POLICY BRIEF
The Paradoxes of Legitimate EU Leadership. An Analysis of the Multi-Level Leadership of Angela Merkel and Alexis Tsipras during the Euro crisis
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All democratic leadership suffers from inherent tensions between effective governance and the sovereignty of the people, but in the European Union the paradoxes of legitimate leadership seem particularly challenging. This contribution presents an analytical framework to unravel why this is the case. The framework introduces four so-called 'vectors of legitimate leadership' (see figure 1):

Of these vectors, the vectors of ideology and identification are less reliant on short-term output and forge stronger bonds between leaders and followers. Moreover, the legitimising logics underlying the vectors are to some extent social constructions and subject to political

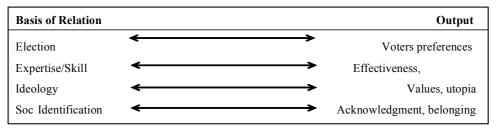| Basis of Relation		Output
Election	←——————→	Voters preferences
Expertise/Skill	←——————→	Effectiveness,
Ideology	←——————→	Values, utopia
Soc Identification	←——————→	Acknowledgment, belonging

Figure 1: Four vectors of legitimate leadership (Van Esch, 2017)

craftsmanship. However, for any leadership relation to be legitimate, the inherent inequality and exertion of power it implies must be balanced by a vector of proper nature and strength.

What makes the problem of European leadership different is its multilevel and interdependent nature. This means that 1) leaders are called to cater on more diverse groups of followers at different political levels; 2) the tension between power and equality not only exists at the level of individuals but also at the level of states; 3) the vectors of legitimate leadership are weaker than at the national level and often work against each other.

Applying this framework on the leadership of the German Chancellor Merkel and Greek Prime Minister Tsipras during the euro-crisis reveals 5 lessons on European leadership:

1. The specifics of each of these leader-follower relationship must be taken into account when assessing the balance between legitimate and strong leadership;
2. Despite the differences in power, Merkel and Tsipras faced similar paradoxes in their attempts to walk the tightrope between legitimate and decisive EU leadership;
3. The vectors of ideology and national social identification play a decisive and paradoxical role in the legitimisation of European leadership: They help European leaders to gain the sustainable domestic support for European compromises, but by defining fellow Europeans as the outgroup may hamper future European compromises.
4. The transnational appeals of Merkel's and Tsipras' leadership show that identity and especially ideology are not necessarily associated with nationality and could potentially be a constructive and inclusive force in the hands of able leaders.
5. The weakness and contradictory workings of the vectors and the centrality of the vectors of ideology and identity act as a warning against those who see the federalisation or centralisation of European leadership as a solution to the paradoxes of legitimate leadership as long as the construction of a pan-European identity or shared ideology has proven to be elusive.

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