

## *Book Review / Recension d'ouvrage*

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### **Diversity and Leadership**

by Jean Lau Chin and Joseph E. Trimble

Thousand Oaks, California, USA: Sage Publications, Inc. 2015, 344 pages

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### **Reviewed by/ Revu par**

Kaschka Watson

OISE, University of Toronto

In Chin and Trimble's (2015) compelling book, *Diversity and Leadership*, they successfully argue that multiculturalism and diversity are important and need to be included in the study of leadership due to the rapid growth of globalization and its impact on increasingly diverse societies, organizations, and institutions. The authors deliver new and impactful perspectives on leadership by developing a paradigm of diversity leadership through the amalgamation of the research on leadership and the research on diversity, which challenge our notions and expectations of leaders and leadership. Their paradigm of diversity leadership offers recommendations for evaluating diversity and leadership in innumerable societal contexts and organizations.

Chin and Trimble argue that, a leader's cultural context and lived experiences provide us with a sense of how leadership will be executed and the kind of leader we can expect to emerge. I agree with the authors calling for a paradigm that is diverse. The authors' modification of Hickman's (2010) Leading Organizations framework producing a 'Diverse Leader-Member-Organizational Exchange Paradigm' (DLMOX), which they argue highlights "the diverse composition of leaders and members and define the organizational and external environment as both diverse and global" (p. 44) is relevant to the examination of diversity leadership.

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The DILMOX paradigm sees diversity and being inclusive as dichotomous, yet interrelated with how leadership is to be perceived and exercised in the 21st century. In looking back at the diverse or cultural contexts in which leadership is administered, Chin and Trimble posit that diversity leadership is contextual, value driven, and collaborative. They further maintain that, “to identify diverse leadership styles across diverse groups and to embrace core values that motivate those in leadership roles, lived experiences of leaders and members must include the biases, stereotypes, challenges, and dilemmas they face as they negotiate their social roles in society” (p. 188-189).

The “diversity inclusive” approach supports the DILMOX paradigm in that diversity may be seen as being linked to inclusiveness. To be inclusive, one has to first embrace diversity when addressing concepts of leadership that involve leaders regardless of their race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, citizenship (Asumah & Nagel, 2014), religion, or age. Being diverse does not necessarily mean that you are inclusive. Being diverse can mean that differences are allowed at the table within institutions and organizations, but the contributions of the “out-group” (Chin & Trimble, 2015) members are not included in the policy and decision making. With inclusiveness linked to diversity, all members’ contributions at the table are recognized, valued, and incorporated in the decision making of the institution/organization (Opportunity Now and Shapiro, 2011).

Perhaps inclusion or being inclusive is difficult to achieve in the workplace, especially when the dominant group, the ones holding the leadership roles, are wielding the power. Chin and Trimble argue that, although out-groups are not always, but often linked to women, racial, and ethnic minorities, they experience barriers to important social networks because they do not fall into the in-group’s dominance within the organization. In the DILMOX paradigm, inclusion needs to be intertwined with diversity if we are to expand our notions of leadership between leader and member or leader and organization.

Like Chin and Trimble’s DLMOX paradigm, the DILMOX paradigm meshes diversity and inclusion as a driving force for understanding leadership in today’s global and ever changing (Morrison, 2009) world. Leaders wanting to channel the DILMOX paradigm should not only walk the diversity talk, but should also model inclusive behaviours as one of the many traits of being an inclusive leader (AAC & U, n.d). On the contrary, Chin and Trimble challenge the ‘Trait Theories’ approach to leadership in Chapter 4 of their book, *Leader Identity*, in which they discuss the need for a shift from leader traits to leader identity. They argue that this approach for selecting the “best candidates” for

leadership was during the time when the leaders were predominantly white, Euro-America males. They reveal the shift from leader traits to identity difference between men and women leaders due to the emergence of the dimensions of diversity, which draw our attention to gender, race, class, ethnic minorities, and the variations of culture and how these influence the exercise of leadership.

Dimensions of diversity and leadership have guided the exercise of leadership within institutions and organizations for many years. However, in light of the increasingly global and diverse society, Chin and Trimble urge us to reexamine our notions of leadership and how leaders lead in various cultural contexts. We are encouraged to be cognizant of the importance of the role cultural context plays in shaping leaders' identity, in defining who leaders are, and in explicating what they bring to leadership in our institutions and organizations.

Unlike other books on leadership theories that remain silent on issues of equity and social justice, the scope of Chin and Trimble's book focuses on diversity and leadership in diverse societal contexts. The book also differs from other diversity books that situate their nucleus on the promotion of diversity as an organizational goal, and those that focus on leadership, but neglects diversity issues in the process.

An important and relevant strength of the book is that Chin and Trimble assert that the cultural contexts in which leadership is exercised is important in how leaders understand what works and what does not in different cultural settings. They further espouse their central thesis in calling for the reexamination of our concept of leadership, demanding that, "we ask new questions, create new paradigms, and identify new dimensions to expand our thinking about how leadership is perceived, enacted, and appraised" (p. 17).

This book is an exceptional one I recommend for all educators, students, institutions, organizations, and policy-makers with an interest in diversity leadership, and how cultural contexts influence how leadership is administered and what can be expected of emergent leaders. This book will serve as a powerful source of reference for me during my doctoral studies; as it provides a solid platform and understanding of diversity leadership perspectives that I can use as leverage for my research interest on diversity and inclusive leadership. The book also fills a current gap in our understanding of the challenges and dilemmas of diversity leadership that are constantly evolving with globalization. Despite the book providing its readers with a better theoretical understanding of diversity leadership in the contexts of culture, further research and critical approach to

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diversity and inclusive leadership can be done in the context of specific minority groups (e.g., LGBT, disability and learned ability) in seeing how their identities shape leadership.

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