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Book Review

Bratton, J. (Ed), Organizational Leadership, 2nd Edition.
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Introduction

Publication of the second edition of *Organizational leadership,* edited by Professor John Bratton, is perfectly timed as we try to adapt and learn lessons following the pandemic. Written in the context of global crises such as Covid-19, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the failure of capitalism in Europe and climate change, the book critically examines the plurality of leadership theories and practices in public and private organisations. With an international team of authors, this book draws less on evidence and case studies from the United States of America (USA) than most leadership textbooks, bringing together examples from UK, Europe, Far East, South Africa, Australia and elsewhere. The 'Leadership in Action' and 'Ethical Spotlight' features, which consider the application of leadership theory and practices in different cultures, ensure that the content is accessible and relevant to readers no matter their

background. The book is situated at the interface of leadership, organisational behaviour and human resource management (HRM) and is based on a framework that explores the interconnections between context, leaders and followers. It is structured into four main sections, as summarised below.

Part 1: Contextualising Leadership

Part 1 contains four chapters, which outline core concepts in leadership and their relationship to context. Chapter 1 considers 'The nature of leadership', including definitions of leadership, the relationship between leadership and management, changing approaches to studying leadership, and the employment relationship. It is suggested that leadership touches on issues of power, ideology, and the development of social relationships. Chapter 2 delves deeper into these issues by exploring different perspectives on power and its relationship to leadership and management. In the third chapter, the authors consider the issue of culture, including the role played by leaders in developing and shaping culture in organisations, as well as cross-cultural variations within and between societies. This chapter highlights dominant culture, sub-cultures and counter cultures, and explores metaphors such as the iceberg and web. This part of the book concludes with Chapter 4, which elaborates on how strategy informs decision-making, as well as the role of leaders in innovation, the creation of value, and the importance of adapting to internal and external contexts.

Part 2: Leadership Theories

The first chapter in this section, Chapter 5, provides a critical analysis of leadership theory based on trait, behaviour and contingency approaches. The chapter summarises classic research, such as the Michigan and Ohio University studies on task-oriented and relationship-oriented leadership behaviours and the Blake-Mouton Managerial Grid, as well as more contemporary examples such as the 'multi-level systems model' by Kinicki and colleagues. Chapter 6 focusses on the topic of Charismatic and Transformational Leadership. Nelson Mandela, Winston Churchill and Barack Obama are considered examples that illustrate the complex and multi-faceted nature of charisma. Transformational Leadership highlights the power of human synergy between leaders and followers and is another concept that benefits from critical analysis. Chapter 7 explores more contemporary theories of relational and distributed leadership and their implications for expanding our understanding of leadership beyond formal 'leaders'. Attention is given to research on 'leader-member exchange' (LMX) and the ways in which leaders and followers can build mutually beneficial relationships. Chapter 8 takes these ideas further through an exploration of

'followership' and the importance of nurturing active and engaged followers. Attention is also given to personality dynamics and the motivations of people to follow.

Part 3: Managing People and Leadership

Part 3 looks at the relationship between leadership and managing people. This part also contains four chapters. Chapter 9 explores the importance of ethical leadership in human societies. The authors address different philosophical approaches to ethical leadership and the implications of each perspective for how ethics influence decision-making processes. Consideration is also given to the nature of unethical leadership and the importance of whistleblowing. Chapter 10 considers how HRM can inform the understanding and practice of organisational leadership. It covers various HRM practices and perspectives and critically evaluates their relationship with strategy and leadership. Chapter 11 focusses on the development of leaders and leadership. The authors consider the capabilities required of leaders in a changing environment, as well as the development of collective leadership abilities through team and action learning. Finally, Chapter 12 investigates the important issue of gender and diversity in leadership and what can be done to create more diverse and inclusive workplaces.

Part 4: Contemporary Leadership

Part 4, the final one, includes five chapters that introduce and explore the implications of contemporary issues for leadership. Chapter 13 outlines the nature and challenges of leadership in teams. The increasing prevalence of 'virtual' teams, working across organisational and national boundaries, has significant implications for millions of people. Whilst such experiences are increasingly common, critical studies demonstrate the potential for teams to "intensify managerial control, disrupt work-life balance, undermine member wellbeing, and in global virtual teams, there are additional cross-cultural challenges" (p. 287). Chapter 14 looks at the implications of artificial intelligence (AI) for leadership, and how AI and machine learning may impact organisational structure, leadership, and technological change. This is a particularly timely topic and rare to see featured in a textbook such as this. In Chapter 15, the authors consider the role of leadership and HRM in tackling climate change and promoting environmental sustainability. This is another hugely important topic and one that merits scrutiny. Chapter 16 turns attention to the distinctive challenges of leadership in public sector organisations and the need to develop and implement

collaborative and shared approaches to respond to crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic. The final chapter (Chapter 17) looks at leading post-industrial urban and regional renewal. This brings a place-based perspective to the understanding and exploration of leadership that transcends organisational boundaries.

Conclusion

This book is a culmination of Bratton's 30 years of experience in teaching and research in the fields of organisational behaviour, leadership and HRM. It is enriched by contributions from a range of renowned scholars, who bring a diversity of perspectives, experiences and examples that help contextualise and apply concepts to important individual, organisational and societal issues.

The book provides a deep exploration of the relationship between theory and practice that highlights both the importance and complexity of leadership in contemporary organisations. The inclusion of a broad range of examples and case studies, as well as a range of learning resources and activities, will make this a highly engaging and relevant textbook for undergraduate and postgraduate students in business and related subjects.

About the Editor

John Bratton is an Honorary Professor in the Management School at Queen's University Belfast, Northern Ireland. He has taught Human Resource Management and Labour Relations in business schools in the UK and Canada over 30 years. He has been a member of the editorial board of Leadership, the Journal of Workplace Learning and the Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education and has authored several books on leadership and organisational studies.

Acknowledgement