

## *Book Reviews*

*A Theory of Leadership Effectiveness.* By Fred E. Fiedler, 1967. Available from McGraw-Hill Book Co., New York, N.Y. 10036. 265 pp. \$8.50.

How important is the leader as a determinant of group effectiveness? According to Fiedler, leadership effectiveness, as measured by group performance, depends as much on the group situation as it does on the leader. More specifically, group effectiveness depends upon the relationship between leadership style and the degree to which the group situation enables the leader to exert influence.

The central point of Fiedler's contingency model of leadership effectiveness is one that has been clarified through a number of studies conducted by the author and his associates over a 15 year period. The variables involved in these studies are clearly described, both conceptually and operationally, in this book. It makes an important contribution in terms of explaining many of the conflicting findings that have evolved from the voluminous research in the area of leadership and group dynamics.

The author begins by differentiating among three types of groups: (1) interacting groups in which the work of members must be closely coordinated in order to accomplish the group task; (2) co-acting groups in which the task is common but members work relatively independent of each other; and (3) counteracting groups which consist of individuals working together for the purpose of negotiating and reconciling their conflicting opinions.

A model for classifying interacting groups according to the degree to which the situation is favorable or unfavorable to leader influence is given. The three major criteria of the model include the nature of the interpersonal relationship between leader and members, the structure of the task, and the leader's power position.

Fiedler also makes a clear distinction between leadership style and leadership behavior. Style, he argues, refers to the underlying need structure of the individual which motivates his leadership behavior in various leadership situations. The researchers classify leaders as tending toward either an autocratic, controlling style that is primarily task oriented, or a permissive, non-directive style that is concerned primarily with intra-group relationships.

Task-oriented leadership is more effective in group situations which

are either very favorable or very unfavorable for the leader. Leadership which is more concerned with relationships among group members is more effective in situations which are intermediate in favorableness for the leader. In co-acting and counteracting groups the relationship-oriented leader is more effective when the situation is tense and unpleasant. The author explains that this type of leader is able to reduce tension and anxiety and thus permit group members to perform their jobs more effectively.

Although the research on which the theory is based is carefully documented, the organization of the book enables the reader who is less concerned with methodology to by-pass these chapters without losing the central ideas. In short, Fiedler has accomplished what few writers in the area of leadership have been able to do—he presents a pragmatic theory of a rather abstruse conceptual area in a way that makes interesting and informative reading. This, coupled with appendices which explain the major measurement techniques used and a comprehensive bibliography, make it an important reference for those concerned with the broad area of leadership.

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*Urban-Rural Problems*. By Lee Taylor, 1968. Available from Dickenson Publishing Company, Inc., Belmont, California 94002. 110 pp. (No price listed.)

Integration is a household word nowadays and generally connotes racial integration. There is another form of integration, according to Professor Taylor, that must be accomplished in the United States—integration of the urban and rural societies. *Urban-Rural Problems* specifically focuses on the social problems resulting from the confrontation between the traditional patterns of urban and rural social organizations.

Rather than giving a broad brush treatment to a multitude of social problems, Taylor has selected a few problems and discusses each in some depth. Five subject areas constitute this book: (1) low-income people, (2) aspirations of rural youth, (3) education and training, (4) government and representation, and (5) population and land use.

A major theme is the existing imbalance between urban and rural ideologies, an imbalance dominated by the urban value system. Deviations from the urbanized values constitute social problems. Beginning with an analysis of low income, the author contends it is a matter of relative deprivation. The separate value system of the low-income cultures, whether urban or rural, generates social problems when persons from these cultures interact with those who subscribe to the dominant values of larger

society. The author expands on this value imbalance concept when discussing the achievement and occupational aspirations of rural youth and the quality of rural educational systems.

A critical analysis is presented of the many social problems caused by the ancient forms of local government that prevail throughout the nation. Taylor says that consolidation of rural and urban governmental units is the systematic solution to the social problems of government. Several forms that this consolidation might take are suggested.

The discussion on population and land use is based on the premise that the nation's increasing population must learn to live within the existing political boundaries. As the pressure for land use shifts from agrarian to non-agrarian purposes (such as recreation, housing, industry, and commerce) many problems and opportunities are created for rural private landowners. Taylor suggests that intensive rural zoning must be implemented if the differential interests in land usage are to be harmonized.

Perhaps the most appealing aspect of this book is the concise description and interpretation of the social problems generated by the urban-rural interaction. Professionals and laymen concerned about the problems associated with the movement from a ruralized to an urbanized society will find here both disturbing and informative insights.

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MYRON D. JOHNSRUD

*The Quandary of Youth.* By Julia M. Seton, 1967. Available from Seton Village Press, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501. 182 pp. \$3.95 (\$1.95 paperback).

Extension youth workers will be interested in reading a book whose author has spent over forty years working with youth in educational programs. It is not a book of academic research and theory. Rather, it draws from actual experience in camps, schools, and homes, and reflects the philosophy and underlying principles used by the author and her husband in their work in Seton Village near Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Her main thesis of the problem of today is that the world is in a period of rapid change. Youth have to meet new situations which have never before existed, and adults are not in a position to tell them what to do or how to do it. She states, "The world of today belongs to the youth, and only those of the older generation who can still feel the emotions and experiences of youth can understand and take part in this world—perhaps the most confused that youth has ever inherited. . . ."

She regards an adolescent not as "a *little* adult, but as a *developing* adult." She firmly believes youth must question and test the judgment of adults if youth are to think intelligently, establish their own beliefs, and

have things become a part of them and not merely accept what is told to them. On the other hand, she feels there are times when the child must realize that the adult does know more than he and must submit to an adult. A young child is not capable or ready to make important decisions. He needs to be given responsibilities commensurate with his ability in making decisions in order to grow.

Mrs. Seton emphasizes that the most important thing in America and the world is the character of our young people. She discusses at great length each of the four primary forces that she feels shapes and molds the character of our children—home, school, church, and play. In her opinion the home has lost much of its influence on the child. Parents now seem to want a personal life of their own, and are no longer willing to self-sacrifice or “submerge themselves in the problems of bringing up their children.”

Her observation is that the school is the least successful of all the character-building forces. It has taught children to read, but has not developed the process of thinking in them. She sees education not as the development of scholarship, but of manhood—not as the teaching of how to make a living, but how to live, not *what* to think but *how* to think.

It is her feeling that the human being must accept the superiority of something outside himself, whether it be a person or an intangible. Religion and the church fulfill this need.

She states that “play is the most important influence on character development.” A child spends many more hours in play and creative activity in which new horizons are explored and adventure is sought than in the other three elements together. Adults, however, regard play as of secondary importance and inferior to work.

Mrs. Seton devotes the latter part of the book to a discussion of the plan of education used in their Youthcraft work and describes it as four pathways or cornerstones: the way of beauty, the way of truth, the way of fortitude, and the way of love. They are aimed at the four-fold development of youth in body, mind, spirit, and service.

This book reveals a keen sensitivity to the needs of youth. Extension workers concerned with youth development will find it inspirational reading.

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