

**Global and Culturally Diverse
Leaders and Leadership:
New Dimensions and Challenges
for Business, Education and
Society**

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Global and Culturally Diverse Leaders and Leadership: New Dimensions and Challenges for Business, Education and Society

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Foreword

It is a very exciting and challenging time to examine the current changes of leadership styles in society, especially given the rapidly changing demographic changes worldwide. Those changes result in a society where members may speak several languages; have a variety of customs and ceremonies; represent people of colors; display a variety of clothing; introduce a variety of foods; and display multicultural and feminist specific orientations to leadership. It is thus timely that Chin, Trimble, and Garcia provide us with an edited volume on diverse leadership that provides a new body of knowledge that is more relevant and applicable in today's world.

Leadership is defined in a number of ways, and numerous models of leadership are described in the literature. Most models describe the various processes of interpersonal influence that use power and authority to encourage others to act to achieve goals. [Chin and Trimble \(2015\)](#) addressed the importance of diversity and leadership to arrive at more expanded models of leadership. Their work is foundational to this volume where authors are providing more nuanced understanding of such issues as authentic leadership, revisiting trait theory, and integrating critical race theory. What impact do different models have on those influenced by the leadership styles and approaches?

Traditional leadership styles have advantages and disadvantages. In their 2015 volume [Chin and Trimble](#) described research that identified the most important characteristics and styles out of 63 that are embraced and preferred by various populations, and the least important. Results indicated that the least important were those associated with the “alpha male” leadership style, including aggressive, conflict-inducer, dominant, self-centered, and status conscious. The more important endorsed descriptors included adaptability, integrity, authenticity, honesty, and communicator ([Chin & Trimble, 2015](#); [Trimble, 2015](#)).

Since the 2016 presidential election, we have witnessed a traditional dominant leadership style of the U.S. President, who has

the lowest approval rating of any chief executive since *Gallup* began tracking the initial months of a president's term in 1953. The rating is due to high disapproval among Democrats and independents, but there is considerable satisfaction on the part of many Republicans, including those who elected him (Yourish & Murray, 2017, March 20). It is clear that people follow different leaders; various styles may influence individuals and groups differentially. The American Psychological Association's *Stress in America* survey found that between August 2016 and January 2017, Americans' overall average reported stress rose from 4.8 to 5.1 on a 10-point scale. Also, more than half of Americans (57%) report that the current political climate is a very significant source of stress. Also, two-thirds (66%) say the same about the future of our nation, and nearly half (49%) report that the outcome of the election is a very or somewhat significant source of stress (APA, 2017).

Chin and Trimble (2015), Trimble (2015), and most of the authors in this edition propose that in a changing society, new leadership styles are emerging and preferred. Traditional western models of leadership may be less and less relevant for societies that are increasingly diverse and global. As our societies become more diverse, more diverse leaders with a variety of styles are more relevant and appropriate; it is vital that the citizenry not only tolerate, but appreciate the contributions that diverse leaders can provide.

Several years ago former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor conveyed the belief that diversity in leadership was a compelling interest in society. She spoke of the importance of a critical mass of racial and ethnic minority attendees in higher education in order to cultivate a set of leaders from those diverse backgrounds with legitimacy in the eyes of the citizenry. She thus supported affirmative action in universities because she believed that universities are partly in the business of training a leadership corps for society and that a society with racial and ethnic tensions can benefit tremendously from having a diverse and integrated leadership (*Gratz v. Bollinger*, 2003; *Grutter v. Bollinger*, 2003; Jayson & Rodriguez, 2003, p. A-1).

The different perspectives and insights provided in this volume provide a critically important understanding relative to traditional perspectives on leadership. The authors shed light on under-researched and under-examined areas related to evolving leadership approaches regarding *how* to lead, but also *what goals* leaders should attempt to accomplish. This contribution does

indeed address the value of a diverse leadership in society, including at a global level, especially in the context of challenging leadership models that have historically omitted racial and ethnic groups in society. Authors describe how diverse representation promotes values such as collectivism, benevolence, and familial affiliations that have greater relevance, effectiveness, and applicability in today's world. Authors also describe leadership theories and research agenda that are more relevant to a growing multicultural population. This helps contribute to a knowledge base that allows for leaders to be more responsive to the evolving changes in societies. The knowledge base can help and support women, people from different racial/ethnic backgrounds as well as traditional leaders to avoid becoming or continuing to be like those already in the power elite. It provides opportunity for different lived experiences and worldviews to influence those leadership styles.

The opportunity for a citizenry to have diverse leadership is a social justice issue. Leaders with varying ideologies and values that include prioritization of social justice issues can have positive impact on issues such as racism, classism, sexism, poverty, and other oppressions. Perhaps one of the most intriguing themes among several authors is how social identity variables such as gender, race, and ethnicity influence leader behaviors. Some of the authors address values of equity and social justice, and how the lived experiences of those from diverse backgrounds may predispose them to be empowered to prioritize those altruistic values. This volume describes how worldviews and lived experiences influence leadership styles, and how the interaction of diverse leaders, diverse members, and diverse contexts shape the enactment of leadership.

The challenges of diverse leadership are also addressed, including strategies for addressing some of those challenges. Leaders who have indigenous backgrounds, who are racial and ethnic minorities, or are women or homosexual often deal with those who are accustomed to White, North American, heterosexual males, and traditional leadership styles, e.g., masculinized, individual oriented, dominant, and controlled. Destructive biases, either explicit or implicit can result in failure to accept the diverse leader and/or leadership style. The authors validate orientations that examine virtue from philosophical and ethical principles, collective orientations, collaboration as a leadership process, incorporation of inclusiveness, socially derived identities tied to

leadership traits, and examination of how altruism influences goals and communication across groups.

The authors also provide valuable information in the context of theories and models to help guide the development and training of leaders in a variety of different settings, including educational institutions, and business, military, professional, and civic organizations. Great skill is required in balancing conflicting interests that emerge in most contexts and in most settings. Training can help leaders become aware of the factors that shape goals, including the leaders' personal values, the organizational context, and needs of the setting. The information has the potential to help leaders become more effective across a broad range of situations. Training can also help leaders from diverse background to develop skills to address forms of microaggressions and other challenges to their leadership.

Editors Jean Lau Chin, Joseph E. Trimble, and Joseph E. Garcia are to be congratulated for their selection of authors who contributed knowledgeable, insightful, thought provoking, and inspiring chapters. This is a significant contribution to the evolving literature and research on leadership and diversity. It challenges existing notions of leadership with a more global vision of society. I am enthused about this extraordinary contribution that helps bring to light how we can understand, develop, promote, and support a more inclusive, diverse, and effective set of leaders in the many contexts of society.

Melba J. T. Vasquez

Introduction

The rapidly changing demographic composition worldwide calls into question the relevance of leadership models that historically have omitted ethnic and racial groups or diverse groups within society or a country. Rooted in a North American and European tradition, this omission has fostered a research agenda that was ethnocentric, gender biased, and bound by time and place. Western models of leadership have remained dominant and sometimes inappropriately applied to leadership in diverse, multicultural contexts. This is no longer justified as we enter a world and societies that are increasingly global and diverse. We start this volume by asking the following questions:

- How well prepared will leaders be to lead a diverse workforce and provide products and services to a diverse clientele?
- What will we teach our increasingly diverse future leaders?
- How will leadership models build a knowledge base that can be generalized to the population as a whole and to be inclusive of diverse entities within an organization?
- How do we prepare ourselves, our communities, our constituents, and our leaders to live, work, and practice in these future realities?

This volume examines new ways of examining research, teaching, and practice to develop a body of knowledge on leadership that will have greater relevance, effectiveness, and applicability in today's world. While masculinized contexts of leadership have prevailed, 21st-century models should seriously include feminist and culturally specific orientations to leadership.

With growing population diversity and mobility in the United States and throughout the world, leaders and members will find themselves in more culturally heterogeneous settings, organizations, and communities than ever before. Leaders of tomorrow need to be prepared to lead a diverse workforce in ways that are culturally responsive and competent in meeting the

needs of a growing multicultural population. This demands that leadership theories and research be more inclusive and robust if they are to remain relevant. How best can we do that?

People throughout the world will grapple with the question of who best can lead them. Must our leaders look like us and share our beliefs and values? Are there different styles that lead to greater cultural understanding and healthier leader-member relationships? How do we prepare ourselves to live, work, and lead in a world when we do not know the skills we will need or the environments we will face?

A majority of leadership models foster a research agenda that is ethnocentric, gender-biased, and bound by time and place (Chin, 2009, 2010; Chin & Trimble, 2015; Eagly & Chin, 2010; Turnbull, Case, Edwards, Schedlitzki, & Simpson, 2012). With the growing worldwide population shifts, leaders and followers will find themselves in more heterogeneous contexts within institutions and communities than ever before. Will leaders be prepared to lead a diverse workforce and provide products and services to a culturally varied clientele? What will we teach our future leaders as they and those they lead become increasingly diverse? How will leadership models build a knowledge base that can be generalized to our expanding global and diverse societies? Can leaders and leadership be responsive to change?

In this volume, we challenge existing notions of leadership. We use personal narratives and case studies of diverse leadership styles to illustrate the importance of diversity in our lives, communities, and workplace, and how it influences access to leadership positions and exercise of leadership. An “idealized” prototypic model of leadership often drives leadership training and prescribes conditions of leadership for corporate, higher education, science, and social and political sectors of society.

As more women and people from different ethnocultural backgrounds begin to emerge in leadership ranks, [Zweigenhaft and Domhoff \(2006\)](#) report that they often become more like those already in the power elite. The prevailing question then is: Is there room for diverse forms of leadership, or are new leaders constrained by the prevailing norms?

Existing leadership theories often draw their case examples and narratives of those already in leadership positions, i.e., White, North American, heterosexual males, representing a narrow range of the potentially rich and diverse examples of leadership. As we develop leadership paradigms for an increasingly global and diverse society, we need to expand our examples with

narratives reflecting the diverse experiences and social identities of leaders who understand and live amidst different paradigms of effective leadership.

In this volume, we give needed attention to ethnocultural diversity and leadership styles that reflect more inclusive theories of leadership applicable to the exercise of successful leadership in unique and diverse cultural settings. We include the use of personal narratives and case studies to offer new paradigms and identify new dimensions in the study and practice of leadership – to examine diversity in the minds and actions of successful leaders. We hope it will offer insights to challenge our existing notions of leadership and generate a post-industrial, post-colonial, diverse, and global view of leadership. Through the use of narratives and case studies we will emphasize:

- How the different worldviews and lived experiences of leaders influence leadership styles.
- How social justice, ethical, and cultural values are often manifest and included in dialogues about leadership.
- How social identities of leaders (e.g., gender, race, and ethnicity) intersect with leader identities and may result in biases that influence perceptions, shape leader behaviors, and influence appraisals of a leader's effectiveness.
- How the exchange between diverse leaders and diverse members and between leaders and diverse contexts shape the enactment of leadership.

Part 1: A New Look At Leadership: Overview

Western styles and models of leadership currently dominate the leadership literature. New global and diverse perspectives of leadership can begin to include non-dominant views where collectivism, benevolence, and familial affiliations are given greater prominence. This might include an attention to different perspectives of the same phenomenon which some might find to be anathema to long-held beliefs, e.g., examining virtue in leadership from philosophical and ethical principles as opposed to empirical validation; comparing effective leadership using collective vs. individual orientations; using non-Western metaphors, such as Daoist principles, to define the process of leadership; considering

how alternative construals of the self as interdependent might influence the image of leaders; collaboration as a process; leader traits as identities which are socially derived; incorporating inclusiveness and difference as goals; examining power and its relationship to altruism, dominance, and control; and communication across groups and cultures.

Although leadership theories have evolved to reflect changing social contexts, they remain silent on issues of equity, diversity, and social justice. In these chapters, the authors challenge existing theories of leadership and move toward viewing leadership via a global view of organizations in their societal contexts. Others incorporate principles of leadership that are inclusive, multidimensional, and address group differences through the voices of those who have experienced cultural challenges rather than those who are privileged. In redefining leadership as global and diverse, the authors impart a new understanding of who our leaders are, the process of communication, the exchange between leaders and their members, and the contexts that shape the exercise of leadership.

1. Theory Leadership from Africa: Examples of Trait Theory – Nyasha M. GuramatunhuCooper
2. The Case for an Indigenous Collectivist Mindset – Kem Gambrell
3. Cross-cultural Dimensions of Personal Stories in Communicating Authentic Leadership – Marco Aponte-Moreno and Konstantinos Koulouris
4. How the Communal Philosophies of Ubuntu in Africa and Confucius Thought in China Might Enrich Western Notions of Leadership – Rob Elkington and Elizabeth A. Tuleja

Part 2: Ethnocultural Contexts

People around the world increasingly recognize their discontent with leadership models that derive from a Eurocentric or North American perspective. As more diverse leaders are recognized in the world (they exist in many different countries not viewed as among the powerful Western nations), or enter the ranks of leadership viewed to be the power elite, they are looking to be inclusive and multidimensional. Indigenous perspectives, once relegated to the exotic, less powerful, and unessential are now empowered to be perspectives worthy and useful in their own

right. Chapters in this section provide examples of these alternative approaches among different populations, and open a dialogue on a more balanced view of how leadership is viewed and exercised.

1. Influence and Global Leadership: China, India, and the Multinational Corporation – Christie Caldwell and Ethan Prizant
2. Indo-European Leadership (IEL): A Non-Western Leadership Perspective – Afsaneh Nahavandi and Hema A. Krishnan
3. Current and Emerging Patterns of Muslim Leadership – Lina Klemkaite

Part 3: Application of Global and Diverse Perspectives in Different Contexts

As we urge paradigm shifts to develop and expand leadership models that are inclusive of all groups, responsive to difference and diversity among leaders and members, and attentive to the interaction of lived experiences, social identities, and leader-member exchange, chapters in this section apply these principles to different contexts in which leadership is exercised. The five chapters examine the different sectors of service to communities, social justice, military, and higher education from both the leader's and student's perspectives. While Part 2 examines ethnocultural contexts from the standpoint of populations and how their cultures influence and intersect with leadership, Part 3 is about the culture of organizations and institutions which shape how leadership is exercised. These chapters introduce the sense of vision and purpose that challenge our exercise of leadership and the values we bring to bear on how we lead.

1. Service Leadership under the Service Economy – Daniel T. L. Shek, Po Chung, Li Lin, Hildie Leung, and Eddie Ng
2. Reinvigorating Conversations about Leadership: Application of Strategic Choice Theory to the Social Justice Organizational Leader – Caroline S. Clauss-Ehlers and Lynn Pasquerella
3. Probing Leadership from Racio-Ethnic Perspectives in Higher Education: An Emergent Model of Accelerating

- Leader Identity – Jeanetta D. Sims, Ed Cunliff, Atoya Sims, and Kristi Robertson
4. Campus Unrest in American Higher Education: Challenges and Opportunities for Strategic Diversity Leadership – Ralph A. Gigliotti, Brighid Dwyer, and Kristina Ruiz-Mesa
 5. Inclusive Leadership and the Dynamics of Multinational Military Operations – Yvonne R. Masakowski

Part 4: Future Directions...

We end with visions of future directions for studies of leadership and how leadership is central to advancing society and promoting social change. As we examine the influence of different world-views and lived influence leadership, how social justice, ethical, and cultural values emerge in our vision, goals, and exercise of leadership, how social identities of gender, race, and ethnicity intersect between diverse leaders' identities and diverse members, and how that exchange shapes the enactment of leadership, we emerge with new perspectives with an emphasis on cultural competence and promoting change. Saini emphasizes concepts of benevolence and ethics while Thompson et al. emphasize sustainable cultural competence as a catalyst for effective and excellent leadership. Chandler and Kirsch introduce a critical lens to examine the patterns of oppression and domination to challenge the power relations and social processes of leadership and to promote change.

1. A New Perspective toward Leadership Paradigm – Damini Saini
2. A Sustainable, Culturally Competent Approach to Academic Leadership – Sherwood Thompson, Timothy Forde, and Tom Otieno
3. Addressing Race and Culture within a Critical Leadership Approach – Jennifer L. S. Chandler and Robert E. Kirsch

Jean Lau Chin
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Editors

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PART 1
A New Look at Leadership:
Overview

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CHAPTER

1

Theory Leadership from Africa: Examples of Trait Theory

Nyasha M. GuramatunhuCooper

Leadership from Africa: Examples of Trait Theory: Introduction

Written from a Leadership Studies educator's perspective, this chapter highlights and challenges the Western bias of leadership theories, and disrupts this ideological ethnocentrism by presenting leadership trait theory through the experiences of contemporary African community leaders. Using one of the most recognizable theories in leadership studies, this chapter proposes reimagining trait theory by presenting examples of skills, abilities, and qualities of leadership by contemporary leaders from Liberia, Cameroon, and South Africa.

By using examples of leadership in African countries, this chapter demonstrates that the Western bias of leadership is artificial because its theories, particularly trait theory, can be successfully employed to discuss leadership in non-western contexts in ways that prize the differences in culture and societies.

Current leadership theories need not be forsaken in favor of creating new Afro-centered leadership theories. It is possible to explore the attributes, skills, and abilities of trait theory using examples from places around the world that have typically been

excluded as viable places to study leadership. To heed the call for inclusive leadership, particularly in a global society, it is crucial that Leadership Studies educators intentionally examine how leadership theories can be taught by exploring different ways of knowing and being. Failure to do so undermines the complexity of leadership and Leadership Studies, which transcend a single worldview.

This chapter presents an opportunity to explore leadership trait theory beyond typical examples from the West. Valuable lessons about leadership skills, abilities, and traits, can come from parts of the world that have been excluded from the leadership studies canon.

The objective of this chapter is to bring Africa into Leadership Studies education by demonstrating how Western theories of Leadership Studies can be studied and taught using Africans as examples of theories. The secondary objective of this chapter is to prompt leadership educators to think about expanding their understanding and examples of leadership by intentionally seeking leadership voices and experiences from different parts of the world.

With an aggregate population of almost one billion, the African continent is an important part of the global marketplace, with imports and exports in the form of goods and services worth billions of dollars (Nwosu in Deardoff, 2009, p. 158). Africans are creating and participating robustly in a world that has seen widespread shifts due to trade, technology, and migration (p. 159). This assertion is hardly new, yet Africa is noticeably and frequently excluded from conversations that explore the study of leadership. As Bangura (2011, p. 133) noted: “no one would deny that the continent of Africa is intimately involved when the disciplines of Geography, History, Political Science, Linguistics, Economics or Anthropology” are examined. However, the same cannot be said for the Leadership Studies canon. African voices and experiences have been excluded from the intellectual pursuit of leadership. This exclusion of Africa in Leadership Studies harkens back to the ideas advanced by 19th-century European thinkers who wrote and spoke of Africans “as objects unworthy of study, as lacking history, as lacking culture” (p. 133). Yet the rich and complex precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial histories of Africa’s 55 recognized states show leadership in nuanced forms.

Exclusion from the Leadership Studies canon is not unique to Africa. The global south is noticeably absent in leadership theories and approaches that dominate academic curricula,

international policy, and models of governance. The emergence of Leadership Studies as a discipline in the last 60 years has shown the pervasiveness of a Western, particularly North American lens (Den Hartog & Dickson, 2012). The result has been a discursive imperialism of sorts, wherein the West is positioned as the authority on the concept and practice of leadership, and leadership that occurs outside of this particular framework is not legitimate or noteworthy. In an effort to counter the problematic ethnocentrism in leadership theory, I call for intentional inclusion of non-Western experiences and perspectives in Leadership Studies education.

In this chapter, I propose a reimagining of trait theory by highlighting examples of young Africans who are influencing and advancing their communities: Arthur Zang, Fatu Kekula, and Sizwe Nzima. Arthur Zang, a Cameroonian engineer, invented the Cardiopad: “a touch screen medical tablet that enables heart examinations...to be performed at remote rural locations while the results of the test are transferred wirelessly to specialists...” (Nsehe, 2012). Fatu Kekula from Liberia saved her entire immediate family from the deadly Ebola virus (Cohen & Bonifield, 2015). Sizwe Nzima from South Africa started Iyeza Express: a medication delivery service (Kelto, 2014). The achievements of these three remarkable leaders show a kind of leadership that Masango (2002) designated as life giving and innovative. Moreover, these exceptional individuals exhibit some of the oft-cited desirable traits in leadership trait theory: intelligence, determination, and integrity (Northouse, 2015). Ultimately, this chapter serves as a resource for leadership educators to explore some of what Africa has to offer Leadership Studies education.

Before presenting the leadership stories of Arthur, Fatu, and Sizwe, I begin by discussing the positioning of Leadership Studies as a Western concept, followed by a brief overview of trait theory. The chapter ends with a discussion of the implications of shifting trait theory from a Eurocentric lens to a more global perspective that considers cultural and social context, which ultimately invites different voices and experiences in Leadership Studies education.

Locating Personal Interest

Sikes (2010, p. 19) noted that in maintaining a standard of ethics regarding their work, scholars must clearly present “where they

are positioned in regard to their work.” Explaining one’s position includes revealing the origin of interest in the topic, and how the topic relates to personal experience (p. 19). I am a Leadership Studies educator. Teaching at the undergraduate level, my work in the classroom is committed to guiding learners towards and through the complexity of leadership. Guided by a postmodern lens, I hold that leadership is socially and culturally mediated, and one’s geographical positioning in the world affects perceptions and practice of leadership.

Born and raised in Zimbabwe, I navigate the world as an African woman. I respond to people, places, things, and events as an African woman. I know that the continent, in its rich yet complex state, is poised to contribute valuable ways of knowing and being when it comes to the study and practice of leadership. As a young African, I believe that there are many young Africans who are doing incredible work to uplift their communities to little or no fanfare. Their leadership is a powerful reminder of [Masango’s \(2002\)](#) life giving and innovative leadership.

At this juncture, I will also note that though I am writing about African examples of leadership trait theory and specifically name the countries of Liberia, Cameroon, and South Africa, I also invoke the rest of the global south, for the exclusion in Leadership Studies extends to regions such Latin America, the Middle East, and parts of South Asia. One can also find powerful examples of leadership that are scarcely written about and given due designation as demonstrations of leadership as it is known in the discipline. Though I do not write specifically about the global south in this chapter, the point remains that this is a part of the world that is not included in the framing of Leadership Studies and in the way that leadership is taught.

Leadership as a Western Paradigm

In a *New York Times* opinion piece, [Garfield and Van Norder \(2016\)](#) issued a poignant call to their colleagues in the field of Philosophy. In a clear and pointed critique, they highlighted the flaw in their discipline, noting: “the vast majority of philosophy departments in the United States offer courses only on Philosophy derived from Europe and the English-speaking world” (2016). This same critique is gaining momentum in Leadership Studies education, particularly directed at leadership theories and approaches. Works by [Chin and Trimble \(2015\)](#),

Schedlitzki and Edwards (2014), and Den Hartog and Dickinson (2012) extensively discuss a Western bias of leadership theory.

Presenting a history of Leadership Studies, Perkins (2009) advised that though there is a Western bias in leadership research, the study and practice of leadership is ancient and universal, meaning that the concept of leadership transcends borders and fixed time periods. For example, the concepts of leader, follower, and leadership have been pointed out in Egyptian symbols dating back to 5,000 years ago (Bass, 1995). Such resources interrupt the notion of the discipline of Leadership Studies as couched in Western civilization, with examples of ideal leadership often associated with the works of Plato and Aristotle (Wren, 1995).

Alvez, Manz, and Butterfield (2005) proposed that leadership has “long been treated as a global field of study, borrowing from Eastern and Western classic teachings” (p. 9). However, this is a narrow treatment of the term “global field” in that it excludes much of the world as contributors to the field. These Eastern and Western classic teachings on leadership are often limited to examples such as Aristotle, Confucius, Buddha, Churchill, and Gandhi. However, this leaves out too many parts of the world as valuable sources for studies and scholarship on leadership, particularly Africa. This vacuum led Jallow (2014) to proclaim that there is “a need for African Leadership Studies, Asian Leadership Studies, Latin American Leadership Studies, and Middle Eastern Leadership Studies” (p. 3).

Shifting focus from historical major figures, contemporary leadership scholarship increasingly examines societal and contextual issues such as power, gender, and ethics (Day & Antonakis, 2012). However, there is no explicit focus on worldview. The arena in which leadership is studied and practiced is vast, so it is concerning that Leadership Studies as a discipline discusses cultural and social influences on leadership as special issues rather than critical shapers of the discipline. For example, a review of widely used textbooks on leadership shows the topic of leadership and culture at the bottom of the table of contents, and/or covered within a single chapter. Peter Northouse’s *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (2015), places leadership and culture as Chapter 16 out of 16 chapters. Similarly, Richard Daft and Patricia Lane’s *The Leadership Experience* (2015) examines leadership and culture in Chapter 14 out of 15 chapters. By treating leadership and culture as a special interest topic, the implication is that cultural and social contexts operate at the periphery of the

discipline. Ideally, such chapters should be at the beginning of popular textbooks because it is important to frame cultural and social contexts as critical shapers in assessing the strengths and weaknesses of leadership theories, particularly for learners who are new to the discipline. Texts such as Chin and Tremble's *Diversity and Leadership* (2015) underscore how global shifts in trade, technology, and migration have buoyed advocacy for the inclusion of cultural and social contexts as a focal point for leadership.

If students, scholars, and educators are to laud Leadership Studies as an interdisciplinary field, then collective and intentional work must be done to make it an intercultural field of study. What I am proposing is not radical. Scholars need not completely change the basis of current leadership theory in order to be inclusive. Instead, there are opportunities to contextualize existing leadership theories so that their tenets can be appreciated from a culturally relativistic lens (Jallow, 2014). Indeed, the intellectual space for this already exists. Leadership is the study of possibilities based on context, situations, and contingencies (Ayman & Adams, 2012). This view creates space to critique, advance, and reimagine the concept and practice of leadership while spanning geographical borders. This is the allure of Leadership Studies despite its current limitations in inclusivity.

With this perspective, I present trait theory in contemporary terms with African exemplars. Even though I have levied the critique that Leadership Studies is presented from a Western centric lens, this very same lens can be used to study leadership related to Africa in a way that prizes African voices and experiences. This follows Bangura's (2011) proposition that there are aspects of Africa that are common to any continent, therefore there is license to use Western theories of leadership to uncover these commonalities. As I pointed out in previous work (GuramatunhuCooper, 2014), the ability for scholars to discuss African leadership in social movements speaks to the versatility of African leadership in how it can be analyzed using different worldviews.

At this juncture, I acknowledge that there are several ways to approach this chapter. Scholars versed in Afro-centered ways of knowing and being may question my use of Western derived theories to present Africans as examples of leadership theories. Scholars in the tradition of the formidable Cheikh Anta Diop might assert that there is a distinct character of African sociocultural constructs, which cannot be correctly interpreted by a

Eurocentric (Western) mode of analysis (Bangura, 2011). I acknowledge that this is a limitation of this chapter. I concur: it is critical to place “African ideals at the center of any analysis that involved African culture and behavior” (Asante, 1987, p. 6). However the beauty of Leadership Studies is such that a post-modern lens allows for such scholastic pursuits wherein knowledge from one cultural base can share the same intellectual space with another: without contrast or comparison, but simply as knowledge. To attempt to come up with Afro-centered leadership theories in this chapter would be a gargantuan task that deserves skilled and disciplined study, and I am encouraged that scholars such as Jallow (2014) are championing this cause.

A survey of scholarship shows a dearth in Leadership Studies scholarship written by and for African audiences. As Jallow (2014) noted, scholarship on African leadership comes from historians, political scientists, and theologians, and often lacks “infusion of Leadership Studies theories” (p. 5). However, a qualitative study by Bolden and Kirk (2009, p. 14) suggested that “Africans aspire for leadership founded on humanistic principles, and a desire for more inclusive and participative forms of leadership that value individual differences, authenticity and serving the community.” What I propose, as a Leadership Studies educator teaching at a Western institution of higher education, is limited in scope and less ambitious for now, however, it impacts Leadership Studies education in important ways. In my quest to expose learners to global experiences of leadership, I focus on my immediate sphere of influence. Presenting Africans and African experiences as examples of leadership theories adds to the work of disrupting the Eurocentric lens in Leadership Studies.

Trait Theory

At its core, trait theory of leadership thrives on the assumption that extraordinary personal attributes, abilities, skills, and physical characteristics are the markers of leadership (Glynn & DeJordy, 2010, p. 122). In other words, “one is born into a leadership role in society,” creating a clear demarcation line between the destinies of leaders and nonleaders (Schedlitzki & Edwards, 2014, p. 22). Trait theory is also sometimes referred to as the “great man theory” as inquiry into the theory began at a time when “leadership was thought to be the province of males” (Glynn & DeJordy, 2010, p. 122). Research on trait theory

between the late 1940s and the early 1990s focused on isolating characteristics and qualities that distinguished leaders from non-leaders, seeking to understand “why certain people were great leaders” (Rowe & Guerrero, 2016, p. 33). Among the eminent studies on trait theory (see Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991; Mann, 1959; Stogdill, 1948, 1974), five traits are most frequently noted: intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity, and sociability (Northouse, 2015). But this aforementioned trait theory research highlights the Western gaze as the normative lens in Leadership Studies. Specifically, all these studies were carried out in Western contexts, focusing on Anglo males as examples, thus excluding other people, places, things, and events from other parts of the world that might have advanced research.

One of the intriguing things about Leadership Studies is that each approach and theory can be assessed on its strengths and weaknesses, which gives way to developing other contextually responsive ways of thinking about leadership. Since trait theory is leader-centric, one of the critiques levied against the theory is its limiting nature (Yukl, 2010). It is limiting in that while focusing on attributes or traits of a leader, it does not take into account social, political, economic, and cultural variables that impact perceptions of leaders and leadership. In earlier extensive reviews, scholars such as Stogdill (1948) and Mann (1959) have critiqued trait theory “as being insufficient to explain leadership and leadership effectiveness” (as cited in Zaccaro, 2007, p. 6). Similar critiques were noted by Ghiselli and Brown (1955), Secord and Backman (1974), Muchinsky (1983), and Baron and Byrne (1987). In more recent scholarship, Chin and Trimble (2015) discussed the limitations of trait theory as rooted in “a presumption of universal traits” (p. 37). This limitation ushered a failure “to note cultural variation and/or gender variation” (p. 88). The basis of these critiques is that singling specific traits as markers of leadership, without consideration of circumstances, is an unproductive pursuit. These critiques made way for “situationism perspective,” which emphasizes that different situations call for different types of leadership, and it cannot be assumed that an effective leader in one situation will be effective in another, without consideration of individual leadership attributes (Zaccaro, Kemp, & Bader, 2004).

A notable example of an examination of a type of situationism perspective: leadership traits within cultural and social contexts, is the GLOBE Study (House, 2004). This longitudinal quantitative and qualitative study presents culture and society as

the situational variables, and uses data to extrapolate traits or attributes of leadership from various cultures. Though there is room to critique its scope in other venues, the Globe Study informs my attempt to present leadership attributes or traits as those that individuals possess and use in response to areas of need in their societies and communities. Bolden and Kirk's (2009) work supports this culturally and socially based presentation of trait theory, noting that their "research in Africa has indicated that leadership begins with accepting and taking up one's role within a community (or social) context" (p. 13).

Model of Leader Traits and Leadership

Critiques of trait theory have lauded it as "too simplistic" (Conger & Kanungo, 1998, p. 38). In its simplicity, it is perceived as rendering a reductionism of leadership that presents it as a "passive status" or "mere possession of some combination of traits" (Stogdill, 1948, p. 66). However, a revival of the theory abounds. According to Zaccaro (2007), contemporary application of trait-based perspectives of leadership must be grounded in conceptually meaningful ways. Such a perspective assuages Conger and Kanungo's (1998) label of the theory being "too simplistic" in that traits and attributes are useful in assessing leadership performance and outcomes if contextually bound meaning is applied. In other words, Stogdill's (1948) assessment of the theory as the "mere possession of some combination of traits" is transformed when traits are viewed within the specific contexts in which they are used to influence and impact people, places, things, and events.

In introducing the model of leader traits and leadership, Zaccaro et al. (2004) provide a useful framework for categorizing leadership traits and attributes. The model is unique in that it does not just list a set of traits, rather, it provides "integrated sets of leadership attributes" that can be used to evaluate leader performance and impact (Zaccaro, 2007, p. 11). The attributes include "cognitive capacities, personality or dispositional qualities, motives and values, problem-solving skills, social capacities, and tacit knowledge" (p. 11). Illustrating advancement beyond simply listing traits associated with leadership, the model of leadership traits and leadership makes a distinction between distal and proximal attributes. Distal attributes such as cognitive capacities, personality or dispositional qualities, and motives

and values are traits that individuals are born with, thus, relatively stable (p. 13). Proximal attributes: problem-solving skills, social capacities, and tacit knowledge, are learned and developed, and susceptible to social, cultural, and systemic influences (p. 13).

For the purposes of this chapter, I will focus on the proximal attributes of leadership as presented by Zaccaro et al. (2004) to illustrate how examples of leadership trait theory can be found across Africa and can be used to teach leadership theory in institutions across the world. Focusing on proximal attributes (leadership traits that can be developed) reveals my own perspective of leadership as an inclusive enterprise that is not limited to certain kinds of people. Rather, leadership can be informally and formally nurtured and developed in response to situations and needs. The examples of trait leadership presented in this chapter underscore this perspective, illustrating how young Africans used problem-solving skills, social capacities, and tacit knowledge (all proximal attributes) to respond to the needs of their communities.

Examples of Trait Theory in Africa

In 2014, the West African countries of Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia reeled from the Ebola epidemic. Global health institutions issued dire warnings and death counts, signaling the rapid impact of a disease that had been previously thought to be curbed. Even Liberian president: Her Excellency Ellen Sirleaf Johnson, traveled to the United States appealing for resources to fight or at least slow down the spread of the disease (Cooper, 2014). On the ground in Liberia, Fatu Kekula (then 23 years old) treated and saved her entire family from Ebola “using nothing more than plastic trash bags, a raincoat bought in the market, boots, and a surgical mask and gloves” (Dixon, 2014). A detailed profile in the *Los Angeles Times* shows that Fatu cared for her father, mother, sister, and cousin because: “Doctors called and told me to leave them alone, and not go anywhere near them. I could not. They are my only family. No one came near me” (2014).

With limited medical knowledge, Fatu showed her problem-solving skills by creating a rudimentary isolation room with a raincoat, rain boots, and chlorine as her primary medical equipment (Dixon, 2014). Dispensing a mixture of medications such

as blood pressure medication, antibiotics, and analgesics, and monitoring an intravenous drip, Fatu worked tirelessly to keep her family alive without sleep, telling herself:

You have to be sorry for them. You have to put yourself in the shoes of that person and ask yourself, what if it were me? I was fighting for my family and their lives, I would do it for other people in the hospital, so I knew I could do it for my family. (2014)

Indeed, her family survived. That experience prompted Fatu to pass her tacit knowledge gained from caring for Ebola patients to other desperate families (Dixon, 2014). During this time of personal and national crisis, she exhibited social capacity by collaborating with Liberia's ministry of health to teach others how to use everyday resources when there was nothing else available. Fatu enrolled in the nursing program at Emory University in the United States, becoming a nursing student whose experience in medicine was beyond what any textbook could teach her (Cohen & Bonifield, 2015). Fatu is an example of a leader whose proximal leadership attributes were quickly developed in response to a deadly situation.

National Public Radio (Kelto, 2014) profiled South African social entrepreneur Sizwe Nzima: "the guy who delivers HIV medicine on his bicycle." Sizwe saw a need in his community that impacted the quality of life for his friends and family. In his community in Cape Town, South Africa, access to healthcare came with long waiting periods, long lines, and multiple trips to the clinic to get medicine for his grandparents (2014). Waiting at a clinic, he came up with the idea of starting a medication delivery service that would deliver medicine to people's homes instead of them waiting in line for hours at local clinics and pharmacies (2014).

The idea was not novel because other companies in Cape Town were already delivering medication to homes. But for Sizwe and his community, their location made a difference in being a part of this service. There were no companies delivering medication to low-income townships such as his where "most people lived in wooden or metal shacks" without street addresses and could not be found without "local knowledge" (Kelto, 2014). This dire need was the catalyst for Iyeza Express: Nzima's bicycle powered medicine delivery service. Nzima's business, an illustration of his problem-solving capacity and tacit knowledge, began with just two clients and expanded to 930 clients and a

staff of six after a few years (2014). Not only was Nzima delivering HIV medication, but he also delivered medication for diabetes and epilepsy (2014). His services are offered at a low cost due to “support from a local business incubation program that provides free office space, including a telephone, computer, and wifi” (2014).

Nzima is an example of African innovation and problem solving. He saw a need for his community and stepped into a leadership role that improved the quality of life for members of his community. His social capacity allowed him to recognize the layered impact that long wait times for medication had on his community. Waiting in line for medication was not just an inconvenience, it was an issue of livelihood. Spending time in a clinic waiting for prescriptions meant “lost income and lost opportunities to look for work” (Kelto, 2014). Further consequences were that many people did not go to get their medication and thus failed to manage their treatment plans for conditions such as HIV (2014).

Lastly, Arthur Zang was named one of Forbes Africa’s 30 under 30 in the best young entrepreneur category (Nsehe, 2012). This designation was for good reason. In Arthur’s home country of Cameroon, just 30 heart surgeons, primarily located in the country’s two economic hubs (Douala and Yaoundé), provide service for 20 million people (Nsehe, 2012). This means that in addition to a lack of specialists, people in rural areas were competing with residents in urban areas for access to the surgeons, and also lacked the financial resources to make the trip to get help. As with many African countries, access to healthcare is a cause for concern. Using his engineering knowledge and problem-solving capacity, Zang invented the Cardiopad: a touchscreen tablet that facilitates wireless transfer of examination results performed in rural locations to trained specialists in Doula or Yaoundé who can interpret them and recommend courses of action (2012). The Cardiopad shows the ingenuity of Zang in its capacity as a life-saving device. It is the first of its kind in Cameroon and Africa with a reliability rate as high as 97.5%, which has been validated by the local scientific community (2012). Zang used his social capacity and tacit knowledge of the needs in his country to create a solution for a social justice issue, enhancing the lives of patients in remote areas and removing barriers and burdens to the healthcare system.

Discussion and Conclusion

In support of the call for an inclusive Leadership Studies, I presented African examples of leadership as being compatible with and contributing to Western theories and approaches of leadership. As a Leadership Studies educator, I urge a curriculum-wide conscious awareness of what is going on in other parts of the world, using knowledge of people, places, and events to reimagine the discipline as culturally and socially responsive. The advice from [Den Hartog and Dickson \(2004, p. 277\)](#) is well taken: “We should not take for granted that models and theories developed in one place will work similarly in another.” However [Bangura’s \(2011\)](#) proposition of commonalities across continents provides a framework in which to explore trait theory highlighting African exemplars.

The achievements of the three individuals presented in this chapter show exceptional qualities extolled by trait theory in its general form. However, their location in the world, that is, Africa, prevents their exceptionalism from being included in the current Western centric forms of trait theory and leadership inquiry at large. Their achievements should show that Africa can and does contribute to Leadership Studies and is primed to advance the discipline alongside other worldviews. Perhaps instead of only citing Napoleon Bonaparte, George Washington, and Winston Churchill as examples of trait theory, those interested in Leadership Studies (as students and educators) will also begin to cite young people in Africa who are changing the lives of people around them as examples of desirable leadership traits that inspire across borders.

The task for students, scholars, and educators of leadership is to normalize leadership acts in Africa and any part of the global south as part of the Leadership Studies canon rather than human-interest stories in the media. In consuming these leadership experiences as human-interest pieces, members of the leadership studies discipline become complicit in denying space and voice to leadership acts that occur outside of the West. In this case, the designation of human-interest stories functions as a sort of orientalism ([Said, 1993](#)) that denies the addition of African experiences as important contributors to leadership theories simply because Africa has long been framed through a single story: known as a singular and deficient place marred by poverty, death, and war ([Adichie, 2009](#)). Normalizing leadership from

African experiences means disrupting the well-worn single story of Africa and the notion of the West as the gatekeeper of Leadership Studies by intentionally seeking and naming leadership experiences as just that, rather than human-interest stories. That is a small but important start.

The next step is to challenge scholars, educators, and practitioners to intentionally use examples from non-Western contexts in their work. Normalizing leadership from non-Western contexts might mean using the examples of Fatu, Arthur, and Sizwe alongside examples of Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, Sheryl Sandberg. The examples are available. There is no shortage of leadership in Africa. It is a matter of those interested in leadership to be intentional in learning about experiences beyond their own social and intellectual spaces. As a leadership educator with cultural and social ties to Africa, I want to see my part of the world included in Leadership Studies. To contribute in the effort of disrupting the Western bias of Leadership Studies, I intentionally use non-Western examples to demonstrate leadership theories in my teaching. My goal is to guide learners and colleagues to think about the vastness and nuance of leadership, rejecting the confines of a Western gaze.

To address the leadership needs and demands of a global society, Leadership Studies education must become inclusive. Being inclusive means availing the discipline and curriculum to various cultural and social contexts. With demonstrated growth in population, market share, and leadership impact, those who study and teach leadership cannot ignore the contributions of Africa and the global south at large. To do so is missing out on valuable leadership lessons and knowledge that will provide more resources in answering the call to and for inclusive leadership knowledge.

Discussion Questions

1. What factors have contributed to the Western bias in Leadership Studies, and in leadership theories?
2. Whose responsibility is it to ensure that experiences and voices from the Global South (nations in Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and parts of South Asia) are featured and included in the study and theorization of leadership?

3. Can leadership theories, in their current forms, be used to examine leadership in non-Western contexts? What are the implications of this particular pursuit?

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