View metadata, citation and similar papers at core.ac.uk
brought to you by CORE
provided by Leiden University Scholary Publications

Routledge Taylor & Francis Group

Perspectives on Political Science

ISSN: 1045-7097 (Print) 1930-5478 (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/vpps20

# Statesmanship Beyond the Modern State

Patrick Overeem & Femke E. Bakker

**To cite this article:** Patrick Overeem & Femke E. Bakker (2019) Statesmanship Beyond the Modern State, Perspectives on Political Science, 48:1, 46-55, DOI: 10.1080/10457097.2016.1229563

**To link to this article:** https://doi.org/10.1080/10457097.2016.1229563

© 2017 The Author(s). Published with license by Taylor & Francis Group, LLC© Patrick Overeem and Femke E. Bakker.

Published online: 17 Oct 2016.

Submit your article to this journal

Article views: 2372

View Crossmark data

Citing articles: 2 View citing articles

Full Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at
https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?journalCode=vpps20

PERSPECTIVES ON POLITICAL SCIENCE
2019, VOL. 48, NO. 1, 46–55
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10457097.2016.1229563

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

OPEN ACCESS

# Statesmanship Beyond the Modern State

Patrick Overeem[a] and Femke E. Bakker[b]

[a]Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, The Netherlands; [b]Institute of Political Science, Leiden University, The Netherlands

**ABSTRACT**
The concept and ideal of statesmanship have been handed down to us from ancient to modern times, but it has a paradoxical relationship with the modern state. While terminology suggests that statesmanship presupposes the state, in fact it appears rather incongruent with modern (i.e., constitutional, democratic, and bureaucratic) statehood. Nonetheless, statesmanship continues to be promoted and new understandings, such as judicial and administrative statesmanship, have been proposed. Some hope, moreover, that statesmanship becomes more feasible again as we transfer from state government to multilevel governance. There are problems, however, with conceiving of statesmanship, either in its original or in its newer meanings, under these new conditions. Despite the enduring appeal of statesmanship, the changing role of the state in present-day governance does not mean that this ideal can be easily regained.

## Introduction

Statesmanship can roughly be defined as morally excellent leadership at the polity level. Historians, journalists, and others usually ascribe it *ex post* to great political figures who have led their state through times of war and crisis—men like Lincoln, Churchill, or De Gaulle and, increasingly, women like Thatcher or San Suu Kyi, too.[1] It is far from clear, however, whether the state is the best habitat for statesmanship. By "state" we here mean a particular kind of polity, namely, the typically modern regime at the national level, developing through intertwined processes of constitutionalization, democratization, and bureaucratization. Although this concept of state can be used as a relatively neutral descriptor, the concept of statesmanship is unavoidably normative, indeed laudatory. And although the state is a familiar institution in modern times, statesmanship seems much more quaint: to many it sounds not only unacceptably gender biased (although, as noted, this might be changing) but also elitist and antiquated. Nonetheless, in the public debate calls for statesmanship are frequently heard, especially in times of crisis and constraint, when social demands are great and trust in government is low (i.e., when the state is no longer relied on).[2] And academically, in a time when principle-based ideal theory and institutional analyses dominate political science, there is also a felt need to bring back attention to individual political agency.[3] So there are both practical and intellectual reasons to reconsider statesmanship and its relation to the modern state and to assess the chances for statesmanship under current conditions.

Our goal here is not to determine which leaders should be called statesmen or not (which would result in endless quibbles about particular cases) but rather, to improve our understanding of statesmanship as such. As Jacobsohn has put it: "Perhaps it is less important to evaluate the statesmanship of [X] than that we understand the criteria according to which such evaluations are made."[4] To achieve this goal, we offer, first, a concise elaboration of the concept of statesmanship as it has been handed down to us from ancient and modern thought. Next, we argue why, contrary to appearances, the modern state is inhospitable to statesmanship. Then we show that new concepts of statesmanship have appeared lately. Hopes that the ideal and practice of statesmanship can be reinvigorated seem bound to be disappointed, however, because statesmanship fares no less badly in contemporary governance than in modern government. Our sobering conclusion is that, with mounting pressures on the state, statesmanship may become more needed, but not more feasible. This is not to deny that, incidentally, statesmen may still arise; we only claim the structural conditions for such occurrences are not improving.

**CONTACT** Patrick Overeem p.overeem@vu.nl
© 2017 Patrick Overeem and Femke E. Bakker. Published with license by Taylor & Francis Group, LLC
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

## Statesmanship: A Conceptual Exploration

President Truman once reputedly quipped that "[a] statesman is a politician who has been dead 10 or 15 years," but this is surely too cynical, if only because the vast majority of long-dead politicians never gains the epithet. Dannhauser therefore rightly qualifies: "A statesman is (…) not simply a politician, but an extraordinary politician who exercises wise leadership."[5] This also seems not precise enough, however, for statesmanship is not just wise leadership but wise leadership of a special kind. To get a clearer understanding of the concept, we propose to use a conceptual framework developed by Coats.[6] His definition harks back to that of the ancients, in particular Aristotle:

> In its purest sense, [statesmanship] equates to the idea of political rule, where 'political' is understood to mean a comprehensive or 'architectonic' perspective focused on molding character and leading fellow citizens through a stream of contingencies, within the context of fundamental laws (a constitution), and through primary reliance on a mix of persuasion and coercion called 'politics.'[7]

Statesmanship, thus, is not just playing the game of politics well but making that very game possible. In the words of Coats again, it is "an activity directed toward securing the conditions for politics to occur, as the basis for agreement about general courses of action, and for moderate reconciliation of differences among fellow citizens."[8]

Since Plato's fascinating late dialogue *Politikos*,[9] the concept of statesmanship has gone through various modifications. Coats describes its development from ancient to modern understandings, arguing that Aristotle and Cicero depicted statesmanship as an "architectonic" activity, a "general or comprehensive art" concerned with the development of all other arts in society, which, although "exercised over those who are free and equal" and for their good, undeniably had a strongly aristocratic character.[10] In modern times, however, challenges posed to this classical ideal first by Christianity and then by liberalism led to its gradual democratization. Through the influence of modern political thought from Machiavelli onward, statesmanship, while retaining its laudatory connotations, acquired additional overtones of political realism. This is the sense in which, for example, Bismarck has often been called a statesman.[11] Thus, we have ended up with an intricate concept in which ancient and modern, Christian and secular layers of meaning can all be traced.

Traditionally, statesmanship is said to be shown at two moments in particular, namely, at the constitutional (re)founding of a polity and in times of war and crisis—two moments, that is, in which the state cannot be taken for granted.[12] Apparently, statesmanship particularly occurs in the face of great difficulties. In the words of Dannhauser: "Difficulty is thus of the very essence of statesmanship. (…) A statesman's vocation necessarily involves the surmounting of obstacles…."[13] Or, as Tulis puts it: "Statesmanship most clearly reveals itself in times of political crisis. It is hard to think of well-known statesmen whose reputations were not the product of exceptional political circumstances."[14] Others, however, think statesmanship is also conceivable in quieter times. Coats, for one, says there are "two functions of statesmanship, that is, one concerned with getting constitutional arrangements in place, and the other with employing them to deal with *the daily stream of contingencies* facing a body politic."[15]

As Coats further points out, statesmanship should be discerned "from other forms of rule, such as mastery, domination, and 'management.'"[16] It is unique in three crucial respects:

> This art or activity [of statesmanship], then, is distinguished by its aim (achieving the general good in meeting a stream of contingencies), its scope (the major activities in the life of a people), and its means (political, i.e., a blend of persuasion and coercion within the framework of fundamental laws, reflecting prudent judgment).[17]

So, concretely, a tyrant can have great leadership skills, but never be a statesman insofar as he does not aim at the common good (or, in modern terms, the general interest), but only at a very partial one (*aim*). The director of a public agency, next, differs from a statesman insofar as he deals only with his organization and its direct environment and not with the broad interests of the political community at large (*scope*). And a military commander, finally, cannot be a statesman insofar as his form of rule depends on physical force rather than on politics (*means*).[18]

This conceptualization seems useful for analyzing statesmanship but also has its limitations. One is a limitation in time period, to be discussed later. Another is that the aspects of aim, scope, and means, although helpful for discerning statesmanship from other forms of rule, say little about the *character* of the statesman. In most ancient and modern conceptualizations, the statesman is claimed (rightly or not) to possess important political virtues; statesmanship is inherently *aretaic*. Statesmen distinguish themselves from "ordinary" leaders not only by their political contributions to the widest possible common good but also by their moral excellence.[19] Many virtues have been deemed important here, including, of course, the cardinal virtues. Thus, Nicgorski calls prudence "the central and most important virtue of [Cicero's] model

statesman,"[20] while Ruderman says that "statesmanship is essentially the art of moderation, of keeping an oft-times rattled humanity from seeking (...) the (false) comfort of various extremes."[21] It is easy to imagine how courage and justice are also crucial to statesmanship. On a somewhat different note, the Aristotelian virtue of magnanimity has traditionally been strongly associated with statesmanship.[22] Truly great statesmen, such as Churchill, show a kind of chivalry toward, even compassion with their enemies, that distinguishes them from other, less virtuous political leaders.[23] These virtues are not only latent traits of personal character but they are shown in very concrete practical abilities, for instance, in the statesman's well-developed capacity of timing, of grasping the right moment (the *kairos*), in handling public problems.[24] Without delving further into debates on the statesman's particular virtues, we suggest that, to give the concept of statesmanship additional content, this aspect should be added to Coats's original three.

## Statesmanship and the State

Having acquired a clearer understanding of statesmanship, we can now see how it does or does not fit the state. Terminologically, of course, "statesmanship" and "state" are tightly connected, with the former implying the latter. Their relationship is much more paradoxical, however, than this simple relation suggests. Indeed, we argue the modern state stifles rather than promotes the opportunity for statesmanship. A high degree of "stateness" will prevent statesmanship from emerging.

In the canonical Weberian understanding, the state is a regime primarily organized at the nation-state level, wielding the monopoly of violence. The modern state, moreover, has three basic characteristics or aspirations, namely, constitutionalism, (representative) democracy, and bureaucracy. Differences between states can often be understood as variations in the mixture of these elements. Crucially, each of them tends to limit the scope for statesmanship.

To begin, *constitutionalism* (i.e., the legitimation and limitation of government power by legal right) seems difficult to combine with statesmanship. Statesmen are by definition extraordinary, operating beyond established orders, and therefore even dangerous. Tulis states: "True statesmanship lives in a space outside of any constitutional order and would be a threat to constitutionalism or at least to many particular constitutional orders if we actually tried to nourish its possibility."[25] Therefore, he adds, the attractive notion of "constitutional statesmanship is a contradiction in terms. Constitutionalism was invented to replace statesmanship in the old capacious sense of law giving and polity making."[26] The American Founders, for instance, believed it was necessary to resort to constitutionalism instead of statesmanship as a reliable source of political order. Madison famously wrote in Federalist number 10: "It is in vain to say that enlightened statesmen will be able to adjust these clashing interests and render them all subservient to the public good. Enlightened statesmen will not always be at the helm."[27] Hence, constitutionalists typically prefer structures with checks and balances over individual political agency: "The system of institutionally constructed personas put in conflict and dialogue is a substitute for statesmanship in the day-to-day-business of government."[28] Ultimately, constitutionalism intends to make statesmanship superfluous—at least as long as the constitutional order remains intact and the state is in place. It installs, in the old saying, "a government of law, not of men."

Modern states also are, aspire to become, or pretend to be *democratic*. The compatibility of democracy and statesmanship is, however, highly debatable, too.[29] Max Weber, for one, was quite pessimistic about the prospects for statesmanship in democratic regimes.[30] One reason for skepticism is that the ideal of statesmanship is necessarily elitist; democratic egalitarianism stands in the way of greatness.[31] Statesmanship presupposes qualitative differences between people: some people are, because of their wisdom and virtue, more suited for political leadership than others. Another major obstacle is the partisan character of modern democratic politics, which forces politicians to serve particular interests rather than the common good. As Mansfield has shown, partisanship and statesmanship do not go well together: when Edmund Burke rhetorically laid the intellectual foundation of modern party government, this was an act of statesmanship, but paradoxically also one that aimed (and succeeded) "to reduce dependence upon statesmanship" thereafter.[32] So statesmanship seems hard to combine with basic democratic characteristics. Of course, concepts of "democratic statesmanship" have been developed, not least under the influence of Tocqueville,[33] but they do disappointingly little to clarify how the inevitable tensions between democracy and statesmanship can be resolved.

Finally, modern states have become so strongly *bureaucratic* that they can be aptly called "administrative states."[34] How does this affect statesmanship? On the optimistic side, Hegel believed that bureaucrats could run the state as an elite of officials or "universal estate."[35] Even for him, however, these officials hardly figure as statesmen. The only figures worthy of the name, in Hegel's thought, are "world-historical individuals" like Alexander the Great and Napoleon, but tellingly they are no longer needed once the rational state has been established.[36] So while at first glance statesmanship might seem to come natural to bureaucrats, on closer inspection,

the reverse turns out to be true. That other great theorist of bureaucracy, Max Weber, was also very pessimistic. His hallowed ideal of the charismatic political leader had the very role to counteract the rising influence of the bureaucracy. Weber's *Politik als Beruf* can be read as a vivid portrait of this type of politician in contrast with the administrative official and makes it very clear that leadership, let alone statesmanship, was not to be expected from bureaucrats.[37] But the charismatic politician is not suited to act as a real statesman either, because he lacks both the necessary stance "above the parties" and the required long-term focus and moral virtues.[38] It seems safe to say, therefore, that, as Strong put it, "statesmen will be harder to find in an increasingly bureaucratized world."[39] In similar vein, Henry Kissinger, a reflective practitioner who wrote much about statesmanship, especially in his dissertation *A World Restored*, has sharply contrasted the "inspiration" offered by statesmanship with the "organization" characterizing bureaucracy.[40]

So instead of presupposing the modern state, statesmanship rather appears at odds with it. Bluntly put, statehood stifles rather than promotes statesmanship. If this is true, one might hypothesize that, reversely, statesmanship could become increasingly possible again when modern statehood declines. Given the development of present-day governance, is ours perhaps a time of new chances for statesmanship? One would be inclined to think so, considering the new concepts of statesmanship that have recently been proposed.

## Statesmanship New Style

If ancient and modern concepts of statesmanship can be called its first and second generations, our time sees the emergence of new offspring in unexpected places. In the earlier conceptualizations, statesmanship was assumed to be performed exclusively by regime founders, heads of state or government, and other high-ranking political leaders—never by less prominent public officials. This has changed, however, as statesmanship has increasingly been ascribed to other figures as well, such as high-level judges, public servants, and military. The concept's applicability has indeed been widened so much that virtually all kinds of public authorities (think also of diplomats, central bankers, and regulators) can now be praised as statesmen— provided they deal with high interests of the state, transcend partisanship, and aim at the common good. With this transition from "old" to "new" statesmanship, as Storing called it,[41] the epithet of statesmanship is applied to a much wider set of public officials than before. The literature especially contains endorsements of judicial and administrative statesmanship.

*Judicial* statesmanship is shown by high-level judges on the bench, especially in constitutional courts. The idea was known to Tocqueville already: "Federal judges (…) must not only be good citizens, educated and upright men—qualities necessary to all magistrates—one must also find statesmen in them…."[42] More recently, Siegel has given a particularly extended treatment and defense of the idea:

> Statesmanship charges judges with approaching cases so as to facilitate the capacity of the legal system to legitimate itself by accomplishing two paradoxically related preconditions and purposes of law: expressing social values as social circumstances change and sustaining social solidarity amidst reasonable, irreconcilable disagreement. I argue that judicial statesmanship is a necessary, although not sufficient, component of judicial role in the American constitutional order.[43]

Although sometimes criticized on prudential and principled grounds,[44] several constitutional scholars have embraced judicial statesmanship as a necessary feature of liberal democracy.[45] Combining knowledge of the law with political insight and moral respectability, they suggest, judicial statesmen must sometimes appeal to unwritten constitutional principles precisely to sustain what has been written down in the Constitution. This contribution cannot be replaced by mechanical following of the rules without an understanding the deeper meaning of a constitution for the polity.

*Administrative* statesmanship is an even older and more widespread concept. In 1836 Henry Taylor published a book about the British civil servant which he titled, with unmistakable reference to Plato, *The Statesman*.[46] Later, others have called civil servants "statesmen in disguise."[47] The inventor of the literal phrase "administrative statesmanship," however, seems to be John Dewey, who used it in 1935 in a short paper on public school administration.[48] Although nicely summarizing Dewey's educational ideas, his article does little to provide a helpful conceptualization of administrative statesmanship. The concept has remained in use, however, and after a re-launch by Storing, it has found many adopters, especially within the "Constitutional School" in the field of public administration.[49] In that literature, the concept of administrative statesmanship refers to the promotion of "regime values" by public servants to uphold the constitutional order (particularly, the balance of powers) through legitimate, discretionary action.[50] This is indeed a huge responsibility: "The task of the administrator is to be aware of the moral underpinnings of the Constitution not only to promote its values but to correct its excesses as well."[51] In this usage the concept is often used polemically against those who reduce public administration to technocratic management. Thus, for

instance, by Selznick who, in the closing sentence of his *Leadership in Administration*, summarized his argument as follows: "The executive becomes a statesman as he makes the transition from administrative management to institutional leadership."[52]

The literature on these new kinds of statesmanship is mostly theoretical and exhortative and hardly concerned with concrete examples. Some cases of judicial[53] and administrative statesmanship[54] have been described, however, and many more examples of such "extra-political" and "sub-political" statesmanship could be imagined.

## An Expanded Conceptual Framework

Considering these recent conceptualizations, we can now see why Coats's framework was not only limited in content (lacking the aspect of virtues) but also in time. Besides what he called "ancient" and "modern" statesmanship, newer conceptions have emerged that he did not include and that we could name, with Storing, "new" statesmanship. Hence, we arrive at an expanded categorization of three concepts of statesmanship (see Table 1).

The *aim* of statesmen remains, of course, to promote the widest possible common good[55]—or, in contemporary parlance, the general interest. This ultimately conservative goal to preserve the common good of one's own polity while developing its good relations with other polities is what, according to Kissinger, distinguishes the statesman (Metternich) from the revolutionary—whether he is a "conqueror" who mainly relies on military prowess (Napoleon) or a "prophet" who prefers standing aloof on the moral high ground (Czar Alexander).[56] This aim remains crucial to all kinds of statesmanship, including those of the third generation. To qualify for statesmanship, officials who are not politicians will also have to help keep their polity afloat and steer it safely. Coats's definition of this aim as the upholding of the constitution to make politics possible also applies to them. When, for instance, the U.S. Supreme Court decided on the stalled 2000 presidential race between Bush and Gore, it did exactly that: irrespective of the side it chose, by cutting the knot it made the continuation of American politics possible.

**Table 1.** Three concepts of statesmanship.

| | 1. Pre-modern | 2. Modern | 3. "New" |
|---|---|---|---|
| Aim | Common good | Public interest | General interest |
| Scope | Entire body politic (polis, empire) | Entire body politic (nation state) | Entire network (not fixed) |
| Means | Persuasion, negotiation (no force) | The same | The same, but less public |
| Virtues | Cardinal virtues, plus magnanimity | Moral virtues and political skills | Moral virtues and professional skills |

Shaded area: the framework developed by Coats (1995).

As to *scope*, second, things are more subject to change. In practice, judges and administrators are mostly not directly concerned with the survival and well-being of the polity as a whole; their decisions usually concern a narrower interest. This is highlighted by Selznick in the opening sentence of his aforementioned classic, when he notes that besides a focus on "*political* statesmen, leaders of whole communities who sit in the high places where great issues are joined and settled" now "an additional emphasis is necessary" on the leadership of more or less autonomous groups and organizations *within* society.[57] Here statesmanship is shown by actors who are responsible for only a part of the polity. Increasingly, however, one could also imagine "new statesmen" dealing with interests of collectives *larger* than one body politic. Officials negotiating international treaties on climate change or free trade, for example, can show "statesmanship" within a scope that goes beyond the nation-state. Thus, it seems that in third-generation statesmanship, the scope is no longer fixed to one particular size (whether it is the polis, the empire, or the nation-state) but varies with the size of the relevant governance level. Still, these "new statesmen" do serve the general interest of large rather than small communities.

The *means*, third, that "new statesmen" employ also in part differ from those used by first- and second-generation statesmen. Coats is very succinct in describing the means employed by ancient and modern statesmen, but he suggests that both types of political leaders make use of public rhetoric and high-level negotiations. Such means are typically less available to judges and civil servants. Behind the scenes, they do of course use argumentation, negotiation, and decision making, too, but always less publicly and less politically. So, they seem to employ comparable means in a different manner.

Last but not least, what would be the proper *virtues* of contemporary statesmen? The literature on judicial and administrative statesmanship says very little about the (compositions of) virtues characteristically shown by the "new statesmen." It seems clear, however, that their virtues have to be at least partially different from those of more traditional statesmen. It is difficult to conceive, for instance, how they can exemplify Aristotelian magnanimity in their "disguised" roles. And undoubtedly, both judges and civil servants, more than politicians, have to complement their statesmanship with craftsmanship, combining moral virtue with skilled professionalism.[58] To complicate matters further, judicial statesmanship may require other virtues than administrative statesmanship. And different statesmen in different situations

may excel in different virtues. Just as the transition from ancient to modern statesmanship implied changes in moral orientation, so will the further shift toward these new forms of statesmanship.

## New Statesmanship beyond the State?

Today, reflections on the compatibility of statesmanship with the modern, Weberian state may seem to belong to a bygone era, as many political theorists have noted a transition from a relatively coherent system of state-centric *government* to more diffuse, horizontal, multilevel networks of *governance*.[59] This process, if and to the extent it does indeed happen, affects all three characteristics of the modern state identified before. Constitutionalism, first, seems to be undermined, as limited government is replaced by unlimited governance and checks and balances by utilitarian coordination. Representative democracy, second, gradually gives way to diffuse forms of technocratic governance in which equal representation cannot be guaranteed. And bureaucracy, finally, develops into "network governance," public-private partnerships, and other loose forms of cooperation. These very general trends might imply that the conditions for statesmanship in present-day governance deteriorate further, because the character of the public interest becomes less clear and individual action less decisive than before. They might, however, also work reversely. If statehood is indeed disappearing or at least waning, the scope for statesmanship or statesmanlike behavior may increase again. Has not statesmanship always been shown precisely when the role of the state could *not* be taken for granted? So if we move towards governance without strong statehood, do the conditions for statesmanship become less or rather more favorable?

It may be too early to give a conclusive answer, but a good case to illustrate the complexity of this puzzle is Europe. So far, most literature about traditional statesmanship is American,[60] but for studying new statesmanship Europe seems a much better case. The European Union (EU), in particular, is the prime example of a multilevel governance system.[61] It is a composition of various overlapping economic, administrative, and legal arrangements, an emerging federal polity perhaps, but one in which nation-states still play a key role. Moreover, this polity is currently constitutionalizing itself—a process that might ultimately worsen the conditions for statesmanship but that can also (like every founding) offer great chances for statesmanship in the short run. And while the EU's complex structure and its highly bureaucratic and judicial character seem to limit the possibility for traditional statesmanship, this is not necessarily the case for newer forms of statesmanship. (Perhaps Jacques Delors, architect of the monetary and political union, qualifies as an administrative statesman of this non-state?)

We are, however, not too optimistic about the compatibility of statesmanship and contemporary governance. The continuing crisis of the EU illustrates that statesmanship cannot thrive in an amorphous regulatory regime but needs to be embedded within concrete political communities. As long as the EU tries to remain a "democracy without nations"[62] and cannot develop itself into a federal republic of the kind the American Founders have managed to erect, potential statesmen will continue to emerge (if at all) from the nation-states. The EU will then be only a platform on which they can try to achieve peaceful cooperation. If, however, the role of the state is indeed changing as fundamentally as governance theorists claim, statesmanship at the transnational level may be in higher demand, but that in itself does not guarantee it will also emerge. When policies are increasingly made in multilevel governance networks, it rather seems difficult for individuals to play a decisive role. In networks, there is typically little integration and hierarchical organization. With the state no longer playing a central role, authority becomes scattered. This could give leaders more discretion and thus on first sight greater possibilities to act as statesmen, but at the same time they lose their ability to mobilize resources. If the modern administrative state was too structured for potential statesmen to act, present-day governance has become too unstructured for them to make an impact.[63] Of course, the possibility remains that, unexpectedly, a crisis within the present "system" of governance networks gives rise to brilliant instances of statesmanship—just as when dramatic breakdowns of the state system brought forward a Metternich, Lincoln, Churchill, or De Gaulle.[64] These men were, however, genuine political leaders; while their states were endangered, they kept a vivid conception of the common good, both of their own polities and of the wider world. Whether from the ruins of technocratic governance networks similar figures can appear remains doubtful.

## Statesmanship without Statesmen?

Our argument so far has yielded a series of counterintuitive conclusions: statesmanship does not presuppose the state, the modern state makes statesmanship difficult, and yet a decline of statehood is no guarantee for statesmanship to reemerge. This raises the question whether statesmanship is still a relevant ideal. Some theorists believe or perhaps rather hope that statesmanship,

though badly suited for nineteenth- and twentieth-century government, again becomes increasingly meaningful for twenty-first-century governance. Ruderman, for one, maintains its continued relevance:

> Balancing between conserving and innovating, between deferring to public sentiment and attempting to educate it, and perhaps most importantly, between taking morality seriously while recognizing its limited applicability in certain political situations, statesmanship remains an essential yet difficult to prescribe art.[65]

There are, however, several problems with deliberate attempts to resuscitating statesmanship as such. For one thing, in every manifestation of statesmanship there is undoubtedly a great deal of contingency—of *fortuna* next to *virtú*, in Machiavelli's terms. Instances of statesmanship are to a large extent lucky coincidences, a fortunate combination of virtue and wisdom in the right person at the right place and time. That is why true statesmanship has often been regarded as a gift of the gods ("charisma") or of nature.[66] Moreover, pleas for statesmanship can be exaggerated and ultimately pernicious. Calling all public officials potential "statesmen" is an overstatement that threatens to erode the meaning of statesmanship as an ideal. Particularly sub-political actors like civil servants, but also extra-political actors like judges, should perhaps not aspire to be statesmen themselves, but rather recognize and promote the true statesmanship of political leaders.[67]

Contemporary governance surely aggravates the need for all kinds of public officials to act in a statesmanlike manner. This means they should show moral excellence in aspiring to achieve the general interest of their entire community. The size of this community may no longer be fixed to the nation-state but vary with that of the relevant networks. Hence, the very term "statesmanship" seems less and less fitting. Tulis has proposed to speak of constitutional officers rather than statesmen.[68] According to him, even the American President (but this certainly goes for others, too) can no longer be a true statesman, establishing a constitutional order, but only a constitutional officer, working within and in service of such an order: "A constitutional officer is neither a leader nor a statesman but rather something in between."[69] Tulis models this notion after that of the Roman constitutional dictator, who worked within constitutional confines even in times of high emergency.[70] This notion of "constitutional officer" could apply not only to a president or (prime) minister but also to a judge, diplomat, administrator, or other public official with greater ease than that of "statesman."

Regardless of terminology, the *practice* of statesmanship is still strongly desired. Perhaps, we should therefore adopt the useful distinction between "being a statesman" and "performing acts of statesmanship." Green noted: "We needn't require officials to *be* statesmen. The qualities of statesmen are too rare and their powers too awesome. However, we do want officials to perform occasional acts of statesmanship that remind us of the wisdom of our governing system."[71] Or, as Dannhauser put it: "Statesmanship is not as rare as statesmen, because on occasion quite ordinary men are capable of the extraordinary deeds we designate as acts of statesmanship, but it is rare enough."[72] In our century, public officials still and perhaps increasingly need to show moral excellence (*virtue*) while acting with nonviolent ways (*means*) for the general interest (*aim*) of the widest possible political community (*scope*). With the modern state and its institutions under increased pressure, the moral fiber of public officials is becoming particularly important again. The often-announced "waning of the state"[73] does, however, not by itself imply a bright future for statesmanship. Would true statesmen emerge (a possibility that, fortunately, can never be ruled out), it will be despite modern statehood and governance rather than because of them.

## Notes

1. E.g., Coats 1995; Ionescu 1999; Jaffa 1981; Johnson 2007; Mahoney 2000.
2. E.g., Klau 2010.
3. Skowronek and Glassman 2008.
4. Jacobsohn 1974, 44b.
5. Dannhauser 1980, 115.
6. Coats 1995; cf. also Rumpf 1984; Schwinge 1983.
7. Coats 1995, 34.
8. Coats 1995: 21; cf. 118.
9. Plato 1995.
10. Coats 1995, 19; cf. Nicgorksi 1991.
11. Taylor 1967.
12. Manent (1998a, 173) claims that "[b]etween 1940 and 1944, [De Gaulle] could not be a statesman just because the state, the legitimate state, was missing." We would rather say that he was already by then a statesman precisely because the state he sought to resurrect was devastated. One need not have a building to be a builder.
13. Dannhauser 1980, 118.
14. Tulis 2010, 114.
15. Coats 1995, 35; emphasis added.
16. Coats 1995, 29.
17. Coats 1995, 21.
18. Coats 1995, 29–30, 121.
19. Luke 1994
20. Nicgorski 1991, 243.
21. Ruderman 2012, 89.
22. Arnhart 1983; Holloway 2008.
23. Colville 1979, 8. He also states: "A statesman's most distinguishing characteristic is his ability to inspire. He must also have courage, persistence, imagination, and a thick

skin. He must have the tenacity never to give up, never to be deflected from his objective—however many detours he makes in order to attain it—and never to despair." (p. 3). Later on, he elaborates on "simplicity," "originality," incorruptibility, and "flexibility" as essential qualities of the statesman (pp. 6–8).

24. Lane 2012, 194–96.
25. Tulis 2010, 112.
26. Tulis 2010, 114.
27. Hamilton, Madison, and Jay 2003, 75.
28. Tulis 2010, 121.
29. Ruderman 1997.
30. Dronberger 1971.
31. Tocqueville 2000, e.g., 188, 190. Tocqueville also notes that in democracies historians tend to ascribe much less influence to statesmen than in aristocracies (469–72).
32. Mansfield 1965, 18.
33. Danoff and Hebert 2011.
34. Van Riper 1998.
35. Hegel 1967, §303.
36. Dannhauser 1980.
37. Weber 1988.
38. Trepanier 2012.
39. Strong 1986, 53.
40. Kissinger 1973, 317; cf. pp. 326–28. See also Starr 1984, 53–56 for the role of the statesman in Kissinger's "operational code."
41. Storing 1980.
42. Tocqueville 2000, 142.
43. Siegel 2008, 963.
44. E.g., by Bond 1982; Franck 1989; Graglia 1985.
45. E.g., Carrese 1998; Clor 1985. See also Kronman 1993 for the closely related concept of "lawyer-statesman."
46. Taylor 1992.
47. Clark 1959; Fry 1969.
48. Dewey 1991.
49. E.g., Barth 1991; Dannhauser 1980; Green 1998; Haraway and Haraway 2004; Lawler, Schaefer, and Schaefer 1998; Moore 1980; Newswander 2012 and 2015.
50. Rohr 1986, 1989.
51. Rohr 1982, 359.
52. Selznick 1957, 154.
53. Grunewald 1992; Jacobsohn 1974a; Newmyer 2000; Olken 2003.
54. Burns 1948; Cooper and Wright 1992.
55. Manent 1998b, 168.
56. Kissinger 1973, e.g., 316–18.
57. Selznick 1957, 1.
58. Post 2010.
59. E.g., Kjær 2004; Bellamy and Palumbo 2010.
60. Eidelberg 1974; Frisch and Stevens 1983.
61. Bache and Flinders 2004; Marks, Hooghe, and Blank 1996.
62. Manent 2007.
63. Kozinski 2012.
64. Kissinger 1973; Ionescu, 1999.
65. Ruderman 2012, 89.
66. Dannhauser 1980.
67. Rohr 1982, 355.
68. Tulis 2010
69. Tulis 2010, 112.
70. Tulis 2010, 120; cf. Rossiter 2002.
71. Green 1998, 108.
72. Dannhauser 1980, 116.
73. Croce and Salvatore 2012.

## References


Arnhart, Larry. 1983. "Statesmanship as Magnanimity: Classical, Christian & modern." *Polity* 16 (2): 263–83.

Bache, Ian, and Matthew Flinders, eds. 2004. *Multi-Level Governance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Barth, Thomas J. 1991. "Administrative Statesmanship in a Government of Shared Powers," unpublished PhD dissertation, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA.

Bellamy, Richard, and Antonino Palumbo, eds. 2010. *From Government to Governance*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

Bond, James E. 1982. "The Perils of Judicial Statesmanship." *The Oklahoma City University Law Review* 7 (3): 399–417.

Burns, James MacGregor. 1948. "Maintenance of Membership: A Study in Administrative Statesmanship." *The Journal of Politics* 10 (1): 101–16.

Carrese, Paul O. 1998. "Judicial Statesmanship, the Jurisprudence of Individualism, and Tocqueville's Common Law Spirit." *The Review of Politics* 60 (3): 465–95.

Clark, G. Kitson. 1959. "'Statesmen in Disguise': Reflexions on the History of the Neutrality of the Civil Service." *The Historical Journal* 2 (1): 19–39.

Clor, Harry M. 1985. "Judicial Statesmanship and Constitutional Interpretation." *South Texas Law Journal* 26: 397–433.

Coats, Wendell John Jr. 1995. *Statesmanship: Six Modern Illustrations of a Modified Ancient Ideal*. Selingsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press.

Colville, John. 1979. "The Qualities of a Statesman." *Schweizer Monatshefte: Zeitschrift für Politik, Wirtschaft, Kultur* 59 (2): 1–11.

Cooper, Terry L., and N. Dale Wright. 1992. *Exemplary Public Administrators: Character and Leadership in Government*. San Franscisco. CA: Jossey-Bass.

Croce, Mariano, and Andrea Salvatore. 2012. *Undoing Ties: Political Philosophy and the Waning of the State*. New York/London: Bloomsbury.

Dannhauser, Werner J. 1980. "Reflections on Statesmanship and Bureaucracy." In *Bureaucrats, Policy Analysts, Statesmen: Who Leads?*, edited by Robert A. Goldwin, pp. 114–32. Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research.

Danoff, Brian, and L. Joseph Hebert. 2011. *Tocqueville and the Art of Democratic Statesmanship*. Lanham, MD: Lexington.

Dewey, John. 1991 [1935]."Toward Administrative Statesmanship." In *John Dewey: The Later Works, 1925–1953*, edited by J. A. Boydston, pp. 345–47. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Dronberger, Ilse. 1971. *The Political Thought of Max Weber: In Quest of Statesmanship*. New York, NY: Appleton Century Crofts.

Eidelberg, Paul. 1974. *A Discourse on Statesmanship: The Design and Transformation of the American Polity*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Franck, Matthew J. 1989. "Statesmanship and the Judiciary." *The Review of Politics* 51 (4): 510–32.

Frisch, Morton J., and Richard G. Stevens. 1983. *American Political Thought: The Philosophic Dimension of American Statesmanship*. 2nd ed. Itasca, IL: F. E. Peacock.

Fry, Geoffrey K. 1969. *Statesmen in Disguise: The Changing Role of the Administrative Class of the British Home Civil Service, 1853–1966*. London, UK: MacMillan.

Graglia, Lino A. 1985. "Judicial Review on the Basis of 'Regime Principles': A Prescription for Government by Judges." *South Texas Law Journal* 26: 435–52.

Green, Richard T. 1998. "Impartiality and Administrative Statesmanship." In *Active Duty: Public Administration as Democratic Statesmanship*, edited by Peter A. Lawler, Robert M. Schaefer, and David L. Schaefer, pp. 91–111. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Grunewald, Mark H. 1992. "Quotas, Politics, and Judicial Statesmanship: The Civil Rights Act of 1991 and Powell's Bakke." *Washington and Lee Law Review* 49: 53–65.

Hamilton, Alexander, James Madison, and John Jay. 2003 [1788]. *The Federalist Papers*, edited by Rossiter. New York, NY: Signet Classic.

Haraway, W. M. III, and D. L. Haraway. 2004. "American Civil Service Reform: Lessons in Administrative Statesmanship: The French Higher Civil Service." *International Social Science Review* 79 (3–4): 108–23.

Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. 1967 [1821]. *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, trans. T. M. Knox. London, UK: Oxford University Press.

Holloway, Carson, ed. 2008. *Magnanimity and Statesmanship*. Lanham, MD: Lexington.

Ionescu, Ghiţa. 1999. *Leadership in an Interdependent World: The Statesmanship of Adenauer, De Gaulle, Thatcher, Reagan, and Gorbachev*. Harlow, UK: Longman.

Jaffa, Harry V. 1981. *Statesmanship: Essays in Honor of Sir Winston Spencer Churchill*. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press.

Jacobsohn, Gary J. 1974a. "Constitutional Adjudication and Judicial Statesmanship: Principle, Fact, and Doctrine." *Emory Law Review* 23: 137–50.

Jacobsohn, Gary J. 1974b. "Felix Frankfurter and the Ambiguities of Judicial Statesmanship." *New York University Law Review* 49 (1): 1–44.

Johnson, Paul. 2007. "Heroes: What Great Statesmen Have to Teach Us." *Imprimis* 36 (12): 1–7.

Kass, Henry D. 1990. "Stewardship as a Fundamental Element in Images of Public Administration." In *Images and Identities in Public Administration*, edited by Henry D. Kass and Bayard L. Catron, pp. 113–31. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Kissinger, Henry A. 1973. *A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh and the Problems of Peace, 1812–1822*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Kjær, Anne Mette. 2004. *Governance*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Klau, Thomas. 2010. "Europe Would Welcome a Surprise Act of Statesmanship." *The Independent*, May 22.

Kozinski, Thaddeus J. 2012. "Can There Be Statesmen? A MacIntyrean Challenge to Trepanier's Aristotle." *Anamnesis*, www.anamnesisjournal.com (November 25, 2015).

Kronman, Anthony T. 1993. *The Lost Lawyer: Failing Ideals of the Legal Profession*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press.

Lane, Melissa S. 2012. "The Origins of the Statesman-Demagogue Distinction in and after Ancient Athens." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 73 (2): 179–200.

Lawler, Peter A., Robert M. Schaefer, and David L. Schaefer, eds. 1998. *Active Duty: Public Aadministration as Democratic Statesmanship*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Luke, Jeffrey S. 1994. "Character and Conduct in the Public Service: A Review of Historical Perspectives and a Definition of the Twenty-First century." In *Handbook of Administrative Ethics*, edited by Terry L. Cooper, pp. 391–412. New York, NY: Marcel Dekker.

Mahoney, Daniel. 2000. *De Gaulle: Statesmanship, Grandeur, and Modern Democracy*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.

Manent, Pierre. 1998a. *Modern Liberalism and Its Discontents*, trans. D. J. Mahoney and P. Seaton. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Manent, Pierre. 1998b. *The City of Man*, trans. M. A. LePain. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Manent, Pierre. 2007. *Democracy Without Nations: The Fate of Self-Government in Europe*, trans. P. Seaton. Wilmington, DE: ISI Books.

Mansfield, Harvey C. Jr. 1965. *Statesmanship and Party Government: A Study of Burke and Bolingbroke*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Marks, Gary, Liesbet Hooghe, and Kermit Blank. 1996. "European Integration from the 1980s: State-Centric v. Multi-Level Governance." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 34 (3): 341–78.

Moore, Mark H. 1980. "Statesmanship in a World of Particular Substantive Choices." In *Bureaucrats, Policy Analysts, Statesmen: Who Leads?*, edited by R. A. Goldwin, pp. 20–36. Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research.

Newell, Terry. 2012. *Statesmanship, Character, and Leadership in America*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Newmyer, R. Kent. 2000. "John Marshall as an American Original: Some Thoughts on Personality and Judicial Statesmanship." *University of Colorado Law Review* 71: 1365–83.

Newswander, Chad. 2012. "Moral Leadership and Administrative Statesmanship: Safeguards of Democracy in a Constitutional Republic." *Public Administration Review* 72 (6): 866–74.

Newswander, Chad. 2015. "Guerilla Statesmanship: Constitutionalizing an Ethic of Dissent." *Public Administration Review* 75 (1): 126–34.

Nicgorski, Walter. 1991. "Cicero's Focus: From the Best Regime to the Model Statesman." *Political Theory* 19 (2): 230–51.

Nichols, David K. 1998. "Administrative Responsibility and the Separation of Powers." In *Active Duty: Public Administration as Democratic Statesmanship*, edited by Peter A. Lawler, Robert M. Schaefer, and David L. Schaefer, pp. 177–94. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Olken, Samuel R. 2003. "The Ironies of *Marbury v. Madison* and John Marshall's Judicial Statesmanship." *John Marshall Law Review* 37: 391–439.

Plato. 1995. *Statesman*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Post, Robert. 2010. "Theorizing Disagreement: Reconceiving the Relationship between Law and Politics." *California Law Review* 98: 1319–50.

Rhodes, Rod A. W., and John Wanna. 2007. "The Limits of Public Value, or Rescuing Responsible Government from the Platonic Guardians." *Australian Journal of Public Administration* 66 (4): 406–21.

Rohr, John A. 1982. "Public Administration and the Constitutional Bicentennial: An Essay on Research." *International Journal of Public Administration* 4 (4): 349–80.

Rohr, John A. 1986. *To Run a Constitution: The Legitimacy of the Administrative State*. Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press.

Rohr, John A. 1989. *Ethics for Bureaucrats: An Essay on Law and Values*. 2nd, rev. exp. ed. New York, NY: Marcel Dekker.
Rossiter, Clinton. 2002. *Constitutional Dictatorship: Crisis Government in Modern Democracies*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.
Ruderman, Richard S. 1997. "Democracy and the Problem of Statesmanship." *The Review of Politics* 59 (4): 759–87.
Ruderman, Richard S. 2012. "Statesmanship Reconsidered." *Perspectives on Political Science* 41: 86–89.
Rumpf, Hermut. 1984. "Zur Typologie des Staatsmanns." In *Der Staat: Zeitschrift für Staatslehre, Öffentliches Recht und Verfassungsgeschichte* 23: 590–601.
Schwinge, Erich. 1983. *Der Staatsmann: Anspruch und Wirklichkeit in der Politik*. München, Germany: Universitas Verlag.
Selznick, Philip. 1957. *Leadership in Administration: A Sociological Interpretation*. Evanston, IL: Row Peterson.
Siegel, Neil S. 2008. "The Virtue of Judicial Statesmanship." *Texas Law Review* 86 (5): 959–1032.
Skowronek, Stephen, and Matthew Glassman, eds. 2008. *Formative Acts: Reckoning with Agency in American Politics*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
Starr, Harvey. 1984. *Henry Kissinger: Perceptions of International Politics*. Lexington KY: The University Press of Kentucky.
Storing, Herbert J. 1980. "American Statesmanship: Old and New." In *Bureaucrats, Policy Analysts, Statesmen: Who Leads?*, edited by R. A. Goldwin, pp. 88–113. Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research.
Strong, Robert J. 1986. *Bureaucracy and Statesmanship: Henry Kissinger and the Making of American Foreign Policy*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
Taylor, Alan J. P. 1967. *Bismarck: The Man and the Statesman*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
Taylor, Henry. 1992 [1836].*The Statesman*, edited by D. L. Schaefer and R. R. Schaefer. Westport, CT: Praeger.
Tocqueville, Alexis de. 2000 [1835–40]. *Democracy in America*, trans. H. C. Mansfield Jr. and D. Winthrop. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
Trepanier, Lee. 2012. "Statesmanship, Leadership, and Civil Society in the Age of Mass Democracy." *Anamnesis*, www.anamnesisjournal.com (November 25, 2015).
Tulis, Jeffrey K. 2010. "The Possibility of Constitutional statesmanship." In *The Limits of Constitutional democracy*, edited by J. K. Tulis and S. Macedo, pp. 112–23. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Van Riper, Paul P. 1998. "Administrative State." In *The International Encyclopedia of Public Policy and Administration*, edited by Jay M. Shafritz, pp. 71–77. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
Weber, Max. 1988 [1919]."Politik als Beruf." In *Gesammelte Politische Schriften*, edited by J. Winckelmann, pp. 505–60. Tübingen, Germany: Mohr.