

Part V: Psychological study of leadership. (1940?)

GENERAL The study of leadership, its nature and phenomena, has much broader implications than those relevant only to psychology (as can be seen in other parts of this report). It is proposed, however, that specific attention be paid to certain psychological aspects of leadership problems if leaders of any well-defined group are to be studied for other purposes.

Psychological studies of leadership have been conducted on a variety of groups. Major attention in these studies has been placed upon a description of the leaders in physical, psychometric and sociological terms. Certain studies have had as their aim the delineation of personality in analytic and descriptive terms. As traditionally studied, leadership is not a concept which readily lends itself to genetic or developmental investigation. And if the psychological study was an aspect of another project, this sort of approach would probably not be feasible.

PURPOSE This project would have as its main purpose the investigation of personality dynamics among a selected group of fifty political leaders. The following steps would be involved in attaining this general aim:

1. Review of all literature on the nature of leadership, investigations of leaders' personalities, and the behavior of leaders. This search would include studies in fields related to psychology, such as sociology, political science, economics, and history.

2. The formulation of certain psychological hypotheses about leadership in general and about political leadership in particular. A rigorous statement of the specific hypotheses to be tested will be formulated only after some preliminary investigation of the local group under study.

3. Testing the hypotheses in the local group.

DATA Sources of data for the study should include as many of the following as possible:

1. Interview with the leaders themselves, their associates, families, and others with whom they come in frequent contact.

2. Biographic data including facts of education, job history, organization memberships, leisure time activities, family life and the like. Existing records in the community will be scanned (school records, official documents).

3. Test data emphasizing personality formation, attitudes, interests, social skills and if possible abilities and job proficiencies.

4. Incidental information from other aspects of the more general study of leadership, as membership in socio-economic class, political activities. This will serve to catch pertinent biographical facts more easily collected elsewhere.

It is assumed IBM equipment will be available for use in collating and analyzing the data.

Further, it is realized that to obtain the sort of data desired in this study would require exceedingly good cooperation with the 50 selected leaders. Unless this rapport exists, the study in its current form would be impossible.

A descriptive approach of this sort would afford a test of certain hypotheses about the personality structure of a homogeneous group of leaders. Such a project would probably require two years to gather data, with additional time for analyzing it, probably an additional year.

BUDGET An estimated list of expenditures would have to include the following:

\$1,500 1/4 time of Project Director (annually)

3,000 full time psychometrician (for two years)

300 testing supplies, stationery (for one year)

200 travel and consultation fees (annually)

500 IBM rental (for one year)

\$12,000 Total for three years (rough estimate)