

Call for papers

Third Seminar of the Nordic Research Network on Trust within and between Organizations

Theme: Trust and Leadership in a Nordic Context.

8.-9. May 2012: Harstad University College, Harstad, Norway

Key-note speaker:

Sim Sitkin: Professor and Faculty Director, Center of Leadership and Ethics, Fuqua School of Business, Duke University, Durham, NC.

Purpose and focus of the seminar

Trust in leaders has long been seen as important and feature prominently in a series of influential leadership theories including transformational leadership and authentic leadership (Avolio, 2009). Employees' trust in leaders has been found to have a positive influence on employees' well-being, organizational commitment, team-performance, extra-role behavior as well as reduce employees' intention to quit (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002).

Trust is often seen as a prerequisite for voluntary deference and influence, (Tyler & DeGoey, 1996) and is particularly important for employees' acceptance for unfavorable outcomes (Brockner, Siegel et al. 1996). Employees' trust in leaders as a result is likely to influence organizations capacity to accommodate and harness change, including crises (Mishra, 1996).

At the same time more recent studies suggest that employees' trust in leaders is problematic. Several surveys suggest that a large proportion of employees (less than half in some studies) trust the people at the top of the organization. While numbers are somewhat more favorable for leaders further down in the organization, many employees have little trust in their leaders. The same studies suggest that a significant proportion of employees actively distrust their leaders (Kenexa 2011).

This at least partly explain the strong research focus on understanding both the nature of trust (as well as distrust), between employees and their leaders as well understanding how trust between employees and their leaders are formed, maintained or destroyed.

Yet, a critique often leveled at the literature on trust in leadership has been the predominance of North-American studies which raises questions about whether findings and relationships can be generalized to other cultural settings.

More recent studies suggest that trust formation and development is very much influenced by cultural context and cultural rules and scripts (Saunders et al. 2010). Thus Wasti & Tan (2010) shows how the dynamics of trust-development between Turkish and Chinese employees of large multinational firms in Turkey and China differ from Lewicki & Bunkers (1996) description which assumes that trust starts off as calculative for only in some cases to develop into identity-based trust. In contrast Wasti & Tan find that a highly personal connection in collectivist countries is a precondition for working with and doing business with other people.

A Nordic style of leadership has along with labor and education policies been held up as source of competitive advantage resulting in higher productivity and innovation, even raising questions of whether the management style can be exported (Eriksen, Kruse & Larsen, 2006).

Nordic managers have been described as more individualistic but also more ‘feminine’ and relationship-oriented than managers from other countries (Smith, Aarum, Ekelund, Graversen & Ropo, 2002). The management style has been described as democratic management, combining result-orientation with a focus on relationships and consensus.

Nordic management and leader-employee relations can be seen as reflective of a Nordic culture that using Geert Hofstede's dimensions is low on power-distance and high on femininity. It is also reflective of a more collaborative and relationship-oriented approach to HRM which views employees as active partners (Gooderham, Nordhaug & Ringdal, 1999).

Nordic leaders it is argued depend more heavily on “soft power” in the form of persuasion and participatory decision making. Nordic management and leadership then suggest a greater emphasis on trust as responsibility and influence is delegated and employees become more actively involved in decisions. Trust can be seen as both a precondition for a Nordic management style but also as a result.

This forms a backdrop for the seminar which seeks to address the theme of trust and leadership in a Nordic context.

Possible topics include (but are not limited to):

- What is the role of trust in Nordic leadership? How does trust influence leadership and leaders relationship to employees?
- To what extent do Nordic employees’ trust in leaders differs from employees’ in other countries (with respect to form and content)? Is it possible to speak of a Nordic form of trust? How does trust form and change between leaders and employees in the Nordic countries?

- Related to this; how is trust achieved between leaders and followers in Nordic countries – that is what are the tools and symbols that followers and leaders draw on in forming trusting relationships.
- What are some of the consequences of breaches of trust in a Nordic style of leadership and to what extent do strategies for the restoration of trust differ between a Nordic context and other contexts?
- To what extent can trust as a feature of a Nordic leadership style be exported or recreated in different contexts and cultures? How is trust achieved or modified in meetings with other leadership styles?

Papers can be of different types and can be at different stages of development. Papers thus can be presented as “work in progress”, “short papers”, “full papers” or “finalized article” (a paper that has already been submitted to a journal).

Papers should explain the purpose of the paper, theoretical background, research question, research design and methodology, main findings (for empirical papers) and contributions and further developments (if in progress). It is also useful if the paper indicates how the paper links with the theme of the seminar (“Trust and Leadership in a Nordic Context”) and the overall theme of the Trust Research Network. Papers do not necessarily need to focus ‘strictly’ on the seminars or overall network-theme, trust should constitute a key theme within the paper. We do particularly welcome papers, however on the theme of trust and leadership. While comparative data is often hard to come by we do encourage contributors to explore cultural and contextual aspects of trust and leadership in their papers.

Submission guidelines, instructions and deadlines

As regarding papers and seminar, please contact the group leader in your country (see contact information on the web-site). More practical information about attending the seminar as well as more information about Harstad and Northern Norway is available on the Nordic Research Network on Trust website (<http://trust.ruc.dk/third-seminar-at-harstad>).

Deadline for registration: March 12th 2012.

Deadline for submission of full papers is April 12th, 2012.

Please submit your manuscript as a pdf-file on the web-site: <http://trust.ruc.dk/third-seminar-at-harstad>

To submit the paper you will need a password that can be obtained from the project-leader; Lars Fuglsang. Lars Fuglsang can be reached on fuglsang@ruc.dk.

Cover page should include title of the paper, author’s name, affiliation, address, e-mail and telephone number.

Language: The language is English.

Abstract: Please provide a 150-250 words abstract immediately following the names of the authors.

Keywords: Please select three to five key-words that best describe your paper.

I look forward to welcoming you to Harstad, Norway in May 2012!

Svein Tvedt Johansen

Chair of the seminar.