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CHARISMA IN THE 1952 CAMPAIGN*

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I

The term charisma—miraculously-given power—was transferred by Max Weber from its original religious meaning to politics. He described it as “the absolutely personal devotion and personal confidence in revelation, heroism, or other qualities of individual leadership.”¹ He contrasts charisma with leadership based on custom and tradition or on competence related to “rationally created rules” of law. The charismatic leader is thus the one whose claim to rule is neither as a perpetuator of traditional values nor as one who resolves conflicting interests by reasonable and just means but as one endowed with superhuman powers to solve political problems. In the abstract, pure case he is seen by his followers as being *all-powerful*, *all-wise*, and morally *perfect*.

One of the outstanding characteristics of charismatic rule is its mass base. Unlike the palace revolutionary or the condottiere, the charismatic ruler is not content with gaining and maintaining control merely over the machinery of government—the police, administrative offices, legislature, and courts. He consciously seeks to gain control over the individual citizen, not just by the threat of force but perhaps more significantly by appealing for affirmative and enthusiastic devotion. The leader seeks not passive acceptance of his rule but an active identification of the citizens’ needs and expectations with his own and those of the nation. The political demands of individuals become uniform, at least on the manifest level, and are absorbed in and merged with the economic, social, and ethnic demands of the nation, as these are expressed by the leader. A greater portion of the individual’s life finds its expression in politics. The charismatic follower becomes an undifferentiated, cancerous cell in the body politic.

Charisma is therefore not a characteristic of leaders as such but a relationship between leader and followers. It depends both on the construction by a leader and his associates of an image of him as infallible, omniscient, and incorruptible and on a positive, active response to this kind of image-building by those who are predisposed toward such leadership. The “complete” charismatic

* This analysis is derived from data gathered in the study of the 1952 presidential campaign and election that was made by the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan. The general study was under the sponsorship of the Committee on Political Behavior of the Social Science Research Council under a grant from the Carnegie Corporation. The study is published as *The Voter Decides*, by Angus Campbell, Gerald Gurin, and Warren H. Miller (Evanston, Ill., 1954). I wish simultaneously to thank very warmly these three people and others who advised on and facilitated this analysis and to free them, the SSRC Committee on Political Behavior, and the Carnegie Corporation of any responsibility for the data and conclusions herein presented.

¹ *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. H. H. Gerth and C. W. Mills (New York, 1946), p. 79.

follower is oriented in politics toward candidates in a particular way, rather than toward parties or issues. He tends to divide political figures on the basis of strength or weakness, omnicompetence or utter incompetence, righteousness or iniquity. He is unable to see any but good qualities in the leader he accepts or to see any good qualities in the one he rejects. Although strong liking for a candidate is not in itself evidential, for charismatics the emotional attraction of a candidate is predominant and is coupled with the feeling that the leader is the incarnation of all virtues.

In contrast, the non-charismatic person who is nevertheless oriented toward leader rather than party or issues tends to evaluate candidates quantitatively, saying that one is generally better than the other—rather than that one is good, the other bad—and assessing them in terms of specific characteristics indicative of relative competence, skill, experience, or integrity.

Pure charismatic leaders and followers are ideal types unlikely to be found in actual situations. There are doubtless some charismatic tendencies in all candidates for popularly elected office above the level of sanitation supervisor. The well-known panegyrics of those who introduce candidates at public gatherings as often as not are full of hackneyed phrases suggesting the power of their men to move mountains, stop the tides, and gain or regain Utopia within two weeks of taking office. There are doubtless some tendencies in all voters to believe that the candidate of their choice is superhuman and that his opponent is infrahuman. For, campaign hyperbole aside, the phenomenon of strong leadership is perhaps only rarely divorced completely from the will to be or to follow a leader who will make no mistakes and suffer no defeat at the hands of malignant, real enemies and hostile, shadowy forces. In politics, neither St. George nor the dragon is ever quite dead.

Charisma in a nation becomes crucial when it is the dominant characteristic of leaders and a "substantial" number of followers. It is hard to say how large a proportion of followers "substantial" is. Without the interposition of other political forces, a majority of the voting population would be needed to establish government by charisma. The tendency of strongly charismatic leaders to seek power by the use of violence, intimidation, and fraud indicates their deep-seated reluctance to rely even primarily on persuasion and their recognition, perhaps, that in no society at any time can enough people be trusted to believe in the infallibility of any one man.

The political institutions, the degree of territorial integration, and the facilities for communication are also related to the incidence of charisma. Thus, in periods of the Middle Ages when vast numbers of people were in despair because of depredations of famine and disease, the absence of the basis for mass political mobilization of the populace effectively precluded the emergence of charismatic political leaders on more than an immediate, essentially face-to-face level in towns and cities. In those modern Western states where both political traditions of orderly solution of problems and the institutionalized patterns of limited government are strong and effective, again the emergence of charisma is made difficult despite the fact that a mass base is available.

Because of the great variability of leaders, followers, and the situations in

which they interact, the same leader may be seen by particular individuals as charismatic or non-charismatic. During crisis, when more individuals are more uncertain of what should be done in politics, the number of individuals searching for charismatic leaders will increase. A charismatic leader in non-critical times will have relatively less chance to gain political power because of the dearth of individuals who will respond to his clarion call. The failure of charismatic leaders to appear during a crisis period will also frustrate the spread of charisma.

The charismatic phenomenon in a large modern state may therefore be regarded as a function of the interaction of at least these five determinants: (1) the existence of leaders predisposed to make a charismatic appeal; (2) the prevalence of followers predisposed to respond to this appeal; (3) the weakness or strength of political traditions and institutions that inhibit the solution of problems through supermen; (4) a degree of political integration that causes people to turn to the government rather than other institutions (such as family, church, union, service club, or local government) for problem solution; and (5) the existence of crisis.

This last determinant, which has already been mentioned, merits further elaboration. Crisis that has political relevance may arise from at least three different kinds of source. It may result from a feeling of insecurity or anxiety with respect to basic human needs such as food, shelter, health, and physical survival. Chronic failure to satisfy these needs may result in such complete individual preoccupation with staying alive and well as to preclude effective joint political action. The situation in which these needs are satisfied to the extent that time and energy are available for political action, but in which there is persistent fear of the failure to meet these needs, is much more portentous of crisis.

Crisis may also result from a sense of frustration of demands on a level different from that related to the support of life. Despite relative prosperity and health, there may, for example, arise a situation in which there is widespread dissatisfaction with the control structure of the society. Even though there may be basic physical security for most individuals, if a substantial portion of them feel that they are deprived of a fair share of the goods produced in the economy by those who control goods distribution, they may unite politically for the overthrow of the governors. They may unite primarily to overthrow political domination by foreigners, as in the case of colonies rebelling against the mother country—even though economic hegemony by foreigners may continue to be tolerated or ignored.

A third source of crisis is the persistence of unresolved conflict between forces seeking dominance intra- or internationally. This source, which is distinguishable from but perhaps ordinarily associated with one or both of the others mentioned, produces crisis to the extent that people and leaders feel no longer able or willing to tolerate political irresolution. A prolonged internal revolutionary situation or one in which a reform government fails to end deeply divisive conflict within the country may create a crisis. A prolonged conflict between governments, with or without intermittent periods of peace, may have like effect.

One feature of crisis—particularly of the third sort mentioned—that merits

emphasis is that it need not involve conflict which divides the society into two warring camps on an economic, class, or other basis. The conflict may not be between capital and labor, tenant farmers and landlords, one region and another but between two small factions struggling for control of the government—factions operating outside the accustomed or the legal techniques of seeking such control. Or the conflict may be a quiet one within individuals themselves who, regardless of class or religious or traditional party differences, are united in their growing intolerance of perceived incompetence or inadequacy of established rulers and established political rules. These individuals are torn within themselves as to whether to turn to new leaders operating in accord with traditional or rational patterns of political action or new leaders whose appeal is: follow me and turn over to me irrevocably the responsibility for making the decisions on those problems which I say are problems and on which I shall establish and administer policy through control of the government, for I am strong and through me you will get strength.

The political phenomenon of charisma is new only in name. Its demagogic and irrational basis was described by Plato in the discussion of rhetoric in the *Gorgias*. The tyrants in the Greek city-states, Alexander the Great and the succession of Roman Emperors starting with Augustus, were to some extent dependent on charisma for their rule. Augustus appears to have tolerated and unofficially encouraged the building of his popular image as a superhuman. Three centuries later the Emperor Aurelian had medals of himself struck with the inscriptions "Lord" and "God." More recent charismatic rulers, like Napoleon I, Hitler, Stalin, and Huey Long have avoided the label "god," being content with possessing, in the minds of their followers, more than mortal but perhaps only demigodly powers.

Charisma seems most likely to occur during periods when the force of neither tradition nor reason appears to be adequate to cope with mounting political crisis. In the course of the French Revolution, when ancient monarchical tradition had failed and its successor, Reason, brought only evident anarchy, a superman was able to unite France in the pursuit of its supposed destiny to rule all of Europe. Similarly, in Germany, after the breakdown of Imperial rule and even pre-Bismarckian tradition, came the seemingly impotent Republic with its rule of law through the Weimar constitution and parliament. Again a superman gained control, in the pursuit of a similar, even more ambitious destiny.

II

The domestic and international situation during the 1952 national election campaign was a crisis of the sort resulting from persistent, unresolved conflict. There was relatively little insecurity about basic needs of food, shelter, and health—and only the memory of the depression. There was no great outcry to put down malefactors or even accumulators of great wealth. But war, the threat of war, and the memory of two wars which was reinforced by the ongoing Korean conflict, were all factors gnawing at individuals' peace of mind like an

eagle plucking daily the liver of Prometheus, the Titan who stole fire from the gods to benefit mankind. A comparison of this crisis period with others in the United States and elsewhere is impossible in terms of its psychic impact on the general public. One can hazard the guess that as a crisis the years after World War II and the Korean conflict do not seem so capable of producing a sense of individual insecurity as the shock of the depression years. Nevertheless the vagueness and pervasiveness of the current conflict, involving as it does the fear of all-out war, the fear of Communist encirclement, the real and—even worse—the imaginable danger of domestic subversion, and the socio-economic threat implicit in the term communism itself, are strong enough to elicit more than the minimum number of charismatic responses that normalcy would entail.

The 1952 candidates for the presidency offered considerable opportunity for charismatic response. Unlike Truman and Dewey in 1948, Stevenson and Eisenhower were dramatic candidates, both expressing a sense of destiny and both successful—as the size of the vote indicates—in evoking widespread and enthusiastic support. Eisenhower in particular had characteristics which made it possible for those in search of an infallible leader to find comfort in attaching themselves to him. His record as supreme commander of allied forces during World War II, after a swift rise from relative military obscurity; his prestigious presidency of Columbia University; and his successful inauguration of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization—all indicated a capacity for leadership in such diverse fields as military command, educational administration, and diplomacy. For those who so chose to regard his record, these and other achievements could be the evidence for gifts of leadership far beyond those of any mere mortal.

The study of the 1952 election undertaken by the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan provided an opportunity for analysis of charisma as a factor influencing the way people voted for president. On the basis of a sample drawn by area probability techniques, 1799 adults² living in private dwellings were interviewed between mid-September and the election on November 4. Of these 1799 individuals, 1644 were successfully reinterviewed after the election. Among the many questions asked in the pre-election interview was a battery of four on the candidates. These four questions asked what there was about Stevenson and Eisenhower that might make the respondent want to vote for or against each of the candidates. When combined with responses to several other questions, it was possible by a process outlined below to select those cases³ in which the factor of charismatic perception of one candidate or the other was evidently predominant over other grounds for evaluating the candidates.⁴

² An additional 222 in the Far West were interviewed before the election but were deliberately dropped from the post-election sample. These 222 are not here considered because of the need for information available only in the post-election questionnaire.

³ The selection procedure is described in the Note on Method at the end of this article.

⁴ The interview questions used to derive evidence of charismatic responses toward the

Out of this sample of 1799 respondents, who within the limits of sampling error constitute a representative national cross-section of the adult population living in private dwellings, there were only 32 cases in which three judges agreed unanimously that charisma was predominant in the candidate perceptions.

The fact that less than two per cent of even a carefully chosen national sample gave clear evidence of a charismatic orientation is of only tentative significance. Latent charisma may be considerably more widespread among the general public. The responses available in the interviews may have for various reasons failed adequately to report the phenomenon. For one thing, analysis of charisma was not a primary objective of the election study undertaken by the Survey Research Center. For another, there is considerable variation in the fullness of the recorded responses, reflecting presumably some variation in the proportion of the spoken answers that were put down on paper and some variation in the degree of rapport between interviewer and respondent. It is also possible that some respondents felt strongly a charismatic attachment to one or the other of the candidates but were unable or unwilling to express such feeling.

Nevertheless, the predicted relationships that are described below in most instances proved to be considerably closer, considerably more significant statistically, on the basis of the 32 cases finally selected for analysis than on the basis of a preliminary analysis using 252 cases chosen solely because respondents used such expressions as "he is a real leader," or "he is strong and

candidates were:

- a. "I'd like to ask you what you think are the good and bad points about the two parties. Is there anything in particular that you like (don't like) about the Democratic (Republican) party?" If necessary: "What is that?" (This is a condensed version of the four actual questions.)
- b. "Do you think it will make a good deal of difference to the country whether the Democrats or the Republicans win the elections this November or that it won't make much difference which side wins?" If the answer was "Yes": "Why is that?" If "No": "Why do you feel it won't make much difference?"
- c. "Now I'd like to ask you about the good and bad points of the two candidates for president. Is there anything in particular about Stevenson (Eisenhower) that might make you want to vote for (against) him?" If necessary: "What is it?" (This version is similarly condensed from the actual.)
- d. "Now, adding up the good points and the bad points about the two candidates, and forgetting for a minute the parties they belong to, which one do you think would make the best president?"
- e. "Some people say that Eisenhower is not a real Republican. What do you think about this? Is he the kind of man that *you* think of as being a real Republican?"
- f. "What about Eisenhower's ideas and the things he stands for? Do you think that he is pretty much the same as most other Republicans or is he different from them?" If necessary: "Why do you say that?"
- g. (After asking for whom the respondent planned to vote:) "What would you say is the *most important reason* why you are going to vote for Stevenson (Eisenhower)?"
- h. (If the respondent has said he was not going to vote:) "What would you say is the *most important reason* why you would vote for Stevenson (Eisenhower)?"

decisive," or "I have confidence in him." The 32 cases, in other words, gave evidence of being a much more homogeneous category on the charisma dimension than a category eight times as large chosen because of the use of words and phrases that could have—but in fact did not have—clearly charismatic connotation. The evidence is strong that charisma, at least in a manifest form, was not a major factor determining the candidate choice of the very large majority of the respondents interviewed.

All 32 of the cases involved charismatic perceptions of Eisenhower. No clear-cut cases of Stevenson-oriented charisma were found. Of these 32 cases, 26 voted for Eisenhower, four said they would have voted for him but failed to vote. One of the 32 voted for Stevenson.⁵ (And one was not reinterviewed after the election.) For those who were charisma-prone, it is therefore evident on two scores that Eisenhower and not Stevenson was overwhelmingly the candidate to whom they turned. By no means all of these 32 individuals were traditional Republicans. Nine reported voting Democratic in 1948, 14 said they voted Republican, and nine either didn't vote in 1948 or their vote was not ascertained.

It is possible that additional charisma-oriented people would have been found on the basis of responses to the interview question about vice-presidential candidates. This was not attempted because probably few people see the vice-presidential nominee as a potential president and there was only one question in the interview on the basis of which perceptions of Nixon could be assessed.⁶ It would thus be difficult to determine whether Nixon's popularity among a fourth of the sample was charismatic or was of the relatively apolitical sort that might be accorded any national hero.

III

To explain why some individuals have a relatively stronger need than others for infallible political leaders, we must hypothesize differences in individual personality structure and environment that will produce differential reactions to aspects of politics other than leadership as such. Being exposed by and large to substantially the same political phenomena—the same threat of war, the same threat of Communist encirclement and subversion, the same issues of inflation, taxes, corruption, etc.—those who react charismatically to leaders must do so because they differ from others in relatively basic needs and in ways of structuring the external world.

The determinants of these differences are doubtless numerous. Among the

⁵ Eleven additional borderline cases (nine pro-Eisenhower and two pro-Stevenson) were rejected because the evidence satisfied only two of the three judges that charisma was the chief factor in the respondent's perception of the candidates. Thirty more cases (all pro-Eisenhower) were rejected because only one judge regarded the evidence of charisma to be adequate. See the Note on Method for further explanation. The Stevenson voter is discussed in note 10 below.

⁶ The question was: "How about the candidates for vice-president: aside from their parties, do you have any strong opinions about either of them?" If necessary: "How is that?"

causal factors may be a deep-seated sense of insecurity because of a particular kind of upbringing or other formative experiences with parents and others during childhood and adolescence, unusual upward social mobility aggravated by a failure to achieve actual status corresponding to aspirations, or even traumatic experiences such as prolonged unemployment or the loss of son or spouse in consequence of war or automobile accident. Determinants such as these, or actual socio-economic status (including income, education, and occupation), could not be examined because of the complete absence of such data in the interviews or the quite meaningless distribution of these variables among the 32 cases analyzed.

But it is unnecessary to find the causes for a particular aspect of personality structure which results in charisma in order to recognize that the pattern exists and has manifestations in politics other than in the reaction to leaders. The following hypotheses as to the charismatic aspect of personality structure are suggested.

1. The individual with charismatic tendencies is less able to tolerate indecision and crisis.
2. He is less able to maintain ambiguous perceptions—the phenomena he observes must be classified. He is, in other words, more likely to make categoric judgments.⁷
3. He is more likely to believe that other people share his opinions and act as he acts.
4. He is less likely, because of his preoccupation with leaders, to have strong ties to political parties.

These are hypotheses on which data are available from the election study.

The relative intolerance of the charismatic follower for indecision and crisis is posited on the assumption that he is an exceptionally insecure, anxious, or frustrated individual and in consequence incapable of tolerating political conditions which aggravate his sense of insecurity or frustration. There is a sort of restlessness about uncertain situations, a relatively strong demand that something be done to alleviate the uncertainty. The demand is in part for action as such rather than for a particular kind of action. This is not to say that the charismatic person is unconcerned with the kind of action taken, but that his tensions will be *more* relieved if any action is taken and that he will be *less* concerned with appraising the possible consequences of alternative kinds of action than will non-charismatic individuals.

The most striking evidence of this phenomenon appears in comparing the attitude of charismatic and non-charismatic people on the question of what should be our current policy in Korea. In contrast to the 44 per cent of the Republican non-charismatics who said we should take a stronger stand and bomb Manchuria and China and the 38 per cent of these who said we should keep on trying to get a peaceful settlement, 63 per cent of the Republican charismatics said we should take a stronger stand and 17 per cent favored

⁷ See Else Frenkel-Brunswik, "Intolerance of Ambiguity as an Emotional and Perceptual Personality Variable," *Journal of Personality*, Vol. 18, pp. 108-43 (Sept., 1949).

continued efforts toward a peaceful settlement.⁸ Table I presents the total picture.⁹

TABLE I. RESPONDENT'S PREFERENCE FOR U.S. POLICY IN KOREA*

	Republican Charismatics (N = 30)	Republican Non-charismatics (N = 544)
Pull out	7%	10%
Keep trying for peaceful settlement	17	38
Take stronger stand	63	44
Either pull out or take stronger stand, respondent refusing to make choice	7	1
Don't know	0	4
Not ascertained	7	3

* The question asked was: "Which of the following things do you think it would be best for us to do *now* in Korea? Should we: (1) Pull out of Korea entirely? (2) Keep on trying to get a peaceful settlement? (3) Take a stronger stand and bomb Manchuria and China?"

Note: Because of rounding, percentages do not always add to 100.

Further evidence of intolerance for indecision among the charismatic respondents comes from an examination of the relative promptness with which they made up their minds on the candidates. The promptness is apparent and highly significant whether one considers only Republican charismatics or the entire category. Four out of five of the charismatics after the election reported having decided to vote for Eisenhower before or during the Chicago conventions; only about half of the non-charismatics had decided by then.

Similarly, far fewer of the charismatics reported that they had considered voting for the candidate they rejected at the election. Although one out of five non-charismatic Republican voters said he had considered Stevenson, only one charismatic Republican respondent out of 26 who voted for Eisenhower said he had considered Stevenson. The difference is again highly significant.

⁸ Despite the small number of cases, these differences are highly significant statistically; significant, that is, at the one per cent level of confidence using a Chi-square test. This means that there is only one chance in a hundred that the differences between the two categories of individuals are due to chance. The Chi-square formula used here and elsewhere in this article, except where another formula is given, is the basic one of $\chi^2 = (o - e)^2 / e$. Since both difference between the two categories and the direction of difference were predicted here, the level of significance is doubled here and elsewhere in the article where direction was predicted.

⁹ Respondents who voted or would have voted Republican tended more often than Democrats either to say we should pull out of Korea or to say we should take a stronger stand. Since being Republican in terms of the 1952 vote is thus related to this policy issue, this factor was controlled in Table I by eliminating Democrats and comparing only Republican charismatics and non-charismatics. This practice is followed in all comparisons where there is evidence that voting or intending to vote Republican is related to the response given to a particular question. In such cases, the charismatics and non-charismatics are labeled Republican in the tables.

TABLE II. TIME OF VOTING DECISION*

	Republican Charismatics (N = 30)	Republican Non- charismatics (N = 544)	All Charismatics (N = 31)	All Non- charismatics (N = 830)
Before or during the Chicago conventions	80 %	53 %	77 %	51 %
After the convention	7	22	10	24
Didn't vote	13	21	13	23
Don't know	0	†	0	†
Not ascertained	0	3	0	2

* The question was: "How long before the election did you decide that you were going to vote the way you did?"

† Less than one-half of 1 per cent.

Note: Because of rounding, percentages do not always add to 100.

cant and the proportions are about the same for all charismatic and non-charismatic voters.¹⁰

The second hypothesis concerns the intolerance of the charismatic follower for ambiguity of perception, just as the first concerns his intolerance for am-

TABLE III. CONSIDERATION OF OTHER CANDIDATES*

	Republican Charis- matics (N = 30)	Republican Non-charis- matics (N = 544)	All Charis- matics (N = 31)	All Non-charis- matics (N = 830)
Voted for Eisenhower, considered Stevenson	3 %	15 %	3 %	10 %
Voted for Eisenhower, did not consider Stevenson	83	63	81	42
Voted for Stevenson, considered Eisenhower	0	0	0	9
Voted for Stevenson, did not consider Eisenhower	0	0	3	15
Other voting possibilities	0	1	0	1
Didn't vote	13	21	13	23
Don't know or not ascertained	0	†	0	†

* The question was: "Did you ever think during the campaign that you might vote for (opposite candidate)?"

† Less than one-half of 1 per cent.

Note: Because of rounding, percentages do not always add to 100.

¹⁰ Curiously, but consistently with this hypothesis, the one charismatic respondent who voted for Stevenson said after the election that he had never considered voting for Eisenhower and that he had decided to vote as he did "three months at least" before the election. When he was first interviewed on September 25, just six weeks before the election, he said he was going to vote Republican, had only favorable things to say about Eisenhower, and unfavorable things about Stevenson.

biguity of action or for what he regards as inaction or indecision. The two hypotheses are as related to and as separate from each other as are action and perception in the individual. Table III, discussed above, represents the borderline between perception and action and is relevant to both hypotheses. The second hypothesis relates more strictly to the way the charismatic follower goes about forming his judgments. It says that he tends to see the world in blacks-and-whites, to fit persons and ideas into compartments, and generally to regard the withholding of judgment as being as unpleasant as the withholding of action.

The general tendency to view the political world in blacks-and-whites was measurable in the election study by a comparison of the pattern of responses on the general party and candidate questions in which the respondent was asked to state what he regarded as the good and bad points about each party and candidate.¹¹ As might be expected, some respondents had favorable and unfavorable things to say about both parties and both candidates. Others had only favorable things to say about one candidate or one party. Others had only unfavorable things to say about one candidate or party. The different patterns are presumably related to several things, including level of political interest and information, political involvement, party preference and voting preference for example. The patterns are related also to charisma.

For present purposes, those charismatic and non-charismatic respondents (labelled least black-and-white in the tables to follow) who had both good and bad things to say about both Stevenson and Eisenhower were compared with those (labelled most black-and-white) who had only good things to say about one candidate and bad about the other. A similar comparison is presented on

TABLE IV. PATTERN OF RESPONSE ON CANDIDATES

	Republican Charismatics (N = 30)	Republican Non-charismatics (N = 544)
Least black-and-white	3 %	13 %
Most black-and-white	50	27
Other response patterns	47	60

TABLE V. PATTERN OF RESPONSE ON PARTIES

	Republican Charismatics (N = 30)	Republican Non-charismatics (N = 544)
Least black-and-white	10 %	18 %
Most black-and-white	47	29
Other response patterns	43	53

¹¹ The wording of these questions is given in footnote 4, items a and c.

the parties. In both comparisons, only those who voted or would have voted Republican are considered, to eliminate the distorting influence of the relationship between vote and pattern of response.

The charismatics are clearly much more inclined to judge both candidates and parties on a cops-and-robbers basis.¹² On candidates, the charismatic Republicans are 16 to 1 most black-and-white, as contrasted with a 2 to 1 ratio among non-charismatics. On parties, the corresponding ratios are $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 and $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 1.

Another indication of the charismatic person's relative inability to sustain perceptual uncertainty appears in the forecast respondents made before the election on how close the national race for the presidency would be. As the following table indicates, charismatics were about evenly divided as to whether the race would be close or would approach a landslide. The non-charismatics were about 3 to 1 inclined to think the election would be close. The difference is highly significant.

TABLE VI. PREDICTION OF CLOSENESS OF PRESIDENTIAL RACE*

	Republican Charis- matics (N = 30)	Republican Non-charis- matics (N = 544)	All Charis- matics (N = 32)	All Non-charis- matics (N = 922)
(Very) close race	50%	68%	53%	68%
One candidate will win by (quite) a lot	46	21	44	19
Respondent answered but gave no clear-cut prediction	0	7	0	7
Don't know or not ascertained	4	4	3	6

* The question was: "Who do you think will be elected president in November? Do you think it will be a close race or will (respondent's choice) win by quite a bit?"

The intolerance for perceptual ambiguity is evidenced also in the discrepancy between the candidate respondents voted for and the one they said would make the best President aside from the party. Few people can be expected to believe or to state that in their opinion there is a difference between the candidate of their choice and the best potential President. Nevertheless, here again the charismatic Republicans differ from the non-charismatics; there is slightly

¹² The difference is significant in both cases at the five per cent level of confidence. In Table IV, because the expected frequency among the least black-and-white charismatics was less than five, the following formula was used:

$$\chi^2 = \frac{N \left(\frac{AD - BC}{N} - \frac{N}{2} \right)^2}{(A + B)(C + D)(A + C)(B + D)}$$

See Quinn McNemar, *Psychological Statistics* (New York, 1949), p. 207.

more than one chance in twenty that the difference is due to chance. The difference therefore falls short of statistical significance.

The third hypothesis—that the charismatic individual is more likely to believe that other people share his opinions and act as he acts—is related to the second in that the inability to maintain ambiguous perceptions is presumably part of the same psychic inability to tolerate diversity. The third hypothesis, however, introduces the additional factor of the charismatic's need for group

TABLE VII. CANDIDATE BEST SUITED FOR THE PRESIDENCY*

	Republican Charismatics (N = 30)	Republican Non-charismatics (N = 544)
Eisenhower	97%	83%
Stevenson	3	10
Either; neither; it depends	0	2
Don't know or not ascertained	0	5

* The question was: "Now, adding up the good points and the bad points about the two candidates, and forgetting for a minute the parties they belong to, which one do you think would make the best president?"

support for his own judgments, his relative inability to stand alone. In the pre-election interview respondents were asked how they thought various groups would vote. The groups in question were farmers, the working class, Negroes, the middle class, big businessmen, union members, Protestants, Catholics, and Jews. The Republican charismatic respondents were much more likely to believe that farmers, working class, and middle class would vote Republican. There were slight differences also between charismatic and non-charismatic respondents on the other groups, but the differences were generally so small that they must be attributed to other factors or to chance.

The fourth hypothesis states that the charismatic follower will have weaker ties to party than others because his main concern is to attach himself to an

TABLE VIII. PREDICTION OF VOTE OF VARIOUS GROUPS OF REPUBLICANS

	Farmers		Working Class		Middle Class	
	Charis- matics (N = 30)	Non- charis- matics (N = 544)	Charis- matics (N = 30)	Non- charis- matics (N = 544)	Charis- matics (N = 30)	Non- charis- matics (N = 544)
Will vote Democratic	17%	24%	23%	38%	3%	11%
Will vote Republican	40	20	27	14	47	35
Will split	30	33	30	32	30	31
Don't know and not ascertained	13	23	20	16	20	23

infallible leader. The evidence in support of this notion is not so strong as for the other hypotheses. In terms of classifying themselves as either strong or weak Republicans or Democrats rather than as Independents with or without leanings toward one or the other of the parties, there is some evidence—which falls slightly short of statistical significance at the five per cent level—that charismatics are more likely than the non-charismatics to attach themselves to party.

But when asked what they would do if confronted with voting for a candidate of their own party whom they liked less than the candidate of the other party, the charismatics differ markedly from the non-charismatics. Three-fourths of the former would vote for the candidate rather than the party of their preference, while less than half of the latter would do so. Only one out of eight of the charismatics in such a conflict situation would stick by his party or else not vote at all, whereas one out of four of the non-charismatics would choose one or the other of these alternatives that maintain his party ties. The relationship is evident whether one contrasts all charismatics or only those who voted or would have voted Republican in 1952.

TABLE IX. VOTING FOR CANDIDATE OR PARTY*

	Republican Charis- matics (N = 30)	Republican Non-charis- matics (N = 544)	All Charis- matics (N = 32)	All Non-charis- matics (N = 922)
Would vote for candidate of other party	74%	49%	72%	42%
Would vote for candidate of own party	10	10	9	14
Would not vote for either candidate	3	14	3	17
Don't know or not ascertained	13	27	16	27

* The question was: "Suppose there was an election where your party was running a candidate that you didn't like or you didn't agree with. Which of the following things comes closest to what you think you would do? (1) I probably would vote for him anyway because a person should be loyal to his party. (2) I probably would not vote for either candidate in that election. (3) I probably would vote for the other party's candidate."

The interesting aspect of this information is that, if charismatics are indeed more likely to attach a party label to themselves, the label means less for them than for non-charismatics. The former may declare rather more strongly or more often their loyalty to party, but this loyalty means less to them than the attraction of a strong candidate. One can speculate on an explanation for this, saying that conventional loyalties are prominent among charismatics but that the convention is honored mostly on the verbal level and will be flouted in action—without the flouters being particularly aware that their party loyalty is largely sham. The available evidence from the election study, however, offers no clue other than the data presented to explain a phenomenon—apparent real weakness of verbally strong party ties—that is by no means self-explanatory.

IV

One of the most important broad questions about charisma-oriented individuals is the amount and kind of their political activity. If they are relatively active politically, their importance is of course greater than their numbers. If their orientation toward political issues differs from more common patterns, this too may be portentous. The inconclusiveness of relevant data from the election study makes improper any testing of hypotheses. But some of the material is suggestive and merits brief mention.

The charismatic respondents reported being "very much" or "somewhat" interested in the 1952 campaign much more often than did the non-charismatics.¹³ Nine out of ten of the charismatics compared with three out of four non-charismatics expressed such interest. (And less than a tenth of the charismatics said they were not much interested, compared with about a fourth of the non-charismatics.) Furthermore, three out of four of the charismatics said the differences between the parties were such as to make it important or very important to the country which party won the election; somewhat more than half of the non-charismatics said so.¹⁴ Statistically, these differences are significant.

But these differences in reported strong political feelings among the charismatics are not so clearly evident in the differences in reported action. There is either no difference between charismatics and non-charismatics on the reported regularity of their actual voting, or a difference indicating that the charismatics are somewhat less likely to vote in all or most presidential elections.¹⁵ On the other hand, charismatics slightly more often than non-charismatics reported having voted in both 1952 and 1948 elections. In both cases the differences fall short of statistical significance. The only reasonable conclusion from these data is that charismatics by and large vote neither more nor less often than non-charismatics.

Aside from voting, charismatics are in some ways apparently more active than non-charismatics. Respondents were asked after the election whether they had (a) talked to people, trying to persuade them how to vote, (b) given money, (c) attended meetings or rallies, (d) done any party campaign work, or (e) belonged to any political club or organization. On two scores the charismatics were significantly more active than non-charismatics—talking to people and doing campaign work. In the other kinds of political activity they were either as active or possibly slightly more so. Republicans generally are more active politically than Democrats, so part of the charismatic's activity may be

¹³ The question was: "Some people don't pay much attention to the political campaigns. How about you, would you say that you have been very much interested, somewhat interested, or not much interested in following the political campaigns so far this year?"

¹⁴ The question was: "Do you think it will make a good deal of difference to the country whether the Democrats or the Republicans win the election this November, or that it won't make much difference which side wins?"

¹⁵ The question was: "In the elections for president since you have been old enough to vote, would you say that you have voted in all of them, most of them, some of them, or none of them?"

related to being Republican. But when all Democrats were eliminated, the remaining charismatics were still in the ways described more active than Republican non-charismatics.

The orientation of charismatics toward partisan issues is substantially the same as that of non-charismatics. On the three domestic issues used in the election study to test partisanship of orientation—government welfare activities, FEPC, and the Taft-Hartley Act—charismatics did not significantly differ from non-charismatics, although they may lean very slightly more toward the Democratic position on welfare legislation and slightly more toward the Republican view on FEPC. On two of the four foreign issues—Have we gone too far in foreign involvement? Was it right to go into Korea in 1950?—the difference is microscopic. On the issue of whether it was our fault China went Communist, charismatics are inclined to blame this country more than do non-charismatic Republicans. If charismatics are adopting a partisan view on our China policy, it is so extreme as to indicate more zealous Republicanism than most Republicans themselves exhibit.

A more likely explanation than partisanship is that this belief in our blame for China's going Communist is associated with the characteristically charismatic attitude toward the fourth of the foreign issues—what should we do in Korea now? The strong tendency of charismatics either to say we should pull out of Korea or to say we should bomb Manchuria and China has been explained above in connection with Table I as evidence of intolerance of sustained political indecision and crisis.

V

The foregoing analysis of charisma in the 1952 campaign was undertaken for three reasons: to assess the researchability of an important political phenomenon which heretofore has remained largely in the intuitive realm of thought, to find out how prevalent the phenomenon is in contemporary American politics, and to test the validity of certain intuitive hypotheses as to the way charismatic followers will act.

The analysis presented is neither exhaustive nor deeply etiological. Because of the broad scope of the election study undertaken by the Survey Research Center, it was not possible to insert in the interview questions which could be designed to explore in depth the causes and in breadth the manifestations of charisma. The absence of prior research that is of directly probative value would have made imprudent the large expenditure necessary to gather a large national sample for the sole or primary purpose of research in patterns of leadership perception. But it was in fact possible by relatively exact, though crude, techniques to isolate a category of respondents whose primary orientation to politics indicated a strong predilection for a particular kind of leadership. And meaningful as well as statistically significant relationships between this predilection and kinds of political attitude and action did in fact emerge. I believe the analysis does indicate that a concept which up to now has been confined largely to intuitive observation can be subjected to empirical observation and test.

As we have noted, less than two per cent of the very precisely representative and random sample of the national adult population gave clear evidence of a primarily charismatic orientation. This fact is indeed significant, in more than a statistical sense, but its significance should not be overestimated. There is evidence in the interviews suggesting that more than such a tiny fraction of the general public has some charismatic reactions to politics. There is indeed no evidence that only about one person in fifty would actively support a man with a halo on a white horse. However, the fact that 32 cases produced striking relationships whereas more cases less precisely selected did not—despite the pronounced statistical advantage of large numbers—indicates rather clearly that charisma judged by fairly clear-cut criteria and exhibiting specific behavioral manifestations is not now epidemic in our society.

The four intuitive hypotheses stated at the beginning of Section III find considerable support in the data presented. It does seem clear that charisma-oriented individuals are relatively intolerant of political crisis, incapable of maintaining ambiguous perceptions, and more likely to see others as sharing their opinions and actions. The fourth hypothesis on relative weakness of party ties among the charismatics is supported by less convincing evidence. The hypotheses are by no means proven, but they state differences which are theoretically consistent, and the relevant data are consistent with the hypotheses. Further research should not only test anew such hypotheses as these but also seek to examine in greater depth and breadth the causes and political consequences of charisma.

As is true with all research, a danger of investigations in charisma is that they lead the analyst and the reader to believe that the concept is the sole one having portent for our political future. Social analysts having an established set of work interests are prone to see charisma or anomie or authoritarianism or class struggle as *the* crucial concept, in terms of which the past can be explained and the future predicted with a confident sadness. No claim is here made for the primacy of charisma. Liberal and democratic political institutions are surely fostered or destroyed in consequence of a wide range of phenomena operating together and during the same time period. The isolation and abstraction of a particular phase of political life is necessary but should not lead to the crowning of kings when it seems clear that causal regency is plural.

We have noted that certain hypothesized relationships exist between underlying behavior patterns and charisma. Those who are looking for an omnipotent leader are doing so because they cannot tolerate either ambiguous thought or uncertain action. They tend to seek group support for their judgments and perhaps to be less firmly attached to political parties than others. More elaborate analysis would surely produce a wider range of knowledge about the dynamics of charisma.

The major caveat I would make is that there is danger of inferring from general behavior patterns to political behavior and vice versa. No claim can legitimately be made that, because charismatics cannot tolerate ambiguous thought and action, all those who cannot tolerate such ambiguity are charismatics. The term charisma refers to a particular pattern of political behavior

and not to a general characterological type. The charismatic individual is not a personality type any more than the person with cancer is an organic type. Charisma is in this paper conceived of as a characteristic of a particular aspect of the individual's total pattern of behavior—the political aspect. No more is asserted than one would say in describing a person as having cancer when he had a cancerous lung or liver. As a political behavior pattern, charisma is probably more fundamental than Republican or Democratic, but much less basic psychologically than, let us say, sado-masochistic or paranoid.

There is a growing tendency in current social research to jump with verbal ease from political to psychological concepts and back again. This saltatory process is presumably designed to establish profound relationships between the two areas of investigation. Profound relationships do exist, and are researchable, but the facile leap is likely to impede rather than facilitate the growth of our knowledge of political behavior. Until such time as we can demonstrate that all those who are insecure or intolerant of ambiguity or paranoid are of a single political type (whether charismatic or authoritarian or anomic) and can demonstrate that all charismatics or authoritarians can be subsumed under a particular broad psychological type, it seems likely that progress in knowledge can be more rapid the more cautiously we generalize. All individuals who are characterologically intolerant of ambiguous thought and action may share a political predisposition not to tolerate indecision and crisis in politics. But for some of them, family tradition or community pressure may preclude identification with candidates in a charismatic manner. Some political non-charismatics may have a strong tendency to attach themselves charismatically to leaders in business or trade union or to religious fanatics or even to their spouses. Preliminary efforts to establish relationships between general and specifically political behavior patterns must be recognized as such and regarded as initial efforts to appraise the significance of only some of the wide range of determinants of people's political attitudes and actions.

The broader context in which charisma is here conceptualized is the irrational tendency not to solve but to suppress major political problems of the age. Isaiah Berlin has said that the new belief of the 20th century "consists, not in developing the logical implications and elucidating the meaning, the context, or the relevance and origin of a specific problem . . . but in altering the outlook which gave rise to it in the first place. . . ."¹⁶ Charisma is regarded as only one of the major forms which this tendency takes. The evidence here presented indicates that the factor is not now prevalent on the manifest level. The extent to which it is a latent disease in the body politic cannot here be judged. If our political institutions remain strong and prove generally though falteringly able to handle the crises of our times or if the crises abate, charismatic leaders and followers alike may be frustrated in their combined search for power and glory.

¹⁶ Isaiah Berlin, "Political Ideas in the 20th Century," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 28, pp. 351–85, at p. 371 (April, 1950).

NOTE ON METHOD

The central methodological problem was selection of the charismatic cases. This process went through three stages. The first stage was facilitated by the elaborate code established for appraising respondents' perception of Stevenson and Eisenhower. A range of over a hundred different kinds of responses favorable to each of the candidates and about the same number of unfavorable responses was established in the code. From this range of possible responses were selected those that indicated some possibility of charismatic content, such as the one that he is a natural leader, he is above politics, people have confidence in him, etc. A machine sorting produced a total of 252 interviews in which one or more such possibly charismatic remarks had been made about Eisenhower or Stevenson. I then read through each of these interviews to determine which contained defensible evidence of charisma and which did not. This reduced the number to 50. The final sifting process involved having two other judges independently read through the 252 interviews and apply the criteria described in the next paragraph. There was some difference of opinion among the two independent judges and myself. Cases on which agreement was not unanimous among the three of us were discussed. Those on which there was not final unanimous agreement were discarded. On 32 cases there was final unanimous agreement, and this group provided the basis for analysis.

The criteria used in judging were established in a four-page, single-spaced "code." It described the concept of charisma, specified the questions in the interview (those listed in footnote 4) that were to be first examined for evidence of the characteristic and the questions that specifically were not to be examined (such as the one on vice-presidential candidates and how the respondent expected to vote), and gave examples of responses which did and did not meet minimal standards for charisma. Since the examples were so important in establishing a cutting point, the most relevant responses in three different interviews are given below:

1. An interview classified as not sufficiently charismatic to be included:

(What do you like about the Republican party?) "Nothing except their choice of candidate, General Eisenhower. I'm a particular admirer of him." (What do you like about Eisenhower?) "His qualities of leadership. His ability to accept responsibility and make up his mind."

The respondent says he is "a particular admirer" of Eisenhower and praises his qualities of leadership, but speaks of his ability to accept responsibility and make up his own mind, which are not uniquely charismatic qualities.

2. An interview classified as minimally charismatic:

(Why will it make a difference if the Republicans win?) "... I am trusting to the Republicans and Ike to end this awful war."

(What do you dislike about Stevenson?)

"Truman got the nomination for him, and, instead of being himself, Stevenson is being a little second Truman. We don't need a weak sister now . . ."

(What do you like about Eisenhower?)

"His past record has shown him a man of decision and honor. He will do the wise thing about Korea and get our boys out of there . . ."

(Is Eisenhower a real Republican?)

"... In some ways he may differ, but only in ways he feels it best for the country, and then the Republicans will listen, as they know they have a wise man to listen to."

The charismatic clues are: (1) Stevenson is "a little second Truman" and "a weak sister"; (2) Eisenhower is trusted to end the Korean war; (3) Eisenhower is "a man of decision"; (4) the Republicans will listen to "a wise man"; (5) there is belief in the *certainty* that Eisenhower will end the war and that he will lead the Republicans.

3. An interview classified as clearly charismatic:

(What do you like about Eisenhower?)

"I think Eisenhower is God-sent in our moment of strife. He will, I believe, get us out of this turmoil and back on our feet again. He is a leader of men, and he can do the job if anyone can."

(Are Eisenhower's ideas pretty much the same as other Republicans?)

"I'd say a little different, maybe. His ideals of right and wrong are much higher than most politicians. He has been at the head of an army, a college, and men all over have looked up to him and respected him. Why, he is just the man to lead this country and put it on a firm footing."

The belief in Eisenhower's omnipotence and moral excellence are rather clear-cut here.

There were inevitably some borderline cases. It was because our primary interest was in assessing the characteristics found to be clearly associated with charisma rather than in reaching a firm conclusion on the number of individuals whose approach to politics is charismatic, that we excluded all cases on which the three judges could not agree. This proved to be sound because the predicted relationships were more clear-cut among the 32 cases than among the 50 that I had chosen without the aid of judges—despite the fact that the criteria used by the other two judges were my own.

A statistical measure of the amount of agreement between the three judges indicated reliability of judgments considerably above the level of chance. Using a measure of agreement between judges labeled π by its author, William A. Scott,¹⁷ we found that the completely independent classification of interviews as charismatic by the three judges (including myself) had a π of .40, where 0 indicates only chance agreement and 1 indicates complete agreement. The π score for agreement between the two independent judges, who had no part in preparing the criteria for charisma, was higher (.53) than the agreement scores .32 and .36 between each of them separately and me. If I had gone through the 50 interviews I originally classified as charismatic and judged them in accordance with the more rigorous formal criteria used by the two judges, agreement would have been statistically higher but would have needlessly involved my being both judge and jury.

¹⁷ Wherein $\pi = P_0 - P_e/1 - P_e$. P_0 signifies observed per cent of agreement between two or more judges selecting a particular characteristic out of a group. P_e signifies expected or chance per cent of agreement between two or more judges selecting such cases.