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This is a reaction paper to Bordas' (2012) *Salsa, Soul, and Spirit: Leadership for a Multicultural Age*, using a servant leadership model to interpret three of the author's principles. Each principle was interwoven tightly to present a unique angle to look at leadership through deeply rooted cultural traditions. Compared to the mainstream research on leadership, Bordas offered a different lens to define leadership outside of a well-perceived business fashion and more from everyday life: how people recognize, connect, and use the power to make every decision. Core values held by three communities of color were described in detail to reflect multicultural leadership practices. By examining the principles through the lens of servant leadership, an example of how servant leadership can be a useful tool for communities of color is also provided at the end of this paper.

The Model of Servant Leadership

Servant leadership puts great emphasis on leaders' behaviors, which includes listing their own interests after their follower's needs promoting followers' development (Hale & Fields, 2007). A wide array of theoretical frameworks exists that analyze key characteristics of servant leadership. Besides, Liden, Wayne, Zhao, and Henderson (2008) proposed a model of servant leadership with three main components: antecedent conditions, servant leader behaviors, and leadership outcomes.

Servant Leadership in Communities of Color

Using the model proposed by Liden et al. (2008), three principles found in Bordas' book will be examined: (a) I to We; (b) Leaders as Community Stewards —working for the common goal; and (c) Gracias—gratitude, hope, and forgiveness.

"I to We" and Antecedent Conditions

In principle two, which Bordas (2012) discussed about a shift from "I to We", one can clearly sense that Latino, Black, and Indian cultures provide fertile soil for a more collective standpoint, each coming from a *we*, rather than *I*, perspective. Servant leadership occurs in a particular culture (Northouse, 2013). In a we-oriented culture, common good and long-term welfare for the whole community is most valued (Bordas, 2012). The communities of color honor tribe, community, and family, which all support the ten characteristics of a servant leader when considering a we-culture perspective.

As Latino, Black, and Indian cultures all share the foundation of putting group interests ahead of individual interests, leaders from the communities of color are not pushed by power or positions coming with the leadership role, rather they feel the urge from people around them wanting them to lead. Leaders (a) listen to their followers who are also family, friends, and people from the same communities, as their commission to serve usually aligns with their faith, (b) empathize true feelings based on immersive understanding as the true leadership

emerges when servant leaders try to address people's needs, and (c) share great responsibility and commitment to the welfare of the whole communities (Bordas, 2012). Servant leadership is also well received in the communities of color, as a shared sense of collectivism and care of communal good spreads among all the community members. Followers trust and choose their leaders and desire the chosen leaders to act as servants who are looking out for more than leaders' personal gains.

Leaders as Community Servants: Servant Leader Behaviors

As Bordas (2012) mentioned, community servanthood involves many people sharing power and benefiting others. The idea of having leaders as servants accords with the behaviors proposed by Liden et al. (2008). When facing concerns and challenges from economic, educational, political, and psychological progress, leaders provide emotional support by making themselves available while they think through problems by acknowledging followers' needs and empowering them to become self-sufficient without treating others differently because of their leadership positions. Servant leaders also are trusted because of their ethical behaviors, essentially the willingness to go an extra mile to fulfill what others need from them (Bordas, 2012; Liden et al., 2008). Thus, by following the values in the greater community, leaders complete their mission with passion and commitment by intentionally giving back to their community, changing the areas with which they see community members have struggled, and making efforts to improve the public good.

Gratitude, Hope, and Forgiveness: Leadership Outcomes

By looking at principle nine through the lens of leadership outcomes, societal impact has been stressed by recognizing how servant leadership can change individuals and have a greater influence to the society. By linking gratitude to thanksgiving, hope to optimism, and forgiveness to reconciliation, Bordas (2012) acknowledged the importance of spiritual responsibility, reflecting an integration of leadership, spirituality, and social activism. True servant leaders embrace the spirituality-driven power from a sense of belonging from their cultural backgrounds, as well as a recognition of historical improvements, while maintaining the belief that things will turn out to be right through collective efforts. In history, the communities discussed by Bordas are traditionally underrepresented and have gone through setbacks and hardships. However, having servant leaders who show the ability to forgive and love means reconciliation that servant leaders promote to help work with the oppressed groups. Leadership is exhibited not only in how servant leaders carry on traditions and help younger generations to realize their dreams, but also in how leaders deal with the past, present, and future. By fully incorporating the tenets of being grateful, hopeful, and forgiving, the leaders of color are on the right paths to their greater visions.

Servant Leadership in a Multicultural Age

Living in such an age, we are blessed to have diversity not only to label ourselves with a fancy word but to truly learn about the similarities and

differences among individuals every single day. The world is more mobile, and in order to have more people learn to appreciate the essence of multiculturalism, leaders should first demonstrate cultural awareness, adaptability, and flexibility.

'Servant leader' can be a misleading term. They are not just doing what they are told. In fact, they stay true to their ancestry and cultural roots. They listen to the needs of the people from the same communities who are like family and friends to them, see changes in a positive way, and always hold onto the hopes to be grateful to what they have. Most importantly, they pay attention to their followers, help them grow and succeed, and eventually pass on the legacy of the shared culture and values to make the world a better place.

Educational Practice: Fostering Servant Leadership in College

Servant leadership shares foundations with what has been practiced in communities of color: the value of community consensus, ethics, and empowerment of followers for betterment. Fostering servant leadership among the younger generations of leaders will certainly help continuously nurture the communities. As more and more young leaders choose to seek higher education outside of their communities, support for these traditionally underrepresented students is of great significance, especially to enhance their identity development. Individuals with multiple identities need to figure out what they hold as truths while they are going through college

years in completely different settings at times. Helping younger leaders to embrace their true faith and spiritual identity further enhances their knowledge about themselves and the power of culture and history to work toward the greater good in the future.

For student leaders who are traditionally underrepresented, especially those who might be first-generation, transfer, low-income, or immigrant students, the college environment is exciting as well as challenging. Institutions must launch initiatives to help create conversations that raise students' leadership awareness as well as help them make smooth transitions and early academic and career plans. Unlike students who may have grown up in a more mainstream setting, these students holding the potential of becoming future leaders need to be connected and empowered at an early stage. Peer-to-peer or alumni programs in which a senior student or graduate works individually with a student of a similar background can be transformational on a personal growth level. And later, this servant leadership will keep its traditions and benefit more people in return.

References

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