might have even joined a non-Tory-dominated Leave campaign in the UK, one whose federating principle would have been the protection of the treasures of British history and not shamelessly xenophobic anti-EU demagoguery (!)

9. Max Hastings, “Boris, Churchill and the Implosion of the Tories,” “The Financial Times,” September 6th, 2019.

10. Max Hastings, “I was Boris Johnson’s boss: he is utterly unfit to be prime minister,” “The Guardian,” June 24th, 2019.

11. Cf p.416.

12. “A word to the wise is enough.”

Author Biography

Simon Oliai is a former UNESCO adviser on the worldwide promotion of the humanities as well as a philosopher of history who has studied and lectured in the United States, France, and Iran. He has organized several noted international seminars in Europe and the Middle East. He is also the editor of the landmark international anniversary dossier on Martin Heidegger published by the French review “Portique” in 2006.

Review of Bobby Siu (2021). *Opening Doors to Diversity in Leadership*. University of Toronto Press (UTP), 371 pp. CND US$38.95 (Hardcover) ISBN 978-1487500870

Abstract

*Opening Doors to Diversity in Leadership* is a hard-hitting look at systemic racism in the workplace. The author provides eye-opening insights into the barriers that those who are marginalized must face when establishing respect and authority in leadership roles. This eight-chapter book examines the plight of four uniquely disadvantaged groups of individuals. These groups include Indigenous populations, women, persons with disabilities, and racialized minorities. These groups were examined with particular interest given the fact that on January 1, 2020, amendments to the Canada Business Corporations Act went into effect and required a greater level of diversity amongst the aforementioned populations (p. 299). Issues within the context of building diversity into the workplace were approached from a triangular perspective, looking at the interplaying dynamics between the psychological, organizational, and cultural/societal dimensions. The author makes it clear that for real and lasting change to take effect, there must be sweeping overhauls within each of the three categories discussed.

Keywords

Diversity, leadership, inclusivity, social change, overcoming barriers, representation

*Opening Doors to Diversity in Leadership* is a hard-hitting look at systemic racism in the workplace. The author provides eye-opening insights into the barriers that those who are marginalized must face when establishing respect and authority in leadership roles. This eight-chapter book examines the plight of four uniquely disadvantaged groups of individuals. These groups include Indigenous
populations, women, persons with disabilities, and racialized minorities. These groups were examined with particular interest given the fact that on 1 January 2020, amendments to the Canada Business Corporations Act went into effect and required a greater level of diversity amongst the aforementioned populations (p. 299). Issues within the context of building diversity into the workplace were approached from a triangular perspective looking at the interplaying dynamics between the psychological, organizational, and cultural/societal dimensions. The author makes it clear that for real and lasting change to take effect, there must be sweeping overhauls within each of the three categories discussed.

The layout of the book was progressive and easy to follow; each chapter was clearly defined and served a unique purpose. The earliest chapters (1–2) established the scope and background of the issue, with subsequent chapters (3–7) examining the adversity and hardship populations have both historically and currently undergone when striving for career advancement. The final chapter (8) proposes sweeping changes that are to be imposed on private organizations, government, and educational institutions that will address these issues from a forward-momentum perspective.

The book begins by highlighting all of the many positive aspects that a diverse workforce can bring to a modern and progressive workplace. Real thought and argument are presented when advocating for diverse perspectives allowing for business competitiveness (p. 12). Additionally, the argument for diverse hiring practices branches into greater levels of innovation, the ability to confidently approach global markets; the chapter also considered how hiring a diverse workforce allows for economic prosperity and corporate growth opportunities. “Companies with women on their boards outperform their competition with 142% higher returns in sales, 66% higher return on investment and 53% higher return on equity” (p. 17).

In chapter two of this book, the underlying issues that lead to diversity gaps in leadership are examined. Each group’s background and profiles are called into context and examined from a colonial perspective. Historic and recent trends in the appointment of board members and senior executives’ positions are examined to determine what key factors are valued and how marginalized populations can compete for leadership roles. A comprehensive search of senior leadership and board members’ roles was examined by looking at a Canadian national news publication’s archives (The Globe and Mail). “2013 data showed that of the 135 new appointees, 99 (73.3%) were men and 36 (26.4%) were female. All 36 women appointed to corporate positions (100%) were white” (p. 37). Many employers stated that hiring was based on the pool of applicants and oftentimes marginalized populations do not apply for these positions. The main recommendation that came about as a result of this discovery was asking companies to write their job ads addressing the minimum qualifications of candidates instead of including an unrealistic wishlist of credentials. Creating ads where women, those with disabilities, Black, Indigenous, and people of color can view themselves in the role will increase the pool of applicants and eventually, the representation of these candidates in leadership positions.

The heart of this book can be found in chapters five through seven. Chapter five—“Moving In” examines the recruitment and selection process that is used to evaluate candidates. Oftentimes, key leadership positions are selected based on a word-of-mouth approach. This precludes candidates who do not operate within the same social circles from even knowing that the posting is available (p. 154). In chapter six—“Moving Up,” performance criteria, job evaluations, along with the corporate culture associated with promotion and succession planning are called into question. According to the author, private organizations lack governance and accountability (p. 184); additional to this is an undervaluing of transferable skills (p. 192) and the fact that most leadership roles require a level of autonomy that negates familial obligations (p. 194). These issues prevent highly skilled and qualified candidates from ever reaching their full career potential. Finally, in chapter seven—“Moving Out,” the focus of the book turns to the work environment and corporate culture of an
organization. The key argument made throughout this chapter is that without mentorship and having a supportive network of champions, the overall culture of a workplace is designed to limit the access of those who do not fit the mold (p. 247). It is also within this chapter’s framework where the issue of tokenism is discussed. By selecting just a few key members of marginalized groups who have conformed to the status quo, an organization can make claims that they have made strides in diversity hiring practices. Tokenism in hiring cannot lead to systemic change due to a lack of critical mass. Oftentimes, those who are hired into leadership roles feel marginalized and isolated (p. 251).

By examining thought-provoking research and approaching the issue of equity in hiring practices from a solution-oriented perspective, this book was able to emphasize the enumerable benefits that diverse populations bring to the workplace while at the same time not negating the immense equity gaps that still exist within organizations. Writing a book that focuses on four unique populations requires exceptional organization and strategic foresight to interweave such unique and diverse narratives into one cohesive story. One main issue that needed to be addressed was which diverse groups should be the primary focus and how to delve into the strife of such different populations with a high level of insight, dignity, and respect. An example of this challenge can be found in chapter three when the author discusses perception, attitudes, and biases; the biases that are faced by women are much different than the leadership perceptions associated with populations of First Nations Canadians. The prerogative of the chapter included a valiant attempt to equally shed light on how although challenges and perceptions faced were not the same, the outcome of a lack of representation within leadership positions was still the result of discriminatory hiring practices. Throughout this chapter, many insights were given as to how perceptions and attitudes acted as “psychological filters” when identifying and selecting leaders (p. 66). Stereotypes were used as a means of compartmentalization and over time, the persistence of these stereotypes led to unconscious bias that negatively affected human resource decisions. Spending more time and effort exploring the effects of intersectionality on hiring dynamics would add value to further discussions (Agosto and Roland, 2018). The plight of women in the workplace and biases were discussed along with the biases and prejudice against racialized minorities; however, very little time was spent looking at the duality of these two (or any two) realities and how facing marginalization on multiple levels impacted attitudes and perceptions of leadership abilities. As it stands currently, the book does not yet reach the discussion far enough to truly dissect how duality negatively interferes with the career trajectories of those who strive for leadership.

Benevolent prejudice (p. 92) is a newer concept with a limited research base. The idea behind this trend is to impose a glass ceiling on marginalized groups by stereotyping them and compartmentalizing them into non-senior roles; this is done by using their strengths and abilities as the limiting factors. The example given in the book was that some racialized minority groups are known for their mathematical and computational abilities; these highly valued and difficult-to-recruit skill sets allow for diverse hiring practices, but however, often limit individuals from within those populations from reaching the c-suite or the ranks of senior executives. Given the fact that this concept only made for a very brief discussion, enhanced conversation on this emerging awareness would have only benefited the narrative of this book.

The focus of my analysis of this text comes from exploring the solutions that were proposed in chapter eight. The majority of this book does an exceptional job outlining the value of diverse leadership and the systemic barriers that have held back incredibly talented individuals from reaching their full leadership potential. In chapter eight, the author switches focus and begins to lay a framework for change. The majority of the suggestions that were made require an underlying tone of private and public sector synergy to be effective. The approaches that were proposed are highly socialist; the programs outlined require a high level of corporate volunteerism and organizational
transparency to determine effectiveness. In the United States especially, there is a high degree of individualism; regardless if the elected officials are democratic or republican, the “American Dream” is predicated on the fact that there is autonomy in choice and a strategic separation from government overreach. To a lesser degree, this also is the case in Canada. Individuals who own organizations and have worked to build private enterprises take pride in the decisions they make to grow their businesses; hiring practices are central to these decisions. Therefore, any moves on the part of the government to restrict hiring or dictate quotas in employment tend to be met with prejudice and resistance. With this being said, the book does place significant effort into describing a two-pronged approach where changing the cultural and psychological attitudes that lead to systemic racism must be addressed simultaneously.

The many strengths of this book must not be overlooked. The author does an excellent job building a high degree of awareness in the reader. As a result of the time invested in working my way through this text, I have a much larger and more complete understanding of the multiple layers and attitudes that lead to systemic racism. In particular, I appreciated the matter-of-fact approach that was taken to discussing how modern corporate culture is built around white, non-indigenous, able-bodied male leadership (p. 253). Many senior leaders view their colonial heritage as a differentiating factor that has led to the success of their company. Letting go of these notions and changing their approach to all aspects of the business from hiring, to evaluation, interviewing, promotion, and succession planning is a daunting task that some are just beginning to consider. Change starts by disarming stereotypes and allowing each unique individual to have a voice and an equal opportunity to succeed. However, the reality is that is not enough. The system itself needs to change to accommodate the needs, values, and dynamic skills that historically marginalized communities can bring into a vibrant workplace. The author does an excellent job laying out how virtual workspaces, flexible hours, and different approaches to routine tasks change the benchmarks of success and allow for better opportunities for equity.

*Opening Doors to Diversity in Leadership* is not just a book that looks into the deepest crevasse of societal oppression; it takes the opportunity to explore the root causes, attitudes, and prejudices that undermine marginalized groups and lead to systemic disadvantages in the workplace. This book acts as a highly valuable guidepost for anyone interested in being part of a solution-oriented organization or those just looking to gain a better understanding of the impact of systemic oppression on marginalized communities. I strongly recommend that anyone who is compelled toward leadership, in a leadership role, or can act as an agent of change should be introduced to this text as the insights provided and the comprehensive overview shared paint a thorough picture of societal norms and leaves just enough a silver lining for the reader to believe that true corporate and societal change is possible.

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KG Schuyler, JE Baugher and K Jironet (eds.) Creative social change: Leadership for a healthy world, Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2016; 360. ISBN 9781786351463

Abstract
In the book entitled “Creative social change: Leadership for a healthy world” which was published before the novel Coronavirus pandemic, there could be lessons that organizations have neglected. Its main argument implies that health together with effectiveness could help leadership sustain their organizations for a healthy world. Correspondingly, this actionable book review aims to provide implications that could help organizations become or stay healthy during the pandemic. A critical analysis of the book’s contents reveals that it could be reasonable to start with gender equality for women before everything else in order to have healthy organizations during the pandemic. Health could improve through gender equality, trust-based partnerships, adaptation to environment, and involving in organizational (and entrepreneurial) activities. This contribution is intriguing for three reasons. Firstly, it provides actionable recommendations during increased uncertainty. Secondly, it prioritizes a sustainable development goal. Thirdly, it is an attempt to strengthen the sustainable development goals that are under challenges. Therefore, the link among health, leadership, sustainability, and organization in the book and the above road map in the book review could be inspiring.

Keywords
Leadership, organization studies, health, effectiveness, sustainability, pandemic

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