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# THE STUDY OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

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It is a lesser question for the partisans of democracy to find means of governing the people than to get the people to choose the men most capable of governing.

ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE, in a letter to John Stuart Mill.

Politics by leadership is one of the distinguishing features of the twentieth century. If the eighteenth century enunciated popular sovereignty and direct democracy as a major theme in democratic thought and the nineteenth century was concerned with the challenge of stratification and group conflict, then twentieth century trends have made us sensitive to the role of leadership. The search for the values of security and equality have led to changes in the character of politics. If one were to delineate this newer pattern of a *politics by leadership*, it would include the following: (1) the shift in the center of conflict resolution and initiative from parliamentary bodies and economic institutions to executive leadership;<sup>1</sup> (2) the proliferation of the immediate office of the chief executive from its cabinet-restricted status to a collectivity of co-adjuting instrumentalities; (3) the tendency toward increased centralization of political parties, with the subordination of the victorious parties as instruments for the chief executive; (4) the calculated manipulation of irrationalities by political leadership through the vast power-potential of mass communications; (5) the displacement of the amateur by the professional politician and civil servant; (6) the growth of bureaucracy as a source and technique of executive power but also as a fulcrum which all contestants for power attempt to employ; (7) the growth of interest groups in size, number and influence, with the tendency toward bureaucratization of their internal structure; (8) the changing role of the public that finds its effective voice in a direct and an interactive relation with the chief executive.

What are the social sources of this new pattern of politics? The centralizing tendencies<sup>2</sup> of the modern democratic state need no elaborate recapitulation. The pressing needs arising from economic instability, war, technological change and urbanization have caused new tasks and functions to be entrusted to executive leadership.<sup>3</sup> The new commitments to a sustained full employment

<sup>1</sup> Otto Kirchheimer, "Changes in the Structure of Political Compromise," *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science*, Vol. 9, pp. 264-89 (1941).

<sup>2</sup> On the leadership political trends, see Herman Finer, *The Future of Government* (London, 1946), Ch. 1; Ernest Barker, *Reflections on Government* (London, 1942), pp. 123 ff.; W. Ivor Jennings, *Cabinet Government* (London, 1942); Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation" in H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds.), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York, 1946), pp. 77-128; E. Pendleton Herring, *Presidential Leadership* (New York, 1940); Carl J. Friedrich, *Constitutional Government and Democracy* (New York, 1946), Ch. 18.

<sup>3</sup> For the growing literature on "constitutional dictatorship," see Frederick M. Watkins' essay, "The Problem of Constitutional Dictatorship," in C. J. Friedrich and Edward

policy and national defense augment these tendencies by calling for increased direction and decision by government, while underlying all of the tendencies toward increased executive direction there lies the basic technical factor that in the large state, characterized by universal suffrage, political action presupposes large organization that tends to thrust initiative to the top.<sup>4</sup>

What bears more iteration is the record of failures of leadership as part of the history of our times. The failure to recognize the importance of concentration of responsibility is a principal factor in the defeats of the Weimar Republic, Republican Spain, Austrian Social Democracy, the French *Front Populaire*, America in the 1920's and 1930's, and England during its Baldwin and Chamberlain regimes.<sup>5</sup> Although these failures of leadership arose in part from constitutional limitations and political practices,<sup>6</sup> including the restraint imposed by political traditions, the inadequacies in the caliber of prevailing leadership must be reckoned with. Nor were the failures in leadership confined to organs of the state alone. They also involved such voluntary associations and functional groups as labor, business and church organizations; for democracy rests upon a plurality of capable leadership rather than upon the selection of the single leader. The question may thus be seriously raised as to whether the democracies have been defective by impeding the free and continuous rise of adequate leadership.<sup>7</sup>

However, if the periods of defeat prevailed when crises and men were not congruent, there has also been another source of politics by leadership in the trend of political personalism of dynamic leaders—the two Roosevelts, Wilson, Lloyd George, Clemenceau, Churchill, Poincaré—who have expanded the meaning of executive leadership. By their acts and ideas, these decisive leaders carved new sources and methods of power which have proved indispensable for democratic survival. Each, paradoxically, while resisting institutional restraints contributed to the further institutionalization of executive leadership.

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S. Mason (eds.), *Public Policy* (Cambridge, 1940), pp. 324–79; Lindsay Rogers, *Crisis Government* (New York, 1934); Clinton L. Rossiter, *Constitutional Dictatorship* (Princeton, 1948).

<sup>4</sup> Studies of large-scale organizations indicate that formal centralization may in fact result in the devolution of authority to elements that are away from the center; thus formal centralization may well result in decentralization in terms of effective influence. This decentralization to other elements of leadership in the structure does not do violence to a conception of politics by leadership, but is quite consistent with it.

<sup>5</sup> On England, see Hamilton Fyfe, "Democracy and Leadership," *Nineteenth Century and After*, Vol. 129, pp. 465–76 (May, 1941); on France during the Popular Front regime, see Lindsay Rogers, "Personal Power and Popular Government," *Southern Review*, Vol. 3, pp. 225–42 (1937–38).

<sup>6</sup> See Arnold Brecht, "Constitutions and Leadership," *Social Research*, Vol. 1, pp. 265–86 (May, 1934). F. A. Hermens stresses the role of P. R. as a major deterrent to leadership in *Democracy or Anarchy* (Notre Dame, 1941).

<sup>7</sup> On this general theme see the stimulating essay by Albert Salomon, "Leadership and Democracy," in Max Ascoli and Fritz Lehmann (eds.), *Political and Economic Democracy* (New York, 1937), pp. 243–54.

Today, with more "built-in" provisions for executive leadership, we have possibly become less dependent upon the dynamic individual figure.<sup>8</sup>

In the larger sphere of social relations, the laying bare of the stresses of urbanization, economic insecurity, large-scale organization and the decline of community has tended to confirm the Hobbesian diagnosis that under certain conditions widespread insecurity seeks resolution in submission to leadership.<sup>9</sup> The bureaucratization process in both the occupational and the non-occupational aspects of living is consonant with impersonality in social relations, creating a vacuum that may be filled by the "solicitude" of a "sincere" leader.<sup>10</sup> As control becomes concentrated at the apex of the pyramid in the large-scale organization, the participant citizen tends to become a dissipated entity. Many observers, searching for the strategic factor to rekindle participation and involvement, have contended that it lies within the discovery and training of a liberating, democratic leadership. Attesting to this is the growing literature in education, industrial management, voluntary associations and public administration, which is devoted to the study of the recruitment and training of such leadership.

Such are the roots of the new concern with political leadership in democracy. One of the tasks that confronts us is defining the concept of democratic leadership. The empirical face of the new politics requires new democratic self-assessments in terms of its value consequences and implications. It is patent that democratic leadership must not mean the surrender of any of the values of free expression, public sharing in policy, the consideration of men as men and not things, and the procedural processes of discussion and compromise. Yet the pattern of politics associated with leadership and centralization which brings indispensable democratic virtues of more widespread social welfare and equalization of opportunity cannot but challenge other democratic values.

We might therefore suggest that the concept of leadership for democracy should include in its formulation an attempt to answer the following questions: How can a democracy set up leaders, from whom it desires direction, without paying submission as its price? Can democracy furnish leadership that will provide for change with responsibility and for power that is scrupulously used? There are also sub-problems of leadership for democracy: Can democracy provide for the orderly continuity and succession of leadership? Is the recruitment of leadership representative and not restricted? Does the path of ascent enhance

<sup>8</sup> We may note the resurgence of demands for "cabinet government" in America as an expression of this desire to institutionalize executive leadership. (Institutionalization may result in generating the "myth" of the leader although the capacities of the man are not in accord with the myth.)

<sup>9</sup> Karl Mannheim, *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction* (London, 1940); Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom* (New York, 1941).

<sup>10</sup> See the interesting study by Robert K. Merton, *Mass Persuasion* (New York, 1947). On bureaucratization and leadership generally, see Robert Michels, *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy* (Eden and Cedar Paul trans.; Glencoe, 1949), together with the writings of Gaetano Mosca and Max Weber.

or weaken the capacity of potential leaders to cope with the problematic situation confronting leadership today?<sup>11</sup> Does the institutionalization of the executive tend to screen leaders from accurate perception of public needs?<sup>12</sup> These are problems of institutional adjustment but also problems for democratic values. Democratic thought has not yet adequately wrestled with the problems of the implications of leadership.<sup>13</sup> Motivated perhaps by its opposition to authority,<sup>14</sup> it has regrettably left to the proponents of authoritarian and aristocratic-conservative politics the elaboration of a political theory of leadership.<sup>15</sup> Yet leadership concern is but the new aspect of the age-old problem of representation in politics, a question that has always been a root one for democratic theory.

These remarks are but introductory to the consideration of the status of political leadership study today. If the subject is indeed of considerable importance, what is being done towards its exploration?

#### I. RECENT STUDIES OF LEADERSHIP

*A. Leadership as a Social Status-Position.* The study of leadership is sometimes focussed upon the conception of leadership as a status index and position.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>11</sup> A question asked by Brooks Adams in *The Law of Civilization and Decay* (New York, 1943).

<sup>12</sup> The writer is engaged in preliminary research on the men of the "inner circle" of presidential leadership, in which this question, among others, is explored.

<sup>13</sup> Joseph A. Schumpeter addresses himself to this question of reformulation of the conception of democratic politics in *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* (2d ed.; New York, 1947), Chs. 21–23. Schumpeter stretches his "theory of competitive leadership" too far in relegating the public to a mass-passivity status, and he does not go far enough in considering extra-governmental group factors in politics.

<sup>14</sup> Locke's chapter "Of Prerogative" in his *Second Treatise of Civil Government* showed appreciation of the necessity of executive leadership in the democratic state.

<sup>15</sup> See Carl Schmitt, *Staat, Bewegung, Volk* (Hamburg, 1935); Ernst Rudolf Huber, *Verfassung* (Hamburg, 1937), pp. 90 ff; René de Visme Williamson, "The Fascist Concept of Representation," *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 3, pp. 29–41 (Feb., 1941); Émile Faguet, *The Cult of Incompetence* (Beatrice Barstow trans.; New York, 1911), among others.

<sup>16</sup> Illustrative are the following: Harold J. Laski, "The Personnel of the English Cabinet, 1801–1924," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 22, pp. 12–31 (Feb., 1928); John G. Heinberg, "The Personnel Structure of French Cabinets," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 33, pp. 267–78 (April, 1939); Pitirim A. Sorokin, "Leaders of Labor and Radical Movements in the United States and Foreign Countries," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 33, pp. 382–411 (Nov., 1927); (for a summary of many such studies, Pitirim A. Sorokin, *Social Mobility* [New York, 1927]); John Brown Mason, "Lawyers in the 71st to 75th Congress," *Rocky Mountain Law Review*, Vol. 10, pp. 43–52 (Dec., 1937); Madge M. McKinney, "The Personnel of the Seventy-seventh Congress," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 36, pp. 67–75 (Feb., 1942); J. F. S. Ross, *Parliamentary Representation* (London, 1948); Marion Brockway, *A Study of the Geographical, Occupational, and Political Characteristics of Congressmen* (M.A. thesis, University of Kansas, 1934); Frank P. Bourgin, *Personnel of the American Senate* (M.A. thesis, Claremont College, 1933). Consult especially Bruce Lannes Smith, Harold D. Lasswell, and Ralph D. Casey, *Propaganda, Communication and Public Opinion* (Princeton, 1946), for references to many studies on the social recruitment of political leadership.



Such studies attempt to answer the following types of questions: Whom is the social and political structure elevating to eminence? From what strata of society are leaders recruited? What occupational skills do they possess? What are the channels of their ascent to power? Generally, the broad significance of such studies is their attempt to answer to what extent there is circulation and representativeness in the composition of political leadership. All too frequently, however, this type of research results in little else than statistical tabulation of collectivities of leaders. It fails to answer completely why particular individuals rose to the top. From this standpoint, such collectivity studies would be enriched by including more intensive case studies of one or more representatives of the sample. Moreover, the negative implications of such studies are sometimes more significant than the positive reports. Thus one question that ought always to be asked is to what extent there are blocks, and what is the nature of the blocks, to the free recruitment of leadership in our society. How do changes in leadership recruitment occur as related to (1) political changes (such as the direct election of Senators); (2) economic changes (such as inflation-depression periods); (3) war, etc. We are indeed in need of systematic and historical trend studies of ascent and recruitment aspects of politics as a career line, which arrive at generalizations in answer to the questions posed above.

*B. Leadership in Types of Social Structures.* Owing principally to the stimulating work of the late Kurt Lewin, there has been much interest and research in the subject of small primary-group leadership. Lewin and his students conducted several ingenious experiments involving the change of leadership in small groups, and obtained results which pointed out the decisive role of leadership in the formation and maintenance of group morale.<sup>17</sup> The experiment conducted with three "atmospheres" (democratic, authoritarian and laissez-faire) attempted to prove that democratic leadership is the most constructive and creative type of leadership,<sup>18</sup> although it did not prove that democratic leadership is best under all situations. This experiment does not justify leaping from a small, relatively simple situation in order to argue its homologies with the larger, more complex political milieu.<sup>19</sup> The democratic atmosphere of an

<sup>17</sup> See Ronald Lippit, "Field Theory and Experiment in Social Psychology: Autocratic and Democratic Atmospheres," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 45, pp. 26-49 (July, 1939); and also Alex Bavelas and Kurt Lewin, "Training in Democratic Leadership," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, Vol. 37, pp. 115-19 (Jan., 1942). For other studies in small group leadership, see Paul Pigors, *Leadership or Domination* (Boston, 1935); Thomas N. Whitehead, *Leadership in a Free Society* (Cambridge, 1936); Fritz Redl, "Group Emotion and Leadership," *Psychiatry*, Vol. 5, pp. 573-96 (Nov., 1942); Ferenc Merei, "Group Leadership and Institutionalization," *Human Relations*, Vol. 2, pp. 23-40 (no. 4, 1949).

<sup>18</sup> Lippit, *loc. cit.*

<sup>19</sup> Lewin never committed this error. See "The Special Case of Germany," in his posthumous *Resolving Social Conflicts* (New York, 1948) and note its kinship to Mary P. Follett's emphasis upon primary groups as the base of a dynamic citizenry. (Her collected papers appear as *Dynamic Administration* [New York, 1942].) See also Alexander Dunlop Lindsay's *The Essentials of Democracy* (Philadelphia, 1929).

experimental group is not the microcosm of a democratic society. Political life occurs for the most part in large, institutional types of organizations, in which contacts are secondary and of which rules and forms are more characteristic than they are of face-to-face groups. Moreover, leadership in politics is associated with emergent features of leadership to a greater extent than would be true in an experimentally-imposed one. Political leadership is likewise associated with office-holding, which provides an increment of legal power to the office-occupant, and which in turn contributes to leadership acceptance.

However, the study of leadership in small groups does have several potential uses for the study of politics. Among them are the following: (1) In understanding the internal workings of large political parties, we would profit from the study of informal group leadership. (2) In studying the use of mass communications by political leaders, we could learn much from the function of small-group leaders as transmission belts or resistances in the communication process. (3) In the study of chief executives in their inner circles, "kitchen cabinets," etc., we would again find application for this type of study. (4) Much work remains to be done on small-group leadership in public administration agencies, in interest groups, etc. And there are doubtlessly many more possible applications of the facts governing small-group leadership to the study of political relations.<sup>20</sup>

*C. Leadership as Organizational Function and Institutional Position.* In recent years there has been a burgeoning of the literature on leadership in formal industrial organizations.<sup>21</sup> Owing largely to the work of Elton Mayo and the group whose center is the Harvard Business School, there has appeared a series of studies addressed to the problem of the malaise of morale in such organizations.<sup>22</sup> These excellent studies have laid bare the informal structure that underlies any formal organization. The studies have indicated that the problems of morale, coordination and efficiency in large-scale organizations have been erroneously conceived to be those of technical arrangements. In

<sup>20</sup> Political scientists, in developing our comparatively rich literature on urban political machines, long ago recognized the influence of primary contact relationships. See, for example, Sonya Forthal, *Cogwheels of Democracy* (New York, 1946); J. T. Salter, *Boss Rule* (New York, 1935); Roy V. Peel, *The Political Clubs of New York City* (New York, 1936).

<sup>21</sup> The literature of this group is abundant and is largely summarized in Elton Mayo, *The Social Problems of an Industrial Civilization* (Boston, 1945). The most significant work for a theoretical treatment of leadership is Chester I. Barnard, *The Functions of the Executive* (Cambridge, 1946).

<sup>22</sup> Political scientists should find much of relevance to their interests when the study of personal ascendancy in economic development, viz., business entrepreneurship, is advanced. See the following three papers, which were presented at the annual meeting of the Economic History Association, 1946, and which may be found in Supplement VI of the *Journal of Economic History*, entitled *The Tasks of Economic History* (1946): Arthur H. Cole, "An Approach to the Study of Entrepreneurship," pp. 1-15; Robert A. East, "The Business Entrepreneur in a Changing Colonial Economy, 1763-1795," pp. 16-27; Chester McArthur Destler, "Entrepreneurial Leadership among the 'Robber Barons': A Trial Balance," pp. 28-49.

the task of integrating the web of informal relationship to the goals of the association, lies the crucial problem. And toward the solution of this problem, leadership plays a vital role. Leadership, to use Chester I. Barnard's phrase, is the "strategic factor" in establishing the kind of communication which resolves the tensions arising from the task of coordination. Much of the writing of this school is, therefore, devoted to the problem of the selection and training of able administrative leadership that will effectively organize cooperation.

As outstanding as has been the research by this school, its relevance to the study of political leadership is subject to some limitations. The first lies in the fact that politics occurs within a consensual framework of more conflicting purposes than the dominant purposes that characterize industrial organizations. Second, it is not the primary function of the political leader to *administer conflicts* or devise structural devices for their mitigation (although this is one of his available methods). Third, the analysis offered by this group ignores the factor of power. The term *communication* is used positively as the lubricant of coordination, so as to suggest that upon effective communication solely hinges proper coordination. That the hierarchical structure in industrial organization may represent power and value divisions between those who have more and those who have less, is virtually ignored. Contrast the type of analysis of executive function in the writings of this group with the analysis of leadership as organizational power in political machines in Harold F. Gosnell's *Machine Politics*. Fourth, the explicit goal of administered social harmony generates a somewhat anti-political bias.<sup>23</sup> Fifth, since a large area of political relations is concerned with competition and conflict between hierarchies, the analysis of a formal organization cannot adequately explain such relations. It is true, of course, that leadership relationships within formal organizations have much to do with their external political behavior; that is to say, other factors than political ones must bear analysis for explanations of this external behavior.

*D. Leadership as a Personality Type.* The attempt to elucidate political behavior by personality types dates back to the work of Ernst Kretschmer<sup>24</sup> and Edward Spranger.<sup>25</sup> The individual most influential in recent times in formulating such a typology in terms of the newer dynamic psychology is Harold D. Lasswell. In his *Psychopathology and Politics*<sup>26</sup> he employed psychoanalytic insights to lay down the basic premise that political motivations had their roots in subconscious sources framed during the early periods of human

<sup>23</sup> See the penetrating treatment by Chester I. Barnard, *The Dilemmas of Leadership in the Democratic Process* (Princeton, 1939). One is tempted to ask whether these dilemmas are "abnormal" or whether they are not virtues of democracy.

<sup>24</sup> *Physique and Character* (W. J. H. Sprott trans., from the 2d rev. ed.; New York, 1931).

<sup>25</sup> *Lebensformen* (Halle, 1924).

<sup>26</sup> (Chicago, 1930). One of the significant virtues of Lasswell's work is that he has consistently viewed the leadership phenomenon in terms of its power and policy implications and in terms of a broad context of an empirical political theory.



development. From this developed the basic formulation that the "political personality" displaced private motives onto public objects and rationalized them in terms of the public good.

More recently, Lasswell has gone beyond his earlier formulations by using the recently advanced concept of "character structure" as the basis for a typology of political functional types, such as the agitator, theorist, bureaucrat, etc. The concept of political type is defined as embracing individuals who are "power seekers, searching out the power institutions of the society into which they are born and devoting themselves to the capture and use of government."<sup>27</sup> The political type is thus a "developmental type who passes through a distinctive career line in which power opportunities of each situation are selected in preference to other opportunities."<sup>28</sup> The character-type delineation would stress that leadership is both a function of a structural personality type, and in dynamic interaction with larger social situations that select individuals of particular types for leadership.

The question has been asked, however, whether the concept of character types adequately permits us to assess not only developmental factors but situational factors as well. There is a tendency on the part of some students employing this approach to make "character structure" an all-inclusive "sack" in terms of which all behavior of political figures is explained, disregarding the influence of the immediate situations and institutional factors as determinants.

The concept of character structure is a notable advance since it attempts to catch social determinants in behavior. With this tool, much work remains to be done. Those who anticipate the complete synthesis of psychological and social factors in political behavior must await developments in social psychological research. A good full-length treatment of particular political leaders that will attempt to cast psychological factors in their social contextual mold is needed. In the meantime, those employing character structure concepts are doing some of the most vibrant and stimulating work in the analysis of political leadership.<sup>29</sup>

E. *Political Biography*. In America political biography never achieved the vogue characteristic in other countries. However, there has of late been a renaissance in such writing after a long decline. The late nineteenth century gave us the "conservationist" biographies, such as Nicolay and Hay's *Abraham Lincoln*. The twentieth presented us with Albert J. Beveridge's *The Life of John Marshall*, a somewhat unbalanced study that was nevertheless a stride toward analysis beyond mere recording. Henry F. Pringle's *Theodore Roosevelt* must rank high because its author attempted to discover a meaningful pattern in a most complex political figure, although it suffers from Pringle's limited data and sardonic dislike of his subject. Compare Pringle's study, however,

<sup>27</sup> *Power and Personality* (New York, 1948), p. 20.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>29</sup> See the forthcoming volume by my colleague, David Riesman, on the theme of politics and character structure in America.

with Claude Bowers' study of the challenging figure of Albert Beveridge, wherein the author meanders gracefully with no apparent attempt at interpretation and analysis. In more recent days we have had some examples that elevated the quality of this craft. Harry Barnard's study of John Altgeld was more than historical revelation in its keen, detached grasp of the man and his political context. C. Vann Woodward has drawn an excellent delineation of both the man and his setting in his biography of the Populist demagogue, Tom Watson. The work of Allan Nevins and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., has likewise represented advances. Dixon Wecter's *The Hero in America*, a series of essays, caught the key factor of the representational character of leadership and gave adequate attention to the function of public acceptance.

In general, political biography abounds in rich insights but suffers from its lack of criteria and conceptualization. Either no questions are asked or there is confusion as to the types of questions which a full-length treatment of the political leader might answer. It is somewhat paradoxical that, despite the marked stress given in American historiography to the role of the political personality, the analytical literature in political biography is as sparse as it is. One consequently awaits the application of theoretical insights of social science to the study of political biography. (It is encouraging to note that some historians, notably Roy Nichols, T. Cochran and Walter Johnson, are proclaiming the necessity for a more adequately delineated history of politics.)

## II. THE MEANING OF LEADERSHIP—TRAITS OR REPRESENTATION?

The preoccupation with the "essence" of leadership has long beset the conception of leadership. It may be, as Professor Carl J. Friedrich has indicated, a reflection of democratic thinking that we have become disenchanted with a conception of leadership posited upon the existence of a peculiar substance possessed only by some. In the literature alluded to in the previous pages, the conception of leadership as relational, that is, dependent upon acceptance within particular contexts, is universally acknowledged. Thus the long search for leadership traits has apparently come to the trough of its promise, where it may well rest for some time.<sup>30</sup> R. M. Stogdill concludes, after his long and exhaustive analysis of the experimental literature, that "leadership is not a matter of passive status, or of the mere possession of some combination of traits. It appears rather to be a working relationship among members of a group, in which the leader acquires status through active participation and demonstration of his capacity for carrying cooperative tasks through to completion."<sup>31</sup> With regard to traits, he adds, "Significant aspects of this capacity for organizing and expediting cooperative effort appear to be intelligence, alertness to

<sup>30</sup> The relational concept of leadership was elaborated some time ago by sociologists, notably Max Weber, Robert Michels, Georg Simmel and C. H. Cooley. See Irving Knickerbocker, "Leadership: A Conception and Some Implications," *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 4, pp. 23-40 (Summer, 1948).

<sup>31</sup> Ralph M. Stogdill, "Personal Factors Associated with Leadership: A Survey of the Literature," *Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 25, p. 66 (Jan., 1948).

the needs and motives of others, and insight into situations, further reinforced by such habits as responsibility, initiative, persistence, and self-confidence." It is noteworthy that the lists of traits that are distilled from the literature usually result in some tautologies, since they refer to conduct by the leader in a particular situation. Traits are not to be ignored nor dismissed, but recent literature has refined our perception of the functional interdependence of leadership traits and situational factors.

The characteristic of active participation as a leadership trait calls for comment. Active participation follows from the conventional conceptions of leadership as "dynamic." This overt dynamic quality may be a presumption about leadership not applicable in all instances. Thus it is conceivable that leadership may be exercised without the leader's awareness or conscious striving to be a leader. For situations of this type the concept of a "central person" might be useful.<sup>32</sup> The term might well be used to describe a person who represents a new trend in conduct or ideas without being conscious of leading or directing, a person who even is subject to imitation without *attempting* to influence.

More recent literature has stressed two central factors in the analysis of leadership. First, emphasis has been placed on the hypothesis that *leadership is a function of acceptance by followers*. A leader is not a leader unless he is accepted by followers; leadership is a representational role. Over a generation ago, Charles Horton Cooley expressed this point in the following manner: "All leadership takes place through the communication of ideas to the minds of others, and unless the ideas are so presented as to be congenial to those other minds, they will evidently be rejected."<sup>33</sup>

Secondly, the point has been stressed that *who is chosen as a leader is related to the tensions and values of a particular situation*. This point has been made repeatedly in the literature, but perhaps most cogently in the experimental work of Helen Hall Jennings.<sup>34</sup> Employing the sociometric methods of J. L. Moreno, she arrived at the following conclusion: "Both leadership and isolation appear as phenomena which arise out of the individual differences in interpersonal capacity for participation and as phenomena which are indigenous to the specific social milieu in which they are produced. Individuals who in this community appear as leaders may or may not be found to be leaders in

<sup>32</sup> The term is used by Redl, *loc. cit.*

<sup>33</sup> *Human Nature and the Social Order* (New York, 1902), p. 294. Chester I. Barnard, in addition to his contributions in other works cited, carefully analyzes this relational aspect of leadership in his chapter on "The Nature of Leadership," in *Organization and Management* (Cambridge, 1948).

<sup>34</sup> See her *Leadership and Isolation* (New York, 1943) and her "Leadership—A Dynamic Re-definition," *Journal of Educational Sociology*, Vol. 17, pp. 431–33 (Mar., 1944). For an interesting application of these methods to discover "political leadership," see the note by Charles P. Loomis, Douglas Ensminger and Jane Woolley, "Neighborhoods and Communities in County Planning," *Rural Sociology*, Vol. 6, pp. 339–41 (Dec., 1941); also Albert J. Murphy, "A Study of the Leadership Process," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 6, pp. 674–87 (Oct., 1941).

another community of which they later become a part; likewise, individuals who in this community appear as isolates may or may not be found in another community later to remain isolated."<sup>35</sup> The same point was made in the conclusion of the experimental work performed in selecting leaders for OSS during the war by Dr. H. A. Murray and his associates.<sup>36</sup>

In sum, the recent literature on leadership has given us a synthetic view of both traits and functional relationship to group and situation. The more organic view of leadership should permit a convergence of points of view that should make leadership no less complex, but clearer in its basic conception.

### III. SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR THE AGENDA

A paper that attempts a survey of the literature must consider the various approaches to the study of leadership. It is apparent that present methods are widely varied. In the consideration of each approach, suggestions were offered as to potential lines of inquiry. In the present stage of development of the social sciences we cannot suggest one single approach as *the* method, and we must necessarily lean upon a fruitful eclecticism. But perhaps we can help solve the problem of approach by delimiting a frame of reference within which the study of political leadership may be pursued.

*As political scientists, we are concerned with the conflict, power and policy implications of leadership. Our present literature is largely concerned with understanding leadership within types of social structure and in terms of defining political roles. It thus focusses largely upon leader-led relationships within the confines of group structures. For political scientists this is but one aspect of the study of leadership, to wit, its representative and technique dimensions within groups. We are not interested exclusively in these relationships, nor in the phenomenon of leadership per se. We are instead concerned with a politics by leadership, that is, a conception of politics that finds power factors in society best approachable through the understanding of leader-led and leader-leader relations.*<sup>37</sup>

*A politics by leadership conception would concern itself with generalizations concerning four types of relations: (1) the relations of leaders to led within particular political structures, (2) the relationship between leaders of political structures, (3) the relationship between leaders of one structure and the followers of another, and (4) the relationship between leaders and the "unorganized" or non-affiliated.*<sup>38</sup> *Within such a matrix the study of leadership may be actively pursued. For the formulation of such a conception it is necessary that we elaborate*

<sup>35</sup> Jennings, *Leadership and Isolation*, p. 204. See also Pigors, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

<sup>36</sup> U. S. Office of Strategic Services, *Assessment of Men; Selection of Personnel for the Office of Strategic Service* (New York, 1948).

<sup>37</sup> It should be emphasized that such a conception of politics entails no value presuppositions as to the inferiority of the public. It is not elitism. On the contrary, such an approach recognizes the vital and sustained role of the public in political direction.

<sup>38</sup> It may be somewhat paradoxical to our notions that political influence is directly correlated with the degree of organization of interests, but if the relatively isolated are identified with the "white collar" floating vote, their isolation makes them most influential politically.



concepts of (1) types of relationship between leaders and led, that is, a characterization of kinds of representative relationships we may find, (2) the classification of leaders by functional types, and (3) types of relationships between leaders in the formation of public policy. The problem of developing such categories as these is made difficult by the plurality of approaches which may be used. In other words, if we say that we are interested in types of relationship between leaders and led, shall we characterize the relationship in terms of the rank and file, in terms of the leader's inner circle, or in terms of the hierarchy of sub-leaders among his following? It would appear that the type of relationship would vary in each instance. In a similar vein, the classification of leaders by functional types can be made in terms of their skill function, their institutional position, the character of the group they lead, or the function they perform in the policy process.

The approach which we would find most useful is the one that centers always on the power and policy context of leadership behavior. Thus leader-led relationships ought to be considered in terms of the distribution of power and influence between leader and led. Leadership types ought to be cast in terms of the role they play in influencing policy. From this standpoint, leadership might be characterized in terms of the scope of the leaders' activities and in terms of the techniques they employ.

One final question must be raised. If leadership research must see the leader in terms of his intra-group relationships as a basis for relating this to his inter-group relationships, to what extent should the power contestants be categorized as groups? For example, if one lumps together the full galaxy of pressure groups, lobbies and functional groups as "groups," the differences in cohesiveness and articulation of structure are so great as to stretch the meaning of "group" beyond the limits of its elasticity. Leader-led relations do exist in these groups, but case studies are necessary to indicate what type of relationships exist within such groups as part and parcel of the study of leadership between these groups.

We may sum up by stating that the areas for profitable leadership research may be denoted as (1) recruitment or developmental studies, i.e., studies concerned with social origins and career-lines of political leaders; (2) studies of the representative dimension of leadership—the character of acceptance by followers; (3) studies of political leadership techniques; (4) specific case studies of leadership functions in typologically expressed political situations.

This paper has touched on some research questions and avenues for research. Its general purpose has been, in short, (1) to indicate the problems that make the study of political leadership of importance from both the empirical and the value standpoint, (2) to point out the nature of some recent research on leadership and its relevance for political science, (3) to urge the importance of theoretical formulations that will build a conception of politics by leadership, within which particular problems for research would assume significance, and (4) to suggest some specific areas for research.