

Management and Labour Studies
Vol. 24, No. 2, April 1999, pp. 142-143.

BOOK REVIEW

"Leadership: Theory and Practice"

--Peter G. Northouse. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 1997.

Pp.xviii+274. US\$ 48.00 (cloth)/22.95 (paper).

Reviewed by Venkat R. Krishnan, XLRI Jamshedpur

The book tries to bridge the gap between theoretical writings on leadership and the inadequacy in presentation to the practitioner. The book reviews in an exhaustive fashion the research findings of many approaches to leadership, while at the same time giving attention to how leadership can be explained and applied in real-world organizations. The author does a commendable job of describing how the research on leadership can inform and direct our practical applications of leadership.

The first chapter introduces the concept of leadership, wherein the author defines leadership as a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. Leadership is also distinguished from similar other constructs like power, coercion and management. The book has 12 chapters. The five chapters following the introductory first chapter deal with the trait, behavioral and contingency approaches to leadership. The trait and behavioral approaches look at leadership from the point of view of the leader. The important traits and behaviors that differentiate leaders from non-leaders are touched upon by the author. The contingency approaches to leadership introduce the follower and the context as relevant variables in addition to the style and behavior of leader. Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership theory, Fiedler's contingency model and the path-goal theory are dealt with in detail.

The book then goes on to explain leader-member exchange (LMX) theory and transformational leadership. The LMX theory (initially referred to as vertical dyad linkage theory) conceptualizes leadership as a process that is centered in the dyadic relationship and interaction between leader and follower. Followers are classified as belonging to either the in-group or the out-group based on the quality of exchange relationship they have with the leader. The author presents findings that highlight the positive effect of high quality exchange relationship on various individual and organizational variables.

Transformational leadership is then introduced as a current approach to leadership that has been the focus of much research since the early 1980s. Transformational leadership is distinguished from transactional leadership by highlighting that the latter refers to the bulk of leadership models which focus on the exchanges that occur between leaders and their followers. Transformational leadership, on the other hand, refers to the process whereby an individual engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower. Transformational leaders are recognized as change agents who are good role models, who can create and articulate a clear vision for an organization, who empower followers to achieve at

higher standards, who act in ways that make others want to trust them, and who give meaning to organizational life.

The last four chapters of the book on team leadership theory, psychodynamic approach, women and leadership, and popular approaches to leadership are respectively written by Susan E. Kogler Hill, Ernest L. Stech, Dayle M. Smith, and Mary Ann Bowman. Kogler Hill discusses the role of leadership in designing and coaching teams to achieve effectiveness. A systems model is presented displaying the relationship between inputs, outputs and process measures. The model also demonstrates the role the team leader can play in monitoring and taking the appropriate action relative to these three factors.

Stech considers mom and dad becoming leaders, at least for a few years after we are born, as the basic premise of the psychodynamic approach to leadership. Our parents create, particularly in the early years of childhood, deep-seated feelings about leadership. Important concepts in the psychodynamic approach to leadership include the family of origin, maturation or individuation, dependence and independence, regression, and the shadow self. Each of these plays a unique role in the leadership process. The psychodynamic approach to leadership is unique in that it is not specifically addressed to the question of leadership but rather to the larger issues of human existence and relationships.

Smith explores leadership from the multifaceted dimensions of women's and feminist theory. The author also analyzes the barriers to promotion and advancement opportunities for women, and suggests some avenues for women to develop further their leadership potential. Finally, the popular approaches to leadership presented by Bowman include the servant-leader paradigm, spiritual-ethical orientation and empowerment of followers.

Three case studies are provided in each chapter to illustrate common leadership issues and dilemmas. Thought-provoking questions follow each case study. Another unique and probably the most useful feature of the book is that a leadership instrument is provided in each of the chapters. The instrument in the form of a self-report questionnaire is designed to help the reader apply the approach to his or her own leadership style or setting. The book would be extremely beneficial as a text for undergraduate and graduate courses in leadership. It is also an excellent and handy resource for participants in leadership development programs, and for anyone interested in improving his or her leadership abilities.