



Monkeys and Political Leaders

The Seven Rules to Every
Human-Simian Society

Kenneth Szulczyk

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I packed my suitcases and moved to northern Malaysia to escape the cruel, fruitless U.S. job market in 2012. I began teaching at a university that is literally located in the middle of a lush jungle, teeming with life. The campus sits in an elongated valley between two tall hills, and my house is perched atop of one of the hills overlooking the campus. My neighborhood is 10 bungalows connected by a winding tarmac road with dark, dense forests, bordering all sides.

The wild life often slithers out of the forest and crosses the front and back yards of my house. The jungles are full of a great variety of snakes, birds, and lizards. Unfortunately, the tiny geckos invaded my house, while a large two-foot monitor scavenges for food in the backyard. Occasionally, as the sun sets, I glimpse from a window at a dark heavy boar that grazes off the grass near the fence in the backyard. I heard the jungle is filled with red and black scorpions, but I have not seen them yet. However, the monsoon rains that begin in October will drive them to seek shelter in the cool, dry house.

Most days the jungle is quiet. In the morning, the magpies, flycatchers, and swallows chirp and whistle a cacophonous chorus, while another unidentified bird emits elongated whooping sounds. Then as dusk approaches, the small Gecko lizards that infested the house chirp. They come out at night to eat the various insects that flew or crawled into the house. They remain hidden behind the curtains and light fixtures. Their constant chirping alerts their presence, while their excrement litters the floors near the walls. Unfortunately, they never defecate in the same spot, spreading their wastes evenly around the house.

On some days, the jungle is noisy, as the long-tail macaque monkeys invade the quietness and solitude of the jungle. They are quite mischievous, intelligent little creatures with a mentality of an unsupervised three-year-old child. The monkeys have brown fur on their backs, while white fur covers their bellies. Subsequently, they have long, skinny tails that dangle a couple of feet behind them. The small, young monkeys have a crop of reddish-brown hair that sticks up like a Mohawk, signaling their youthfulness and defiance of authority. The biggest monkey, the alpha monkey, stands nearly two feet tall, is usually in a foul mood, and is not afraid to chase away the humans.

When the monkeys arrive, pandemonium breaks out. Monkeys swing along branches on the trees, causing a rainfall of leaves and branches to fall upon the ground. Other monkeys swing on the telephone wires that dangle between the telephone poles. They pull laundry off the clotheslines and litter the rooftops. One monkey keeps turning the outdoor water faucet on, wasting fresh water, while another monkey steals any objects from the porch that I accidentally left out. Occasionally, I lose the signal for my satellite TV, as a monkey sits in his satellite dish, while his curious mind examines the microwave sensor.

My initial encounter with the monkeys occurred when I placed my garbage in the trash can during my first week at the university. Once I returned home, I stood in awe, as I stared at the mayhem in front of my house. The monkeys threw and scattered all my garbage across and along the street. The monkeys chewed opened every food container and licked them clean. They chewed open all the water bottles and drank every drop of water. They even licked the butter and yogurt containers dry, as these mischievous little creatures tried to quench their voracious appetites.

I looked around for the troublemakers, but the jungle was quiet. Then I walked around and picked up each remnant of garbage, returning it to the trash can. Once I finished, I headed toward the house to retire for the night. Before I walked through the front door, I turned around and searched the surrounding jungle. Except for the incessant chirping of the geckos, the jungle was quiet, as the sun faded into dark bands of red and orange.

As I walked to work the next morning, I stood at the end of my driveway, and stared in disbelief at the garbage and debris that littered the street in front of the house. The monkeys returned! Then I noticed a trail of garbage led into the dark forest directly across the street, where the garbage bandits fled from the crime scene.

The monkeys forced me to change my habits. I no longer place garbage into the trash can. Instead, I run out to catch the waste-disposal truck, as it lurches and staggers up the hill through my neighborhood with its transmission whining and groaning.

The workers usually come early in the morning, and they honk the horn, as a courtesy, to alert the residents.

The monkeys do not discriminate. They raid everyone's garbage, littering the neighborhood with debris and garbage.

Then I safely toss my garbage into the back of the truck, and away from the monkeys' prying hands and their need to litter the environment with garbage.

After several weeks, I noticed a troop of 30 monkeys would hang out at my neighbor's house in the backyard early in the morning and towards dusk. The neighbor loves to feed the monkeys and places an assortment of foods on the concrete patio in the backyard.

At first, I was hesitant to feed the little beasts. They are intelligent creatures, who would camp out near their food source, like an extended stay of a mooching, jobless relative. Nevertheless, one day, I had an apple and orange that were on the verge of spoiling. I decided to give the old fruit to the monkeys, instead of letting it go to waste.

I opened the door to my backyard, and walked to the back of the house to peer at the monkeys, who were around the corner. I yelled, "Hey monkeys!"

Many curious heads turned and noticed a new human presence, while several young monkeys quickly dashed into the trees to hide from the unfamiliar human.

I tossed an apple to a monkey that was standing nearby.

He eagerly grabbed that apple and ran towards the front yard, separating himself from the group.

Then I tossed an orange to another monkey, and he eagerly caught the orange and quickly ran to the front yard, escaping the jealous snatches and frustrated cries that emanated from the other monkeys.

I returned into the house, and looked through the front kitchen window.

A monkey sat on a fence post in the front yard, and enjoyed his orange in peace. He did not intend to share his orange with anyone. Although monkeys depend on a troop for strength and support, they are quite selfish little creatures that lead to Rule 1.

Rule 1: It's a dog eats dog world out there. We are selfish creatures, who hide our gains and windfalls from others, and

greedily consume them in privacy away from the sorrow, jealous eyes of others.

I became hooked and started to feed the monkeys.

I did not know how intelligent they were at that time, but I discovered they spoke a language. Sometimes, as I walked home from the university, I noticed several monkeys would come down to the university campus to raid the trash bins and trash cans.

When I walked by, the monkeys recognized me out of the sea of human faces who walked down the sidewalk. Then they articulated a particular squawking sound.

After several months, I recognized this squawk was a word that stood for me. Every time they saw me, they repeated a particular squawk among themselves, which I hoped meant nice human and not an idiot.

Then I began laying out a pile of cookies, crackers, or fruit for the monkeys, placing them on the driveway under the carport.

A monkey would notice the pile of food, and he would come over to investigate. Next, he squawked a different sound, which, of course, meant food. Afterwards, he greedily placed one cracker in his mouth, and grabbed two crackers in each hand, and hobbled away to enjoy his meal in peace before the others arrived.

Then several minutes later, the whole troop of 30 monkeys would sit under the carport and fight for the remaining food.

Subsequently, I learned the monkeys had a pecking order, forming a hierarchical society. Every troop has an alpha monkey, who is the leader, or in Machiavellian terms, a dictator, a king, or a strong president. He is the strongest, and the most aggressive monkey, who gets the best sleeping place, the first dibs at food, and his choice of a harem of female monkeys.

Then the king monkey forms alliances with the other strong male monkeys who keep the discipline and order within the group. These monkeys are his cabinet or government. They get the second choice, when it comes to sleeping spots, food, and females. Finally, the remaining monkeys are the small males and females who are dead last in everything, whom we call the 99%. Unfortunately, the monkeys formed a rigid caste system, and the lower caste monkeys get to pick through the leftovers and

remnants of food after the leader, and his cronies devour their shares.

I did not realize it at the time, but when I first fed the two monkeys the apple and orange, they were the lower caste monkeys, who stood patiently on the periphery of the group, waiting for their chance at the food.

The leader and his henchmen were too busy scrounging for food at the neighbor's house, and they did not notice my gifts to the bottom caste monkeys.

The lower caste monkeys were smart enough to enjoy their good fortunate and move away from the watchful eye of their leader. Unfortunately, the monkeys and possibly me could have been in big trouble with the leader, because he gets everything first. His wrath is ferocious, if his rule is violated.

I experimented and gave different types of food to the monkeys, watching their response from the window. For example, I bought a new juicing machine, and began drinking homemade fruit juices. I bought that juicer, so the fresh minerals and vitamins could replenish my aging body, keeping it strong and vigorous. When I was young, I could dash past old age, keeping it at bay, despite the constant diet of fast food. Unfortunately, old age somehow caught up to me, and it is earnestly kicking my butt.

One morning, I cleaned and diced four large, thick carrots, and fed them into the juicer.

The juicer whined and moaned angrily, as the juicer finely shredded the carrots and extracted the juice. Unfortunately, carrot pulp is heavy and sticky, clumping to the sides of the juicer.

I removed the juicer cover, and scooped the pulp with my hands and slung it into a plastic bag. Carrots surprisingly have a lot of juice, which I poured into a large pitcher.

Then I put the machine back together, and cleaned and sliced four red delicious apples.

The slicer continued to groan as it pulverized the apples into tiny pieces. Then the centrifuge extracted the juice, and spun the remains into the pulp dispenser. The apple juice turned a brownish hue from the exposure to the humid jungle air.

Then I peeled four sweet navel oranges, and sliced them into halves, feeding them into the juicer one by one.

The juicer did not whine and groan, as it rapidly ate the oranges and spit out the juices, adding more pulp to the dispenser.

I removed the pulp container, pinched a small wad of orange and apple pulp, and tasted it. Although it was dry, it had a sweet taste. I felt bad about throwing the pulp into the garbage, because it weighed at least a pound.

Then I thought of the monkeys who scampered and played in the backyard. I placed the apple and orange pulp onto an old plastic cookie tray, and happily carried the pulp to the backyard.

I noticed several branches of the trees shook and leaves fell to the ground, as the monkeys jumped from branch to branch. Other monkeys were sitting on the wire fence, while one monkey was swinging on a cable that dangled from the telephone pole.

I placed the tray in the center of the backyard.

Monkeys are naturally curious, and they noticed my presence. They turned and observed the tray, but they did not approach it until I was back in the house.

Then I looked out the bedroom window at the backyard.

The alpha monkey, the leader, came over to examine the pulp. He looked at it, and sniffed it. Then he dumped the tray over, and sniffed the pulp again. Finally, he reached in, grabbed a handful, and tasted it.

He raised his eyebrow in surprise, and his expression was, "What the hell?" Then he slung the pulp down to the ground, and ran away. The leader and his cronies were not interested.

Once the alpha monkey was 10 feet away, the young, lower caste monkeys came over, and started to eat the pulp, which supports the second rule.

Rule 2: The leader and his top members do not eat crap. They save the crap for the rest, who occupy the bottom rungs of the social ladder. Therefore, the leader, king, or president gets his first choice at living accommodations, food, and sex, while his henchmen come second. Unfortunately, the rest competes and fights each other for the leftovers, trash, and wastes that the leader and his cronies kindly leave behind.

An Irish professor, who lives down the street, invited me for dinner in town.

I eagerly jumped at the chance to get out of the jungle, and enjoy some good Chinese food in the heart of civilization, and away from the humid dense jungles that surround my house.

As I climbed out of the car, I noticed a brown, oblong turd planted dead center on top of the car's roof.

I asked, "Man, why do you have crap on top of your car?"

"I had trouble with those damn monkeys," he said with ire wavering in his voice.

"What? What happened?" My curiosity began escalating, since I was growing fond of the hairy little beasts.

"The monkeys were climbing on the roof the other day, making noise, and breaking the roof tiles, so I went outside and chased them away."

I understood his concern, because Malaysia is a tropical country. Many people use clay terra-cotta tiles to cover their roofs. Once the tiles age, they become brittle and easily break when something walks over them, like a monkey playing on a roof.

"Damn, so they came back, and crapped on your car," I retorted, as astonishment punctuated the pitch of my voice.

"They also crapped on my door mat, and knocked over my flower pots outside," he added in disgust.

I was amazed at the level of mischievousness and cleverness of the monkeys, but we, humans, act exactly in the same manner.

On that fateful day, the humans and monkeys had a territorial dispute, and the monkeys struck back. The monkeys did not drop missiles that contained a nuclear warhead or chemical agents, or shoot at their enemies with grenades and bullets; they inconveniently left their feces at the most inopportune places, making sure the human received the message. Bodily waste products scream disrespect in any language, which brings Rule 3.

Rule 3: We strike first, and then ask questions later. Hence, the leader rallies his troops and citizens to retaliate and fight against any outside threats without logic, reason, or diplomacy. The art of war is to protect our sensitive, over sheltered ego.

I did not have any problems with the monkeys. Besides, I was hooked, and enjoyed feeding the little rascals my old fruit, cookies, and crackers.

One day, I stood under the house's overhang in the back corner.

Then I took a large sugar cracker, and hurled it like a Frisbee, trying to feed the small monkeys and the nursing mothers. I deliberately hurled the crackers away from the large adult monkeys, because they would greedily eat all the sugar crackers and not share it with the young ones.

Before I knew what happened, several monkeys surrounded me. They eagerly fought each other for the crackers, and squeaked angrily among themselves. On the roof over my head, several monkeys formed a single line.

I tossed several crackers on the roof.

One cracker landed at the feet of a small female monkey. She squealed loudly, but only stared at the cracker.

A large male monkey stood threateningly near her, forbidding her from enjoying that sugar cracker.

The female monkey continued to squeal as she stared sadly at the cracker near her feet, which leads to Rule 4.

Rule 4: The male species are bigger and stronger than the females. Consequently, the males control, dominate, and suppress the females, holding the females hostage to a male's testosterone-driven fantasies, whims, and notions.

I continued to whiz crackers in various directions, trying to distribute the sugar crackers equally to the troop. I did not know it, but I was imposing democracy and equality on a Machiavellian driven society.

The alpha monkey, the leader, was becoming angry and aggressive.

I whirled a sugar cracker to the far left in the backyard.

A small monkey quickly grabbed the cracker, and scampered up the nearest tree.

The alpha monkey was furious, as he ran to the base of the tree, and squawked angrily at the young monkey.

I hurled another cracker dead center.

Another young monkey grabbed the cracker, and headed up to the nearest tree, escaping the ire of the alpha monkey.

As the leader scampered several feet up the tree, the mother of the baby monkey leaped up the tree to protect her young one.

The alpha monkey was furious, because the young monkeys were defiling his authority. He gets the first crack at the food source, while the young ones get the leftovers. Then he started to approach me.

I tossed him a couple of crackers to appease him, but he ignored them.

He approached me slowly, and menacingly, and continued to squeal a low guttural sound. Then he crawled under a bush that was near me, and he emerged near my feet.

I started to back away slowly, keeping my eyes on the little bugger.

The alpha monkey continued to follow me. He stayed low to the ground, and like a dog, he was on his hands and feet. He hopped in my direction and growled an angry squawk.

As I turned the corner to the house, I picked up my pace and ran for the front door.

After I walked briskly ten feet, the alpha monkey backed off, and returned to his troop. He won the battle that day, but he may not realize it; he lost the war. I am not so eager to feed the monkeys anymore, which leads to the next rule.

Rule 5: The leader is determined to keep his status quo, and squashes any challenges to his rule, even if the status quo harms and starves his subjects.

Although I tell myself that I will not feed the monkeys, I always cave in.

In the morning, I open the front door to let the fresh air in. Then I sit on the couch in the living room and work on my laptop.

Occasionally, several young monkeys pop their heads up against the screen door, with serious, hungry faces and sad little eyes. They know how to implore the stupid humans.

On other days, a nursing mother monkey with her little one will peek in through the screen door. The baby monkeys are covered with black fur, and have peach-color humanoid faces.

They cling to their mother's underbelly, and swivel their heads back and forth, as their curious eyes observe the world around them. The baby monkeys are so cute, especially, when the mother is eating a cookie or cracker, and the baby turns its head upward to nibble on a corner.

Then I cave in, grab some food, and place the food outside the door, although the leader is lurking around the corner, waiting for first dibs at the food.

Unfortunately, the leader and I continue to have squabbles. He chased me into the house several times, while once I lunged a flowerpot at him. On another occasion, I chased him across the backyard while madly swinging a rake.

Sometimes the leader sits on a fence post in the backyard, observing my house. He is a general who is plotting an invasion into the kitchen, to replenish the troop with supplies. The monkeys are known to open the windows and screens, and enter a house, stealing as much food as possible.

A contentious, recurring issue, the leader and I have, is when he catches me feeding Gabby. The leader will even charge and strike at the screen door angrily, so I cannot not wedge food at the top of the screen door for Gabby.

Gabby is my favorite monkey, who is a member of the lower caste. The other monkeys, unfortunately, do not hesitate to push Gabby around and steal his food. Consequently, Gabby climbs on the screen door and sits on the roof of the carport; his mouth continually opens and closes, as if he is eating invisible food. Occasionally, a neurotic twitch convulses through his body.

Gabby is either highly neurotic or has brain damage, because the leader punished him one too many times. The leader's punishment is severe, as he sits on a young monkey's upper back, pinning him firmly on the concrete driveway, and then the leader begins biting him on the head. The leader is merciless, cruel, and extreme, when he believes a monkey has violated his decree, or challenges his authority.

Fortunately, Gabby is a survivor, and he is smart. Once the other monkeys are somewhere else, playing in the trees, Gabby sneaks slyly away from the group, and comes to the front door.

I usually give him something special, like M&Ms, a slice of pineapple, or a slice of bread with a lather of sweetened condensed

milk spread evenly across it. Unfortunately, the leader is catching on.

I do not mind feeding the monkeys who live near my house. Nevertheless, I wish they would not litter and trash their environment. When I feed them, I usually remove the packaging and plastic, and place the food directly outside. However, the little buggers carry food packaging and trash for miles, and kindly deposit it on my yard for me to pick it up. Furthermore, I wish that monkey who keeps turning on the water faucet would at least turn it off when he is done.

Then I notice the monkeys persistently squander resources. Numerous mango trees grow throughout my neighborhood. Once the fruit ripens, a monkey bites into a mango and then tosses it to the ground. Subsequently, they grab another, and repeat the process, which leads to the next rule.

Rule 6: We have no tendency to conserve or to save our resources, as we plunder, waste, and pollute our environment. We party like there is no tomorrow, even if hard times loom over the next horizon.

Every day, when I peer out my window, I notice the size of the troop is becoming larger. Their squawks, squeals, and screeches become angrier.

The leader is having more difficulty in keeping his troop in line.

Occasionally, a fight breaks out in the backyard. Three monkeys are on their hands and feet like dogs, charging at one another.

Unfortunately, the storm clouds of a revolution are gathering over the horizon. Eventually, the neighbor and I will teach at another university, and will leave the monkeys behind to fend for themselves. Their world will be thrown into chaos, as a food shortage rips a tear through their society.

Then the young monkeys, the 99%, will thrust their angry fists into the air and rebel against the leader and his henchmen. Maybe they are not evolved enough to hurl screams of rights and democracy at the leader. Their minds need a few thousand more

years of evolution before they comprehend the ideas of John Lock or Thomas Jefferson.

A new monkey, nevertheless, will rise up to become the brand-new leader who will steer the monkeys along a fresh path. The cycle of leadership will start a new rotation, which bring us to the last rule.

Rule 7: Although monkeys are distant cousins on the evolutionary branches on the tree of life, we, humans, sure act like a bunch of monkeys.

The only hope of humanity is to suppress our monkey urges from our primordial minds, and we evolve into a better society that transgresses these seven rules of society. Then we begin the new path where we truly apply the ideas of liberty, equality, and fraternity, and not merely preach them.