


Book Review: Politics, Ethics, and Change: The Legacy of James MacGregor Burns by George R. Goethals & Douglas Bradburn, eds

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Goethals, George R., and Douglas Bradburn, eds. *Politics, Ethics, and Change: The Legacy of James MacGregor Burns*. Northampton: Edward Elgar, 2016. xvi + 190 pages. Hardcover, \$110.00.

James MacGregor Burns was an American political scientist and historian, and an outstanding leadership scholar. Burns focused on the interaction of leaders and their followers as collaborators working toward mutual benefit. He was best known for his contribution to the Transactional School of Leadership Theory (which focuses on the relationship between leaders and subordinates) and the Transformational School (in which leaders concentrate on the beliefs, needs, and values of their followers). Burns received the Pulitzer Prize for his work on the thirty-second President of the United States, *Roosevelt: The Soldier of Freedom*.

Both of the editors of *Politics, Ethics, and Change: The Legacy of James MacGregor Burns*, George R. Goethals (the recipient of the E. Claiborne Robins Distinguished Professorship in Leadership Studies at the University of Richmond) and Douglas Bradburn (a history professor at SUNY-Binghamton University and the founding Director of the Fred W. Smith National Library for the Study of George Washington), were deeply inspired by Burns. Along with the other contributing authors from various disciplinary backgrounds, including philosophy, psychology, history, and leadership studies, Goethals and Bradburn had individually worked—directly or indirectly—with Burns on the study of leadership.

The content of the book is divided into two parts: (1) James MacGregor Burns and the Essentials of Leadership, and (2) James MacGregor Burns and American Leadership. The book provides an excellent overview of Burns' treatise on the necessary qualities and requirements of leadership, especially the importance of Transformational Leadership. Whether discussing business movements or American politics, the individual contributors not only expound on their own experiences while working with Burns, but effectively expand and provide new examples of Burns' leadership theories. Each contributes to the transformational leadership literature in their particular areas of study.

The authors provide a great deal of empirical evidence concerning Transformational Leadership from leadership during the American Revolution to various American Presidential offices. They effectively apply James MacGregor Burns' views of leadership to politics and the needed changes within the political arena. In fact, many may find Burns' argument concerning political gridlock in Washington, D.C., and the necessity for leaders and followers to work together for mutual benefit, applicable today.

Politics, Ethics, and Change: The Legacy of James MacGregor Burns is very easy to read and comprehend. The book would be an excellent teaching tool for any college or university course which studies leadership. Professors and students in the areas of political science as well as ethics may also find the book to be beneficial, particularly concerning contemporary issues

within the political arena. In addition, anyone who is currently in a leadership position may find the book's insights to be very useful.

Politics, Ethics, and Change: The Legacy of James MacGregor Burns is not only an excellent resource to begin understanding James MacGregor Burns' views on leadership, especially transformational leadership, but also a resource for established academics and those involved in leadership positions.

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