



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
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**THE CONTEMPORARY ROLE OF LEADERSHIP
IN ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSFORMATION:
A QUALITATIVE APPROACH**

By

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
(INDUSTRIAL SOCIOLOGY)**

in the

FACULTY OF ARTS

at the

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

PRETORIA

NOVEMBER 1999



***This work is dedicated to the memory of my brother
Vincent Gerard Sham
(22 April 1956 - 21 February 1999)***

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to record my sincere appreciation and gratitude to the following people who contributed in some way to the completion of this study:

- Prof Carel van Aardt, my promoter, for his encouragement, guidance and inspiration. He is to be commended for his excellent supervision
- Dr Richard Weeks and Prof Martin Nasser for their initial direction and support
- My sister, Prof Veronica McKay, for input, guidance and generous support
- All the respondents who gave so freely of their time, enabling me to gain a greater insight into the dynamics of leadership
- Dr Coen Slabber of Deloitte Consulting, who ensured that I had time off from the firm to complete this study and who gave me strength and inspiration throughout
- Michelle Ducci for her administration and typing of the thesis
- Roger Loveday for meticulously editing my work
- My parents Bill and Mary Sham for prayers, support and always being a great source of encouragement
- Merle Schlebusch, Pam Gerber, Marcelle Nasser and Peter Feather for their interest and commitment through the years.

Deo Gratias

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ABSTRACT

THE CONTEMPORARY ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IN ORGANISATIONAL TRANSFORMATION: A QUALITATIVE APPROACH

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Leadership in South Africa have been given the major responsibility of having to transform and renew their organisation in order that they may now compete in the global economy and that they are furthermore aligned to the socio-political dynamics and imperatives of the country.

Ensuring organisational renewal and survival and meeting the requirements of labour legislation places extraordinary pressure on company leaders. Most South African leaders obtained their managerial experience and expertise during a period characterised by environmental stability and predictability and are now faced with unfamiliar conditions and environmental stressors for which most of them are dismally prepared.

This study demonstrates that given the turbulent environment in which leadership had to operate, there were few leaders who were able to meet these new challenges within their organisations.

The way in which these leaders were able to shift their organisation from its present state to the desired state was examined in this study. The study showed that despite the use of transformational leadership to effect many aspects of the transformation process, all leaders tended to resort at some stage of the transformation process, to a dictatorial and overtly 'quasi-military' style of leadership. Once the organisation had been renewed and stabilised, leaders were more likely to incorporate traditional elements of transformational leadership. Leaders therefore only tended to become more democratic, participative and person centred once their organisations had become sufficiently stable to cope with new and threatening conditions.

UITTREKSEL

Leierskap in Suid-Afrika is die enorme verantwoordelikheid gegee om hul maatskappye te transformeer en te vernuwe sodat hulle nou in die globale ekonomie kan meeding en dat hulle ook toegerus kan wees vir die sosio-politieke dinamika en uitdagings van die land.

Die aandrang op organisatoriese vernuwing en herlewing en die voldoening aan die vereistes van die arbeidswetgewing, het buitengewone druk op maatskappyleiers geplaas. Die meeste Suid-Afrikaanse leiers het hul bestuurervaring en -kundigheid verkry in 'n tydperk wat gekenmerk is deur omgewingstabiliteit en voorspelbaarheid en word nou gekonfronteer met vreemde toestande en omgewingstressors waarvoor die meeste van hulle swak voorbereid is.

Hierdie studie toon dat in die lig van die stormagtige omgewing waarin leierskap moet funksioneer, daar inderwaarheid min leiers was wat in staat was om hierdie uitdagings binne hul maatskappye die hoof te bied.

Die wyse waarop hierdie leiers daarin geslaag het om hul maatskappye van sy huidige toestand te verskuif na die gewenste toestand, word in hierdie studie ondersoek. Die studie het aan die lig gebring dat ten spyte van die gebruik van transformasionele leierskap om talle aspekte van die transformasieproses teweeg te bring, het alle leiers op een of ander stadium van die transformasieproses hul gewend tot 'n diktatoriale en klaarblyklik "kwasi-militêre" leierskapstyl. Wanneer die maatskappy vernuwe en



gestabiliseer geraak het, het leiers meer geredelik tradisionele elemente van transformasionele leierskap geïnkorporeer. Leiers was derhalwe slegs geneig om meer demokraties, deelnemend en persoongesentreer te raak nadat hul maatskappe voldoende stabiel geraak het om die nuwe en bedreigende toestande die hoof te bied.