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EDITORIAL

“A Noble Endeavor”: Comments from the Yearly Review Editor

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This issue comprises *The Leadership Quarterly Yearly Review of Leadership (LQYR)* for 2008, a series that was started by Jerry Hunt in 2000. With this series, Jerry displayed his tremendous talent as a visionary and leading edge thinker in bringing us a series of articles from top and emerging scholars not only in leadership, but in other areas Jerry saw that could inform leadership. The series has become a cornerstone of *LQ*, and the impact is demonstrated by the fact that, since its inception, LQYR articles have been regular recipients of the Best Paper Award in *LQ*. We are tremendously grateful to Jerry and his tireless efforts to advance the study of leadership by pushing the boundaries and challenging us to think more deeply. He will be greatly missed.

This 2008 LQYR consists of five reviews, done by well-established or rapidly emerging scholars, widely recognized within their respective substantive areas. The topics covered are:

- A New Ontology of Leadership
- Leadership and Time
- Leadership and Efficacy
- Authentic leadership and Positive Organizational Behavior
- Flexible Leadership Theory

The first three papers were edited by Jerry Hunt and the latter two by Mike Mumford.

The issue begins with an article by Bill Drath, Cindy McCauley, Chuck Palus, Ellen Van Velsor, Patricia O'Connor, and John McGuire (all from the Center for Creative Leadership) in which the authors tackle the tough issue of current language use and how it constrains our ability to see leadership beyond a focus on individual leaders, followers and disembodied contexts. They propose a new ontology that allows us to focus more on collective leadership processes, and more importantly, to ask different kinds of questions (e.g., how do people who share work in collectives produce leadership outcomes of direction, alignment and commitment?). Their approach is a pragmatic, functionalist perspective, meaning that it identifies leadership as a practical outcome. In all, this paper achieves the lofty goal of helping us to begin to break out of the limitations of our current ontology to achieve theorizing more in line with the realities of leadership as it occurs in practice.

In a similarly evocative paper, Allen Bluedorn and Kim Jaussi draw attention to the need to expand our “temporal imagination” with respect to leadership research. The authors conduct a nice review of the examination (or lack thereof) of time in leadership and management research, and offer us a language for talking about time. A basic premise of this work is that temporal characteristics *do* affect leadership and that it is difficult, if not impossible, to consider leadership without time playing a role. Therefore, they call upon leadership researchers to “activate their temporal imaginations and add time and temporal phenomena to the rich domain of leadership theory and research.” I think this is both a *timely* and resounding call, and hope that we see more work on this important topic in the future.

In “Leadership Efficacy: Review and Future Directions,” Sean Hannah, Bruce Avolio, Fred Luthans and Peter Harms offer a thorough and integrative review of the burgeoning work on efficacy and describe why this area should be of interest in leadership research. A basic premise of this article is that for leaders to demonstrate effective agency they need to have a positive and strong self-efficacy. Building on this concept, the authors present a multi-level framework that addresses both *leader* and *leadership* efficacy. This article draws much needed attention to this often overlooked construct for both leadership research and leadership development.

A nice companion to the efficacy article is “Authentic Leadership and Positive Organizational Behavior: A Meso, Multi-Level Perspective” by Fran Yammarino, Shelly Dionne, Chet Schriesheim, and Fred Dansereau, as efficacy is a core element of authentic leadership (AL) and positive OB (POB). In Yammarino and colleagues’ article they show how AL and POB can constitute multiple levels reflecting both *leaders* and *leadership*. This article provides a much needed integrating framework for AL and POB that helps advance both leadership and multi-level theorizing.

The issue ends along the lines in which it started – with a top scholar and established thinker in the field tackling the tough problem of developing a broader and more practically meaningful framework of leadership. This time the level of analysis is top management and the focus is strategic leadership (defined as leadership at the top of the organization). Specifically, in “How Leaders Influence Organizational Effectiveness,” Gary Yukl presents a framework for Flexible Leadership Theory in which he describes how both efficiency and innovative adaptation jointly determine the financial performance of organizations. The theory also draws attention to the importance of human capital and a leader’s ability to use task-oriented, relations-oriented, and change-oriented behaviors. It aligns nicely with other emerging perspectives in leadership theory that focus on distributed leadership, systems thinking, and adaptability.

Now, to reiterate Jerry’s customary remarks with respect to the LQYR: Once again, in this particular LQYR, the articles are not encyclopedic, although some are more detailed than others. Regardless, the articles illustrate the state of development of the area they represent. Also, once again, the Yearly Review series joins similar reviews covering fields such as psychology, sociology, political science, and management. As mentioned earlier, in addition to opening up sub-areas or start-ups appropriate for a given contribution, all the review articles are designed to fill gaps and some offer truly groundbreaking approaches to relevant topic areas.

As is typical, instructions to authors have been minimal, although they have been encouraged to offer some kind of integrating framework. Authors also have been encouraged to try as much as possible to make their work user-friendly to both scholars and practitioners while recognizing diversity in backgrounds and orientations. The integrating frameworks vary from explicit or implicit propositions to something more elaborate. The reviews, along with being more or less (mostly less) detailed, vary in breadth and depth but tend to be representative of a given topic area. They also cover a time period long enough to tie in with previous work while providing a representative view of where a given sub-area currently stands. Beyond the previously mentioned similarities, LQYR articles have been quite diverse in how various topics have been handled. The frame-breaking pieces have often been especially diverse.

These articles are expected to provide a baseline for follow-up pieces. Such follow-up can either be a later review article or a special issue of *The Leadership Quarterly* focusing on the kinds of topics and sub-topics emphasized in a given LQYR. Whether or not there is a follow-up special issue for any of the topics in question, there remains a strong baseline review that encourages follow-up research and is a must-read for those doing work on a given topic.

I will also note that there is a formal call for papers/proposals for future issues of the LQYR and you are encouraged to submit a proposal for consideration. These papers/proposals will undergo formal review and the ultimate status of papers will be determined by this review process. The call for papers for 2009 is included in this issue of *LQ*.

In closing, I would like to reflect once again on the tremendous dedication and passion Jerry brought to *LQ* and to the LQYR. To paraphrase one of among many of my favorite “Jerryisms”:

Jerry, *LQ* is, indeed, a noble endeavor...enjoy your reward in heaven.