

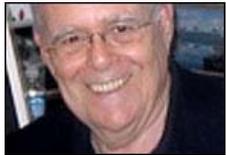
# The Washington Post

## On Leadership



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Exploring Leadership in the News with Steven Pearlstein and Raju Narisetti



### Michael Maccoby

SCHOLAR

Michael Maccoby is an anthropologist and psychoanalyst globally recognized as an expert on leadership. He is the author of [The Leaders We Need, And What Makes Us Follow](#).

### VIDEO: On Leadership



#### Game time with Ted Leonsis

The Washington Capitals and Wizards owner talks running two of the city's most "public" private companies, and the importance of being transparent with fans.

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## Leading a divided public

Q: New Jersey's new Republican governor, Chris Christie, has forced cutbacks in pay for teachers and superintendents, capped local property taxes, cut pension benefits for state workers, canceled popular public works projects and closed a \$11 billion state budget deficit. Yet in spite of these highly controversial initiatives and a blunt speaking style, his popularity in a heavily Democratic state is rising. What is the lesson here for other political leaders?

Gov. Chris Christie of New Jersey is a polarizing leader. His supporters applaud his attack on the state's deficit at the expense of teachers and state employees. But according to a recent poll by the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University, 52 percent of New Jersey voters say Christie is doing a poor job.

Republican voters throughout America want governors like Christie to take on what they consider bloated wages and benefits of public employees. Of course, those who benefit from the status quo and/or believe the economy needs more government spending oppose this kind of leadership.

Given these extreme differences in thinking about policy, not only by the public but also by experts, I cannot imagine a leadership appeal that would unite the country. The differences are too deeply rooted in different values and economic interests. If the economy improves and many more Americans find jobs, the public may again respond to leadership that unites more of us with a common vision.

By Michael Maccoby

| October 12, 2010; 11:42 AM ET

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