A Leadership Model for Diversity

This paper intends to explore current leadership models are usually devised within a homogeneous, (North American) westernised, white male-oriented paradigm (Lumby & Colman, 2007).  Theorists have noted the inadequacy of many leadership perspectives, urging a move from ‘colonial’ models of managing ‘otherness’, to incorporate ethnic voices (Gillborn, 2004; Lopez, 2003; Osler, 2006). Other significant challenges to this unitary perspective have been introduced in the ‘real world’, notably following the election of Barack Obama.   These changes have implications for current discourse in leadership theory and practice such as ‘authentic leadership’ (Goffee and Jones 2005) and ‘distributed leadership’ (Diamond 2007).  For instance, what are the implications of ‘authenticity’ for non-prototypical leaders like black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) individuals? What are the implications for shared leadership in the context of power dynamics inherent in cross-identity group relationships?     With increasing globalisation, cultural and ethnic diversity, new leadership models ought to draw upon a wider notion of leadership, potentially encompassing a wider range of leadership styles from different societies and cultures.  Surely, the time is ripe to reflect and evaluate the western model / concept of leadership, and to create a space for alternative models of leadership acknowledging the multiple permutations of diversity across the world?