



Book Review

Haberfeld, M.R. (2006). *Theories of Police Leadership*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson Prentice Hall.

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BOOK OVERVIEW AND EVALUATION OF THE MAIN POINTS

M.R. Habersfeld's book, *Theories of Police Leadership*, provides an excellent overview of leadership theories while illustrating them with real life examples, in a way that few books do. Not only is the reader treated to a practical book, written in clear language, but they get the benefit of a set of tables to compare and contrast the theories for themselves. The structure of this book makes it a possible solution to a problem that Habersfeld discusses in the first chapter.

Chapter One makes a strong claim that leadership training should begin in the basic academy. Habersfeld argued that while there are certain topics that each state mandates for police cadets, those mandates represent only the minimum of what a cadet must learn. Every academy has the option to add a leadership block into their training, on top of the other requirements. This is the proactive teaching of leadership. Unfortunately, most departments use a reactive method to teach leadership, by waiting until the individual has already been promoted into a leadership position to teach them leadership.

Habersfeld goes on to assert that departments should train cadets in leadership, but they should use examples from the top management of the police agencies. The reasoning behind this is that if academies use basic scenarios that come from typical activities of the line officer (an officer taking a bribe for example), the cadet will resort to saying only what he or she thinks is acceptable; they will not discuss what they actually think about the subject. If a Chief is used as an example, the cadet does not feel as directly connected, and a conversation about the scenario is more likely to reveal how that cadet really thinks and feels about the leadership. Habersfeld finishes the introduction with the five aspects of an effective leader: recruitment, selection, training, supervision, and discipline, which are arranged into a pentagon-shaped diagram that is referred to as the Pentagon of Police Leadership (p. 7).

In the second chapter, the author discusses the use of the term "ethics" versus the term "integrity". In that discussion, Habersfeld says that the term "integrity" is better to use for police departments because it carries a better connotation. Where "ethics" seems to imply that something is wrong and now has to be cleaned up, "integrity" only implies a push to keep things in good order. He then goes on to the triangle of police integrity, which includes recruitment, selection, and training. Training also breaks down into three components: explanation, demonstration, and practice (p. 25). Again the message is to start early and discover early who has the signs of being a good and ethical leader further along in his or her career. The rest of the book is then laid

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out for the reader. In each of the subsequent chapters, a theory will be looked at in detail. At the end of each chapter a real-life police application and illustration is used.

Chapter Three looks at leadership and team theory. "Team" is defined as "two or more people who cooperate towards a common goal and who have specific functions to perform" (p. 31). A good team leader will clarify membership and team goals early in the team formation and will then slip into a more participatory style of management. From there, a good leader must help the team transition through increases in cohesion while guarding against both groupthink and affect. Groupthink occurs when a group gets so isolated from outside influences that they begin to reject ideas without the full benefit of all considerations. Affect is when a group's negative emotions become contagious, and the group, as a whole, begins to get cynical. If those two things can be avoided, a good team leader can make a team more valuable than the sum of its parts. The author does caution that teamwork does not appear to work well in policing in the United States. Perhaps this is because of the long-standing hierarchal structure of policing. If you insert a group into that pre-made structure, and the group is separated out, they look a little like the boss's pets.

Chapter Four addresses Leader-Member Exchange Theory. Under this theory the leader does not have the same relationship with all of his or her employees. This creates a group known as the "in-group," which has a positive relationship with their boss, and the "out-group," who, at best, has no special relationship with their boss. The "in-group" gets more input into decisions and in return is judged by higher expectations and is expected to be more loyal. The "out-group" members just do their jobs. This chapter goes on to say that some researchers argue that the dichotic relationship between the "in-group" and the "out-group" is too simplistic and that the relationship should look more like a continuum. There are also some fundamental issues with the use of the dyad as the unit of measurement for this theory. Regardless of the debate, a good leader under the original leader-member exchange theory should develop "in-group" relationships with all of his or her employees. This may be problematic considering the pull of politics that is involved in policing.

Chapter Five examines Transformational Leadership. "Transformational leadership is a style in which the personality of the leader stimulates change because he or she raises consciousness, motivation, and morale" (p. 71). This is basically the charismatic leader who encourages people to live up to their highest standards and then to transcend those standards and work for the benefit of the organization. Research has shown that transformational leaders do have an impact on their subordinates' behaviors and motivations, but it is unclear whether or not they have an impact on subordinates' commitment to quality and productivity. The fact that most of the studies have been done on military personnel may limit what commanding officers have the power to influence.

Style Theory, the subject of Chapter Six, states there are two aspects of leadership: task-orientation and relationship orientation. If you assign each of those two aspects a high and a low value and put them together in a grid, you create four different types of leadership styles. The most effective leader is both a high-task and a high-relationship manager. According to the author, only one style is needed because an effective leader would "change the situation rather than adapting to it" (p. 99). Harvard studies point out that task and relationship orientations may parallel traditional matriarchal and patriarchal roles. Studies done on military personnel in the 1950's and 1960's lend support to the theory that a high-task/high-relationship manager is the best.

Chapter Seven is dedicated to Situational Leadership. This style of leadership is relatively self-explanatory. A good leader is one who can change, depending on the situation. A situational leader is not

chosen for the circumstances, but instead, can change him- or herself when the circumstances change. Some research has shown that good situational leaders can have positive effects on employee burnout rates.

Chapter Eight addresses Contingency Theory. Contingency Theory posits that certain leaders perform better under certain factual circumstances, which compliment their leadership style. A good leader is someone who was selected for a specific task based on his or her way of doing things. If a leader finds him or herself in a task that they are not suited for, they must attempt to change the situation to suit their leadership. Criticisms of the theory include the assumption that any given task will call for only one style of leadership, and the idea that a leader's style works in one direction and affects performance; however, no "reverse causality" is considered (p. 144).

The Path-Goal Theory of Chapter Nine matches leadership styles with the most appropriate group of subordinates. A leader can be directive, supportive, achievement-oriented, or participative. The basic idea is that people will only work if they feel that they can achieve a goal. Depending on what their goals are, they will need different types of leaders to clear paths for them.

Chapter Ten covers the Freudian side of leadership with the Psychodynamic Approach. This theory basically says that a person's background and personal experience makes them the leader that they are today. Their relationship with their parents, for example, may influence how they relate to subordinates. This will mean that they will interact better in certain circumstances and with certain people depending on those people's backgrounds and experiences. A good leader, according to this author, understands his or her background and how that affects their leadership style and then uses that knowledge as effectively as possible. Everything from birth order to personality type are covered in this chapter, and research has lent some indirect support to psychodynamic findings.

Chapter Eleven covers the Skills approach. This approach basically says that leaders can be made. Over time, through teaching and experience, leaders learn technical, human relations, and conceptual skills. As they move up through the policing ranks they learn how and when to apply those skills. Social, intellectual, and emotional intelligence are noted as pluses, but skills are the number-one thing that makes a good leader. Studies performed on U.S. Army personnel, as well as one done on civilian Defense Department personnel, have lent support to this school of thought.

Chapter Twelve looks at the common traits of good leaders. Unlike psychodynamic theories, this approach is unconcerned about the origin of the traits in a leader. Instead, it is simply concerned with the trend showing that certain characteristics are common in successful leaders. Some of these traits include: intelligence, persistence, self-confidence, initiative, and task-knowledge. This theory is pointing out that, if someone can be found who combines or can be taught to combine these traits, they will most likely be a successful leader.

Chapter Thirteen, the final chapter, looks to what should be done in the future. Haberfeld claims that police leaders should follow Jim Collins's leadership theory. In this theory, an organization should set ambitious goals, leaders should embody the organization's core values and goals instead of pursuing self-interests, and everyone should be patient. According to Collins, changes can take up to seven years to become evident. While this sounds great, finding that leader who always puts the organizational goals over his or her own and who works to gear subordinates for future success in his or her position, will be a difficult task at best.

COMMENTS AND BROADER APPLICATIONS

The examples used in this book were taken from U.S. policing. Many of them were simply examples of a Chief handling a situation in a way that solved the problem and made the public happy. Other examples did not solve the problem, or solved the problem but managed to offend someone in the process. With the possible exception of team theory, most of these examples lent themselves to any of the theories applied to show why they worked or failed to work.

As pointed out several times in the book, criminal justice organizations, unlike private organizations, operate in the realm of the public eye. With that scrutiny comes politics, which may envelop race relations, money, use of force issues, and much more. Not only must a manager of these organizations deal with subordinates under them, who may number in the thousands, but they must also consider public image and the implications of such scrutiny on their organizations, especially by those untrained in the methods and hazards of contemporary policing.

The book also noted that finding good leaders starts with the selection and hiring process. Unfortunately, politics also play a role in that. For example, when looking at the sheriff who is in charge of the local jails, the public selects them directly. In that instance, Trait and Skills approaches are seen most often. The public is more likely to vote for the “great man” who has the skills to be a good sheriff, regardless of whether such skills alone make good leaders.

In applying these theories to corrections, the problem again begins with recruitment, selection, and initial training. Since corrections positions are often dangerous, and since the pay scale is low for the job, the young and uneducated are often recruited in bulk. Couple that with short-term training programs that do not include leadership training, and it may be rare to find a good leader. Because of these methods, an abundance of transactional and leader-member exchange leadership may be seen. People in these organizations, leaders and subordinates alike, may simply be working for a paycheck (transactional). A leader can remain “hands-off” unless a problem in productivity, that would threaten his or her paycheck, arises. There is also a likely abundance of “in” versus “out” groups. Leaders who are young and who have no training are not likely to recognize that these groups may have formed solely because of his or her personal preferences and that these groups do not benefit the organization. A skills approach may be the most beneficial in criminal justice. While finding the perfect natural leader would be preferred, they are few and far between. The best method, in the meantime, may be to start early and teach the employees the skills they need to manage, and then to pick from them the ones that appear to use those skills most effectively.

WHERE TO USE THIS BOOK

This book is perfect for anyone who has never been exposed to theories of leadership. It would therefore be an excellent book for teaching leadership at a college undergraduate level. Unfortunately, as Haberfeld has pointed out, leadership is not often taught early. This book may help to correct that problem. In clear language, the book provides a good overview of the predominant leadership theories along with visual tables for easy comparison. In addition, the book not only applies the theories to real-life examples, but it summarizes how the particular theory worked, or failed to work, in the given situations. For undergraduate students, this is a good book to teach things that are often left out of the average college experience. The policing examples make this book beneficial for any class on organizational theory, policing, or police leadership. It provides an excellent introduction to leadership, for future leaders.

As future leaders are not only found in the university setting, this book's usefulness is also not limited to universities. Criminal justice practitioners may find the book useful in two respects. The first would be to teach individuals, in the basic academies, about leadership theories. In this way, the book would help cadets to find a leadership style that they feel they could fit into. Reading this book also allows the individual cadet to understand different leadership styles, thereby giving him or her the ability to alter their "natural" leadership style when the situation calls for it. In this way, the cadet can learn to be a better leader than he or she may otherwise have been. By illustrating that more than one leadership style may produce good and effective leaders in different situations, the book also extends beyond influencing the individual cadet to possibly influencing the future of an organization. Eventually some of the trainees will make it to the top of the chain of command. In these upper positions, they will be responsible for choosing good leaders. Skills learned early and reinforced throughout his or her career may create more informed decisions about the different types of leaders who will lead a given organization.

There are some downsides to using this book in any setting. As mentioned above, the examples may not always illustrate the way a leadership theory works, but instead, how the theory failed to work. The author does a good job of explaining the application; however, the illustration is more confusing and less useful when a theory "should" have been used as opposed to when it was used successfully. Several of the examples are similar types of situations, in which the author just chose to apply a specific theory. The author overcomes these weaknesses by writing a section at the end of each application that explains the application and evaluates the results. This makes any uncertainty about the applications short-term.

For the university or academy settings, or just for someone who has an interest in leadership styles, this book is very clear in its overview of each theory. It is a great introduction for someone with no knowledge of leadership theories. It is written in common language and has a clear set of charts that allow the reader to compare and contrast the different aspects of each theory.

