



Volume 5, Issue 3 2010

The International Journal of Leadership Studies (IJLS) is a refereed scholarly journal that exists to provide a forum for leadership scholars within the U.S. and around the world. To stimulate scholarly debate and a free flow of ideas, the IJLS is published in electronic format and provides access to all issues free of charge.

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From the Editor

Mihai Bocarnea
Guest Editor

From the Editor

This special issue of the *International Journal of Leadership Studies* is dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the Fall of Communism in Europe. The staggering revolutionary wave sweeping through the Eastern Block in 1989 included the election of the first non-Communist government in Poland (September), the demise of the Communist Party in Hungary (October), the Fall of the Berlin Wall (November 9), the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia and the Bulgarian Upheaval (November), and the violent Romanian Revolution (December). Subsequently, in 1990 and 1991, Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia declared their independence from the Soviet Union. The USSR itself, fundamentally changed by Gorbachev's glasnost and perestroika, eventually collapsed in 1991 when the dissolution of the Soviet Union became final. This profound political reformation of the former Eastern Block triggered significant social and economic changes in these countries and lengthy and difficult transitions to democracy and market economy.

Although late, the scholarly interest in organizational leadership studies in the former Communist countries has steadily increased. More and more studies employing qualitative and quantitative research methods have explored organizational leadership phenomena in these countries. Recognizing this trend 20 years after the tumultuous events of 1989, the 11th annual International Leadership Association Global Conference, the largest conference in the field, took place in Prague in November 2009. At this conference, Vaclav Havel, leader of the Velvet Revolution, was named ILA's 2009 Distinguished Leader.

This IILS special issue contains leadership studies from Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania, Romania, and Russia. Dimitrova (from the *Bulgarian Evangelical Theological Institute*) and Bocarnea (*Regent University, USA*) examine a servant leadership theory, empirically supporting its causal relationships among love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service in Bulgarian students' perceptions of leaders. Tuulik (*Mainor Business School, Estonia*) and Alas (*Estonian Business School*), based on their mixed-method exploration of leadership in Estonian organizations in transition, suggest that Estonians expect their leaders to be charismatic, values-based, team-oriented, and participative. Diskienė, Marčinskas, and Stankevičienė (*Vilnius University*), analyzing leadership

attitudes in Lithuanian business organizations based on descriptive analyses of quantitative data, conclude that Lithuanian leaders are minimally flexible and formal, exhibit aversion to making risky decisions, and have reduced teamwork ability. Huțu (*"Gh. Asachi" Technical University, Romania*), building on the results of her prior cultural research on the given topic, addresses leadership and quality enhancement in Romanian companies in the context of Romanian cultural orientations. Finally, van Beek (*Unilever, Singapore*) and Grachev (*Western Illinois University and University of Iowa, USA*) analyze Unilever's experience in building strategic leadership competencies in the context of the Russian business environment using an ethnographic approach.

The common thread of the five studies appears to be the need for the adaptation of modern leadership theories and practices to the realities of the countries of the former Eastern Block. The authors of these studies seem to implicitly agree on the need for viable leadership models and theories that are empirically tested, theoretically adjusted, and practically implemented so that they are relevant to organizations in post-Communist transition.

We wish to thank the authors for their contributions to this special issue and to the advancement of organizational leadership research in Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania, Romania, and Russia.