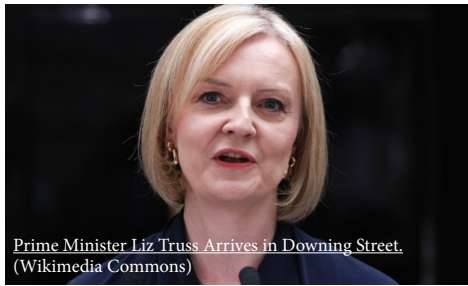


# Understanding and Explaining Bad Leadership:

## The Strange Case of Prime Minister Liz Truss

Dr Mark Bennister



Prime Minister Liz Truss Arrives in Downing Street, (Wikimedia Commons)

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Room 301, Building 10,  
Sophia University

In person only

No registration necessary

'Bad leadership along with bad followership is a disease, a social disease still begging to be addressed.' (Kellerman 2024)

What is bad leadership? This may seem like a simple and rather subjective question however it is a particularly urgent question to ask in the current climate. It is also one that the leadership studies industry has tended to shy away from. The obvious exception is the extensive work on bad leadership by Barbara Kellerman. To help recognise bad leadership Kellerman famously made the distinction between ineffective and unethical leadership, whereby bad leadership is enabled by bad followership. Political institutions in liberal democracies are supposedly designed to make sure that the most unsuitable candidates for high office are prevented from winning public office. But why does bad leadership seem more prevalent and more destructive now in liberal democracies? Utilising Kellerman's conceptual framework I analyse the phases of bad leadership in the brief 49-day tenure of Liz Truss as UK Prime Minister in 2022. In doing so I ask what we can learn about contemporary bad leadership and whether there is treatment for the disease.

**Dr Mark Bennister** is an experienced academic researcher researching comparative political leadership, prime ministerial power, governance, and accountability in parliament. He is the author of [Prime Ministers in Power: Political Leadership in Britain and Australia](#), (2012, Palgrave) and (with Ben Worthy and Paul 't Hart) [The Leadership Capital Index: New Perspectives on Political Leadership](#) (2017, Oxford University Press). Mark was Associate Professor of Politics at the University of Lincoln in the School of Social and Political Sciences and Reader at Canterbury Christ Church University. He was the founder Director of the *Lincoln Policy Hub* and the *Lincoln Parliamentary Research Centre* (ParliLinc). Mark was a UK House of Commons Academic Fellow (2016-19), researching the Prime Minister's appearances before the Liaison Committee. Mark has a practitioner background as Executive Officer at the Australian High Commission in London and as a parliamentary researcher. He is currently a policy consultant and trainer, a Visiting Reader at Queen Mary, University of London, and an Affiliate Research Fellow at the Bennett Institute for Public Policy, University of Cambridge.

This talk is organized by Tina Burrett (Professor of Political Science, Sophia University).

