Chapter 4

Knifed in the Back: A Metaphor Analysis of Party Leadership Takeovers

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A politician's first public address in the role of party leader is a crucial performative act, as it presents him/her with a rare opportunity to (re)negotiate his/her personal narrative and 'brand' before an attentive national audience. Metaphors play an important role in this discursive management of power transfer. The data for this paper comprises speeches given in the aftermath of political deposals in Australian federal politics in the past quarter century. Reasons for variations in the metaphors found therein are considered, including the influence of genre, function and ideology. Four metaphor scenarios are found to be recurrent: LEADERSHIP AS DIRECTION, LEADERSHIP AS CONFLICT, LEADERSHIP AS FOUNDATION, and LEADERSHIP AS HARD WORK. The significance of novel metaphors is also considered.

Australian politics; leadership, metaphor; political discourse

1. Introduction

Metaphors, being both “memorable and persuasive”, are one way in which politicians meet the public’s expectation for oratorical competency and thereby enhance their reputation (Charteris-Black 2014:161). While this may be the case any time a politician speaks, it is particularly so when they first address the public after seizing control of a major political party. The power of metaphors in Australian political life is indicated by two examples that entered the national lexicon in recent years: ‘the killing season’ and ‘captain’s call’. The former denotes the summer weeks leading into Christmas when, with peoples’ minds on beach holidays and family get-togethers, political parties take the opportunity to remove

unpopular leaders (Ferguson and Drum 2016). The latter refers to policies and decisions made by Prime Ministers without consulting colleagues. This term was crowned “Word of the Year” for 2015 by the Macquarie Dictionary (Australia’s national dictionary), as the publication explains:

This is a first! The people and the Committee have agreed that captain’s call is the Word of the Year. Clearly this term has resonated with Australians, possibly because it touches on two of our national passions – cricket and politics. [...] Captain’s call perfectly encapsulates what happened in Australia over the past year. There has been an interesting change in usage; an infrequent item of the jargon of cricket makes the leap into politics and is now being used generally with an ironic tinge. (Macquarie Dictionary Online 2016)

The killer blow to the faltering leadership of conservative Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott was this metaphor. On January 26, 2015 Abbott announced a decision made without consulting fellow MPs. The recipient of the highest Australia Day honour would not be an Australian, but the 94-year old British monarch Prince Philip, husband to Queen Elizabeth II. The decision to ‘knight’ the Prince incurred ridicule from the press, public and political foes. Although only two years into his Prime Ministership after a landslide election victory in 2013, Abbott was an unpopular leader nationally, and rumoured to be so internally as the result of an unconsultative, autocratic and centralised leadership style (Savva 2016) that was prone to half-cocked policy announcements and a lack of vision. By September Abbott was finished, overthrown by his own party without contesting a second federal election.

The storyline is familiar to Australian voters. The administrations that both preceded and succeeded Abbott ended in cannibalistic leadership takeovers. The leftist Labor Party's period in office from 2007 to 2013, is best remembered for the leadership rivalry of Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard. Rudd ended a decade of conservative rule by winning the 2007 federal election, but was deposed by his deputy, Gillard, in 2010 - who was eventually deposed by Rudd again in 2013. Similarly, Abbott's successor as Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, who seized the top job in a leadership takeover in 2015, enjoyed less than three years in the role before himself being ousted in an internal deposal in 2018. Leadership takeovers clearly have a bewilderingly strong tradition in Australian politics and, as this paper will show, language (particularly metaphor) plays an important role in the presentation and management of these events by the central actors.

2. Metaphor variation in leadership takeovers

As explained in this book's introduction, the underlying reasons for the variations in political metaphors are both multifarious and underexplored. This chapter argues that metaphors play a key role in 'dressing up' the messy business of leadership takeovers. By focussing on one identifiable, recurrent and socially significant political phenomenon, we garner insight into how and why metaphors vary in political discourse. At the same time, the study of metaphors allows us to understand how the phenomenon itself (leadership takeovers) is rhetorically stage-managed by political actors.

With a focus on how variation occurs within a single genre of political discourse (the deposal speech, defined below), we are delivering on Charteris-Black's call (2014:174) for a form of metaphor analysis that "aims to identify *which* metaphors are chosen in persuasive genres such as political speeches, party political manifestos or press reports, and attempts to explain

why these metaphors are chosen”. He distinguishes between ‘discourse systematicity’, which is the analysis of metaphors in a set of identifiable political text types (e.g. inauguration speeches), from ‘local systematicity’, which is the analysis of metaphors within a particular speech. This paper predominantly adopts the discourse systematicity perspective, but also shows how context-specific political motivations can lead to the effective use of a specific ‘novel’ metaphor.

Another issue raised in this book’s introduction, and in the Charteris-Black quote above, is that of function: for what political purpose are certain metaphors chosen? Leadership takeovers are particularly useful for understanding how metaphor selection is driven by interpersonal, or pragmatic, factors. This aspect is under-represented in the metaphor literature given its predominantly conceptual bent and is deserving of more research. In one sense a deposal speech is a face threatening act, since its triumphalism comes at the expense of a very public loser. Invoking Goffman’s (1959) notion of the presentation of self as a “theatrical performance”, Chan and Yap (2015:33) point out that politicians use metaphors to construct identities and images for themselves, their rivals and the electorate:

[T]he concept of ‘face’ is ubiquitous and speakers constantly engage in various discourse strategies to address potential face-threats that may arise in the course of ongoing talk. [...] In the political arena, politicians often use metaphors as a verbal indirectness strategy to either promote themselves and their political agenda [...] or to attack their opponents in a less face-threatening way.

This points to the ‘affective’ (interpersonal, pragmatic) dimension of metaphors, which is easily neglected in favour of their ‘ideational’ (topic-defining) function (Cameron 2003, 2007).

This chapter also considers the relationship of metaphor variation to power and ideology. Metaphors are a key device by which political actors configure and project a worldview to which they hope voters will assent. As many scholars of political discourse urge, metaphors are not mere decorative figures, but the very stuff by which debates are framed (Billig and Macmillan 2005, Carver and Pikalo 2008, Koller and Davidson 2008, Lakoff 2004; Musolff 2012; Perez and Reuchamps 2014, 2015). Lakoff and Johnson (1980:157) memorably observe that “people in power get to impose their metaphors”. Thibodeau and Boroditsky (2011) go so far as to claim that “even the subtlest instantiation of a metaphor (via a single word) can have a powerful influence over how people [...] gather information to make well-informed decisions” and that the influence is often covert and can override pre-existing political affiliation (liberal or conservative)¹. Moreover, because certain ‘entailments’ flow from metaphors, they act as “a guide for future action” (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:156), and therefore suit deposal speeches which, as markers of new regimes, are future-oriented. Political scientists themselves use a metaphor to describe this phenomenon: ‘rhetorical path dependency’ (Grube 2016). A further purpose of this paper is therefore to show how varying configurations of metaphors construct these rhetorical paths for the purpose of winning over the people in the wake of a divisive event.

3. Defining the genre: Leadership challenges

¹ However Steen, Reijnierse, and Burgers (2014) dispute the experimental evidence on which this claim is based.

Bynander and 't Hart (2007:48) have observed that although leadership tensions and deposals in democratic systems are “hotly debated and intensely reported”, there is a lack of “systematic” research on this issue. The present paper addresses that gap by providing a rare discursive perspective on leadership challenges, taking as its data the ‘rhetorical situation’ (Bitzer 1992) that is created by a leadership overthrow, when the victor makes his/her first public address about the event. “Politicians”, in the words of Charteris-Black (2014:204), “establish legitimacy by representing themselves as upholding the moral values that bind society together by regaining control over rampant forces”. The first task of a victorious leader in the aftermath of a deposal is to achieve this in public oration. Thus in all the cases listed in Table 1 (below) the new leader called a press conference immediately upon assuming office and delivered a prepared statement (journalists’ questions typically followed).

This study focuses on leadership takeovers in the two major Australian political parties, Liberal (conservative) and Labor (progressive). Minor parties do not feature because only the leaders of Liberal and Labor have the potential to be Prime Minister. This is an important and distinguishing contextual element in the design of speeches by the new leaders, since they are presenting themselves as either the new Prime Minister or the alternative one. Moreover, although there are many ways in which leadership changes occur, this paper only examines those involving involuntary removal from office: i.e. situations where the incumbent leader did not want to go, but was forced to. Table 1 displays all such cases in Australian politics of the last 30 years.

Table 1: Successful leadership contests in Federal Australian politics (1985-2015).

Year	Party	New Leader	Ousted Leader	Contested Office	Contest Details	Contest Votes
1985	Liberal	John Howard	Andrew Peacock	Opposition Leader	Howard and Peacock had a long rivalry, as kingpins of the party's right and left. Howard was Peacock's Deputy Opposition Leader but refused to rule out challenging for the leadership. Peacock formally sought Howard's removal, but Liberal MPs re-elected Howard. His position untenable, Peacock resigned the leadership, and Howard defeated the only other candidate (Jim Carlton).	Howard: 57 Carlton: 6
1989	Liberal	Andrew Peacock	John Howard	Opposition Leader	Howard struggled as Opposition Leader and was caught unawares by a surprise challenge from Peacock's supporters.	Peacock: 44 Howard: 27
1991	Labor	Paul Keating	Robert Hawke	Prime Minister	Although Hawke had taken Labor to a record four election victories, his appeal was diminishing. Hawke had also	Keating: 56 Hawke: 51

					renege on a secret succession plan with Keating. The win came after Keating's second challenge within the year.	
1994	Liberal	Alexander Downer	John Hewson	Opposition Leader	Hewson lost a so-called 'unlosable' election to Keating in 1993 and was subsequently undermined from within.	Downer: 43 Hewson: 36
2003	Labor	Mark Latham	Simon Crean	Opposition Leader	Incumbent leader Simon Crean reluctantly vacated office having lost party room support due to lacklustre polling. Latham defeated Crean's rival Kim Beazley in resultant leadership ballot.	Latham: 47 Crean: 45
2006	Labor	Kevin Rudd	Kim Beazley	Opposition Leader	Rudd issued a direct challenge to Beazley, who had succeeded Latham after the 2004 election loss but suffered consistently low poll ratings.	Rudd: 49 Beazley: 39
2008	Liberal	Malcolm Turnbull	Brendan Nelson	Opposition Leader	While Kevin Rudd enjoyed high popularity as new Labor Prime Minister, Nelson was crippled by poor polls and internal dissent. He called, and lost, a leadership spill in an attempt to head off Turnbull.	Turnbull: 45 Nelson: 41

2009	Liberal	Tony Abbott	Malcolm Turnbull	Opposition Leader	Like Nelson, Turnbull could not compete with Rudd's high popularity. He was also unpopular within the Liberal Party's conservative wing, of whom Abbott was a leader. Abbott engineered and narrowly won a leadership spill.	Abbott: 42 Turnbull: 41
2010	Labor	Julia Gillard	Kevin Rudd	Prime Minister	The public shine eventually came off Rudd's Prime Ministership, and his own colleagues were dissatisfied with a chaotic and dictatorial leadership style. Gillard challenged at the behest of party MPs, and Rudd did not contest due to poor internal support.	No contest
2013	Labor	Kevin Rudd	Julia Gillard	Prime Minister	Gillard failed to gain traction and legitimacy with the Australian public. She was constantly undermined by Rudd and a growing band of MPs who viewed him as their only chance of surviving the upcoming federal election.	Rudd: 57 Gillard: 45
2015	Liberal	Malcolm Turnbull ²	Tony Abbott	Prime Minister	Having constantly pilloried Labor for removing a first-term Prime Minister, the Liberals committed the same act when	Turnbull: 54 Abbott: 44

² For ease of reference, the first deposals of Rudd and Turnbull will be termed 'Rudd#1' and 'Turnbull#1', and their second deposals 'Rudd#2' and 'Turnbull#2'.

					they removed Abbott in the face of poor polls and policy missteps.	
2018	Liberal	Scott Morrison	Malcolm Turnbull	Prime Minister	Turnbull, a moderate, was constantly undermined by the party's conservative faction which sought revenge for Abbott's deposal. Turnbull conceded the leadership after calling a leadership spill to quell back-room manoeuvrings by conservative Peter Dutton. In a final ballot, former Turnbull loyalist Scott Morrison emerged as a compromise victor.	Morrison: 45 Dutton: 40

Although the mode of departure for the vanquished leaders varied, the key common factor is that they were forced out of office against their will. Even those who stood down to allow a leadership ballot between fresh candidates did so as the result of internal revolt. For ease of reference therefore, the term ‘deposal’ is used as a catch-all to describe all such cases.

What is clear from Table 1 is that leadership challenges are common in Australian politics. Between 2010 and 2018, three Prime Ministers were directly elected by the public, whereas four were installed in backroom deals. Bynander and ‘t Hart (2007:61) state that, bar Italy, “no established democracy comes close” to Australia’s record, while the BBC has described the country as the “coup capital of the democratic world” (Bryant 2015).

4. Data and methodological approach

The data on which this paper draws are comprised of ‘victory’ speeches delivered in the wake of the leadership takeovers listed in Table 1³. In each case the new leader delivered a prepared address before assembled media and in some cases took questions from reporters (however these exchanges do not form part of the data). On average the statements were 1050 words long, the shortest being 638 words (Turnbull #1) and the longest 1548 (Gillard).

The metaphor analysis can be broadly categorised as the ‘discourse dynamics’ approach outlined by Cameron (2003, 2007). This aligns with a view of metaphors as cognitive constructs that shape the way people see their world, but also emphasises their ‘affective’

³ Note that Peacock (1989) and Downer (1991) are not included, as archival searches have so far failed to uncover transcripts/recordings of their press conferences.

impact as carriers of evaluation in interactions and as means for positioning “speakers relative to other people or to the content of which they talk” (Cameron 2007:200).

As an initial step in identifying metaphorical language in the data set, the ‘metaphor identification procedure’ (MIP) developed by the Pragglejazz Group (2007) was applied. This involved determining which lexical units had meanings that would be considered more “basic” in other contexts: i.e. more “concrete”, “related to bodily action”, “precise” (not vague), or “historically older” (Pragglejazz Group 2007:3). To understand how this works, we can consider the following statement made in one deposal speech: “there are some WOUNDS that do need to be HEALED”. The capitalized words have been deemed metaphorical since they carry a basic meaning that is more concrete (easy to see and feel, as it were) and is related to bodily action. This contrasts with the contextual meaning, which refers to the coming together of two groups after a (non-physical) disagreement.

These selections of lexical units were then organized in the manner recommended by Cameron (2007:201): “Systematic patterns of metaphor use are described by collecting together the individual linguistic metaphors used in discourse events and grouping them into larger semantically-connected domains”. This is not, as Cameron argues, a precise operation but one that requires “principled flexibility” guided by the “research goals” and “the actual discourse evidence” (2007:205-6). The term ‘metaphor scenario’ is used throughout this paper to denote a particular semantic domain. This comes from Musolff (2016:30) and is preferred here because a scenario can include not only semantically related concepts, but also scripts, frames and narratives, often with evaluative elements, that assist (or influence) receivers in making sense of events. A deposal speech is one person’s story – a self-interested actor’s ‘take’ on a set of events. Metaphor scenarios are a device for making that story more believable and persuasive.

In the next section the major metaphor scenarios that emerged from the data are presented and discussed, and links are made to findings in other studies where relevant. A genre-specific distinction is made between ‘internally-oriented’ metaphors, which reference the leadership takeover process itself, and ‘externally-oriented’ metaphors, which direct the focus of the speech away from the takeover.

5. Metaphor Scenarios

5.1 *Leadership is direction*

It has been remarked that metaphors of journeys, paths, directions, and movement back-and-forth are characteristic of political discourse (Cameron 2007, Charteris-Black 2011, 2014, L’Hôte and Lemmens 2009, Perrez and Reuchamps 2014). It is no surprise to find them in deposal speeches given the expectation for new leaders to demonstrate *future-oriented* visions. Take, for example, the announcement by fresh young Labor leader Mark Latham:

(1) I see this is A LINE IN THE SAND for the Australian Labor Party – a chance TO MOVE FORWARD together, together for the benefit of the Australian people.

Metaphors of this type generally express the idea that successful government involves advancement towards a destination of benefit to all.

Interestingly, all such metaphors were conveyed by five speakers, four of whom were Labor politicians (Latham, Gillard, Rudd#1 and Rudd#2). L’Hôte and Lemmens (2009) similarly reported that UK Labour politicians tended to use JOURNEY metaphors. Small sample size

notwithstanding, it is worth speculating whether left-wing parties traditionally frame their mission as one of BRINGING EVERYONE ALONG, as opposed to other ways in which bright futures could be framed, such as the promises of TRICKLE DOWN ECONOMICS that may be characteristic of neoliberal parties.

Kevin Rudd's first deposal speech is striking because it is all based on an extended JOURNEY metaphor. This construction depicts the nation (Australia) as a group of travellers on a road trip. One inference of the trip metaphor is that decisions have to be made about which roads to go down. Rudd does not pitch these choices as between himself and his Labor leadership rivals – i.e. he does not employ internally-oriented metaphors that focus on the internal party dispute. Rather, he frames a choice between himself and his rival for leadership of the country, the reigning conservative Prime Minister John Howard, thus using externally-oriented metaphors. This rhetorical strategy deflects attention from the adversarial intra-party machinations that had only just brought Rudd to power, and instead focuses the public on the next election.

Rudd uses the term “fork in the road” repeatedly (10 times in a 1,300 word speech) to signal policy differences between himself and Howard:

(2) Our belief is that Australia has reached A FORK IN THE ROAD. [...] There's A FORK IN THE ROAD when it comes to our economy. [...] We also see that there is A FORK IN THE ROAD when it comes to the laws governing our workplaces. [...] A FORK IN THE ROAD in climate change. [...] A FORK IN THE ROAD also when it comes to education and health. [...] This FORK IN THE ROAD has emerged because John Howard has taken A BRIDGE TOO FAR – A BRIDGE TOO FAR on industrial relations, A BRIDGE TOO FAR

when it comes to Iraq and A BRIDGE TOO FAR on climate change BY NOT GOING FAR ENOUGH. [...] This FORK IN THE ROAD presents us with clear alternatives...

Not only do the voting public have to choose which road to go down, they are also made aware that in some cases they have travelled “a bridge too far” (e.g. losing workplace protections, going to war in Iraq, allowing global warming), contributing to an urgent sense that the journey (and importantly the driver) must be reconsidered and changed. Collective pronouns (“Our belief...”, “our workplaces”, “We also see...”, “the road presents us...”) emphasize that although the journey is taken together, the national leader controls the direction, and in this case that person (Howard) has led the nation off course.

While Rudd’s speech has the flavour of a campaign launch, that of his erstwhile deputy Julia Gillard, who deposed him to become Prime Minister, used internally-oriented metaphors to explain her *personal* road to the top. Thus, from the outset, the narrative of her Prime Ministership was centred on her intra-party grab for power, which fed the public perception of politicians as self-interested. Indicative references to the personal are evident early in the speech:

(3) And it is these values that will GUIDE me as Australia’s Prime Minister.

(4) It’s these beliefs that have been MY COMPASS during the three and half years of the most loyal service I could offer to my colleague, Kevin Rudd.

These values and beliefs are in turn construed as an external agent of the leadership change, distancing her own ambition for power:

(5) My values and beliefs have DRIVEN me TO STEP FORWARD to take this position as Prime Minister.

The remainder of the speech is peppered with metaphors focussing on the “direction” of the government, e.g.:

(6) I asked my colleagues to make a leadership change. A change because I believed that a good Government was LOSING ITS WAY.

(7) I know the Rudd Government did not do all it said it would do. And at times, it WENT OFF TRACK.

(8) Ultimately, Kevin Rudd and I disagreed about THE DIRECTION of the Government.

A subtle but significant difference between Rudd and Gillard’s use of these metaphors, is that Rudd posits the whole nation – Australia – as the entity on the move (in the wrong direction). This prospect, which is frightening, entails a complete change of government to set things right. Gillard on the other hand, is careful to state that only “the Government” has lost its way, not the country itself. While her logic is questionable, this formulation suggests that only a change of leader is required to steady the ship of state.

Goatly (2006:33) points out that while SUCCEEDING IS MOVING FORWARD is a common and positive cultural frame, it can slip into the less appealing idea that ACTIVITY/COMPETITION IS A RACE:

[I]n late capitalist society, it is ideologically significant that metaphors for activity and success should have developed into the highly elaborated theme of a competitive race. Race can mean ‘competition for power or control’... Before a (horse) race or competitive activity starts you will know who is taking part (the field), who is in the running, and who is the favourite or the outsider (the contestants likely or unlikely to win).

New leaders have to be careful that their success is not perceived as a competitive victory. No doubt Gillard understood this, but she did not achieve it in her address, underestimating the power of metaphor in political discourse to conjure narrative frames in the public mind, unintended or otherwise. Rhetorically, Gillard was caught between a rock and a hard place. No-one can take the Prime Ministership without explaining why. But in doing so, she drew the public’s attention to the direction of her own government and the legitimacy of her leadership, resulting in endless discussion of both, for the length of her term. Nevertheless Gillard later argued in her autobiography that her mistake was to *not* explain the deposal in *more* detail (although ironically, hers is the longest deposal speech in our collection):

Because I wanted to treat Kevin respectfully, I offered no real explanation of why the change had happened. This was a decision I came to regret. I should have better understood and responded to the need of the Australian people to know why. (Gillard 2014:23).

The predicament brings to mind Lakoff's (2004) 'Don't think of an elephant' principle: if she had focussed on the backstage politics more, she may only have succeeded in further eroding her administration's legitimacy. By not doing so, she looked 'sneaky'.

Eventually, Gillard herself was deposed and Rudd became Prime Minister again. But although he used JOURNEY metaphors in his return speech, they were not internally-oriented, because to do so would be to admit that his own government had again 'lost its way'. Instead his metaphors focussed on the threat of the opposition conservatives:

(9) I simply do not have it in my nature TO STAND IDLY BY and to allow an Abbott government TO COME TO POWER in this country by default.

The opposition party, and particularly its leader Tony Abbott, is portrayed as moving inexorably towards power, a destination it will reach at the next election. The journey seems to have no obstacle or challenge – unless one person, which must be Rudd, is prepared to step forward and place himself in its path.

To 'lead' implies movement, journey and direction. A *leader* is therefore the person with prime responsibility for making the journey happen, and who can be held accountable when or if the journey is deemed 'off track' by those on board. While stagnation is undesirable, movement of itself is not sufficient – it must be in the right direction. A party takeover speech is an identifiable genre of political discourse that marks the reassessment and rejection (explicit or otherwise) of the journey taken to this point. It is for this reason that the metaphor scenario LEADERSHIP IS DIRECTION is so prevalent in this speech type.

5.2 Leadership is conflict

The cover term *ACTIVITY IS FIGHTING* has been offered by Goatly (2006) to denote metaphorical themes associated with conflict, which in politics is typically interpersonal and/or ideological. Charteris-Black (2014) has also demonstrated that multiple conceptual frames operate in political discourse around notions such as *POLITICS IS WAR*, *POLITICS IS SPORT*, and *POLITICS IS A GAME* (with winners and losers). Not surprisingly, variations in metaphors related to the master scenario *LEADERSHIP IS CONFLICT* are rife in depol speeches, given that one key purpose is to apply a rhetorical balm to an often messy and divisive victory of one rival over another. In these cases, where the conflict is construed as interpersonal, the depol metaphors acquire an internal orientation, since their purpose is to stage manage the relationship between the contestants in the leadership dispute. However, conflict can also be ideological - as when a new leader declares the ideas or principles s/he is prepared to 'fight for'. In these cases, metaphor variation is driven by an external orientation, since the speaker's focus is typically the party to which s/he is opposed, and which represents a different view of the world. To illustrate these points, let us consider some representative variations that emerged in the data.

One repeated metaphorical theme was the construal of the leadership takeover process, including its aftermath, as a form of *MEDICAL CARE* necessitated by the "BLOODY BUSINESS of politics" (Rudd #1). In these representations, politics is framed as a combative, viscerally hurtful pastime, whose participants incur actual physical injury. Scott Morrison, for example, observes that his party "has been *BATTERED* and *BRUISED* this week". Such statements therefore entail *TREATMENT* metaphors, as in Mark Latham's statement:

- (10) We needed A HEALING PROCESS within the Australian Labor Party and that is what we've got.

Tony Abbott makes a similar observation:

- (11) Obviously there are some WOUNDS that do need to be HEALED.

Whereas Latham frames the leadership ballot as the means by which infighting is resolved, Abbott concedes that tensions would continue to simmer after, and perhaps because of, the takeover. But an inference stemming from both metaphors is that a period of reparation is needed and expected, and it is the victor's leadership which can enable this to happen. As the Latham statement suggests, the leadership conflict can even be viewed as a healthy if hurtful event, since it has brought the warring parties together.

Abbott was, fittingly, an Oxford University boxing Blue and is typically portrayed in the press as a macho, virile, chest-thumping hard man in the mould of Vladimir Putin (who, coincidentally, he once pledged to "shirtfront" (an Australian football metaphor) at a G20 summit over the deaths of Australians in the MH17 Malaysian Airlines tragedy). Not surprisingly, he adopts a PUGILISTIC metaphor to acknowledge his rivalry with Malcolm Turnbull, who he deposed and who would eventually depose him:

- (12) I have known Malcolm for a long time. We have sometimes been SPARRING PARTNERS, but we have mostly been friends.

Sparring is more training than real brawling, so the metaphor allows Abbott to frame their rivalry as the healthy to-and-fro expected of vigorous ‘alpha male’ competitors vying for leadership of the same team. Most of Abbott’s fighting metaphors are, however, externally-oriented, directed at the then-ruling Labor Party. Like Rudd in 2006, Abbott skillfully used his deporal speech to effectively launch his federal election campaign:

- (13) Ladies and gentlemen, this is going to be A TOUGH FIGHT, but it will be A FIGHT. You cannot win an election without A FIGHT. [...] Now I cannot promise VICTORY. Obviously this is going to be VERY TOUGH. But I can promise A CONTEST. It will be A GOOD CONTEST, it will be A CLEAN CONTEST, and I know my colleagues are gearing up for THE FIGHT OF THEIR LIVES.

This language aligns with Abbott’s popular image as a ‘conservative warrior’ and ‘political headkicker’ (Griffiths, Vidot, and Barbour 2015; Wroe 2013) and can be seen as a unifying call to arms for his side of politics.

By the time Scott Morrison acceded to the Prime Ministership in 2018, his Liberal Party had embarrassingly offered three Prime Ministers in three years. His speech evidences an acute awareness of the public’s displeasure at this, with the opening seven sentences containing a repetitive metaphor string beginning with explicit acknowledgment of their perception of POLITICS AS WAR/SPORT/A GAME. However, he then subverts this scenario into one of *LIFE AS WAR/SPORT/GAME*:

(14) There's been a lot of talk this week about **WHOSE SIDE PEOPLE ARE ON** in this building. And what Josh and I are here to tell you, as the new generation of Liberal leadership, is that **we're ON YOUR SIDE**. That's what matters. **We're ON YOUR SIDE**. **We're ON YOUR SIDE** because we share beliefs and values in common. As you go about everything you do each day – getting up in the morning, getting off to work, turning up on site, [...] **the Liberal party is ON YOUR SIDE, the National party is ON YOUR SIDE**.

These words play on the distinction between internally and externally oriented metaphors in leadership disputes. Using the conceit of ‘taking sides’, which is sourced from the domain of CHILDREN’S GAMES, SPORTS and WAR, it begins by acknowledging the political infighting that has occurred: “there’s been a lot of talk about WHOSE SIDE PEOPLE ARE ON”. It then uses the same metaphor, but in an externally oriented manner. Instead of focusing on political infighting, it construes the notion of a ‘side’ that is unified and inclusive; one that comprises the new leadership team, the party, and the public. One may ask, who is *not* on this side? That is not specified, but by implication must include the opposition parties. In this way, Morrison has used CONFLICT metaphors in both an internally and externally oriented manner within the short opening to his speech.

Finally, CONFLICT metaphors feature in deposal speeches to indicate issues upon which new leaders will take a stand and fight. In doing so, leaders are able to formulate an intellectual and values-based ‘personal brand’ and communicate a sense of passion and urgency for the job, which goes some way to justifying their seizing of the top office. Examples include Paul Keating’s “pledge to FIGHT THE BATTLE AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT” and Latham’s commitment “to WIN THE WAR AGAINST TERROR internationally” and fight “THE DOMESTIC WAR AGAINST INEQUALITY”. Because these metaphors do not reference the defeated rival,

they can be seen as having an external orientation. They display the policies and principles that will be at the centre of the leader's battle to win the next election.

5.3 Leadership is a foundation

UPPER SPACE is another master scenario that is common in political discourse. Goatly (2006:26) points to four metaphorical constructions of this type that carry positive meanings: GOOD IS HIGH, IMPORTANCE/STATUS IS HIGH, ACHIEVEMENT/SUCCESS IS HIGH, and POWER/CONTROL IS ABOVE. He also notes that the converse is true: movement downwards connotes failure (e.g. falling, crashing, and collapsing). This is echoed by L'Hôte and Lemmens (2009), who demonstrate the prevalence of the broad metaphor COMPLEX ENTITIES ARE VERTICAL STRUCTURES in new Labour discourse. More specific metaphors within this domain include THE NATION IS A BUILDING (under construction), SOCIAL ORGANISATION IS A STRUCTURE, SOCIAL MOBILITY IS A LADDER, and POLITICIANS ARE ARCHITECTS. In the leadership takeover speeches, two variations of the SOLID FOUNDATIONS metaphor emerged: one referring to the legacy of previous leaders, upon which things are built, and another referring to society as a structure, which can be enhanced or degraded by actions in the political sphere.

Let us consider PAST LEADERS ARE FOUNDATIONS first. Former leaders can be safely invoked in a deposal speech when they are venerable figures from the distant past, as in the following statement by Julia Gillard:

- (15) I give credit to the Labor giants, Bob Hawke and Paul Keating, as THE ARCHITECTS of today's modern prosperity.

But when *rival* party leaders are mentioned, the metaphors assume an internal orientation and their affective function comes into play. An example is Rudd #1's praise of the rival he has just vanquished:

- (16) He has also in the last two years of his leadership left me as the new Leader with A SOLID POLICY FOUNDATION ON WHICH TO BUILD. And I thank him for that.

The metaphor is internally-oriented, but with a positive spin. It suggests that the party continues to "build" in spite of leadership changes. However, parties can also be brought down by internal strife. By the time Rudd deposed Gillard to regain the Prime Ministership, the Australian public had tired of leadership coups and Rudd acknowledged that political legitimacy was crumbling:

- (17) There's been AN EROSION of trust.

He elaborated on the need to rebuild faith, but naturally did not refer to his own actions as part of the problem.

Invoking SOCIETY AS A STRUCTURE allows a new leader to portray him/herself as the necessary individual to build or protect that structure and/or its vital elements, thereby legitimizing the takeover. Thus Rudd#1 spoke of “the actual FABRIC of our Federation” which was “not often talked about in this country but is critical” and the “DEEP STRUCTURAL SHIFTS UNDERWAY in how our STRUCTURE and system of government is working”. A visionary leader, this suggests, is one who knows the structure in the way an engineer or architect does, and can be trusted to maintain, repair or reform it. For Malcolm Turnbull – a politician in the neoliberal mould and recognised as a successful businessman before entering politics – it is “free trade agreements” that “represent some of the KEY FOUNDATIONS of our future prosperity”. For Gillard, coming from a traditional Labor background, it is the potential destruction of socialist reforms under a conservative government which justify her drastic actions:

(18) I love this country and I was not going to sit idly by and watch an incoming Opposition CUT education, CUT health and SMASH rights at work.

In either case – progressive or conservative – the leader portrays him/herself as the preserver of the foundations that s/he perceives to be the essential underpinnings of the state. The foundations are so important, that their safeguarding overrides any suggestion that self-advancement is actually the motive for party takeover.

Another leader, Latham, used the “RUNGS OF OPPORTUNITY” as an extended metaphor throughout his speech. As a Labor leader he, like Gillard, construes life as a process of upward progression with an active role for Government:

(19) I believe in AN UPWARDLY MOBILE SOCIETY where people can CLIMB THE RUNGS OF OPPORTUNITY, CLIMBING THE LADDER OF OPPORTUNITY to a better life for themselves and their family. [...] And the problem in Australia that we've got at the moment is the Howard Government has TAKEN OUT TOO MANY OF THE RUNGS. It has TAKEN OUT TOO MANY RUNGS. I want to PUT THEM BACK IN. [...] [M]y aim as the new Labor leader [...] will be to PUT THE RUNGS OF HEALTH CARE, EDUCATION, EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT, DECENT SERVICES back into that LADDER OF OPPORTUNITY.

This is an externally-oriented metaphorical framework that has obvious appeal, as it casts John Howard's ruling conservatives into the role of destroyers of the social ladder and thwarters of opportunity for ordinary, hard-working people. As with all metaphors, though, part of their power comes from what they obscure as much as what they illuminate. A neoliberal leader might well argue that Latham's ladder would be too expensive and high taxing, or that social mobility is better facilitated by encouraging business growth.

A final point is that the commonality of social mobility metaphors across both this study and that of L'Hôte and Lemmens (2009) casts doubt on Lakoff's (2004) claim that left-wing politicians tend to lack well-developed and effective metaphorical frames when compared to those of the right. It may be that this is truer of the American political context where public health and social welfare are less widely accepted than they are in the UK and Australia, amongst other places.

5.4 Leadership is physical labour

This metaphor scenario is not as prominent in the data as the other three mentioned above, but is nevertheless worthy of comment. It is offered here partly because it does appear in the deposal speeches, but also to canvas the hypothesis that the broader scenario POLITICS IS PHYSICAL LABOUR is a recurring metaphorical frame in political discourse. While the latter claim cannot be proven in the present paper, it would make an interesting avenue of further research into the metaphors that politicians use.

The first issue for the analyst of the source domain PHYSICAL LABOUR is whether the word ‘work’ actually carries a degree of metaphoricity. When we say we ‘work hard’ we do not always mean that we literally expend physical energy. Work can be an activity of the mind or body, although sometimes we explicitly invoke metaphors from the source domain of PHYSICAL LABOUR to signal that our work is highly taxing, as when we say ‘I’ve been SLAVING AWAY for hours over that report’.

In the deposal speeches, the word ‘work’ features prominently in the texts of four Labor leaders. This makes sense: any national Labor leader is, ultimately, the supreme representative of the country’s working people. Blue collar toil is a core value signalled in the party’s very name – a party that is the political arm of the union movement. For these reasons it is not unreasonable to suspect that Labor politicians intend some connotation with physical labour (not to mention their traditional base, the so-called working class) when using the word ‘work’. Moreover, this meaning is more ‘basic’ or ‘concrete’ in MIP terms. It is also worth noting that all politicians are keen to deflect the accusation that they do not work hard for their constituents. Internal party machinations can give the impression that politicians are more concerned with their own interests than with those of the general public.

Turning to specific usages in the data, there are eight instances of “WORK(ING) HARD” in Mark Latham’s speech as well as associated colloquialisms such as “getting stuck in” and “having a go”. This degree of repetition suggests Latham is aware of the positive resonances to be derived from the hard work theme. Similarly, the rhetorically weighted final sentence of Gillard’s speech - her ‘take home message’ for the audience - is:

(20) On every day, I will be WORKING MY ABSOLUTE HARDEST for you.

Along similar lines, Rudd#1’s rhetorically weighted *opening* sentence is

(21) So now the new and THE REAL WORK begins.

Rudd#1 also pledges “to DELIVER a new policy agenda for the nation and in the weeks and months ahead we will be SLEEVES ROLLED UP doing that”. Moreover, in Rudd’s second deposal speech he describes economic policy work during his initial Prime Ministerial term as

(22) WORKING IN THE TRENCHES day in and day out, night in, night out, here in Canberra, WORKING TOGETHER to prevent this country from rolling into the global economic recession and avoiding mass unemployment.

We can note that these are all externally-oriented metaphors. They do not refer to defeated rivals or internal party brawling, but rather to the tough endeavours that the new leaders pledge to undertake to ensure that good government is carried out selflessly and reliably, for the good of the people. The metaphors paint a picture of administrations focussed on industriousness over self-advancement and diligence over deceit. Only further research on metaphors in political discourse can confirm the stability or otherwise of the POLITICS/LEADERSHIP IS PHYSICAL LABOUR scenario more generally.

To conclude this section, Table 2 presents an overview of the four metaphor scenarios discussed so far, including a list of “inferences” (Musolff 2016:30) that can be expected to flow from them.

Table 2. Overview of key metaphor scenarios.

Metaphor Scenario	Orientation	Example	Inferences
Leadership is direction	Internal	I believed that a good government was LOSING ITS WAY.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nation/Government is on a journey. • Leaders are guides or drivers of the journey or direction. • Nations/governments/political parties should be moving forward. • Leaders cannot be idle bystanders if direction is wayward.
	External	Our belief is that Australia has reached a FORK IN THE ROAD.	
Leadership is conflict	Internal	We have sometimes been SPARRING PARTNERS, but we have mostly been friends.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Politics is a blood sport. • Wounds must be healed after leadership contests. • Leadership aspirants are fighters.

	External	You cannot win an election without A FIGHT.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflicts can be clean or dirty. • Ideas can be fought for.
Leadership is a foundation	Internal	He has also in the last two years of his leadership left me as the new Leader with A SOLID POLICY FOUNDATION ON WHICH TO BUILD.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Past leaders lay solid foundations for a party or nation. • Certain services, laws, rights, policies and principles constitute the foundations of a nation's well-being. • Political opponents can destroy the nation's foundations and must be stopped. • Bold leaders understand that structural reform is necessary for progress.
	External	I was not going to sit idly by and watch an incoming Opposition CUT education, CUT health and SMASH rights at work.	
Leadership is physical labour	Internal	(not observed in the data)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good leader is a hard worker. • The people are the boss – the leader works for them.
	External	Our purpose through that is to DELIVER a new policy agenda for the nation and	

		in the weeks and months ahead we will be SLEEVES ROLLED UP doing that.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A leadership change is only the beginning of hard work.
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6. Novel Metaphors

As mentioned earlier, the discourse systematicity and local systematicity of metaphors are equally valid perspectives (Charteris-Black 2014) on metaphor variation. But when reporting on metaphors within specific genres of political communication, there is a temptation to catalogue only those that occur most frequently. However, in doing so we run the risk of failing to account for highly effective metaphors that do not ‘fit’ the metaphor scenarios that recur within certain genres of political communication. To put it another way, ‘most frequent’ does not necessarily equate to ‘highest impact’ when evaluating metaphors in public language. Any account of metaphor variation must consider those that are novel as well as those that appear regularly.

One reason is that the more conventional a metaphor becomes, the more it can “deaden political awareness” (Billig and Macmillan 2005:459). A figurative item may cease to be processed as a metaphor due to overuse. At the other extreme are novel and/or deliberate metaphors which are “explicitly used to present one’s conceptualization of a given issue” (Perrez and Reuchamps 2015:169) and may “trigger people’s processing of a metaphor *as* a deliberately used device” (Steen 2015:68).

A second reason is that political discourse is *mediated* (Fairclough 2003) – filtered by various forms of media – and therefore most people only receive pre-selected sound bites of politicians’ communications. In a book-length critique of contemporary political communication, a senior minister under Prime Ministers Rudd and Gillard lamented that simplicity and novelty are keys to having one’s message projected to the outer world by the media, and that nuanced, detailed explanations of issues and policies are unlikely to be understood, let alone heard (Tanner 2011).

With these thoughts in mind, one may expect to find a significant number of novel metaphors in the data set. However, this was not the case: only one significant example could be identified in the corpus. In 2006, new Labor leader Kevin Rudd used his deporal speech to make the following claim:

(23) When I travel the length and breadth of this country and talk to working families everywhere as Julia and I did the other day in my electorate in Brisbane, people ask this question: they are concerned about their KIDS BECOMING GUINEA PIGS in THIS NEW DANGEROUS EXPERIMENT of John Howard's, which he calls *Work Choices*.

Howard had introduced workplace relations reforms ('Work Choices') that many viewed as putting too much power in the hands of employers over employees. Political commentators now regard this overreach as a major reason he lost office after a decade in power. Rudd's framing of the issue directly hit at Howard's traditional strong suit – family values. The metaphor reframed Howard from a protective grandfatherly figure into a clinical authoritarian whose main concern was big business. Far from being a conservative - a leader who can be trusted to *maintain* institutions - Howard was now cast as the conductor of a "dangerous experiment" on that most sacred of institutions, the family, even using "kids" as "guinea pigs".

Rudd's use of a vivid and original metaphor in this passage does not fit any of the conventional categories discussed in this chapter but is all the stronger for that. He conjured an image that has much greater 'sound bite potential' than either non-metaphorical or

conventional metaphorical language. The utility of cut-through messages such as these is therefore another important factor when accounting for metaphor variation in political discourse, and it is surprising that political communicators have not made greater use of them, at least in the corpus analysed in this study.

7. Conclusion

We now return to the central question of this book: what drives metaphor variation? For this paper, it is primarily the context-specific function of the generic speech situation which determines the kinds of metaphor scenarios that are engaged by political actors. We have focussed here on party leadership takeovers, which are a recurrent and highly newsworthy fact of life in Westminster party democracies. Such events demand rhetorical address because ‘backstage’ transfers of power raise issues of legitimacy, and new leaders have a momentary opportunity of national exposure to explain their actions and display their credentials. What then are the legitimacy issues faced by the new leaders? In effect, the recurrent metaphor scenarios answer this question for us.

First, when leaders are overthrown, there must be question marks over the direction of the party, the Government or even the nation itself. If there were no such questions, why would a change of leader be necessary? With this in mind, metaphors related to DIRECTIONS, PATHS, JOURNEYS, and PURPOSEFUL FORWARD MOVEMENT are recurrent. Variation is further driven by the speaker’s focus: whether it be the direction of his/her own party (an internal focus) or the direction of the nation led by an opposition party (an external focus). We may also speculate whether ideological orientation can further drive variation. It may be, for example,

that metaphors of BRINGING EVERYONE ON THE JOURNEY are more characteristic of leftist politicians.

A leader's legitimacy is also eroded when doubt emerges over unity within a party. This can never be more so than in the wake of a leadership contest. For this reason, metaphors alluding to CONFLICT recur in deposal speeches. Again, they can vary along the internal/external axis. When internal, metaphors typically have the purpose of smoothing over intra-party disputes, and when external, they may constitute a rallying cry against an opposition party. The size of victory in the leadership contest (see Table 1) may also bear on the extent to which unity/conflict metaphors are invoked.

Legitimacy can also be undermined if there is a perception that the foundations upon which society is built are unsound or under threat. Just as a party or Government cannot afford to be seen as disunited, so too it cannot be viewed as unstable. New leaders have the opportunity to (re)assert the familiar and trusted foundations upon which their platform rests. They may applaud the legacy of previous leaders (including a vanquished opponent) to establish a sense of continuity and override the perception of reckless incoherence that a party purge can engender. When externally oriented, blame for SOCIETY'S CRUMBLING FOUNDATIONS can be laid at the feet of other parties and other parties' leaders. A counter variation is that of the LEADER AS STRUCTURAL REFORMER – s/he who is visionary and courageous enough to institute fundamental change. We can also expect variation along ideological lines. What constitutes a foundation will vary between progressives (universal health care, free education etc.) and conservatives (low taxes, free enterprise etc.). The mechanisms by which citizens SCALE THE SOCIAL EDIFICE may also vary metaphorically. Labor leaders, for example, see it as the Government's role to provide the ladders and steps that assist people in raising their socioeconomic status.

Finally, the legitimacy of politicians is continually questioned in relation to their work ethic and professional integrity. Who do they really work for: themselves or the people? Are they showered with benefits or enslaved by the unforgiving grind of public life? This paper suggests that politicians' sensitiveness to this issue is a possible generator of metaphors about work, particularly for Labor politicians who purport to represent the proverbial working man or woman.

While it is useful and necessary to account for emergent metaphor scenarios within a recurrent genre, no two contexts are the same. Each leadership takeover occurs in a unique context of interpersonal rivalries, varying levels of support, issues of the day, and sociocultural conditions. Therefore, the impact of a single completely fresh metaphor may be more noteworthy than a speaker's selection of a chain of more-or-less conventionalised ones, as in Rudd's 'social experiment' metaphor. The Macquarie Dictionary's choice of a political metaphor as the 2015 Word of the Year demonstrates that metaphors have the power to effortlessly illuminate political machinations in the public mind. How this occurs will continue to be an important task for scholars of political language.

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This list is presented to match the order of historical events (i.e. Table 1).

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