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LoTF Essay

What is being a leader? Being a leader is the ability to take on the responsibility of watching over and governing those who look up to you. Leaders can arise with different attitudes towards their leadership role. What influences leaders? Depending on the person, a leader can consider themselves a leader because they want to help others. They enjoy satisfying the needs of others. There are also leaders that lead for their own self-interest. They lead because they want to appear on top while hurting those under them. More importantly, these actions do not come from the leaders themselves -- those on top are really just reflecting the desires and emotions of the followers that put them in charge. Their behavior shows that their actions are a result of the people who support the individual's leadership and decisions.

A real world example of the different types of leaders affecting the general public has been our current president and those around him. Trump's character shows someone who wants to have total control over everything. One of the characters in William Golding's "Lord of the Flies," named Jack, wants to have the same complete control of everything. When things don't go the way Trump intended, his immediate response is to blame another person, attempting to turn the attention away from him and onto another person or group. A recent example is when the repeal and replace of "Obamacare" failed, which was followed by him pointing fingers initially at Democrats. "And they just fell a little bit short, and it's very hard when you need almost 100 percent of the votes and we have no votes, zero, from the Democrats. It's unheard of." According to MSNBC, the last sentence, "It's unheard of," was in reference to the fact that the Democrats – the opposition and enemies of Trump – worked together to keep this from taking place.

Furthermore, the people who were against the repeal and replace of the Affordable Care Act

were influenced by Trump to say “no”. They were influenced in that they felt the plan that he presented would have hurt millions. The human behavior of looking out for each other was notable on the side of the Democrats. The emotions that were reflected in their rejection of his plan were the emotions and desires of democratic supporters. Those who supported Trump would have likely followed along, agreeing with the healthcare plan that he presented. They not only do this because they agree with him, but it would also make him appear to be far more superior, and, more importantly, make him appear to be the hero. Trump putting blame on others may appeal to the people that support him because they think similarly.

In William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies*, a group of boys were stranded on an island with no adults to watch over them. The three main characters – Jack, Piggy, and Ralph – were the ones who took charge of the group. In the first stages of life on the island, the group of kids on the island were trying to find a way to start a fire. Ralph insisted that they start a fire in order to create a smoke signal. However, he and Jack did not know how to start the fire. “Ralph and Jack looked at each other while society paused about them. The shameful knowledge grew in them and they did not know how to begin confession.” This was then followed by Jack pointing fingers at Piggy, demanding that they steal his glasses in order to start the fire. ““Jack pointed suddenly. ‘His specs – use them as burning glasses!’” (40) Jack’s sudden turn of action was effective because of how quickly the kids surrounded Piggy and took his glasses. Similar to how the president pointed fingers at Democrats in order to shift the attention away from the unsuccessful repeal and replace plan, Jack shifted the attention away from how he and Ralph couldn’t immediately think of a way to start the fire. This slight shift in attention appealed to the rest of the group because Piggy was an easier target. From the beginning, he became the target of

Jack, who tormented him because he was fat. His torment towards Piggy likely appealed in a way that created a winners-and-losers outcome. According to Harvard Business Review, there is a behavior in humans coded for competitiveness. There had to be someone that wins and someone that loses, and, in this particular scene, Jack was the winner since he got what he wanted – Piggy’s glasses.

Another way to look at how the followers of a leader influence a leader’s decisions, and vice versa, is through cognitive biases. There are numerous different biases that affect how a leader makes decisions based on what their followers say. One of the ways cognitive biases affect decision-making is through the “bandwagon effect.” This is when one “hops on the bandwagon,” or goes along with everybody else who agrees (or disagrees) with an idea, despite the fact that there could be evidence that states otherwise. Those who agree or support a leader’s decisions are likely to have the bandwagon bias, even when the actions done by the leader benefit everyone. In the recent election, for example, supporters for both candidates can be seen and heard chanting the individual’s name, their slogan, or another quote they said during rallies. Moving to one viewpoint or the other, depending on who the leader is, is an example of how supporters are influenced by the leader. In addition, when a group of people take on one viewpoint, the person in charge becomes inclined to do more for those people now that they have a base of supporters. Since the leader has now seen who supports them and what their needs are, they have an idea of what they have to do in order to satisfy the needs of their followers.

This can be seen back on the island, where, despite the fact that Ralph was voted as leader, Jack had been taking over. He had prioritized hunting for pigs over keeping the fire lit, with the majority of the group following along with him. They eventually created a chant, “Kill

the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood!” (152) Due to the fact that Jack was able to make hunting seem more appealing, most of the kids decided to follow him. With this, Jack had a base of supporters who likely had their needs, which was simply killing more pigs. This is another example of the bandwagon effect because, even though keeping the fire up could have been much more beneficial than hunting and killing, the majority decided to follow Jack instead because they felt he was meeting their desires. A contributor to the bandwagon effect is the fact that humans are social beings, sharing information, and ultimately finding similarities and differences. If just one person were to follow Jack, then his job as leader wouldn't be as productive or effective because he only has to meet the needs of one person. But if there were five followers, they all would be able to communicate their needs and his job as leader would be more productive and effective for more people.

In conclusion, when a group of people follow a leader, not only do the leader's decisions and ideas have an effect on the supporters, but the supporters have an effect on the leader. The need that is expressed by the people is what can influence the actions made. They will have the tendency to help the people as long as the people present some sort of necessity, whether it is higher wages, better schools, or lower taxes.

Works Cited

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