement and argues that all these levels seem to come together in what Marcos presents as the long-term Zapatista project: the creation of political space or conditions for the formation of a politically empowered, culturally diverse and egalitarian civil society. The Zapatistas seem certain that this vision or social condition can be achieved without seizure of formal political power, without a specific political program and, most importantly, without hierarchical structures or authoritarian leadership. This is the message that transpires from Marcos' writings, particularly by way of his Mayan-inspired tales, where he draws on picturesque allegories to illustrate the connections between political behavior and human traits.

The discordance between these anti-authoritarian progressive ideas and the personalism implied in Marcos' charismatic authority is analyzed in Chapter 5. While he realizes that personal authority is politically effective—and even essential to build a foundation for socio-political change or at least to inspire such change—he is also acutely conscious of the dangers involved in being a cult figure, a *caudillo* or the political vanguard. It is contended that Marcos was (and still is) faced with a fundamental dilemma: how to use his charismatic authority to catalyze a truly progressive political process and at the same time avoid its 'negative' or overly personalistic and potentially authoritarian consequences. I suggest that these negative consequences need to be understood as arising from three different contexts that impact on Marcos' role intellectually, politically and culturally, given that his thoughts and actions were not shaped in a vacuum.

The first context is the global and national political stage, where he emerged (however briefly) as a cult figure. The danger here is the possibility that idolization and excessive focus on personality will deflect attention from the purposes of the movement. The second context is the Mexican political culture where Marcos is, by default, located and one that has traditionally been characterized by relations of power based on personalism and patronage. He therefore has to ensure that he is not behaving like a *caudillo* or that he is not being perceived as

one; surprisingly, we note that in Mexico more than anywhere else this perception of the Subcomandante is not uncommon. The third and last context is the revolutionary Marxist tradition and its associated vanguard politics that shaped Marcos' early intellectual formation. This is the most serious legacy that Marcos has to confront, for nothing less than blatant ambiguity (visible to the rest of the world) is created by the continuing vehement presence of Marxist ideas in his discourse and the simultaneous attempts he makes to distance himself from this legacy.

Marcos attempts to defuse or neutralize the negative implications of his authority in a number of ways that are discussed in Chapter 6. The most interesting device he uses to avoid the quagmires described above is the creation of a masked alter-ego. Obviously numerous symbolic meanings can be attributed to the use of the mask, including equality and Indigenous historical invisibility. Nevertheless, I contend that the most befitting interpretation of the mask is one that sees it as an attempt to avoid the pitfalls of personalism and of Western representation since it separates the personal self from the person seen and heard by the public. 'Subcomandante Marcos' is meant to function as what Laclau refers to as an 'empty signifier', a blank figure upon which people can carve their own meaning, hence (in theory) their response to it should differ from their 'normal' response to a public personality. Overall, there is much evidence that Marcos deliberately attempts to neutralize the personalistic or authoritarian element of his own personal power. His actions could even be interpreted as a democratizing act reminiscent of Paul the apostle, an effort to 'hand over' his charismatic power to members of the community so that they can utilize it as they see fit. The second interpretation is probably a bold extension of the first, but either way this book concludes that Marcos is only partially successful in his quest to break the traditional cycle in Latin American politics, in avoiding the traps of personalism and in 'democratizing charisma'.

Notes

[1] Appleton (2001); *Los Angeles Times* quoted in Knudson (1998: 507); Stavans (2002: 387); Ronfeldt and Martinez (1997: 369); Rochlin (2003: 205).

[2] Cueli (1994: 30); Krauze (2001: 27); García de León quoted in Gámez (1995); Stavans (2002: 387); Gómez Peña (1995: 90).

[3] Romero (1994: 21).

[4] Chapter 5 will offer an in-depth discussion of these positions.

[5] *History Will Absolve Me* [1953] was written and spoken to denounce the brutality of Batista's regime, to justify armed struggle and to explain the Cuban

rebels' program of action. As Castro has stated, this was not a socialist program, but one of nationalist liberation that was to set the foundations for the subsequent development of a socialist revolution (Castro in Minà 1991: 117–118).

[6] See Castro in Elliot and Dymally (1986: 203–209).

[7] See Castro (1960). For a list of what the revolution delivered in its early years see Del Aguila (1984: 46) and Mankiewicz and Jones (1975, 59–61). See also Huberman and Sweezy's *Socialism in Cuba*, (1969: 33–34, 47–48) for educational achievements in Cuba between 1957 and 1962.

[8] See Tapia (1974: 460, 462) and Paul in the New Testament, 1389–1392. Paul refers to 'speaking in tongues' as one of the gifts of the spirit. See also Smith (1998).

[9] There is wide-ranging literature on charismatic renewalist movements, for instance Pentacostalism in Christianity. For charisma and Christianity see McGuire (1982); Neitz (1987); Robbins (1988); Anderson (2004); Gordon and Hancock (2005); Lankauskas (2008). Nietz's work is particularly interesting as it describes the direct and individual experience of 'speaking in tongues' as a challenge to institutions. For charisma and the Islamic faith see Takim (2006) and for charisma and Sufism see Werbner and Basu (1998). For the religious meaning of charisma in general see Parrinder (1987).

[10] See for instance Burns' *Leadership*, 1978, where the author makes a distinction between transactional and transformational leadership. For the debate on the use of the term 'charisma' at the micro level of analysis see Bass (1999); Beyer (1999); Yukl (1999). Even educational studies have adopted the term charisma in search of leadership traits for the creation of ideal educational settings, see Brubaker (2006).

[11] Weber's work has been edited and translated by a number of notable academics. See *The Methodology of the Social Sciences* (1949), edited and translated by Edward A. Shils and Henry A. Finch, with a foreword by Edward Shils; *Basic Concepts in Sociology* (1962), introduced and translated by H.P. Secher; *The Sociology of Religion* (1963), introduced by Talcott Parsons and translated by Ephraim Fischoff; *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (1964), translation of volume 1 of *Economy and Society* by A.M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons and edited with an introduction by Talcott Parsons; *Max Weber on Charisma and Institution Building: Selected Papers* (1968), edited and with an introduction by S. N. Eisenstadt; *Max Weber: The Interpretation of Social Reality* (1971), edited and with an introductory essay by J.E.T. Eldridge; *Max Weber: Selections in Translation* (1978a), edited by W. G. Runciman and translated by E. Matthews; *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (1978b), volumes 1 and 2, edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, translated by Ephraim Fischoff; *Max Weber on Capitalism, Bureaucracy, and Religion: A Selection of Texts* (1983), edited and partly translated by Stanislav Andreski; *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (1991), edited, translated and with an introduction by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills; *Weber: Political Writings* (1994), edited by Peter Lassman and Ronald Speirs.

[12] Most specifically, Marett's theory of pre-animism links charisma to concepts like *mana* (a term coined by Marett himself), *maga* and *orenda* (Riesebrodt 1999: 8–9). Tambiah (1984: 338) defines *mana* as a "contagious

and transmissible force possessed by both objects and spirit beings". It is worth noting that the latter author argues that Weber concentrated mainly on the objectification of charisma in social institutions rather than on the objectification of charisma in objects such as talismans (1984: 335). See also Coleman (2004).

[13] See (Riesebrodt 1999: 9). Also, Poewe (1992: 165–166) notes the importance of the religious dimension in the secular political context in terms of culture formation and social transformation. The role of religion in society is also discussed in relation to liberation theology by Rosado (1992) in the same volume, *Twentieth-Century World Religious Movements in Neo-Weberian Perspective*, 195–209.

[14] Weber (1978b).

[15] Weber (1978b: 241).

[16] Riesebrodt (1999: 2).

[17] See Draper (1998: 557); Riesebrodt (1999: 2); Turner (2003).

[18] See Blau (1963: 305) and Roth (1979: 124). Weber's historical and comparative sociological method consists of the use of trans-epochal and trans-cultural heuristic sociological devices called 'ideal types' that organize knowledge in categories. Selected features of the ideal types are extracted from specific historical situations, systemized and applied comparatively to diverse historical configurations in order to analyze distinctive comparable features of historical phenomena. The 'ideal type' has been the object of criticism in the literature as an inadequate tool for the portrayal of concrete realities (San Juan Jr 1967: 270), although Weber did specify that such 'ideal types' do not occur in pure form in the real world. The important point about the use of 'ideal types' is that they are not restricted to any specific historical era or context, thus making it possible to assign a potentially central role to charismatic authority and charisma.

[19] Weber (1978b: 212–213, 217–241).

[20] Weber (1978b: 241–254).

[21] See Mommsen (1965: 44–45) and Downton (1973: 273). Mommsen (1974: 81), in another work, defines rationalization as "the universal advance of purely instrumentally-oriented social institutions, to the detriment of all value-oriented forms of social conduct". See also Lassman (2000: 95) on Weber's preoccupation with the effects of rationalization and disenchantment on the free human spirit.

[22] 'Politics as a vocation' was originally a speech by Max Weber given at Munich University in 1918. See Weber (1991: 115–120). Villa argues that passion in Weber should be understood not as a form of power, but as devotion to a cause. The author states that Weber "wants to question the overly simple relationship that Western rationalism and the grandiose moral fervor of Christian ethics have posited between politics and ethics" (1999: 547). Weber clearly struggles between idealism (passion) and realism (rationality) in politics, with the scales slightly tipped in favour of 'consequential realism'. See also Dow (1978); Gane (1997); Davis (1999); Starr (1999). Dow's paper is particularly interesting with regard to Weber's philosophy of history, where he qualifies charisma as a vehicle of release that needs to be guided or restrained by an ethic of responsibility.

[23] Eisenstadt (1995: 198–201). See also di Piramo (2004).

[24] See Mommsen (1974: 79) and Schroeder (1987: 216–217).

[25] Lindholm (1990: 25).

[26] Weber (1978b: 248).

[27] See Weber (1978b: 246). Greenfield (1985) argues that there are two types of charisma in Weber's analysis, one based on a personal quality (pure charisma) and the other based on the internalization of symbolic structures (routinized and transformed charisma). This division is seen by the author as essential to a resolution of Weber's seemingly contradictory use of the concept as existent both inside and outside institutional boundaries.

[28] Parkin (1982: 85).

[29] Weber (1968: 49–50).

[30] See Falco (1999: 74-75) and Smith (1998: 36-37).

[31] Falco argues that Paul invented his charismatic theory to question the aristocratic hierarchical authority of the Corinthians, as his letters in the New Testament indicate (Paul in May and Metzger 1965: 1378–1407). These letters were written "to censure the 'spiritual aristocracy' of the church at Corinth" (Falco 1999: 73). Furthermore, Falco (1999: 75) states that Paul "uses a rhetoric of equality to quash the spiritual rebellion of the Corinthians, emphasizing the revolutionary egalitarianism of Christianity".

[32] Haley (1980: 185); Smith (1998: 34); Riesebrodt (1999: 5).

[33] Weber (1978b: 216).

[34] Haley (1980: 192–197).

[35] Smith (1998: 43).

[36] Riesebrodt (1999: 5–6).

[37] See Smith (1998: 34, 46–51) and Riesebrodt (1999: 7–8).

[38] See Smith (1998: 34) and Haley (1999: 196).

[39] See Friedrich (1961: 16) and Rieff (2007). Friedrich betrays distaste at the idea of fluid boundaries between the religious and the political realm. However, his assumption that religious leaders are not preoccupied with power is highly questionable (1961: 15–20). See also Piovanelli (2005: 423) who defends the value-free Weberian qualification on the grounds that the charismatic is "nothing but a *heuristic* tool in the service of the historical reconstruction" and Baehr (2008) who comments on the effect of this qualification on Caesarism. Costa Pinto and Larsen (2007: 135–136), somewhat unconvincingly, add another category to Weber's typology, that of 'ideological authority'.

[40] For challenging debates and critiques of Weber's work see Blau (1963); Ratnam (1964); Mitzman (1985); Matheson (1987); Whimster and Lash (1987); Hennis (1988); Albrow (1990); Eisenstadt (1995); Turner (1996). Some scholars put forward a number of conditions upon which the usefulness of charisma as an analytical tool depends, see Eatwell (2006b: 144).

[41] See Berger (1963: 950); Hindess (1987); Poewe (1992: 167); Turner (1996: 5); Rey (1998: 346–348); Hutt (2007). Bourdieu, as Hutt states, believes that the message and activities of a charismatic leader are generated by the society or by the social group in close proximity (or are latent in these loci) rather than by the individual leader. Other general critiques are that Weber was much more concerned with the effects rather than with the sources or origins of charisma. Weber seemed to concentrate on the struggle between charisma and bureaucracy and in doing so neglected to elaborate on the historical conditions

and social processes that give rise to charismatic movements. As noted by some scholars, he did not specify how or why followers develop commitments within revolutionary movements and exactly which mechanisms legitimate authority. See Blau (1963); Downton (1973: 210–211); Merquior (1980: 137); Szakolczai (2001: 378). Moreover, since Weber was mainly concerned with the analysis of the historical processes involved in the transformation from charismatic movements to increasing rationalization, he offered no theory of revolution. See Blau (1963: 316) and Parkin (1982: 87).

[42] See Albrow (1990: 162–165). Note that some scholars have identified the theme of personality in Weber's work. Hennis (1988: 71), for instance, considers the tension between the external order and the demands of inner personality.

[43] Parkin (1982: 76–77).

[44] Skinner (1981: 40). In *The Prince*, Machiavelli (1979 [1513]: 135) states that it is necessary for a leader to "have a mind ready to turn itself to the way the winds of Fortune and the changeability of affairs require him".

[45] A couple of exceptions, for example, see Sieyès (1964 [1789]) and Burke (2003 [1790]). It is interesting to note the endurance of the concept of the 'mindless crowd'. As late as 1985 Moscovici (1985: 38-39) argued quite convincingly that the masses submit to a leader because they "do not spontaneously tend towards democracy, but towards despotism". This author describes charismatic leaders as totally committed, obsessed and convinced that what they believe is the will of God or absolute historical necessity; such leaders appeal to crowds because they endeavour to answer their questions and because they promise a better life.

[46] Le Bon quoted in Moscovici (1985: 135). See also Moscovici (1986) and Camic (1980: 6).

[47] Le Bon (1897: 10–11).

[48] See Erikson (1958; 1970).

[49] Fromm's general thesis is that individuals in modern society find themselves helpless and bewildered by constant pressures; this general insecurity and lack of existential orientation are negative by-products of the condition of 'freedom' that often instigate a desire to escape life. See also Wilhelm Reich's 1970 book called *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* and Franz Neumann's *The Democratic and the Authoritarian State*, 1957. These ideas are taken a step further in Irvine Schiffer's *Charisma: A Psychoanalytic Look at Mass Society*, 1973, where the author interprets the 'charismatic image' as one created by the psyche of the people and projected upon a chosen individual. His argument is that all leaders are to a substantial degree creations of the people, rather than the capacity for greatness emanating entirely from the leader himself or herself.

[50] The other main work that comes to mind is Theodor Adorno et al. in a book called *The Authoritarian Personality* published in 1950. See also Fromm (1964); Mitscherlich (1976); Lasswell (1977); Kohut (1978); De Vries Kets (1997); Oakes (1997).

[51] See Matthews (1969: 17) and Aizcorbe (1975: 134). Similarly, a number of Castro's behavioral traits, including violence-prone rebelliousness, deceitfulness, and strategic opportunism, are traced back to his childhood by

Gonzalez and Ronfeldt (1986) and in *Perón: Una Biografía*, 1999, Joseph A. Page argues that Perón was convinced that he was born to lead.

[52] For instance, Lindholm (1990: 129) mentions the effect of a leader's eyes in regard to Jim Jones and Willner (1984: 150) similarly refers to a comment that was made about Mussolini's eyes. Kirkpatrick (1971: 31) labels Perón as attractive, articulate and handsome and Horowitz (1999: 29) describes him as tall and commanding; even his hands were viewed as part of his charm (Aizcorbe 1975: 133). Szulc (1986: 70–71), who has written one of the best biographies of Castro, describes him as an "immensely attractive and contagiously energetic man", as well as endowed with prodigious memory and erudition. The literature on Marcos abounds with allusions to his erotic appeal (Gómez Peña 1995: 92) and his gifted story-writing (Gregory 2000: 6; Huntington 2000: 75).

[53] See Marcus (1961: 239–240); Willner and Willner (1965: 78–79); Dow (1969: 315); Beyer (1999: 308). Furthermore, typologies that attempt to categorize traits and behavioral patterns of charismatic personalities in subgroups have not been all that successful, except for Burns' book *Leadership* published in 1978, where the author makes a distinction between transactional and transformational leadership.

[54] See Hughes (2002: 402, 410).

[55] See Slater (2001: 3). For theorists such as Huntington, personalism and charismatic rule appear to be phenomena that conflict with political institution-building. Charismatic leaders are caught in the dilemma of needing personal power to build institutions (and needing to build institutions to retain personal power), but to do so usually means relinquishing it (power), as the party and other organizations do not remain the embodiment of the leader indefinitely. See Huntington (1965: 423–424; 1970: 29).

[56] Friedland (1964: 21). For quantitative studies on the correlation between charismatic authority and crisis see Bligh, Kohles and Pillai (2005) and Merolla, Ramos and Zechmeister (2007). Note that Costa Pinto and Larsen (2007: 132) seem to imply that crisis is 'located' or 'invented' by these leaders. See also Wolpe (1968); Cavalli (1986: 71); Lepsius (1986). Madsen and Snow's 1991 book *The Charismatic Bond* is an excellent study of Juan Perón and Peronism that emphasizes the political and sociological context in preference to personal attributes.

[57] Kane (2001: 31).

[58] Lepsius (1986: 58, 62). See also Ratnam (1964: 348); Tucker (1970: 69-94); Cavalli (1987: 324-325).

[59] See Kahin, Pauker and Pye (1955: 1024–1025); Wallerstein (1964: 156); Willner and Willner (1965: 81); Bendix (1968: 617); Dow (1968: 332-336); Apter (1972: 304). Regarding post-charisma transitions that involve a change from a charismatic to a non-charismatic leader see Jarbawi and Pearlman (2007). Note that other instances of charismatic leadership occurred in post-communist nations of Eastern Europe; again, we are talking about nationalist movements that perceive democracy as unable to resolve the problems created by the demise of the old order. The obvious example is Milošević in former Yugoslavia. See Pfaff (2002: 96–101).

[60] Apter (1972: 233).

[61] Willner (1984: 52).

[62] Willner and Willner (1965: 83–84). In his famous book *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*, 1983, Geertz argues that leaders and cults are social constructions and that political symbolism is an essential element of the charismatic strategy. The author illustrates this principle with a few examples of historical figures imbued with authoritative power that emanates largely from this symbolism and that is continuously played out in rituals and ceremonies. The symbolic dimensions of a society are not only a cultural phenomenon, they are also historical. In *Reflections on Political Identity*, 1988, Norton emphasizes the importance of historical paradigms for the public and phenomenal validation of charismatic authority, despite the fact that charisma itself (she notes) is a personal attribute.

[63] Hunt (1988: 39). See also James (1936: 172); Stark and Bainbridge (1985: 173–174); Lindholm (2002). Lindholm's work is a study of the religious cult Shree Rajneeshee, led by the Bhagwan. Charismatic leaders have thrived on these new forms of religion that may even be largely the projection of their own personalities (Jim Jones and Charles Manson are also examples). Following a different line, Tambiah's *The Buddhist Saints of the Forest and the Cult of Amulets*, 1984, paves the way to an interpretation of the source of charisma as originating in transcendental non-Western religions.

[64] Norton (1988: 123, 141). For a discussion of Jesus as a charismatic figure see Sanders (2000) and Smith (2000); similarly for a discussion of Muhammad as a charismatic figure see Takim (2006).

[65] Ratnam (1964: 347–349); Loewenstein (1966: 86); Gundle (2008). See also Wolpert (1965: 681); Bensmann and Givant (1975: 603-612); Glassman (1975: 635); Andina-Díaz (2006) (my view is that the author overstates the role of the media); Vokes (2007); Sheafer (2008).

[66] Bensmann and Givant (1975: 609–611). The authors argue that the concept of pseudo-charisma obscures three features of the original concept: its personal nature, its revolutionary dimension and its irrationality. They further state that central to the political processes of the modern world is the contradiction between the impersonality of social relations and the use of images of personality (1975: 600, 611).

[67] Kane (2001: 31–32).

[68] Eisenstadt quoted in Falco (1999: 82).

[69] Pappas (2005) makes a useful distinction between *endemic* and *total* crisis.

[70] This is illustrated by examples in Australian politics at federal level with conservative Opposition Leader Tony Abbot claiming to be a 'greenie' while Labor Prime Minister Kevin Rudd in the election campaign of 2007 argued that he was an 'economic conservative'.

[71] Many authors, however, regard Clinton as charismatic. See for instance Phillips (2007).

[72] On this topic see the excellent book by Mariano Plotkin entitled *Mañana es San Perón: A Cultural History of Perón's Argentina*, (2003: 39–82) as well as Plotkin (1993, 1995, 1998). See also Flores (1968); Reyes (1973); Crassweller (1987: 168–169); James (1988: 32–33); De Ipola (1995: 147); Torre (1995b); Chávez (1996).

[73] Weber (1968: 48); Weber (1978b: 242).

[74] Paul quoted in May and Metzger (1965: 1389).