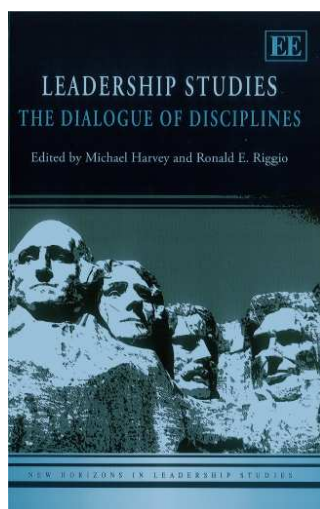


***Leadership Studies: The Dialogue of Disciplines*, by Michael Harvey and Ronald E. Riggio (eds). Cheltenham, UK and Northampton MA, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2011, ISBN 978 1 84720 940 5**

Book review by Silvia Florea
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The first questions that come to one's mind upon reading this book are inevitably, what makes leadership studies (if an academic discipline) necessary and effective and if so, what is the common ground for inter-, multi- and trans-disciplinary research within this newly emerging field? An adequately comprehensive answer could be provided by several cross-disciplinary reflective conversations among scholars from various disciplines, willing to explore and share their reflections upon the diversity of contemporary leadership research. Leadership Studies represents a must-read in any such serious attempt, in that it is a repository of a wide variety of disciplinary approaches to the study of the topic, from the arts and the humanities, to the social sciences and to more applied perspectives, confirming Rost's (1991) belief that in so doing, all scholars and practitioners are encouraged to think radically new thoughts about leadership that are not possible from a uni-disciplinary approach.

The book is structured in three main divisions: an introduction on the "Dialogue of disciplines" and on the nature and roots of leadership studies following on how they impacted the emergence of the field in the past, currently and in the future, a second and largest section, entitled "Disciplines", which covers the historical order of various disciplinary approaches to leadership studies, and a final section on the

questioning and integration of these perspectives into an overarching and underlying synthetic focus which exists beyond the diversity of methods, perspectives and purposes evidenced throughout the book. The study clearly evinces in its overall approach a weaving together of varied strands of leadership psychology, personnel treatment and management, engagement and communication with external constituencies, conflict resolution into a humanistic spirit of social groups. Whether the integrated model is possible to achieve in actuality might be a good question to ask, all the more so as the theoretical debate consumes itself along the disparate models and methods, divergent levels of analysis, contrasting theories and still persistent disagreements among scholars of all disciplines and stripes and issues of all kinds. But it is nonetheless instructive to be able to bring all these disciplines in a dialogue and, from the vantage point the book's authors provide, to be able to draw forth a vision of unity in leadership studies, with a productive future research grounding and thematic coherence. This is the added value the study possesses, along with the central thrust of modern scholarship revealed on and of the discipline alike.

In the light of this book's theme and approach, Samuel's Biblical caution to Israel, which Michael Harvey uses as a motto for the last chapter, acquires new connotations beyond the high hope, faith and informed consent embedded in its traditional telling; this shows, without doubt, that in the process of negotiating leadership, while there is no compulsion to accept the rule of God, ultimately there is no escaping it either, for He is the one who ultimately appoints the king. Translated into modern terms, "leadership" becomes essential in achieving a common goal and, this reviewer would add, so does our potential to turn a century of ambivalent skepticism into an era of trust and long-lasting hope.

Rost, J.C. (1991). Leadership for the twenty-first century. New York: Praeger Press, p.2..

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