

June 1984

## Ethnic Minority Leadership: A Theoretical Perspective

Pallassana R. Balgopal  
*University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw>



Part of the Race and Ethnicity Commons, and the Social Work Commons

### Recommended Citation

Balgopal, Pallassana R. (1984) "Ethnic Minority Leadership: A Theoretical Perspective," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 11: Iss. 2, Article 6.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15453/0191-5096.1654>

Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol11/iss2/6>

This Article is brought to you by the Western Michigan University School of Social Work. For more information, please contact [wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu](mailto:wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu).

# ETHNIC MINORITY LEADERSHIP: A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

PALLASSANA R. BALGOPAL, D.S.W.  
Professor of Social Work  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

## ABSTRACT

Although numerous approaches have been utilized to study leadership (focusing on traits, attributes, styles, roles, situations, performance, results, and so on), there is no agreement on the ideal approach. The debate over this issue especially as related to the study of ethnic minority leadership continues. In this paper two major approaches - the "Great Man or Trait" and the "Times or Situational" approaches are examined, and the latter is presented as a viable theoretical framework for studying the ethnic minority leadership.

## INTRODUCTION

The concept of leadership has appealed to the imagination of many theorists and researchers, but attempts to categorize and integrate leadership knowledge systematically have proven disappointing (Stogdill, 1974). Regarding the state of the accumulated literature on leadership, Thibaut and Kelly (1959) comment:

Not much smaller than the huge bibliography on leadership is the diversity of views of the concept. Many studies essentially ask: What do people mean when they speak of a leader? Other studies begin with a conceptual or empirical definition of leadership and then proceed to determine the correlates or consequences of it as defined. Even a cursory review of these studies shows that leadership means different things to different people (p. 9).

It seems that leadership studies, guided by different notions and theories, have not concerned themselves with common phenomena (Janda, 1960). Browne and Cohn (1958) corroborate this viewpoint when they write:

Through all of the history of man's attempts to record human experiences, leadership has been recognized to an increasingly greater extent as one of the significant aspects of human activity. As a result, there is now a great mass of "leadership literature" which, if assembled in one place, would fill many libraries. The great part of the mass, however, would have little organization: it would evidence little in the way of common assumptions and hypotheses, and it would vary widely in theoretical and research approaches. To a great extent, therefore, the leadership literature is a mass of content without any coagulating substances to bring it together or to produce coordination and point out inter-relationships (p. V).

In spite of such ostensible chaos, conventional views of leadership identify a leader as one who exerts the most influence over other's efforts towards achieving group goals. Also, the concept of leadership allows one to see that a (some) member(s) of a group posses(es) certain characteristics which are different from those of the followers. The way by which a leader exerts influence over others in a group is called leadership role (including dynamics and style) (Carter, 1953), and it is dependent upon many circumstances and peculiarities of the leader and the situation. Obviously, one cannot understand ethnic minority leadership unless it is presented in the context of a theoretical and research frame of reference which takes under consideration some of the previous works on leadership in general and ethnic leadership in particular. This is based on the assumption that the general parameters of leadership are deducible from previous works, and that these parameters apply to all ethnic groups. Therefore, the purposes of this paper are to: 1) describe the nature of the leadership role (dynamics and style); 2) discuss two theoretical approaches which attempt to explain the leadership role; and 3) place the study of ethnic leadership in one of these theoretical approaches.

#### THE NATURE OF THE GENERAL LEADERSHIP ROLE

Three basic sub-concepts provide a framework for describing the dynamics of the leadership role. Influence is on sub-concept, and it can include virtually any psychological or behavioral effect or impact by one party on another in the process of interpersonal interaction. This impact may take the form of emulation,

suggestion, persuasion, or coercion. Emulation denotes one's modeling of another's behavior, while suggestion refers to any attempt to influence another's behavior by advocating a particular course of action. Persuasion involves the use of some inducement in an attempt to evoke a desired response, while coercion involves the use of forcible constraints to achieve a desired response.

The second sub-concept is power, defined as the ability to influence behavior. Power denotes the ability of a person or a group of persons to solicit prescribed behavior from others by means of superior formal or informal position (Bierstedt, 1950). Therefore, power can be understood as the capacity to affect behavior in a predetermined manner.

Another important sub-concept of leadership dynamics is authority, which is defined as the institutionalized right to employ power (Bierstedt, 1950). In a sense, authority represents an artificial power structure. The three basic types of legitimate authority are: rational legal, traditional, and charismatic. Rational legal authority is based on logical expedience, while traditional authority is based on custom and loyalty. Charismatic authority depends upon the qualities of the individual leader and is more illogical and emotionally based, because personal characteristics are more important than position. A charismatic leader is one who attracts followers by means of his/her appealing personality.

These dynamics, when juxtaposed in a certain manner, allow a leader to influence the activities of a group in a certain fashion, and this comprises leadership style. There are four basic types of

leadership styles: dictatorial, autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire.

## TWO THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO LEADERSHIP IN GENERAL

As a foundation for these notions about the nature of the general leadership role, it is helpful to look at the two classical theoretical approaches which attempt to explain the nature of the leadership role, and which grew out of the thinking of early political philosophers. They are usually referred to as the "great man" and the "times" approaches (Gibb, 1969). In general, the "great man" approach has received the greater amount of attention and support in Western society. The "great man" approach holds that particular individuals are natively endowed with characteristics which cause them to stand out from the many and permit them to guide, direct, and lead the majority (Stogdill, 1948).

Since the variables which support the "times" approach are relatively more difficult to identify than those which support the "great man" approach, attention to it is only of recent vintage (perhaps only during the past three or four decades). The "times" approach views leadership as a function of given social situation. That is, at a particular time, a group of people have certain needs and require the services of an individual (or individuals) to assist them in meeting their needs. Chance determines which individual(s) happen(s) to be at the critical place at the critical time to provide the group with the needed leadership (Morgan, 1973). This does not mean that the particular individual(s) peculiar qualities would thrust him (them)

into a position of leadership in any other situations. It means only that the unique needs of the group are met by the unique qualities of the individual(s) at that time (Lewin, 1938). The "times" approach is somewhat less rigid than the "great man" approach, for while it assumes that humans are all alike and that there are individual differences, it emphasizes that the unique political, economic, and social characteristics of a given time and/or social place are indicative of the leadership needs of a given group.

These two theoretical approaches have provided the background for a large number of studies of leadership and leader behavior by researchers. The "great man" approach is the background for the trait studies of leadership which emphasize the leader's personal characteristics, while the "times" approach has provided the basic assumptions for the situational/interactional studies of leadership.

#### THE (GREAT MAN) TRAIT APPROACH

In the trait approach to studying leadership, extensive attempts have been made to enumerate the personality and special qualities essential for being a leader. Accordingly, some researchers have attempted to ascertain, mainly by experimental methods: 1) what specific innate traits of personality are responsible for the leadership role? 2) what traits are developed during the assumption of the leadership role? and 3) what traits are specifically affected as the leader's tasks are accomplished? (Gibb, 1969).

The notion of cataloguing personality traits of leaders commanded considerable attention during the early period of

leadership inquiry. Bird (1940), for example culled a list of seventy-nine traits of leaders from approximately twenty inquiries which bore some resemblance to controlled investigations. He also focused on the exploration of leadership in terms of what leaders actually did rather than the prevailing notions of leaders. Britt (1941) listed an additional sixty traits which, taken together, "constituted a fair representation of the principal traits of leadership." (p. 277). Krout (1942) added still another twenty-five traits compiled by a psychiatrist from a study of 100 selected leaders. Collectively, this amounted to over 60 personality traits which, singularly or in combination, allegedly accounted for leadership roles.

Stogdill's (1974) herculean task of reviewing studies in over 3,000 books and journal articles on leadership caused him to conclude that:

(Only a few) personality traits have been found to differentiate leaders from followers, successful from unsuccessful leaders, and high level from low level leaders. The traits with the highest overall average correlation with the leadership role are: originality, popularity, sociability, judgement, aggressiveness, desire to excel, humor, cooperativeness, liveliness, and athletic ability, in the approximate order of the magnitude of the average correlation coefficients (p. 91).

Actually, Terman (1904) conducted one of the earliest studies of leadership from the trait perspective. In his study, he sought to identify the qualities leaders possessed which enhanced their roles as



leaders. He also made suggestions as to which areas of leadership might be relevant to researchers, but the significance of his suggestions was not immediately apparent, for his primary aim was to discover the distinguishing attributes of leaders which appealed most to psychology.

This discipline had just begun to devise psychological tests and other means of assessing ability and personality. Also, after World War II, an interest in the impact of group dynamics on interpersonal relations prepared both psychologists and sociologists to apply their insights to the study of leadership. These new efforts were sparked by Stogdill and Gibb. The above-mentioned survey of the literature by Stogdill in 1948 showed that many researchers had sought to isolate the characteristics of leaders and to differentiate them from those of other group members. Individually, these studies were not successful and did not support one another; but by organizing them and placing them in one document, Stogdill debunked the trait approach and offered a strong rationale for the situational/interactional approach to the study of leadership.

Stogdill's (1948) review of the literature allows one to conclude that the qualities, characteristics, and skills required in a leader are determined, to a large extent, by the demands of the situation in which he/she functions as a leader, although a few personality traits are more likely to be found among leaders than among followers. Contrary to Stogdill's original intention, his work moved thinking about leadership away from trait determinants toward an emphasis upon the times or situations as major determinants, for it is quite clear that, subsequent to his study, the view of leadership

shifts toward interactions among members of a group and with the external environment (the situation). Shaw (1971) substantiates this notion by indicating that it is a mistake to think that the relationship between traits and the leadership role is universal, for a trait which is positively related to the leadership role in one situation may be either unrelated or even negatively related in another. This idea has resulted in substantial research which concludes that leadership roles are relative to situations.

#### THE (TIMES) SITUATIONAL/INTERACTIONAL APPROACH

By way of clarifying the situational/interactional approach, reference is made to LaPiere's (1938) definition of the "situation". He states that the "situation" is a set of related events, forces, considerations, and circumstances which constitute the context within which interaction or behavior occurs and within which it must be viewed in order to be understood. It appears that, in the situational/interactional approach to the study of leadership, the term "situation" implies at least five categories of behavioral determinants: 1) the structure of interpersonal relationships between and among leader and followers, 2) the group syntality or the quality of the structure (integration, cohesiveness, solidarity, etc.), 3) characteristics of the larger social context or society in which the group exists and from which the members are drawn, 4) the physical conditions, and 5) the task with which the group is confronted (Gibb, 1954).

In studying leadership from this perspective, emphasis is placed on the relationships among leaders-followers and their

external or social settings. These social settings may be small groups, communities, institutions, political organizations, business organizations, etc. Researchers who have used this approach may be classified as either interactionists or situationists.

### The Interactionists

The interactionists assume personality differences, and outstanding among those who have studied leadership from this perspective are Gibb (1958), Hemphill (1962), Cooper and McGaugh (1963), and Fiedler (1964).

Gibb's (1958) analyses of group dynamics led him to assert that there are four important aspects of group interaction which explain the leadership role: 1) role differentiation (including leadership) is part of a group's movement towards its goal of satisfying individual members needs; 2) leadership is a concept applied to the interaction of two or more persons, and the leader's evaluations control and direct the action of others in accomplishing common goals; 3) the leader's evaluations are products of perception and emotional attachment; and 4) this leads to a set of complex emotional relationships which, in turn, explain the leadership role.

Hemphill (1962), in support yet independent of Gibb's work, studied the characteristics of groups and their importance in determining what behavior is considered by group members to be conducive to successful leadership. His study used members of groups to obtain responses to the following kinds of issues: what a given leader does; the characteristics of the group he/she leads; and the degree of success he/she

achieves as a leader. Some findings from the study suggest that authoritative behavior on the leader's part is most successful in groups which restrict membership, in groups which are described by members who have high status in their groups, and in groups which are described by members who do not feel dependent on their groups.

Cooper and McGaugh (1963), who think that leadership and leaders are indispensable to adaptation and survival, describe the push-pull type of leadership as a function of the dominance-submission relationship among people. Pull may be seen as imprinting, or when one generates in another an enthusiastic desire to follow; while push may be seen when the leader plans or anticipates action, the followers often finding themselves in predicaments where they are dictated to and urged to implement behavior which they very much dislike. A combination of the two may be seen in a leader who both dictates and compromises, or vice versa.

Finally, Fiedler's (1964) areas for selecting and training leaders are interactionist in nature. His findings show that it is much easier to modify one's job or change one's rank and power than it is to change one's personality traits.

### This Situationists

The situationists assume group dynamics and consider external factors as important determinants of an organized group's efforts toward goal setting and goal achievement. Leadership here is directed toward organizing the group and its goals. The minimal social conditions which permit the existence of leadership are: 1) a

group (two or more persons), 2) a common task (goal oriented activities), and 3) differentiation of responsibility (different members have different duties). While there are many more situational factors which influence leadership, these are the minimal ones which will allow for the emergence of leadership. A leader, then, is one who becomes differentiated from others in the group in terms of the amount and quality of influence he/she exerts on the accomplishment of shared goals or activities of the group.

Further explanation of the leadership role in terms of influence is offered by Hollander (1964) who indicates that, since interaction can be evaluated through interpersonal assessments made up of task-related behaviors (measured against some expectation standards), an individual member who adheres to group expectations and conditions of competence over a significant period of time accumulates influence credits which permit innovation in the group. Consequently, this task-competent follower, at one stage of the group's interaction, may emerge as a leader in another stage.

The situationists insist that the group environment is paramount, implying that a good leader in one group may not be a good leader in another. Also, a leader in any group may not be adequate in all instances even in that group. The situationists focus on specialized abilities rather than traits. For a leader to be effective, he/she is only as effective as perceived in his/her group. Given associated factors, interpersonal interactions, and so forth. Situational studies reveal that certain leadership expectations are unique to particular group settings, for instance, Cartwright and Zander's (196) work shows

that while certain minimal abilities are required of all leaders, they are widely distributed among non-leaders as well, and that the optimal leadership abilities for one group may be quite different from those of another in a different setting. This means that just because a leader is suitable for one task, he/she may not be suitable for another (other) tasks, so as tasks change, leadership changes.

As a situationist, Fiedler (1964) developed a contingency model which is most practical for explaining the leadership role. His model maintains that directive leaders are effective under either favorable or unfavorable conditions, whereas non-directive leaders are effective under conditions of moderate favorability. Favorability is defined by the relationships among three situational variables: position power, task structure, and group-leader relations. Fiedler also states that when a situation is most unfavorable, the most effective leader devotes his attention primarily to friendly interpersonal relations.

Sociologists and political scientists who have studied leadership, particularly community power structures, may also be categorized as situationists. The community power structure is the power relations among actors in a community which persist through time, and the major ways sociologists have identified power holders or leaders are by studying community positions, by studying community reputations, and/or by conducting community decision analyses (Dahl, 1961). It seems that the oldest and simplest method of studying community leadership is by studying community positions. It rests on the assumption that leaders perform specified governmental and organizational (formal)

roles. This method does not assume any prior knowledge of the socio-economic structure of the community, although this structure is seen as part of the leadership environment. One simply draws up a list of people who perform the formal roles, and interviews them as community leaders. One difficulty, for the researcher, is that he /she never knows if actual leaders are excluded or if leaders with little or no power are included, for the method assumes that every office holder is influential on some issue(s). So while the method is economical, simple and useful for some purposes, it has dubious validity as a means for the identification of real power holders in a community.

The reputational method attempts to correct this deficiency, for it includes both formal and informal leadership roles. The most significant study of the community power structure which used the reputational method was done by Hunter (1953) in Atlanta. Hunter used a panel to identify most of the influential people in the community wherein he obtained a list of forty leaders whose reputations were studied and described. While the key leaders were from private rather than public sectors, the results from Hunter's study indicated that political and governmental leaders were second to economic leaders (who tended to compromise a small, relatively invisible upper-class group). Parenthetically, it is quite obvious that these findings are at variance with the democratic theory of political accountability.

The decision-analysis method attempts to respond to the critics of the reputational method, for it begins with certain key issues in the community and identifies people who affect their outcomes. Dahl's (1963) classic study (wherein he identified

three basic sets of issues in New Haven-- school issues, urban renewal issues, and political issues) concluded that a leader on one issue is not likely to be influential on another unless he/she is a public official such as the mayor; and leaders on different issues are not homogeneous. Of course this method had been assailed by critics also who are concerned about the arbitrary choice of issues; the fact that focusing on key issues ignores routine decisions; and the fact that the method ignores leadership ideologies. The critics of all three methods highlight the fact that traditional methods are quite crude and a more valid way of looking at leadership is needed for insuring adequate analysis of the leadership role and power structures.

It seems that the identification of power holders and an explanation of the leadership role, particularly on a large urban or societal level, is quite complex, for formal decision makers (those who hold formal offices) may not be the real decision makers in a political system. This was underscored by Mills (1956) who won considerable notoriety with his argument that "power to make decisions of national and international consequence is not so clearly seated in political, military and economic institutions that others areas of society seem off to the side and, on occasion, readily subordinated to these" (p. 16).

Bachrach and Baratz (1970) addressed the problems which face power and leadership identification by highlighting two facets of power which are not considered by leadership theorists and researchers: 1) those who establish public agenda may exercise power to prevent major issues from entering the political system; and 2) the



existence of the private property system, the legitimacy of wealth, and the validity of a social-incentive system are supra-environmental conditions which establish a social policy that requires leadership to be adaptive. This means that there are macro issues which explain the leadership role and power relations and which provide a much broader and more intelligible view when taken under consideration. In this context, it seems that the leadership role becomes an adaptive strategy, and the best way to study it is situationally. However, with the context of environmental issues, it does appear necessary to identify leaders both positionally and/or reputationally.

#### ETHNIC MINORITY LEADERSHIP AS AN ADAPTIVE STRATEGY

Consistent with the foregoing, this section analyzes ethnic leadership as an adaptive strategy. It proceeds on the assumption that ethnic leadership cannot be understood apart from the social context in which it exists. Thus, the nature of that social context and its impact on ethnic leadership will be discussed. Adaptation is a sub-set of coping which refers to any behavior or psychological process occasioned by threat and which serves the purpose of mitigating or eliminating that threat. In other words, "adaptation refers to strategies for dealing with threat" (Lazarus, 1955, p. 151). An understanding of ethnic minority leadership is clearer when it is placed in the context of adaptation, for viewed in this fashion, it is removed from the realm of the unusual and the strange and becomes, appropriately, a manifestation of ethnic population confronting, adjusting to, and mastering their

social environment. This, after all, is the challenge to all human groups, irrespective of ethnicity and race, and it emphasizes the notion that different groups, due to the nature of their environments and conditions in society, tend to deal with their environments differently. This point of view is consistent with Hartman's (1958) concept of adaptation which holds that people seek to fit with their environment and that "the degree of adaptiveness can only be determined with reference to environmental situations" (p. 23).

The importance of the above perspective in illuminating some of the issues involved in the current debate about the nature of ethnic minority leadership and leadership potential among these groups is apparent. Given the nature of the environment which minorities must negotiate, with all of its exclusions, rejections, poverty, and prejudice, it could hardly be expected that their method of negotiation with their environment would be similar to that of whites. This is not to say that ethnic leaders are merely reactors; it indicates that these leaders are both actors and reactors depending on the nature of the situation. McDaniel and Balgopal (1978) in their historical analysis of the patterns of black leadership note that during the Slavery period of 1841-1865 when the race relations policy was subjugation the modal black leadership strategy was oriented toward integration. During the Reconstruction period of 1866-1877 as the race relations policy changed to that of forced tolerance the black leadership also changed to that of integration. In the Post-Reconstruction years between 1877-1920 the race relations policy tended to be de jure segregation and the modal black leadership strategy was oriented toward accommodation.

In the 1920's with increased black migration, the leadership strategy was aimed at separation. During 1930 through 1960 a period characterized by depression and revolution the modal strategy used by black leaders was oriented toward integration and separation. With the emphasis on rapid desegregation during the 1960's Revolution black leaders used differential strategies, including integration, pluralism and separation. In the 1970's a Post-Revolution period as the race relations policy was that of tolerance the black leadership strategy was oriented toward integration. However, in the 1980's as the race relations has not made any dramatic change and continues to be one of tolerance, there is once again emergence of new black leaders who are advocating integration through elected political office. Election of black mayors in most American cities and the emergence of Rev. Jesse Jackson as a viable presidential candidate clearly supports that, for eliminating continued oppression of blacks and other ethnic minorities, it is essential to elect minority leaders to key political offices.

Chestang (1976) identifies three essential elements which aid in describing the black environmental situation: social injustice, societal inconsistency, and personal impotence. This, of course, is a conceptual way of referring to poverty and racism. These three conditions, when combined with adaptive styles, comprise the black experience, and out of this experience, black leadership evolves. It should be clear that ethnic minority leadership is being described as a process rather than a cluster of traits. The rationale is that the trait approach can be very misleading, because it overlooks the fact that "behaviors which are often construed as stable personality traits are,

in reality, highly specific and dependent on the details of evoking situations," (Mischel, 1968, p. 37). Another reason of utmost significance for not listing a cluster of traits to define minority leadership is that such an approach can lead to pejoratively stereotyping these groups in general (e.g., indicating that blacks are affective, blacks are laissez faire, etc.).

Given the nature of the condition for minorities in American society--poverty and racism--and given the fact that in spite of this condition, they are citizens of the country, the prevailing and consistent aspect of their lives which they all share in common is the necessity to live in two cultural arenas -- one minority and one American (a pseudo-pluralistic society). This, then, is a significant part of the ethnic minority situation which gives rise to ethnic leadership, and it grows out of the history and the acculturation of minority in this society. For example, slavery essentially severed the blacks' cultural connections with their homeland, the result being that they were forced to adopt the only culture available, the culture of the dominant white society. At the same time, their participation in white society was circumscribed and conditional. Blacks, in other words, identified with the white society, but the opportunity to derive the benefits of that identification was denied. As a result, their acculturation was dichotomized. Because the gratification of certain sustenance needs (i.e., employment, economic resources, political power, and so forth) were lodged in the white society, blacks necessarily had to interact with whites. However, their needs for nurturance (i.e., family, friends, supportive institutions, and so on) were gratified in the black community.

When ethnic minority leadership is understood as a psycho-social process involving these two interacting systems (each serving to meet specific needs of minority individuals and groups), and when it is understood that this process was set in motion by the limitations placed on their participation in the white society, the nature of the environmental demands on the psycho-social function of the minorities becomes obvious. Limited opportunities for employment, meager economic resources, and circumscribed participation in the political sphere posed serious threats to their physical and social survival. Rampant personal denigration inconsistent responses from the white society, and the threat to physical and emotional well-being menaced their security. Implications of inferiority, denigration of their talents and skills, and insults to their dignity abused their group pride. One of the functions of ethnic minorities leadership, therefore, was (and still is) to mitigate and/or palliate these environmental demands for survival, security, and group pride (and by implication, self-esteem).

As has been said before, it is within the white society that threats to ethnic minorities physical and social survival are found. However, these people, particularly their leaders, must make excursions into the white society if they are to survive, and they do so with the least danger to their integrity by relating only instrumentally to it. By this is meant that their leaders adopt a variety of strategies for obtaining the needed benefits without rendering their people vulnerable. The observation that many minorities perform quite adequately on jobs, but show no investment in the task is one manifestation of a larger leadership strategy. This strategy

was even more commonly used during the period when racial discrimination was more blatant, and blacks of superior competence were consigned to menial tasks. Lack of interest in being a doorman, for example, when one possesses the credentials of a lawyer should be understandable. That some minority individuals used their political position to advance group interest is not surprising. This was (is) true, because the real political power resided (reside) in institutions which had (have) the power to end their careers. Manipulations such as feigned humility and other self-effacing behaviors were (are) also utilized in the course of obtaining survival needs.

The security and the group pride functions of ethnic minority leadership also stem from the constraints placed upon the minority individuals participation in the wider society. In response to those constraints, these groups have been pushed to develop leadership which assures mutually supporting solidarity. Davis (1982) succinctly presents the societal variables which are instrumental in the rise of black leadership: 1) absence of political equity - according to Davis there is a direct correlation between the activity of black leadership, followers, and organizations and the degree to which black citizens have equitable and just access to and control of the political system; 2) absence of adequate economic opportunity - continuation of serious inequities in the economic status among the whites and blacks is a major concern of all black leaders; 3) continued violence against black people and the failure on the part of the society, including government, to put an end to it has been instrumental in the emergence of black leaders in the local level; and 4) the historical absence of access to different public accommo-

dations is still prevalent, especially through institutional racism and racist policies both in the private and public sectors. This solidarity has both social and psychological implications which are interactive and reciprocal. Because the social implications are well known (e.g., the church, sharing resources), it might be well to devote attention to the psychological implications.

The psychological implications of this solidarity provide the genesis of the idea of an "ethnic community". This idea of ethnic community is ultimately an abstraction, for a real, unified monolith called the ethnic community seldom exists. What does exist is the shared feeling of "we-ness" among the ethnics growing out of their shared experiences in relation to the white society. This "we-ness" is facilitated by ethnic leadership, and it serves as a haven against the assaults of the white society. When one refers to the work of leaders in supportive institutions within the ethnic community, such as ministers in the black church, and union and community workers among Chicans farm workers, it is clear that they are able to do their work because of this affinity between and among their people. It is in this sense that one speaks of leadership in the ethnic community.

The abuses to group pride are related to the implications of inferiority, the insults of dignity, and the denigration of talents and skills. Within the ethnic community, leaders serve as role models indicating, to other members, that it is possible to display their talents and skills and receive intrinsic and/or extrinsic rewards. For example, this could be observed more clearly during recent periods of black history, however, the

group pride function of black leadership has always existed. What was once the pride in observing one's parents and friends within the territorial confines of the black community has now been generalized to the activities of one's black fellows, whether in academic, politics, religion, sports or other areas in the larger society.

In addition to the above, the group pride function of ethnic minority leadership can be seen in its provision of a base for identity. The former slave who persevered, outwitting his master and surviving; the depreciated black child who struggled against heavy odds and achieved success; a people beaten down and whose spirits were crushed--all of these are elements of the black identity. These experiences provide a sense of purpose in the lives of many black people. It seems that all groups, in one sense or another, define themselves in terms of how they have mastered their environments. and it is true that every group whose history has been tarnished by oppression has attempted to transform that oppression into an asset. This does not imply that the seeds of good germinate in oppression. It is suggested only that people do what they must to maintain their dignity and pride in the face of oppression. It implies only that the human being adapts (or copes) by using the means available to him/her.

## CONCLUSIONS

Since generally, the issues for ethnic minority leadership have been set by the white majority, it seems that the situational approach is ideal for studying



it (see for example, the thorough works of Thompson (1963), Conyers and Wallace (1976) and Chatterjee (1975)). Such an approach allows the researcher to study the minority leadership role non-pejoratively, and as a function of the dynamic nature of its environment over time and from place to place. It also allows the researcher to narrow down the concept of minority leadership so that it includes only those activities which are, or have been, specifically oriented toward the solution of some problem(s), or the achievement of some goal(s), which is (are) of particular relevance to these ethnic minority groups in the United States.

---

The author expresses his deep appreciation to Professor Clyde O. McDaniel, Jr. for his stimulating ideas and assistance in writing this article.

#### REFERENCES

- Bachrach, P. and Baratz, M.  
1970 Power and Poverty. New York:  
Oxford University Press.
- Bierstedt, R.  
1950 "An Analysis of Social Process"  
American Sociological Review,  
15, December.
- Bird, C  
1940 Social Psychology. New York:  
Appleton Century.
- Britt, S. H.  
1941 Social Psychology of Modern

Life, New York: Rinehart and Company.

- Browne, C. G. and Cohn, T. S.  
1958 The Study of Leadership.  
Danville, Ill.: The Interstate  
Printers and Publishers.
- Carter, L. F.  
1953 "On Defining Leadership", in M.  
Sherif and M. O. Wilson (Eds.),  
Group Relations at the  
Crossroads. New York: Harper  
and Row.
- Cartwright, D. and Zander A. (Eds.)  
1960 Group Dynamics: Research and  
Theory. Evanston, Ill.: Row  
Peterson.
- Chatterjee, P.  
1975 Local Leadership in Black Comm-  
unity. Cleveland, Ohio: Case  
Western Reserve University.
- Chestang, L. W.  
1976 "Environmental Influences on  
Social Functioning: The Black  
Experience," P. Chafferty and L.  
W. Chestang (Eds), Diversity in  
American Society: Implications  
for Social Policy, New York:  
Association Press.
- Conyers, J. E. and Wallace, W. L.  
1976 Black Elected Officials. New  
York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Cooper, G. B. and McGaugh, G. R.  
1963 Leadership Integrating Prin-  
ciples of Social Psychology.  
Cambridge: Schenkman Publishing
- Dahl, R.  
1961 Who Governs. New Haven, Ct.:

Yale University Press.

- Dahl, R.  
1963 Modern Political Analysis.  
Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey:  
Prentice Hall.
- Davis, K. E.  
1982 "The Status of Black Leadership:  
Implications for Black Followers  
in the 1980's", Journal of App-  
lied Behavioral Science, 18:3
- Fiedler, F. E.  
1964 "A Contingency Model of Leader-  
ship Effectiveness", in L.  
Berkowitz, (Ed.), Advances in  
Experimental Social Psychology.  
New York: Academic Press.
- Gibb C. A.  
1954 "Leadership", in G. Lindzey  
(Ed.), Handbook of Social  
Psychology, Cambridge: Addison-  
Wesley Publishing.
- Gibb, C. A.  
1958 "An Interactional View of Emer-  
gence of Leadership", Australian  
Journal of Psychology, 10.
- Gibb, C. A.  
1969 Leadership: Selected Readings.  
Baltimore: Penguin Books.
- Hartman, H.  
1958 Ego Psychology and the Problem  
of Adaptation. New York:  
International Universities  
Press.
- Hemphill, J. K. et.al.  
1962 Administrative Performance and  
Personality: A Study of the  
Principle in a Simulated

Elementary School, New York:  
Teachers College, Columbia Uni-  
versity.

Hollander, E. P.  
1964 Leaders, Groups, and Influence.  
New York: Oxford University  
Press.

Hunter, F.  
1953 Community Power Structure.  
Chapel Hill: University of  
North Carolina.

Janda, K. F.  
1960 "Toward the Explication of the  
Concept of Leadership in Terms  
of the Concept of Power", Human  
Relations, 13:4.

Krout, M. H.  
1942 Introduction to Social Psych-  
ology. New York: Harper.

LaPiere, R. T.  
1938 Collective Behavior. New York:  
McGraw-Hill.

Lazarus, R. S.  
1938 Psychological Stress and the  
Coping Process. New York:  
McGraw-Hill.

Lewin, K.  
1938 "The Conceptual Representation  
and Measurement of Psychological  
Forces", Contributions to Psych-  
ology Theory I.

McDaniel, C. O., Jr. and Balgopal, P. R.  
1978 "Patterns of Black Leadership:  
Implications for Social Work  
Education", Journal of Educa-  
tion for Social Work, 14:1.

- Mills, C. W.  
1970 The Power Elite. New York:  
Oxford University Press.
- Mischel, W.  
1968 Personality and Assessment. New  
York: John Wiley.
- Morgan, J. JR.  
1973 Principles of Administration and  
Supervisory Management. New  
York: Prentice-Hall.
- Stogdill, R. M.  
1948 "Personal Factors Associated  
with Leadership: A Survey of  
the Literature", Journal of  
Psychology, 25.
- Stogdill, R. M.  
1974 Handbook of Leadership: A  
Survey of Theory and Research.  
New York: The Free Press.
- Shaw, M. E.  
1971 Group Dynamics: The Psychology  
of Small Group Behavior. New  
York: McGraw-Hill.
- Terman L. M.  
1904 "Preliminary Study in the  
Psychology and Pedagogy of  
Leadership", Pedagogical Semin-  
ary, 11.
- Thibaut, J. W. and Kelly, H. H.  
1959 The Social Psychology of Groups.  
New York: John Wiley.
- Thompson, D. C.  
1963 The Negro Leadership Class.  
Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey:  
Prentice Hall.