

Mendenhall, M.E., Osland, J.S., Bird, A., Oddou, G.R., & Maznevski, M.L. (2008). *Global leadership: Research, practice and development*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Reviewed by Colette Fournier

## **Introduction**

Leadership has been an important concept for centuries, but only recently has this discussion taken place in a global context as increased internationalization has students, practitioners, business people, and ordinary citizens interacting with new cultures and societies on a daily basis. *Global Leadership: Research, Practice and Development* edited by Mark E. Mendenhall, Joyce S. Osland, Allan Bird, Gary R. Oddou, and Martha L. Maznevski explores this growing field and presents a thorough summary of the research, development models, and other important components relevant to global leadership today.

## **Theoretical frame**

As part of the Global Human Resource Management series, this book is grounded in an international business and human resource management approach and focuses on the aspects of global leadership that many multinational corporations encounter as they operate around the world. Since the initial push to study global leadership came from companies needing managers and top level executives who could work abroad and navigate the increasingly international side of business, many of the early studies focused on determining what competencies were important for working in a global context. From this research came the models and common practices within global leadership that are highlighted throughout this book. Within the body of literature on this topic, *Global Leadership: Research, Practice and Development* provides an easily understood macro-level perspective on a vast topic that can be both ambiguous and overwhelming for the casual reader.

## **Chapter annotations**

Chapter one, "Leadership and the birth of global leadership" by Mark E. Mendenhall, starts off with a discussion of the field of leadership studies and the various approaches to the study of leadership using Bass (1990) and Yukl's (2006) categorizations. After a summary of the trait, behavioral, situational, power-influence, and integrative approaches, the author goes on to discuss various dualities amongst the theories: leader versus follower-centered theories, descriptive versus prescriptive theories, and universal versus contingency theories. This overview of traditional leadership studies is followed by a discussion of some of problems inherent in studying such an ambiguous topic, namely the problem of defining what, exactly, leadership is. Additionally, problems related to the lack of connection amongst leadership studies in different disciplines and problems stemming from societal changes in the idea of leadership are also highlighted. The chapter concludes with a brief history of how global

leadership came about as its own field of study and a discussion of how global leadership is different from traditional leadership. The final sentence provides a broad definition of global leaders that is used as a reference point for the authors' view of global leadership.

The focus of chapter two, "The multidisciplinary roots of global leadership" by Joyce S. Osland, is to further explore the multidisciplinary roots of global leadership by focusing on the contributions from fields like intercultural communication competence, expatriation, global management, and comparative leadership. Intercultural communication competence comprises the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and awareness necessary to effectively communicate across cultures, and takes into consideration the context each individual culture provides. Intercultural communication is especially important to the field of global leadership as much of the available research focuses on global leader competencies. Expatriation also contributes to the field of global leadership in an important way, as expatriates are often studied as global leaders, and an overseas assignment is viewed as one of the most effective ways to develop global leadership. The discussion of the similarities and differences between managers and leaders extends to the global leadership field as well, often with an even blurrier line than in traditional leadership as much of the early research fails to distinguish between global leaders and managers. A final influence on global leadership discussed in chapter two is that of comparative leadership, which looks at similarities and differences between leadership styles of different countries. It is here that a discussion of the GLOBE project takes place, emphasizing its contribution to the field of global leadership studies.

Chapter three, "An overview of the global leadership literature" by Joyce S. Osland, provides a literature review of the research on global leadership, including both observations/expert opinion and empirical research. Several early studies from the 1990s are discussed, including work by Tichy and his colleagues (1992), Rhinesmith (1993), Kets de Vries and Mead (1992), and Brake (1997). Of particular note from this section are Rhinesmith's basic components of a global mindset and Brake's global leadership triad. The discussion of empirical research that follows includes studies by Yeung and Ready (1995), Adler (1997), Black, Morrison, and Gregersen (1999), Kets de Vries and Florent-Treacy (1999), Rosen, Digh, Singer, and Philips (2000), McCall and Hollenbeck (2002), Goldsmith, Greenberg, Robertson, and Hu-Chan (2003), and Kets de Vries, Vriegnaud, and Florent-Treacy (2004). Since much of the literature on global leadership is focused on pinpointing specific competencies global leaders need, a large list of desired competencies is understandably generated. To help make sense of it all, Mendenhall and Osland organize the list of fifty-six competencies discovered in their literature review into six main categories: cross-cultural relationship skills, traits, global business expertise, global organizing expertise, cognitive orientation, and visioning (Mendenhall and Osland, 2002). Osland and Bird's 2004 pyramid model of global leadership is also highlighted as a way to organize and make sense of all the various competencies associated with global leadership. The chapter concludes with an evaluation of global leadership research, emphasizing both strengths and weaknesses within the studies.

In chapter four, "Assessing global leadership competencies" by Allan Bird, the focus shifts to the various forms of assessing global leadership competencies; however,

before identifying particular types of assessments, the authors define what is meant by the term “global leadership competency.” The ensuing discussion about the particular assessments is broken down into three main categories: cultural difference assessments, intercultural adaptability assessments, and global leadership competency assessments. Cultural difference assessments include an individual’s scores on various cultural value dimensions that are then calculated into a cultural profile to aid in the specific training of that individual. Intercultural adaptability assessments focus on intercultural competence, one of many competencies thought to be of importance to global leaders. Examples of this type of assessment include the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory, the Intercultural Development Inventory, based on Hammer and Bennett’s development model of intercultural sensitivity, the Multicultural Personality Questionnaire, the Intercultural Readiness Check, and Big Five personality inventories such as the NEO PI-R. The final group is global leadership competency assessments, which assess a wide variety of competencies and include the Global Competencies Inventory and the Global Executive Leadership Inventory. The authors stress that a proliferation of global leadership assessments exist, but they chose to highlight only those with at least some validating research behind them. The final section mentions strengths and weaknesses of the assessments as well as what future work should focus on.

Chapter five, “Process models of global leadership development” by Joyce S. Osland and Allan Bird, provides an overview of the various process models of global leadership development. Examples of some of the highlighted models include the Chattanooga model of global leadership development, the Global Leadership Expertise Development model, and the “right stuff” model. Some of these models focus on an individual’s early global experiences as part of their global leadership development, while others concentrate specifically on the development of global executives. The last part of the chapter focuses on additional factors that influence global leadership development such as experience, talent, mechanisms, and catalysts. Despite their differences, all three models emphasize the importance of flexibility and adaptability, two key components for global leaders.

The focus of chapter six, “Leading global teams” by Martha L. Maznevski, is on leading global teams, an especially important component given the amount of teamwork that occurs in today’s multinational organizations. The authors first discuss the basic components of team performance which include having a defined task and objectives, proper team composition, specific roles within the team, and effective processes for communication, conflict management, and managing progress; however, to achieve even greater team performance, building respect and trust, generating innovation, and managing boundaries and stakeholders are necessary. Within global teams specifically, several factors must be taken into consideration. For instance, most global teams have a diverse composition and thus different cultural expectations for working in teams. To manage this cultural diversity, the authors argue for understanding both the similarities and differences amongst team members and then working to bridge the differences to achieve a more cohesive, productive global team. Another component affecting global teams is their frequently dispersed distribution around the world, forcing reliance on new technologies to connect teams that are geographically widespread until face-to-face

meetings can take place. Organizationally, both top management teams and connected teams can help contribute to the overall success of the organization if properly utilized, which the authors help describe towards the end of the chapter. The final section concludes with a caveat that no two global teams are the same and that this is where leadership really comes into play as leaders navigate the dimensions of their particular global teams.

In chapter seven, “Global leadership knowledge creation and transfer” by Allan Bird and Gary R. Oddou, knowledge creation and transfer for individuals and organizations within the global leadership context are emphasized. The authors argue that international work experiences provide the main source of knowledge creation about global leadership and are thus invaluable in the process of creating global leaders. Additionally, a distinction is made between tacit and explicit knowledge transmission, which, in various combinations, comprise the four typologies of the knowledge creation process: socialization, articulation, combination, and internalization. To categorize the types of knowledge being generated, the authors look to Kidd and Teramoto’s (1995) four types of knowing (know who, know how, know what, and know why), which are then applied to international assignments and global leader development. The importance of considering the structure and meaning of international assignments is also emphasized. After the employee transformation that accompanies international assignments, the repatriation and knowledge transfer processes begin. A discussion of the repatriate’s ability to transfer knowledge and the organizational constructs in place that may or may not support that process is followed by the concluding remarks that provide implications for how to enhance the knowledge transfer process.

Chapter eight, “Leading global change” by Joyce S. Osland, engages in a discussion about leading global change, beginning with the role of culture in change. Different cultures view the concept and implementation of change in very different ways, which is important to know when initiating a global change effort. To better understand the impacts of global change, a brief background on change management and change process models is provided. From there, the key factors of global change are posited including awareness, desire, knowledge, ability, and reinforcement, among others. The authors point out the lack of empirical research on global change efforts, and thus rely on case studies and interviews to provide examples throughout the rest of the chapter. A few major components of global change are then highlighted: leaders as catalysts, creating the right vision, communicating the vision, building a community, operationalizing the change, and organizational alignment. The chapter concludes with a discussion of measurement, contextualization, and innovation as they apply to global change.

The final chapter of the book, “Global leadership development” by Gary R. Oddou and Mark E. Mendenhall, focuses on global leadership development by looking at general development methods, conceptual issues within global leadership development, and two examples of global leadership development in practice. A wide range of global leadership development methods exist that have been altered from traditional leadership development methods: 360-degree feedback, executive coaching, job assignments, mentoring, networking, reflection, action learning, and outdoor experiences. To apply

these methods to global leadership and to best contextualize the learning process, both classroom and experiential learning opportunities are emphasized. The chapter concludes by offering two different examples of global leadership development programs as well as various strategies for globalizing personnel.

### **Target audience**

*Global Leadership: Research, Practice and Development* is intended for both students and practitioners interested and involved in global leadership, especially as it pertains to global human resource management. It is also meant for scholars interested in a deeper understanding of research in the field of global leadership and its relation to human resource management around the world. The book is best used within the context of international business and management, but may be applied to other fields as well.

### **Practical use**

While this book is primarily intended for a human resource management audience, it can also be used to educate students in other fields about the many components of global leadership. Many universities offer a specific course on global leadership for which *Global Leadership: Research, Practice and Development* could be the textbook. The competencies described, though rooted in a business perspective, are still important in any global setting and are thus applicable to a more general discussion of global leadership without the requisite business focus. Additionally, chapters from this book would be useful in supplementing a more traditional leadership course to include a global perspective in the discussion. Finally, scholars interested in the field of global leadership can use this book to gain a sense of past research and identify gaps in the literature that future research can focus on.

### **Critique**

What *Global Leadership: Research, Practice and Development* does very well is provide a comprehensive resource on the literature, models, and processes relevant to global leadership in today's society. The authors are all well-regarded in their field and thus provide thorough insight into some of the most important concepts in global leadership. Furthermore, the organization of the book provides easily navigable content that transforms a vast, ambiguous field into clear subjects and applications.

While the overall review of this book is positive, there exists room for improvement as well. For instance, more depth could be provided by making connections between the chapters. As with many edited books, each chapter is strong on its own, but the book would be even stronger with deliberate connections forged between the chapters to really connect the concepts in a more fluid manner. A final concluding chapter or epilogue would also suffice to tie together the main concepts into a more cohesive ending.

Where the book falls short is in its inclusion of other disciplines. To be sure, it is not the explicit purpose of the book to include resources outside of the business and human resource management context, but providing references and connections to other organizations that develop global leadership would allow for even richer context and dialogue. Only non-profits are mentioned as examples outside of the traditional multinational corporation framework, even though other institutions (like those within higher education) are dealing with similar concerns. Despite its shortcomings, *Global Leadership: Research, Practice and Development* is a well-researched, thorough resource for students, practitioners, and scholars of global leadership around the world.

## **Reviewer**

Colette Fournier is a second year master's student in the Higher Education program at the University of Maryland. She graduated from the College of William and Mary in 2010 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in European Studies and a minor in Management and Organizational Leadership. Her main research interests include experiential education, international education, and leadership.

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