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BLACK LEADERSHIP FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Jacob U. Gordon

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BLACK LEADERSHIP FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

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BLACK LEADERSHIP FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Jacob U. Gordon

Foreword by Samuel DuBois Cook

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To the generations of African-American men and women who provided leadership for the redemption and renewal of the Soul of America

and

To all those who lived and died in the struggle for a fair and just society and in pursuit of the American dream.

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Foreword

Samuel DuBois Cook

As we begin a new century and millennium, problems of black leadership in the drama of the flux and flow of the American historical process loom large and deserve rigorous analysis and probing exploration. The stakes are high. This book by Dr. Jacob U. Gordon meets an urgent and timely need.

This is quite a book richly deserving of a wide audience. It is fascinating, imaginative, illuminating, challenging, learned, exciting, and thought-provoking. Indeed, it is magisterial, panoramic, wide-ranging, encyclopedic, and rigorous. It is a *tour de force* on black leadership.

Dr. Gordon explores the various dimensions of black leadership within the broad sweep, context, and conceptual scheme of American history and the dynamic and continuing struggle of blacks to achieve freedom, justice, equity, fairness, and equality. African-American leadership for what? The answer is to dislodge the cancer, albatross, and heavy yoke of racism and to pursue and realize full equality as citizens and as human beings. Black leadership is inextricably tied to social change, institutional reform, and structures and processes of power and influence.

The author asserts that, regrettably, "while much has been written about black leaders very little has been done about black leadership. A comprehensive book on black leadership is lacking. It is this gap in leadership literature that this volume attempts to fill."

Thus this book is a grammar of black leadership. While the author deftly discusses black leaders from the broad perspective of American history—from slavery to the contemporary scene—his chief focus is on the concept, philosophy, vision, and criteria of black leadership. Thus he roams far and wide. He wrestles with definitions, models, styles, strategies, tactics, dilemmas, ideologies, dialectics, diversities, multi-dimensionality, changes, continuities, typology, sources,

foundations, black leadership in a variety of institutions—corporate America, education, community, religion, international relations, military—and the future.

What a broad reach and inclusive perspective!

Dr. Gordon's book is a rich and powerful contribution to the literature not only of black leadership, but also to the understanding of the black experience in the ebb and flow, the tragedies and triumphs, the heights and depths of the American historical, social, political, and cultural processes. This book is also courageous, engaged and inspiring. It deserves wide, thoughtful, critical, and constructive readership. It has creative and enduring utility. Dr. Gordon has plowed new ground and established significant scholarly foundations on which to build.

Note: Dr. Samuel DuBois Cook is President Emeritus of Dillard University and President of the Association for the Study of African-American Life and History, Inc.

Acknowledgments

This book is a reflection of my belief that a study of African-American leadership within the context of American history will reveal, among other things, some of the continuities and changes in African-American reactions to unremitting white racism and oppression. For the past ten years, I have been teaching an upper-class undergraduate course in black leadership to American and foreign students at the University of Kansas. Facing the paucity of a comprehensive text and especially the lack of black leadership theories in leadership literature has been a challenge.

Throughout my work on this volume I have tried to keep in mind the observation of Martin R. Delany in 1852:

Our elevation must be the result of self-efforts and work of our own hands. No other human power can accomplish it. If we but determine it shall be so, it will be so.

In putting together this book, I owe many debts to a number of people. First, to my wife Thelma and my four children who have given me the love and encouragement from start to finish. Second, I would like to thank my students in my black leadership classes for challenging me to write a text on this neglected area of the African-American experience. Third, I am grateful to my colleagues in the Department of African and African-American Studies at the University of Kansas for their intellectual stimulation. To my staff at the Center for Multicultural Leadership-Life Span Studies: Katie Woods, who served as my research assistant, and Bridgitt Mitchell, my special assistant, I am appreciative. Special thanks to my editor at Greenwood Press, and Mary Brohammer for preparing the manuscript. Finally, I am grateful to all who

participated in our interviews and black leadership surveys. Without the assistance of all those whom we have touched and/or those who have touched us during the course of our research, this book would not have been possible.

Introduction: Black Leadership for Social Change

To talk about the need and the importance of Black leadership is something that affects not only African-Americans but the entire country. And the civil rights movement in the past, and I suspect in the future as well, has provided a lot of moral support and a lot of energy to the Women's Movement, to the Gay Rights Movement, to the Labor Movement, and to other important movements for equality and advancement. So the issue of Black leadership is really important to everybody in this country.

William M. Tuttle, Jr.
Professor of History
The University of Kansas

For the past ten years I have been teaching courses in black leadership in America to American and international students. This decade saw growing scholarship and public interest in the role of black leadership in American history. No student of American studies can any longer be unaware of the development of black history in the historical profession and the broad outlines of this scholarship, or of the significance of the unresolved issues of race and class in America, and the world at large.

This book reflects my belief that any serious and meaningful consideration of American history requires an understanding and appreciation of African-American leadership. It reveals some of the continuities, changes, and contrasts in African-American reactions to unrelenting white racism, bigotry, and sexism. The work draws from a large body of African-American historiography and my experiences as a student of Africa and the African Diaspora. It is also drawn from the suggestions of my students and colleagues in the Department of African and African-American Studies at the University of Kansas.

In the quest for human rights and racial advancement, African-Americans have managed throughout their history to draw their leaders from their own ranks. African-American leaders have always sought diverse ways to overcome the racial barriers and oppression that have pervaded American society. It should be noted that the scarcity of power, prestige, and ideological differences in the African-American community has resulted in the struggle for leadership that is often ruthless and ineffective. And although black leaders share a common destiny and values for the respect for human dignity, they differ markedly in ideologies, leadership styles, and tactics. A classic case in point are the differences between two great black leaders, W. E. B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington.

Although much work has been done on African-American studies since the establishment of the Association for the Study of African-American Life and History by Carter G. Woodson in 1915, very little has been done on black leadership. This conclusion is based on the recurring appearance of theory, research, and practice in leadership literature. Of particular concern is that leadership theories and practices are usually Eurocentric. The purpose of this book and its investigation is to document African-American leadership roles in America's search for social change. The major area of investigation is threefold: (1) the impact of African-American leadership in America's search for social change, to ensure justice, fairness, equality, and the pursuit of happiness for all Americans; (2) an analysis of the enduring dilemma of black leadership, especially in light of the emergence of Louis Farrakhan as a possible political leader; and (3) the future role of African-American leadership in the twenty-first century.

This book is based on historical and contemporary contexts. Black leadership should be viewed as part of American leadership history. It should be noted, however, that black leadership is different from the American, "dominant culture" leadership. While the former grew out of the enslavement and oppression of African-Americans, the latter was, for the most part, an extension of European culture and values.

Black leadership and black social thought have traditionally been characterized as either liberal or conservative (but for the most part, liberal). Thus, the main thrust of this book is the examination of the impact of African-American leadership in American life, both from liberal and conservative perspectives. The book provokes several related questions:

1. How much power did various black leaders actually have?
2. What were the sources and limits of that power, and how did the leaders use that power or influence in seeking to attain their goals?
3. To what extent was that power derived from black support, to what extent from white support, and to what extent from an organizational base or from a position in government?
4. What tactics did individual leaders use to appeal to blacks and/or whites to achieve their aims?
5. To what extent did the leaders cooperate with each other, to what extent were they competing with each other, to what extent were their relationships marked by conflict; and

how in turn did such patterns of cooperation, competition, and conflict shape the course of their careers and the degree to which the cause of black advancement was hindered or promoted?

6. What were the different ways in which the style and strategies of the individual leaders were shaped by their personal backgrounds and the differing social contexts in which they operated?
7. To what extent were any of the leaders able to move beyond their role as leaders in the cause of black advancement, to become leaders prominent in other broader and predominantly white social movements as well?
8. What is the future of black leadership in America?

In order to adequately address these questions, the book has been organized into three parts: Part One—Theorizing Black Leadership; Part Two—Foundations of Black Leadership; and Part Three—Twentieth Century and Contemporary Black Leadership. The book concludes with a chapter on the future of black leadership.

For the purpose of clarity, relevance, and appropriateness, several terms have been used interchangeably throughout this book to refer to persons of African ancestry in the United States. The terms “black” and “African-American” are most commonly used; the latter is the official term used by the U.S. Census of 1990.

According to a survey of 1,003 African-Americans age fourteen and over (survey conducted from October to December of 1992 by Burrell/Yankelovich for the American Association of Retired Persons [AARP]), the most preferred term to describe this ethnic group is “Black” (38%), followed by “African-American” (30%), “Afro-American” (20%), “Negro” (4%), and “Other” (5%). Each generation of African-Americans has different preferences:

- Age 50+ prefer “Black” (49%)
- Age 30–49 moderately prefer “Black” (42%) versus African-American (31%)
- Age 21–29 are undecided (three choices are all within 31–32%)
- Age 14–20 strongly prefer “African-American” (46%)

Black/African-Americans are the largest ethnic group in the United States, making up 12.1 percent of the total population. Between 1980 and 1990, the black population increased by 13.2 percent compared with a 9.7 percent increase in the total population. About 80 percent of the black population reside in southern and industrial states, particularly in large cities (U.S. Census Bureau, 1990).

Like the other four major groups (American Indian/Alaska Natives, Asian and Pacific Islanders, Hispanic/Latino-Americans, and White/European Americans), the Black/African-American group is heterogeneous. During the twentieth century, members of this group have come from different countries, represented various cultures, languages and dialects, and included both native and foreign-born individuals. They also reflect a variety of skin colors, from “white” to “darkest black.”

In scientific study of leadership in the United States, the concept of *leadership*, despite its obvious centrality in American politics, has not been sharply defined. Indeed, in reviewing the interdisciplinary scientific literature of leadership, the

author concludes that there is a lack of explicit focus on leadership as a core concept. In the general social science literature, the concept of leadership has been used in such diverse ways to characterize the varied phenomena that there is a lack of agreement regarding even the basic properties of leadership. This ambiguity in the general concept of leadership is reflected specifically in black leadership literature. Here, there is a wide variety of definitions, implicit and explicit. It is even debatable as to whether there is such a thing as black leadership, let alone the notion of any academic inquiry of the subject.

Gunnar Myrdal (1944) wrote in his classic study, "We should not start from an attempt on *a priori* grounds to define the principle concept. . . . We have only to settle that we are discussing the role and importance of individual persons in the sphere of social action." Similarly, Ladd (1966) wrote that little effort was made at the outset to develop any full and precise definition of black leadership, because "the study as a whole is centrally concerned with defining it."

Writing about the crisis of leadership, a pioneer scholar of leadership, James MacGregor Burns (1978) writes, "If we know all too much about leaders, we know far too little about leadership. We fail to grasp the essence of leadership that is relevant to the modern age and hence we cannot agree even on the standards by which to measure, recruit, and reject it." He goes on to say that "one of the most serious failures in the study of leadership has been the bifurcation between the literature on leadership and the literature on followship."

In recent years, the scholarship in African-American studies has gained national recognition in American historiography. Regrettably, however, while much has been written about black leaders, very little has been done about black leadership. A comprehensive book on black leadership is lacking. It is this gap in leadership literature that this volume attempts to fill.

A brief review of selected major publications on black leadership should shed light on the subject. John Hope Franklin's (1982) *Black Leaders of the Twentieth Century* is an essential volume on the major accomplishments of fifteen twentieth-century black leaders—nationalist and integrationist, the charismatic and the bureaucratic, and men and women who came from diverse walks of life, including religion, labor, business, the professions, and the arts. John White (1985) examines black leadership in America from 1895 to 1968 in a work of synthesis of five outstanding black male leaders' lives and their collective biographies. The book is the first attempt to examine the problems facing these men, their personal and ideological relationships, and the historical context in which they operated. He also examined such civil rights organizations as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the National Urban League, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and the Nation of Islam. Some scholars have also explored the role of black leadership during the Reconstruction Era. Of special interest is the work of Howard Rabinowitz (1982), *Southern Black Leadership of the Reconstruction Era*.

Rabinowitz has assembled an anthology that transcends recent efforts to "rehabilitate" black leaders' reputations and that explores the larger question of

how black leaders “functioned in Reconstruction politics and within the Republican party” (p. xviii). The combined studies of selected congressmen, individual state and local leaders, and the collective biographies of state and local figures provide a storehouse of information about black political leadership during Reconstruction. The purpose of this book, according to the author, is twofold: to make readily available “the fruits of recent biographical work” and to point the way toward future investigations (p. xx). Rabinowitz and his fellow authors succeed admirably in both efforts. They assemble an extended collection of biographical information that illuminates the crucial areas of black-white interdependence and divisiveness among blacks within the Republican coalition; for, as Rabinowitz notes in his introductory essay, without such information “neither the nature of black leadership nor the course and direction of Reconstruction can be properly grasped” (p. xix). The authors also raise a multitude of questions—particularly about the nature of black interactions with the white world—that could profitably engage the attention of Reconstruction scholars for years to come.

Reflecting careful conception and planning, the volume includes an introductory essay by Rabinowitz that traces the historiographical debate over the quality of black leadership; individual essays that are drawn from every state of the Confederacy and that explore every variety of black leadership; and a concluding chapter by August Meier that highlights the major themes and findings of the essays and underscores the need for further research in particular areas. The fourteen essays are consistently of high quality, and although they differ somewhat in interpretation, they all focus on the central question of how blacks functioned in Reconstruction politics—or in other words, how they “gained, maintained, and finally lost power . . .” (p. xviii).

August Meier notes in his conclusion that “one of the virtues of this volume is that it illuminates so well the complex and ambiguous ways in which late nineteenth century Black political leaders in the South functioned” (p. 401). One comes away from this volume, however, with something of an overdose of complexity and ambiguity, and grasping for another level of analysis of all this carefully assembled new information. Rabinowitz could have strengthened this volume and increased its usefulness and significance considerably by expanding his introduction to include an overview of the major findings of his contributors. Meier’s afterword is helpful in this regard, and he draws a series of “tentative conclusions” based on the research presented within, but one is left with the unsettling impression that Rabinowitz has not quite completed the task at hand. His own reflections, in addition to Meier’s, would have brought the project to a more successful conclusion. Although scholars in the field will find this a valuable compendium of biographical information and an important corrective to stereotypes both old and new, the overburdened scholar in related fields will probably not find the time to extract the essence of meaning from this volume.

Another attempt to document black leadership is an anthology edited by Georgia A. Persons (1993), *Dilemmas of Black Politics*. A reviewer noted, “Here

at last is a major collection of writings on Black leadership and electoral politics in the post-Reagan era." The book focuses on recent high-profile elections; it assesses the strategies that are helping black candidates win an increasing number of political contests. What appears to have emerged from the collection is a clear evidence of a new strategy of "de-racialization," a major departure from the traditional agendas and assumptions of black politics in America.

In a recently published work on twentieth century black leadership, Manning Marable (1998) presents his family during slavery and Reconstruction, and their efforts to achieve full equality. In this compelling work, the author identifies three major traditions that have defined black American political culture: integration, nationalist separatism, and what he terms *democratic transformation*. At the heart of the book are critical portraits of four leaders whose legacies speak to the challenges of race, class, and power: Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. Du Bois, Harold Washington, and Louis Farrakhan. The author argues convincingly that the history of the black struggle for civil rights and political and economic equality in America is deeply tied to the strategies, agendas, and styles of black leaders. Professor Marable's book is undoubtedly one of the most exciting and important books on race and black leadership to appear in quite a while. It is by no means a comprehensive text on black leadership, nor was it intended to be one. Nevertheless, it is a valuable addition to the field.

While these publications are useful documents, the need for a comprehensive text in this increasingly important field cannot be overemphasized. It is also clear that the theoretical and practical knowledge of black leadership remains incomplete. However, I believe that the richness of the information in this volume provides a sound basis for a better understanding and a deeper sense of appreciation for the impact of black leadership in American life.

Although the aforementioned publications are useful documents, a comprehensive book in black leadership is lacking. It is this gap in leadership literature that this volume attempts to fill.

Part One

Theorizing Black Leadership

Movements of thought and social change cannot be fully understood without some sense of their relation to the theories and practices which explain the phenomenon of human behavior.

Jacob U. Gordon
Professor and Research Fellow
The University of Kansas

The key to understanding the idea of black leadership is to examine the subject within the literary context of leadership as a universal human experience. Equally important is an understanding of the role of black leadership in American life. Both contexts, the universal and the American, are critical to the understanding and appreciation of the contributions of black leaders to the American society and the human race.

In the quest for freedom, racial equality, civil and political rights, and economic and educational advancement, black Americans, both during and after slavery, responded to the proposals and rhetoric of leaders drawn from their own ranks. Yet, one of the anomalies in African-American history is the omission of blacks in American leadership literature. Leadership theories and practice have usually excluded black leadership.

The purpose of this part of the book is to fill this gap by examining such questions as: What is leadership? What is black leadership? Why black leadership? What are the foundations of black leadership? And finally, what are some of the theoretical and emerging concepts in black leadership?

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Defining Black Leadership

The key to understanding leadership lies in recent findings of the origin and sources of leadership. Rigid hierarchies of coercion and deference would seem to bar leadership from animal life. However, extended observations by psychologists of primates (Willhoite, 1976) have suggested that animals indulge in various forms of leadership. In an experiment designed to answer the question whether leaders need followers, a chimpanzee was shown some food hidden under leaves and grass, then led back to rejoin his group. Soon he was trying to persuade the others to follow him to the food. He rushed from one follower to another, grimacing, tapping the follower on the shoulder, screaming, and sometimes grabbing a companion and dragging him or her toward the food. According to the observer (at the Delta Regional Primate Research Center), all this "suggested that group cohesion was strong and the 'leader' was as dependent upon the group for getting to the food as they were dependent on him in knowing precisely where to go."

A study of goal behavior (Stewart and Scott, 1947) concluded that the phenomena of dominance and leadership were not correlated, but the result of two separate learning processes. Studies of "imprinting" by Lorenz and others found that "following responses" are set at intervals early in an animal's life and tend to persist. "Finder" bees are known to communicate the location of food by indicating the nature and direction of the food through variations in buzzing and flower scents exuded from their body. Some of these behaviors are genetically determined, but others seem to be learning experiences based on recognizing leaders with dominant influence, as well as by knowing the right cues.

Another, quite different, biological emphasis in the study of leadership is the assumption of male leadership, especially at the higher levels of power. In this

context, power may be defined as the ability to control what others want (Lassey and Sashkin, 1983). Researchers have noted that to lead successfully and permissively, a group member must have the power to impose restrictions on what other members are permitted to do, and must have the ability to know when such restrictions are necessary and when would be best to avoid such impositions.

Most leadership studies have been (and are) concerned with males—at least, male leaders. Gender, as an important aspect of the situation, has rarely been studied. Denmark and Diggory (1966) found, contrary to their hypotheses, that male leaders exhibit and find approval from followers for more authoritarian behavior than do women leaders. This is especially true when leaders use power to induce individual members to conform to group norms. The lack of the gender variable in studies of leadership points to the gaps in existing research and theoretical models.

In the scientific study of politics in the United States, the concept of leadership, despite its centrality in American life, has not been sharply defined. Indeed, early studies and definitions of leadership in the 1930s and 1940s were based on attempts to determine the traits and characteristics of leaders. Smith and Krueger (1933) surveyed the literature on leadership. Leadership methodology, as related to military situations, was reviewed in 1947 by Jenkins. Stogdill's (1948) studies included all studies bearing on the problems of traits and personal factors associated with leadership. It is important to note that these early studies appear to have little relationship with the problem of defining leadership. Except in few cases, the authors asked different groups of persons, usually business executives and members of the professions, to list the traits which they believed to be essential to leadership. Little uniformity was found among the items contained in such lists. Only intelligence, initiative, and responsibility were mentioned twice each among the top five items in the lists reported (Gowin, 1915; Heath and Gregory, 1946; Jones, 1938; and Starch, 1943). Other traits included in the studies were: age, height, weight, physique, energy, health, appearance, fluency of speech, scholarship level, knowledge level, judgment and decision skills, insight, originality, adaptability, degree of introversion-extroversion, dominance, initiative, persistence, ambition, dependability, responsibility, integrity and conviction, self-confidence, mood control, mood optimism, emotional control, social and economic status, social activity and mobility, bio-social activity, social skills, popularity and prestige, and so forth.

The following conclusions are supported by uniformly positive evidence from ten or more of the studies surveyed:

The average person who occupies a position of leadership exceeds the average member of his or her group to some degree in the following respects: (1) sociability; (2) initiative; (3) persistence; (4) knowing how to get things done; (5) self-confidence; (6) alertness to, and insight into, situations; (7) cooperativeness; (8) popularity; (9) adaptability; and (10) verbal facility.

In addition to the aforementioned, a number of factors have been found that are specific to well-defined groups. For example, athletic ability and physical prowess have been found to be characteristics of leaders in boys' gangs and play groups. Intellectual fortitude and integrity are traits found to be associated with eminent and natural leadership in maturity.

The items with the highest overall correlation with leadership are originality, popularity, sociability, judgment, aggressiveness, desire to excel, humor, cooperativeness, liveliness, and athletic ability, in approximate order of magnitude of average correlation coefficient.

In spite of considerable negatively correlated evidence, the general trend of results suggests a low positive correlation between leadership and such variables as chronological age, height, weight, physique, energy, appearance, dominance, and mood control. The evidence is about evenly divided concerning the relation to leadership of such traits as degree of introversion-extroversion, self-sufficiency, and emotional control.

The evidence available suggests that leadership exhibited in various school situations may persist into college and into later vocational and community life. However, knowledge of the facts relating to the transferability of leadership is very meager and obscure.

The most fruitful studies, from the point of view of understanding leadership, have been those in which leadership behavior was described and analyzed on the basis of direct observation or analysis of biographical and case history data.

The factors that have been found to be associated with leadership could probably all be classified under the general headings of *capacity*, *achievement*, *responsibility*, *participation*, and *status*.

The definition of leadership based on traits is troublesome. The process of analyzing the studies proved frustrating because each student of leadership created different definitions based on the particular selected sets of traits. Few characteristics could be universally identified as constituting leadership behavior. The requirements for leadership, characteristics of leaders, and definitions of what constitutes leadership varied widely, depending on circumstances. Therefore, analysis in recent decades has concentrated on examination of leadership behavior in various contexts.

In a review of leadership literature, several definitions can be summarized. Stogdill (1974) suggests eleven perspectives that define leadership as:

1. A function of group process
2. Personality or effects of personality
3. The art of inducing compliance
4. The exercise of influence
5. A form of persuasion
6. A set of acts or behaviors

7. A power relationship
8. An instrument of goal achievement
9. An effect of interaction
10. A differentiated role
11. The initiation of structure

Burns (1978) defines leadership as the reciprocal process of mobilizing—by persons with certain motives and values—various economic, political, and other resources, in a context of competition and conflict in order to realize goals either independently or mutually held by leaders and followers. Burns also defines leadership as a special form of power. He noted two essentials of power: motive and resource, and the possession of control, authority, or influence over others.

Hogan, Curphy, and Hogan (1994), in their search for what we know about leadership, have suggested that leadership involves persuading other people to set aside for a period of time their individual concerns and to pursue a common goal that is important for the responsibilities and welfare of a group. . . . Leadership occurs when others willingly adopt, for a period of time, the goals of a group as their own.

Bass (1973) observed that leadership is the observed effort of one member to change other members' behavior by altering the motivation of the other members or by changing their habits.

Lassey and Sashkin's (1983) study of leadership and social change defined leadership as a role that leads toward goal achievement, involves interaction and influence, and usually results in some form of changed structure or behavior of groups, organizations, or communities.

Writing on leadership, Gardner (1990) defined leadership as the process of persuasion or example by which an individual (or leadership team) induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader or shared by the leader and his or her followers.

Finally, in their study of leadership as everybody's business, Lawson, Griffin, and Don (1976) defined leadership as "the process of influencing others in making decisions, setting goals and achieving goals . . . and, concurrently, it is the process of keeping the group voluntarily together."

At the time of writing, one of the world's most important leadership campaigns was underway in the United States. It was the re-election campaign of President Clinton in 1996. The bottom-line questions in this contest for the U.S. presidency were: Who among the candidates could *lead* the nation? Who would be the next *leader*?

While the words "lead" and "leader" are frequently used in conversations and media reports, they are used loosely—seemingly with an assumption that their meanings are static and universally understood. Carnahan, Smith, and Gunter, Inc. (CSG) (1996) as part of an ongoing effort to explore and understand the implications of the usage and meaning of these words, commissioned its news media study on the subject.

The news media was selected for such an exploration because they are the major source of popular knowledge in free-speech societies, such as the United States. While the media reflect the cultural behavior and attitudes of the societies covered, they also influence behavior and attitudes in the way they define and present the news.

Interestingly, the newspaper articles collected for the CSG study contained very little substantive discussion on—and description of—what constitutes leading or being a leader, whereas detailed descriptions of what appears to be a radical shift in the notion of business leaders and leadership styles dominated the magazine articles studied.

It should be noted that the attributes of business leaders used in the magazine articles were, when spelled out, similar to those used in the newspaper articles about all sorts of leaders; such attributes included “visionary” and “experienced.” The differences were found in the function descriptors, or the leadership skills, required. In the past, a hierarchical leadership style relied on “command” and “control” or “top-down” decision-making. The main leadership skills emphasized in the magazine articles in this study were: facilitation, negotiation, empowerment of employees to make decisions (that is, *to lead*), and mentoring. The following sections briefly discuss the study findings. Their implications call for further exploration and dialogue.

KEY FINDINGS

- In the newspaper articles examined, *leader* was sometimes used as a job title or a function; other times it was used as an attribute.
- Used either way, in the publications studied that were geared to general audiences, *leader* was predominantly applied to white males, and infrequently to others.
- One of the most glaring examples of the aforementioned was found in the articles about Ron Brown, U.S. secretary of commerce, after he died in a tragic plane crash. Although the adjectives used to describe him were typical of those applied to *leaders* in articles that included function descriptors, 87 percent of the articles about him were devoid of such terms as *leader*, *leadership*, *lead*, and the like.
- Although 1996 was a major U.S. political campaign year in which people from the local to the national level sought elective office (that is, key cultural *leadership* positions), there was little discussion in the newspaper articles of what constitutes a *leader* or the requisite *leadership* skills needed for these jobs. While there was considerable discussion in the business magazine articles about *business* leaders and leadership styles, there was very little discussion about *political* leaders and leadership styles, and the implications for business of either or both.
- In the hundreds of articles about the main political contenders for the U.S. presidency that appeared in the general-interest newspapers examined, the term *leader* was seldom used and its meaning discussed even less. When used, it was mostly the congressional job title of the presumptive Republican candidate who was the Senate majority *leader*.
- The term *leader* was used in the newspaper articles in reference to politicians (world leaders), warriors (rebel leaders), cultists (militia leaders), criminals (ringleaders), artists (leading man), chief executive officers and other business managers, heads of religious organizations, educators, community organizers, and others. There were no articles in

the publications examined that discussed whether or not there were differences in the requirements for or attributes of *leaders* or *leadership* skills in the varied list.

- Similarly, there was minimal discussion of *leadership* styles or qualities required for various environments. For example, are business leadership skills interchangeable with military or political leadership requirements?
- Vision, experience, education, accomplishment, action, being a risk taker, creativity, being trusting/trustworthy, intelligence, and popularity were the top ten attributes mentioned in newspaper articles examined that described a *leader* in more detail. Similar attributes were found in the magazine articles.

NEWSPAPER FINDINGS

Six geographically diverse, general-interest newspapers were selected for the CSG study conducted in April 1996. Articles containing key words such as *lead*, *leading*, *leader*, and *leadership* were culled for the analysis. The research focused on the context in which these words were used, the articles in which they were found, the placement and location of the articles, and the frequency and application of these and related terms. The newspapers studied were the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *New York Times*, the (Portland) *Oregonian*, the *Seattle Times*, and the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

With the exception of sports and comics pages, all sections of the selected papers were searched for articles or commentaries that contained the key "leader" words. Duplicates (wire stories and syndicated columns that were carried in several publications) were eliminated.

Articles that did not include the key leader words, but did include words normally ascribed to leaders as found in CSG's 1994 study, such as *visionary*, *pioneer*, and *accomplished*, were also culled for review. This brought the total number of newspaper articles examined for the CSG study to slightly more than 800.

Passing References

Sixty-four percent of the newspaper articles that contained the word *leader* were found primarily in political stories; secondarily, in war and mayhem stories. Of these, most (88 percent of political stories; 91 percent of war/mayhem items) were passing references with no further descriptors or discussion as to why these individuals were referred to as "leaders." The references were to world leaders, political leaders, ringleaders, military leaders, cult leaders, guerilla leaders, and rebel leaders.

Some examples of actual passing references include:

- "Russian leader's blast against illegal immigrants and hint at delayed resolution of border dispute are tied to election politics." (*Los Angeles Times*, 4-25-96)
- "Senator Roosevelt was the leader of twenty-one Democratic lawmakers who were willing to take their political future in their hands. . . ." (*New York Times Magazine*, 4-14-96)