



Philosophical Foundations of Leadership

David Cawthon

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The nature of leadership and the human qualities that promote or obstruct leadership have a long history in Western thought and remain a central concern in modern societies. Crises in leadership may arise from human failings or social complexities that defeat or reject those most qualified to lead. David Cawthon examines classical thinkers to offer a historical and philosophical perspective on the intrinsic qualities of leadership, and how these qualities are coded into the souls of some, but not others.

Cawthon begins by tracing the ancient roots of the inquiry into character and leadership via Plato and Aristotle, then turns to the Christian period and the works of St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Augustine. He discusses how the rise of secular philosophy created an opposition between individualist and collectivist approaches to leadership: Thomas Hobbes upheld absolute monarchy; John Locke believed in consensual social contracts; Jean-Jacques Rousseau favored “guided democracy”; Hegel emphasize duty, not individualism; Marx believed in the proletariat which would rule through party apparatus; and Nietzsche, rejected everything that came before in favor of the raw will to power by the superman who is clearly, demonstrably superior.

Cawthon’s historical approach is geared toward extrapolating lessons and examples for contemporary contexts of leadership. In each chapter he points out the cardinal qualities modern leaders should possess in politics and in the workplace. *Philosophical Foundations of Leadership* will be of interest to philosophers, management specialists, intellectual historians, and students of business and organization.

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