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LEADERSHIP FROM AN INTEGRATIVE PERSPECTIVE IN
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LEADERSHIP FROM AN INTEGRATIVE PERSPECTIVE IN

AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

By

Elizabeth Murakami-Ramalho

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ABSTRACT

LEADERSHIP FROM AN INTEGRATIVE PERSPECTIVE IN AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

By

Elizabeth Murakami-Ramalho

School leaders face the unique tension of being the "public persona" involved in a multitude of relationships while, at the same time, performing with a strong feeling of isolation (Murphy, 1988; Scott, 2002). This may be related to a romantic perception (including perceptions of those who work in schools) of the role of administrators, with boards of education often selecting a Frank Boyden of Deerfield (McPhee, 1984) model of school leader—an idealist, a dedicated and altruistic hero—and placing all other school participants on the receiving end of leadership. To move away from hierarchical leadership perceptions, I explored leadership dynamics from alternative lenses. American international schools were selected as appealing ecological environments with a combination of committed educators, families, and community participation in highly multicultural populations.

"What kind of leadership dynamics may be found in American international schools?" and "How do educators in selected American international schools construct and mediate their leadership roles?" were the questions addressed in this study. Participants in three initiatives in three American international schools located in different countries contributed in the study. The findings suggested that leadership dynamics in American international schools is a process that is best viewed from an

integrative perspective. An integrative perspective included the interplay of participants constructing their leadership roles through four fundamental layers: Leadership dynamics was then, (a) reliant on a propitious organizational ecosystem, (b) contingent on group interdependency, (c) associated with capacity building, and (d) fostering organizational learning. However, in the schools studied, the interplay of these fundamental layers seemed to be highly challenged, not only due to constant change and power relations, but also due to constrained human capital and time in order to create stable spaces and enduring traditions of excellence.

This dissertation is dedicated to Ruth
--who was unable to see me complete this journey

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Our lives are forever changed when we discover that there is a door.
– Carolyn Smith

My deepest gratitude goes to my sons Julio and Fabio for their endless support during my time at Michigan State University. Our lives were indeed forever changed as I entered the door that led me to the doctoral program. Among those who showed me the door were those who believed in my potential, including Richard and Masuma Downie, David and Thora Stephen, Vera Giusti, Sally McClintock, Jack Schwille and Anne Schneller, Ginger and Richard Apple, Alan Barker, Larry Busch, Mary Rainey, Jim Enger, John and Angelica Radford, Marcos and Ana Lima, Albert and Beth Cafagna, Romelia and Irvin Widders, Eraldo and Cleusa Matricardi, Adriana and Jarno Jansen, Jader Souza, and so many others who touched my life and contributed to my personal, academic, and professional growth. My cohort colleagues and Spencer fellows were also constant companions that propelled me forward.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

> All of us stand around the fishing net as equals. Sometimes one person pulls harder than another. Sometimes a person pulls for another. Leadership is like that. Leadership moves around the circle—everyone in the circle should be treated with equal respect because everyone in the circle is a leader, past, present, or future.
>
> *–Martha McLeod (2002)*

Statement of the Problem

School leaders face the unique tension of being a "public persona" involved in a multitude of relationships while, at the same time, performing with a strong feeling of isolation (Murphy, 1988; Scott, 2002). Scott closely examined the challenges of school heads and administrators, stressing that even though school leaders juggled multiple demands from different constituencies, they also felt isolated and "unable to share with anyone the challenges, dilemmas, issues they face, and rationale behind decisions they [made] on a daily basis" (p. 2). In addition, she asserted that the public perception (including perceptions of those who work in schools) does not help ameliorate this tension because in most cases we romanticize the role of administrators, with committees often selecting a Frank Boyden of Deerfield (McPhee, 1984) model of school leader—an idealist, a dedicated and altruistic hero.

Is it possible that, as school constituencies, we position ourselves on the receiving end of leadership, not including ourselves in the problems faced by school leaders, even if we are part of the school body? We may tend to "over-infer internal causative factors behind the actions of others such as motivation, hidden ulterior motives, backroom deals, etc., and under-infer them in ourselves, blaming instead a myriad of factors in the

external situation" (Triangle Associates, 2004). Moreover, school leaders are not alone in building new initiatives or in adopting routines. Aside from hierarchical positions among educators in schools, educators are constantly combining their knowledge and talents in highly generative think tanks to improve routines, adopt new initiatives, and revise practices. As a consequence, in this research I worked beyond attribution theories (that the errors explain the events) that isolate school leaders, and instead, I valued and included multiple school constituents in the process of leadership. Therefore, responsibility for leadership was perceived as collective and pro-active, engaging multiple stakeholders.

<div align="center">Purpose of the Study</div>

My purpose in this study was to explore leadership dynamics in three K-12 American international schools. This study was undertaken in response to a growing demand for qualitative researchers to expand the documentation of the lived experience of key members in given communities (Janesick, 2000, p. 396). Leadership in this study was perceived as relational, collective, and purposeful (Burns, 1978). Moreover, leadership was viewed not as an end, but a process (Bennis, 1989), especially because the field of educational leadership can benefit from examples of processes of collective participation. Leadership dynamics were explored by observing administrators, teacher leaders, parents, and/or board members involved in the process of creating and implementing school initiatives.

Research Questions

This study was focused on two research questions:

- What kind of leadership dynamics may be found in K-12 American international schools?

- How do educators in selected American international schools construct and mediate their leadership roles?

Identifying circles of people committed to creating and implementing school initiatives in American international schools was a unique means of understanding "how leadership works" in a context in which leaders' inventiveness brought multiple constituents together. Four main points in the leadership dynamics were of particular interest:

1. How members of a leadership initiative collaborated with each other

2. How they invited and involved different constituents

3. How they grew and learned in collaboration

4. How they focused the initiative in promoting change and advancement in the community

Significance of the Study

The exploration of leadership dynamics in American international schools was seen as providing an opportunity to observe a microcosm of U.S. schools (Gonzales, 1987) performing in host countries. Embedded in foreign countries, these schools work toward engaging their community members to provide adequate education for children of

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U.S. expatriates and demonstrate to foreign nationals the philosophy and methods of American education (U. S. Department of State, 2003).

I considered American international schools to be manageable ecological environments for this study; these schools bring together a combination of committed educators, families and community participants. Many expatriate families in American international schools perceive that these schools provide continuity to their children's success (Blanford & Shaw, 2001, p. 17). In addition, the environment provided by American international schools gave me an opportunity to observe a variety of relationships and partnerships in highly multicultural environments.

American international schools in most cases cluster small expatriate communities who see the school as a center for community participation. Community and school partnerships are perceived as shared endeavors promoting engagement among constituents. An added value for this research was the study of a leadership initiative that included community and school members in boosting a collaborative drive, especially in modeling and amalgamating the academic and social lives of students.

Emergent Conceptual Framework: Leadership Dynamics

With the purpose of documenting leadership dynamics as lived experiences of key members in given communities, I assembled an initial conceptual framework. The framework was intended to prepare me to observe "how leadership works" in the dynamics of educators involved in a school initiative. The framework included relationships among people that encouraged:

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1. Mentoring opportunities (developing instruction, curriculum, and professional opportunities)

2. Partnerships (among students and parents, between faculty and administrators, and focusing on community empowerment)

3. Awareness of issues of a larger society

4. Cultural cultivation through collective initiatives

5. Respect for community beliefs (spirituality)

In establishing framework tenets, I was inspired by studies in which leadership was perceived as distributed among school members, including studies on learning organizations (James, 2003; Levitt & March, 1996; Rheem, 1995; Senge, 1994), distributed leadership (Gronn, 2002; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001), emancipatory leadership (Ryan, 2003), and engaged leadership (Benham, 2003). All educators involved in initiatives are then considered equally in their participation, and *strong* in their contributions. In the study of principals, for example, DuFour (1999) stressed that "effective principals recognize that they do not empower others by disempowering themselves. Empowered teachers and strong principals are not mutually exclusive; the learning community must have both (p. 63).

James (2003) indicated the importance of knowledge-creating environments in the rapidly changing learning organizations (p 46) of the 21st century. Gronn (2002) approached the distributive nature of leadership using an activity theory that valued the cognitive conceptions of activities and their material realization, blending behaviors and actions (p. 674). Spillane et al. (2001) attested that "a central objective of distributed leadership is to understand the links among the macro functions and the micro tasks of

school leadership [and] to explore their relations to instruction and instructional change" (p. 24). Ryan (2003) indicated that emancipatory leadership proponents "advocate for ways to include everyone, particularly those who are not normally included, in the content and process of schooling" (p. 995).

In addition, engaged leadership, one of the theories explored in this study, focuses on healthy learning environments based on participative decision making and power equalization. The focus of engaged leadership on a balance among leaders, institutions, and communities that are cognizant of a socio-cultural "context" (Benham, 2003) led to the inclusion of many elements in the conceptual framework. Engaged leadership characteristics initially were based on the concept of "communiversities" in postsecondary institutions. The study of engaged leadership is noteworthy because such leadership is perceived as fostering engagement in school members and institutions through a reciprocal perspective.

The recognition of engaged institutions was linked to engaged leadership practices, which in turn provide stewardship to the engagement of institutions. Engagement studies initially were inspired by a national report from the Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities entitled "Returning to our Roots: The Engaged Institution" (2001). The report addressed the present public frustration with educational institutions (Edgerton, 1995; Woodard, Love, & Komives, 2000) and the need for engagement in the public's agenda, rebuilding learning, pedagogy and technology, in order to become adaptable to school reform. Authors of the report argued that "leadership to create an engagement agenda is crucial. Engagement will not develop by itself, and it will not be led by the faint of heart" (p. 15).

According to the Kellogg Commission, to create engagement, institutions would benefit from creating:

1. Genuine learning communities, supporting and inspiring faculty, staff, and learners of all kinds;

2. Learning communities that are student centered, committed to excellence in teaching and to meeting legitimate needs of learners; and

3. Healthy learning environments that provide students, faculty, and staff with the facilities, support, and resources they need to make this vision a reality (p. 1).

In short, the emergent conceptual framework (see Figure 1.1) invited the examination of alternative ways to look at leadership. These ways diverged from managerial and psychological practices that once reflected Weberian types of "legitimate domination" (Leithwood & Duke, 1999, p. 56) and patriarchical structures.

The emergent conceptual leadership dynamics model was constructed by observing the balance and distribution of power among participants in an initiative, with consideration of the following elements: (a) community, (b) boundaries, (c) power and ethics, (d) culture, and (e) spirituality. These elements were perceived as significant in the process of leadership if seen as a generative wheel of participatory engagement working toward a school initiative. The five elements of the model are discussed in the following paragraphs.
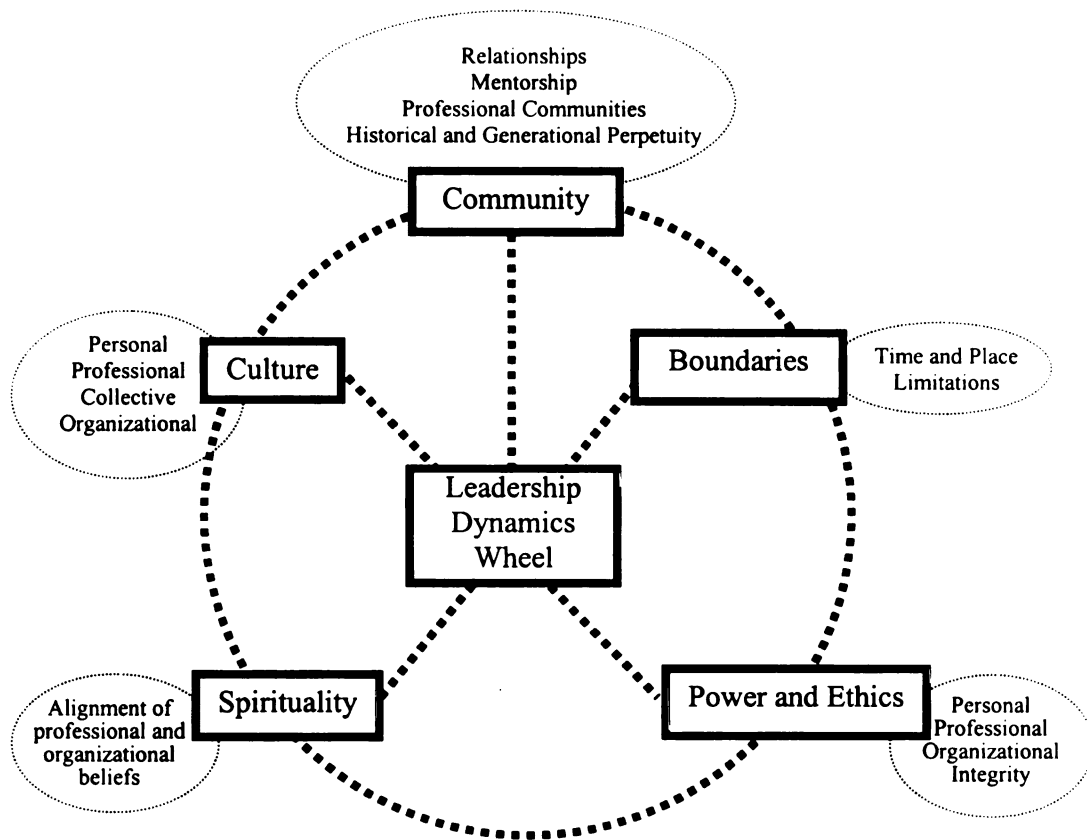
Figure1.1 Emergent conceptual framework: The leadership dynamics model
(Adapted from Benham & Stein, 2003; Cole, 2000; Lave & Wenger, 1991)

Community

In this model, community was valued for its connectivity. Strike and Ternasky

(1993) asserted that communities are "first and foremost, human associations organized

around shared values, and the organizational characteristics of schools are generated in

part by assumptions about the nature of legitimate authority in organization" (p. 4).

Leadership dynamics in this study were observed through the richness of the participants'

interconnections (Bennis, 1999; Firestone & Louis, 1999; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Such

interconnections are perceived as conducive to respect, knowledge inheritance, a

collective cultural reverence, which are key to mutual learning.

John Brooks Slaughter, former president at Occidental College in California made community one of four cornerstones of his institution's mission: excellence, equity, community, and service (Maeda, 1999, p. 17). Slaughter's approach expanded my viewpoint to include multiple ways of analyzing community. As a consequence, the conceptual model included the consideration of (a) relationships among members planning or implementing an initiative; (b) mentorship among participants; (c) the recognition of the group as a professional community; and (d) the consideration of a historical and generational perpetuity in the communal intent.

Relationships among members planning or implementing an initiative were considered in the model because participants may be perceived as generators of knowledge in the community. Relationships affect how participants connect with each other and how the connections may be "improving the collective decision-making" (James, 2003, p. 55). Through relationships, each participant, as a generator of knowledge, may ripple out the knowledge to others.

Mentorship among participants was considered because learners may "engage both in the contexts of their learning and in the broader social world within which these contexts are produced. Without this engagement, there is no learning, and where the proper engagement is sustained, learning will occur," attested Hanks (cited in Lave & Wenger 1991, p. 24). Lave and Wenger defined learning communities as communities of practice; these authors analyzed mentorship as being generated through legitimate peripheral participation. They stated:

> The need for such analysis motivates our focus on communities of practice and our insistence that learners must be legitimate peripheral participants in ongoing practice in order for learning identities to be engaged and develop into full participation. (p. 64)

Lave and Wenger's focus on mentorship in communities of practice contributed to the idea that the group relationship and mentorship may be conducive to a perception of the group as a professional community (DuFour, 1999; Levitt & March, 1996; Louis, Kruse, & Marks, 1996; Neumann & Wehlage, 1995). When the group is recognized as a professional community, its learning cannot be detached from the function of raising social capital.

R. D. Putnam (1995) referred to such a function as civic engagement. He stressed the importance of connections in his article entitled "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital." Putnam indicated the importance of civic engagement, using league bowling as a metaphor:

> When you participate in a bowling league, interacting regularly with the same people week after week, you learn and practice what de Tocqueville called "habits of the heart." You learn the personal virtues and skills that are the prerequisites for a democracy. Listening, for example. Taking notes. Keeping minutes. Taking responsibility for your views. That's what is different about league bowling versus bowling alone. (para. 38)

Putnam called attention to a pattern of civic disengagement in today's society when he reported that "weekly churchgoing is down; Union membership has declined by more than half since the mid-1950s; PTA membership has fallen from 12 million in 1964 to 7 million. Since 1970, membership in the Boy Scouts is down by 26 percent; membership in the Red Cross is off by 61 percent" (para. 44). An important step to civic engagement, affirmed Putnam, is to acknowledge that connections matter: "Without connections, it's not just that people don't feel warm and cuddly toward one another. It's that our schools don't work as well"(para. 51). Civic engagement not only should be passed on to

students, according to Putnam, but also should be enacted in the institution's

communities of practice.

Lave and Wenger (1991) recognized that "we must not forget that communities of

practice are engaged in the generative process of producing their own future" (p. 57).

They stressed that:

> Legitimate peripheral participation is proposed as a descriptor of engagement in
> social practice that entails learning as an integral constituent. Viewing learning as
> legitimate peripheral participation means that learning is not merely a condition
> for membership, but is itself an evolving form of membership. We conceive of
> identities as long-term, living relations between persons and their place and
> participation in communities of practice. (p. 35)

Community learning may contribute, therefore, to historical and generational perpetuity

in the communal intention to create and implement school initiatives.

Boundaries

Boundaries were included in the model in relation to limitations. At the scientific

level, limitations may be viewed from the standpoint of micro and macro systems.

Bialakowsky (2002), who studied social and health policies, indicated the complexity of

analyzing the double relationship between the micro and the macro social systems. He

cautioned that "there is a double relation between the micro and the macro-social systems

which must be understood as a complex system: the incidence of the macro on the micro,

and the incidence of the micro on the macro." He added, "Nowadays, as sociology and

political science view social dimension as subjective, the individual must be understood

within his social dimension" (para. 3). The context is also relevant in observing

boundaries. Gibson (1999), for example, wrote that "the environment and a system meet

at a boundary, and so does each subsystem" (p. 13), indicating an existing link between the system and the environment. He added:

> Whether the exchanges appear to take place from the outside coming in or the inside out, each system is said to be "open," meaning that in reality, the transfers and transformations are moving in both directions across semi-permeable boundaries. The boundaries are structured to keep some of the environment outside and most of the system inside and yet allow these vital exchanges to occur as an expression of self-organizing control. (p. 13)

Furthermore, American international schools carry the added concern of challenging and restricting time constraints that prevent schools from creating effective long-term plans because of the high mobility of staff and students (Leggate & Thompson, 1997). For this reason, the model includes time as a sensitive issue in the analysis of leadership initiatives in American international schools. Nevertheless, Leggate and Thompson also highlighted that American international schools have a certain degree of freedom in adopting initiatives:

> American international schools possess a degree of independence and autonomy since they have fewer external or government controls, greater openness to change, the potential to implement change rapidly and the opportunity to provide effectively for individual student needs within the school. (p. 272)

Significant in understanding an educational institution's population and its needs, is careful documentation and analysis of the population's context and time issues.

Power and Ethics

In examining power and ethics, it is important to comprehend schooling as a bureaucratic mechanism of culture and politics (Giroux, 2002), and the position of school members as participants in the process of schooling. Power and ethics are vital elements to consider in understanding how individual and social identities are mobilized, engaged,

transformed, and informed by issues that limit the full participation of members in the leadership initiative.

The ethical element is a significant part of leadership dynamics when initiative participants individually prepare to take part in a school initiative and collectively propose changes that may raise organizations and societies to higher levels of motivation and morality (Burns, 1978). This disposition may be seen as the individual posture toward professional ethics. Professional ethics, according to Strike and Ternasky (1993), is concerned with "norms, values, and principles that should govern the professional conduct of teachers, administrators, and other educational professionals" (p. 2).

Even though Strike and Ternasky were speaking to the world of teachers and moral education and policy, their view was useful in examining embedded and competing relationships of power that may foster or prevent the development of leadership in schools. What looks like a homogeneous environment may not be free from issues of gender, class, race, or ethnicity, for example. Power and ethics are vital elements to consider in understanding individual and social identities and people's participation in school initiatives. As Strike and Ternasky affirmed, "Nothing erodes community more quickly than a pervasive feeling that an organization is routinely unfair" (p. 4). Therefore, a concern for professional ethics is a significant part of the quality of organizational life and healthy participation of organization members.

Culture

Culture has been defined in a number of ways (Cole, 2000), and there is a debate about internal and external factors that may define the ways in which culture is perceived. However, in this study, culture was considered an organic system of beliefs "that come

into being wherever people engage in joint activity over a period of time" (Cole, 2000, p. 301). To help understand the micro level of individual human thought and action in a macro application, Cole expanded on culture as a "system of artifacts and mind as the process of mediating behavior through artifacts in relation to a supra-individual 'envelope' with respect to which object/environment, text/context are defined" (p. 143). This definition was perceived as suitable to the model used in this study, contributing to the identification of personal connection and the participation of individuals as embedded in macro levels or systems in schools.

Culture is an important part of the model when coupled with issues of identity, participation in society, and self-determination (P. Boyer, 1989). Miller (1996) defined school culture as "the ways of a people or school, ceremonies, and shared values and its meaning to instructional activity" (p. 44). He noted the public loss of confidence in the schools and the importance of changing this perception through the inclusion of articulated "shared values of the school, invigorating rituals and ceremonies, recreating the history of the school, and working with the informal network of cultural players" (p.44).

Shared values are acquired through learning and introspection. Miller stressed that "schools need to look inside themselves, both historically and contemporarily; old practices and losses need to be buried and commemorated; meaningless practices and symbols need to be analyzed and revitalized; emerging visions, dreams, and hopes need to be articulated and celebrated" (p. 44).

School culture, according to Stolp (1994), comprises "the historically transmitted patterns of meaning that include the norms, values, beliefs, ceremonies, rituals, traditions,

and myths understood, maybe in varying degrees, by members of the school community"

(para. 4). School culture is a significant element of the emergent conceptual framework

of leadership dynamics because leadership is always exercised in a cultural context

(Bolman & Deal, 1994). Examining culture under contemporary paradigms is essential

when considering leadership that celebrates "cultural differences and knows that diversity

is the best hope for long-term survival and success" (Bennis, 1999, p. 76).

Speaking of leadership culture, Bolman & Deal (1994) attested that "effective

leadership requires a supportive culture, but creating a positive culture requires

leadership—to that end, leaders must be able to identify cultural themes, values, and

dreams that people can rally around" (p. 83). Continuing, they explained that "leadership

is always exercised in a cultural context: effective leaders understand the importance of

symbols and recognize their responsibility in galvanizing and articulating a vision and

values that give purpose, direction, and meaning to an organization. At its core,

leadership is inherently symbolic" (p. 85). In this study I expanded on the cultural

duality faced by American international schools, as a result of the American culture's

being immersed in a host country. I explored the influence of this duality in the lives of

educational leaders by observing leaders in American international schools in host

countries and noting how they created educational and social change.

Spirituality

Spirituality is an empowering leadership attribute in the model; it includes the

capacity to center decisions through inner strength, personal dignity, and individual

values (Keyes, Hanley-Maxwell, & Capper, 1999). In a distributive leadership format,

each participant's inner strengths and principles must be considered and valued. In *The*

Tao of Leadership (Heider, 1985) said that, in relation to others, one's personal influence begins with the individual and ripples outward, a remarkable indication that one's influence can be potent. Spirituality as used in the study's model incorporates language seldom used in the history of leadership research. However, spirituality in leadership is intrinsically related to the inner strength of school participants as they become cognizant of a highly politicized field of power relations involved in school negotiations at various levels. Some scholars have attested that within such a culture of politics, the inner strength and comprehension of school participants allow them to act according to their social, cultural, and institutional possibilities (Rose, 1995; Keyes et. al, 1999; Schiele, 1990).

Spirituality is an important element to empower the group in their commitment to bring an initiative to fruition. According to Keyes et al. (1999), an empowering leadership increases one's capacity to center decisions through inner strength, personal dignity, and individual values. Such traits may be capitalized through the previous experience that the educators in these schools may bring, with their wide range of national and cultural backgrounds. Commitment to the initiative, coupled with the frequent turnover of faculty, administrators, and families in American international schools may require special attention. The synergy needed to create and implement an initiative depends, then, on the spirituality and commitment of participants.

Conclusion

The search for an integrative way to study leadership was explored to minimize the bureaucratic shield that separates educators and community members in schools. Even though some school administrators may be successful in practicing traditional

forms of leadership, in this study I perceived a need to extend the exploration beyond authoritarian forms of leading. Leithwood and Duke (1999) identified a promising direction for future theory and research through extending "relationships between leadership capacities, motives, and selected elements of the environment in which schools are located" (p. 67). Therefore, the proposed emergent conceptual framework for this study incorporated important elements such as community, boundaries, culture, power and ethics, and spirituality, elements relevant in the creation of collaborative endeavors.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined in the context in which they are used in this study.

American international schools. Market-driven schools which means to provide an American philosophy of education in its curriculum. These schools arise from the needs of particular expatriate communities (Matthews, 2003).

Communities of Practice. A community of practice is a set of relations among persons, activity, and the world, over time and in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities. It is an intrinsic condition for the existence of knowledge, not least because it provides the interpretive support necessary for making sense of its heritage. Thus participation in the cultural practice in which any knowledge exists is an epistemological principle of learning. The social structure of this practice, its power relations, and its conditions for legitimacy define possibilities for learning (i.e., for legitimate peripheral participation)" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 98).

Engaged community. A community that influences and participates with the school, especially in the exchange of important information about how the school can help within the context it serves. The engaged community encompasses constituents related to the school, including educators, parents, board members, businesses, organizations, county or city officials, and any other groups and individuals linked to the school, who perceive the school as a key player in the formation of members of the society.

Engaged institutions. Institutions that encourage engaged participation. Schools as engaged institutions are perceived as open to reciprocal learning that develops capacities conducive to school advancement, showing commitment to creating participatory activities or partnerships among internal and external constituents. Hollander, Saltmarsh, and Zlotkowski (2001) said that an engaged [institution] is "centrally engaged in the life of its local communities, reorients its core missions— teaching, scholarship, and service—around community building and neighborhood resource development" (p. 4). The Kellogg Commission (2001) defined engaged institutions as places "that have redesigned their teaching, research, and extension and service functions to become even more sympathetically and productively involved with their communities, however community may be defined" (p. 13).

Engagement. The educational institution's responsibility for cultivating and enhance democratic and civic participation of internal and external school constituents in the formation of students.

Scholarship of engagement. Scholarship "oriented toward community-based action research that addresses issues defined by community participants and that includes students in the process of inquiry" (in Boyer, as cited in Hollander et al., 2001, p. 5). Boyer said the institution "must become a more vigorous partner in the search for answers to our most pressing social, civic, economic, and moral problems, and must reaffirm its historical commitment." (Boyer, as cited in Hollander, et. al, 2001, p. 5).

Initiative. A single-purposed activity or routine program that has characteristics of an engaged institution, i.e., initiatives composed by a task force of participants from the community (parents, businesses, board) and the institution (students, teachers, staff and administrators).

Leader. An educator or school constituent (family or community member) who takes on a leadership position to foster school and/or community engagement. These members may be perceived as initiative igniters, committed to creating positive environments for students' well-being.

Leadership. The action of an individual immersed in a group who, as a function of knowing oneself, possesses a vision that is well communicated, recognizes the need for individuals to build trust among colleagues, and takes effective action to realize one's own leadership potential.

Leadership dynamics. Also referred to in this study as leadership circles. Participants in leadership dynamics or leadership circles are recognized for their leadership and active participation in the observed school initiative. These participants may include parents, businesses, board members, and institutional members (students, teachers, staff, and administrators) not necessarily related to the school's administrative or teaching roles, or constrained by the institution's hierarchical positions.

Multiculturalism. Encompasses "ideals of social justice, education equity, and a dedication to facilitating educational experiences in which all students reach their full potential as learners and as socially aware and active beings, locally, nationally, and globally." (Gorski, 2000, para. 5). Multiculturalism, as used in this study, is different from multi-ethnic concepts that are based on racial definitions.

Worldmindedness. An individual's perception of belonging to a primary reference group that favors humankind instead of a specific ethnic group (Jones-Rikkers & Douglas, 2000).

Overview of the Dissertation

In the first chapter, I introduced the problem and purpose of the study, the research questions, and the significance of observing leadership through a collaborative and collective approach. The conceptual framework was introduced, along with the foundational theories on which this study was based. That framework guided and shaped the initial focus of the study. In this chapter definition of key terms also were provided.

In the second chapter, a review of literature revisits the evolution of educational leadership, starting from a traditional, positivistic perspective. A transitional phase occurred in the evolution of leadership styles, especially when positivistic, or traditional, knowledge was challenged and questioned. The review then moves to a poststructural phase, when alternative theories were perceived as offering new ways of approaching and practicing leadership. These ways of perceiving leadership were seen as a branch of leadership theories that paralleled the positivist moves. Theories of alternative leadership ultimately guided this study, to advance our perception of additional approaches in the field of educational leadership.

The methodology used in the study is explained in the third chapter. I chose a qualitative design using case studies to observe leadership dynamics in schools. Case studies were the methodological choice because of their value as both the process and the product of the inquiry (Stake, 2000). The emergent conceptual framework was used as a heuristic tool to guide the construction of interview protocols. Verification processes and ethical considerations are described in detail, as is the coding employed in interpreting the data.

In the fourth chapter, I introduce the schools observed by presenting case studies centering on the three American international schools. The cases are situated in the country context, portraying the participants' dynamics during the initiatives, as well as the tensions the groups faced while building leadership.

Chapter 5 contains a thematic analysis of the cases, using a fishing-net metaphor. The metaphor helped in understanding the heuristic processes from the initially proposed conceptual framework. Most important, I perceived additional elements that were missing from the initial framework and that later contributed to the construction of themes. The themes showed the interplay of four layers: (a) an organizational ecosystem, (b) group interdependency, (c) collective capacity building, and (d) organizational learning. These layers help in understanding leadership dynamics in the schools studied.

Chapter 6 includes a summary of the study, highlighting lessons learned about leadership, and the significance of studying leadership from an integrative perspective in American international schools. In addition, implications for research, practice, and policy are offered.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Within organizations, people are busy with all kinds of activity directed at
expressing themselves or at controlling others. When individuals come to
determine how their ultimate organizational purposes are to be achieved, they are
left to argue into the night, because they are discussing not what to do, but how to
be.

(Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993, p.111)

Introduction

Greenfield and Ribbins' quotation calls attention to the fact that when we

participate in organizational endeavors, we are part of a system in which we consider

"what moral order is best, and if [organizations] are designs that distribute power among

people in asymmetrical patterns" (p. 111). In the study of leadership in schools, these

structures may be challenged. Moreover, we may even disagree about the "collective

functions of schooling" (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 43). Tyack and Cuban contended that

"Americans have a deep faith in educational remedies for societal ills but often disagree

about what is wrong and how to fix it" (p. 43). This disconnection may be rooted in the

distinction people make between *education* (a generic term) and *schooling* (what children

learn in school) (Dodd & Konzal, 2002).

One view is that "*education* encompasses everything children learn simply by

living in this society" (Dodd & Konzal, 2002, p. 4). On the other hand, s*chooling* does

not always include communal values, as Dodd and Konzal affirmed when discussing the

poor interconnection between families, schools, and community in today's education.

Moreover, the poor connection between the school and the community alienates the

school from the community's needs. Multiple stakeholders often are not included in school partnerships or treated equally in bureaucratic and hierarchical school structures (Dodd & Konzal, 2002; Epstein, 2000; McCaleb, 1994). Dodd and Konzal further explained that when schools adopted bureaucratic frameworks, the school, its teachers, and its administrators were shielded from outside pressures. They wrote, "Many principals have been socialized to be gatekeepers or buffers, who constantly guard the walls of the institution in an almost medieval way. Their job is making sure that outsiders, parents or the public, do not interfere with the routine functioning of the school" (p. 24).

In this chapter, it is argued, however, that a moral order and power relations are also at play inside the school walls, among educators, administrators, and active parents and community members in their concern to create a supportive environment for students and their families. Much development has taken place in the understanding of schools, from analyzing not only how schools may better serve their populations, but also how to create cohesive planning in school operations, in order to create a healthy environment for the community served.

One of the contributions in the field of leadership has been defining the difference between management and leadership. Qualitative studies in the late 1980's, served to enrich the literature on alternative ways to lead. In his examination of 230 proposals submitted to the Administration division of the American Educational Research Association in 1985, Griffiths discovered only three proposals in which qualitative research methods promoted the inclusion of naturalistic studies in leadership research (Griffiths, 1998 as cited in Heck & Hallinger, 1999, p. 142).

In addition, John Sculley, president and CEO of Apple Computers, explained his view of the difference between management and leadership. According to Sculley (as cited in Bennis, 1989),

> Leadership is often confused with other things, specifically management. But management requires an entirely different set of skills. As I see it leadership revolves around vision, ideas, direction, and has more to do with inspiring people as to direction and goals than with day-to-day implementation.... One can't lead unless he can leverage more than his own capabilities.... You have to be capable of inspiring other people to do things without actually sitting on top of them with a checklist—which is management, not leadership. (p. 139)

Developing a coherent leadership theory is not a new undertaking. In 1959, Bennis (1959) affirmed that "the issues involved in studies of leadership have plagued man since the beginnings of intellectual discourse" (p. 261). Hallinger and Leithwood (1996) argued that "it is time to enrich theory and practice in education by seeking out the diversity of ideas and practices that have existed largely hidden in the shadows of the dominant Western paradigms that have guided the field" (p. 100). Bennis added that leadership is "first being, then doing" (p. 141). The literature invites an examination of leadership and the conceptual difference between leadership and management practices. There is a need to examine the evolutionary trends that have led to an understanding of leadership from within, as Bennis affirmed. This literature review is an attempt to build such an understanding.

This chapter is divided into three parts, exploring leadership perspectives and positivist and poststructural trends, then moving on to discuss leadership from an integrative perspective. In Part I, educational leadership perspectives and their evolutionary trends are examined, ranging from a traditional, positivistic perspective to an alternative or poststructural movement that parallelled traditional perspectives. This

movement progresses from authoritarian and bureaucratic forms of leadership, toward a branch of leadership that is more focused on emancipatory forms– one that empowers multiple members of the school's community to participate in its leadership.

The second part is focused on leaders in hybrid contexts. Leaders are analyzed from a cultural duality perspective because in the study of American international schools, such leaders encounter personal and professional challenges in the understanding of culture. Leaders in these environments are studied in terms of their interpretations of the micro- and macro-environments of the educational system, particularly in the context of their interactions with others. Cultural and contextual influences also are considered when observing leaders. Context is, in fact, considered to be the unifying link between the analytic micro- and macro-sociosystems. Identity issues include dualities in the micro- and macro-sociosystems in schools, operating in combined contexts such as those found in American international schools.

Because this study was focused on leaders in American international schools, the third section of this chapter concerns these types of schools. Detailed descriptions of American schools overseas may be found in a number of studies (Bale, 1984; Bentz, 1972; Flora, 1972; Gonzales, 1987b; Vest, 1971; Vogel, 1992; Walters, 1983). In this study, however, one characteristic of the organization's environment—cultural diversity at various levels (administrators, teachers, students, parents, and location)—was of particular interest. With this multicultural focus in mind, the literature review was focused on socio-cultural aspects that contribute to the development of leaders and the ecological process through which leadership strategies may operate in these contexts.

Traditional and Alternative Perspectives in Educational Leadership

Before discussing the key transitions between traditional and alternative frames in educational leadership, it is important to recognize that these two trends have traveled along an evolutionary continuum. That is to say, traditional leadership knowledge originated in the early Eurocentric epistemology, but has evolved over time, sometimes dividing into different threads, sometimes unifying into fewer streams. On the other hand, the alternative paradigms emerged from scholars who not only used knowledge that belonged to the Eurocentric or English-speaking world, but also incorporated other aspects of the organizational system into a cultural frame. No single leadership perspective is less or more important, much like shades of grey completing a black and white spectrum.

Based on Heck and Hallinger's (1999) study on Next Generation Methods for the Study of Leadership and School Improvement, Table 1 suggests the transitions between the traditional and alternative lenses and methods of knowledge development in educational leadership.

Table 2.1 Transitions between traditional and alternative lenses

Traditional	Alternative
✓ Knowledge is positivistic	✓ Knowledge is critical-contextual (post-positivistic
✓ Structural	
✓ Functional	✓ Informal (poststructural)
✓ Rational	✓ Socially responsible
✓ Political	✓ Relational
✓ Individualistic (focused on the individual - leader)	✓ Ethical
	✓ Collective (focused on the leader as part of the engine)
	✓ Inclusive of ethnicity, gender, culture

Key Transitions between Traditional and Alternative Leadership

There are at least six key differences between the traditional and alternative perspectives in leadership. However, I have refrained from analyzing these differences as dichotomies because dichotomies are often artificial constructs. Lutz and Merz (1992) asserted that "as we say tall or short, bad or good, sweet or sour, we communicate useful information to others, but each of these 'artificial' dichotomies assumes a specific though arbitrary reference points" (p. 49). Therefore, the reader is invited to see these reference points as transitions rather than differences:

Key transition 1: From Positivistic to Critical-Contextual (postpositivistic)
Key transition 2: From Structural to Informal (poststructural)
Key transition 3: From Functional to Socially Responsible
Key transition 4: From Rational to Relational
Key transition 5: From Political to Ethical
Key transition 6: From Individualistic to Collective

A seventh element in the alternative perspective is also recognized, which includes culture, ethnicity, gender, and class. A brief description of each key transition follows:

Key transition 1: From positivistic to critical-contextual (post-positivistic). Educational leadership has a strong positivistic influence. Positivism includes modern structural thoughts of rationality, linearity, progress, and control and refers to an "epistemological viewpoint and philosophical school of thought that was quite influential outside as well as inside professional philosophy during the first half of the twentieth century" (Cherryholmes.C.H., 1988, p. 11). Because positivism holds that the goal of knowledge is simply to describe the phenomena we experience (Trochim, 2002, para. 3),

emotions and thoughts, once thought to be immeasurable were not considered. Consequently, early studies in educational leadership were differentiated by adjectives indicating different disciplines (i.e., business leadership or educational leadership) in which leadership was envisioned as an individual trait, often attributed to those in higher administrative positions, using strategic and managerial formulas (Rost, 1991, p.1).

Under this traditional perspective, knowledge was based on managerial and psychological practices that reflected Weberian types of "legitimate domination" (Leithwood et al., 1999, p. 56), and focused on the individual exercising patriarchic authority, under a crystallized structure. However, educational-leadership knowledge, once considered "traditional," far from being conventional, may have buffered knowledge and practices that remained unrecognized. Stogdill (1974) noted that the "preoccupation with leadership occurred predominantly in countries with an Anglo-Saxon heritage" (p. 17). Researchers like Dillard (1995), Lomotey (1989), Marshall (1993), and Maxcy (1995) argued that "traditional images of school leadership offered incomplete explanations of practical realities and problems of schools" (Heck & Hallinger, 1999, p. 148). At the same time that they examined the characteristics of leaders, researchers divorced the leader from the context in which leadership was occurring.

In contrast, a shift in perspective toward more critical-contextual knowledge informed the contemporary and poststructural epistemology. Poststructuralist thought attacks structuralist assumptions, often through deconstruction (Cherryholmes, 1988). This literature includes foci on sense making about social constructions in schools through critical (Keith, 1996; Lomotey, 1989), feminist (Benham, 1997; Dillard, 1995),

and cultural lenses (Firestone et al., 1999; Johnston & Brinson, 2002; Sergiovanni & Corbally, 1984). Such paradigms include communal and relational wisdom instead of individual capacity. Lave and Wenger (1991) based their model of contextual knowledge on the importance of creating a community of practice through learning. Scholars like Rost, Leithwood and Duke, and Heck and Hallinger, have suggested looking closely at leadership capacities that link people to their contextual environments and toward a stronger community orientation in educational services and mission.

The essence of this transition is based in Burns' (1978) consideration of relationships among motives, resources, leaders, and followers: "The most powerful influences consist of deeply human relationships in which two or more persons engage with one another" (p. 11). Rost (1991) added that this new school of leadership "presents a substantial paradigm shift toward a model of leadership that is post-industrial in its basic background assumptions and in its definition" (p. 126).

Key transition 2: From structural to informal (post-structural). Structural models in the traditional literature were focused on management, instead of leadership. "Structuralism as a pervasive and often unacknowledged way of thinking influenced twentieth-century thinking in important ways," claimed Cherryholmes (1988, p. 30). Promising order, organization, and certainty, structuralism systematized instruction and rationalized bureaucracies. Initial leadership models, influenced by industrial Taylorist trends, shaped educational leaders in a managerial mold. This paradigm followed a classical management approach by presenting a contingent, problem-solving concept of how leaders respond to the organizational circumstances or problems they face.

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Segmented job assignments characterized this era, isolating individuals. Cherryholmes acknowledged that "as long as structural assumptions remain unacknowledged, they are immunized against criticism" (p. 30). However, scholars like Argyris (1957) and McGregor (1957) perceived the need for a perspective that integrated the individual and the social system. Argyris referred to the need for formal and informal organizational health. McGregor noted that classical organizational theorists missed the issue of interdependence between subordinates and their superiors. A relational tenet was missing in the structural model.

Informal or post-structural models of leadership, on the other hand, characterize relationships according to familial and communal perspectives. Rose (1995), for example, found that informal leaders base their leadership on (a) family experiences, (b) individual experiences, and (c) environmental experiences. Therefore, family values, community affiliations, cultural orientations, educational appreciation, church activities, and time utilization are some of the informal concepts that have been added in the alternative framework. Informal leadership issues, according to Rose's findings, are products of life experiences.

Key transition 3: From functional to socially responsible. In traditional leadership models, functionality focused on optimization. The leader was perceived as the controller of such optimization. The traditional authority functioned as an instrument for the preservation of a social order through domination (Mouzelis, 1967, p. 16). However, the effects of traditional authorities were largely negative and prejudicial especially because it led to the creation of gender-biased political domains that were

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based on a one-sided rationality that did not value difference, culture, language, or race. An example is the forced assimilation of Native Americans through boarding schools, beginning in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, in 1879. The functional goal here was to "incorporate American Indians into the lower strata of the industrial wage labor force" (Johansen, 2000, p. 10), which resulted in a number of societal ills in Indian nations.

Bennis (1959) mentioned the problem of authority as a critical dimension in the study of leadership theories and practices. He suggested that:

> The study of leadership raises fundamental issues that every group, organization, nation and group of nations has to resolve or at least struggle with: Why do people subordinate themselves? What are the sources of power? How and why do leaders arise? Why do leaders lead? What is the function of the leader? (p. 261)

In his observations, Bennis noted a discrepancy between leadership and authority, claiming that "ironically, probably more has been written and less is known about leadership than about any other topic in the behavioral sciences" (p. 259).

Leithwood and Duke (1999) observed that "lengthy descriptions of structural functionalism and rationalized systems can be identified in the literature that, beyond its controlling tendencies, also removed schools from serving as agents of democracy and social change" (p. 63). Is it possible that the zigzag path taken by behavioral scientists in defining leadership was an attempt to solve the tensions between such rigid and structured views of leadership authority and the distance it created from the school's mission to serve as an agent of democratic practices?

A socially responsible model came out of a critical analysis of social domination and from experiences such as those of Native Americans. Disrespect for human values in the name of functionality was not congruent with Durkheim's and Parsons' theory of a

consensus universal (a common core of human values) and a conscience collective

(individual awareness of and acceptance of those values) in creating a deep-seated

leadership structure through relational lenses (Greenfield and Ribbins, 1993, p. 113). A

social and collective conscience calls for a more engaging process that places leadership

in a relational context. Burns may have ignited this shift in 1978 when he asserted that:

> The crisis of leadership today is the mediocrity or irresponsibility of so many of
> the men and women in power... The fundamental crisis underlying mediocrity is
> intellectual. If we know all too much about our leaders, we know far too little
> about leadership. We fail to grasp the essence of leadership that is relevant to the
> modern age. (p. 1)

Similarly, Giroux (1992) extolled "unity-in-difference" as a benefit to democratic

representation, participation, and citizenship. He also added that this way of thinking

"provide[s] a forum for creating unity without denying the particular, the multiple, and

the specific. In this instance, the interrelationship of different cultures and identities

become borderlands, sites of crossing, negotiation, translation, and dialog" (p. 11).

Key transition 4: From rational to relational. Rational models were based on

management approaches that resulted in strict and hierarchical school leadership during

and after the industrial revolution. The rationality of these models was related to

maximum efficiency and optimization of time (Mouzelis, 1967). It changed relationships

between school, family and community from fluid to rigid, establishing, according to

Bender (as cited in Lutz & Merz, 1992), "more exclusive roles to make the job of

school/community relationships more complicated and difficult" (p. 45). Such rigid

boundaries and resource control affected "not only money, material, technology, and

symbolic honors, but also other people and their talents," according to Greenfield (1993, p. 110).

A relational model suggests a moral-educative approach and the need to diffuse power among school members, in order to cultivate ownership and respect among school constituents. The moral aspect comes when the relationships are valued. "Learners, like observers, more generally are engaged both in the contexts of their learning and in the broader social world within which these contexts are produced. Without this engagement, there is no learning, and where the proper engagement is sustained, learning will occur" (Hanks, as cited in Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 24). According to Lave and Wenger, "a learning curriculum unfolds in opportunities for engagement in practice" (p. 93). Shifting from a rational and rigid perspective to a more fluid relationship among school, family, and community restores disenfranchised interconnections that were once excluded by traditional theories of leadership.

Key transition 5: From political to ethical. Political negotiations are at the heart of leadership theories. Political perspectives, however, were not necessarily focused on student achievement as the de facto purpose to which leaders were to direct their efforts (Heck & Hallinger, 1999). When the literature focused on leaders' traits, the political influence of such leaders was also focused on the micro-politics and preservation of such traits. Rost (1991) indicated,

> With only the language of individualism to use and with only an interest accommodation model to inform that language when it comes to making decisions about changes in our organizations and societies, the people in the United States are without both the language and the moral systems of thought necessary to make morally coherent judgments about the content of leadership, proposals that indicate the real changes leaders and followers intend for our organizations and societies. (p. 176)

Ethical models challenge us to revisit the role of the school in preparing children to become citizens in today's world. They include the moral aspects of the school curriculum, such as family, religion, and democratic values, in addition to normative, political, democratic, and symbolic concepts (Duke, 1996; Evers & Lakomski, 1996; Greenfield, 1991). The consideration of moral and ethical aspects of leadership provides the balance of conscience and social responsibility directly to the leaders and the institutional structure, by including the students and the communities in the political discourse.

Key transition 6: From individualistic to collective. The individualistic perspective placed power in the hands of a single individual, who socially and politically controlled and manipulated that power to maintain the institution's social order (Shepard, as cited in Bennis, 1959, p. 267). Such power and control de-emphasized the leader's perception of community changes, isolating the school from the social milieu, and consequently fragmenting the communal aspect of schooling.

Collective models position the leader as part of a leadership circle, in action with other stakeholders inside and outside of the school, locating within the leadership unit a cast of people intended to learn and to change in order to meet the emergent community's needs. Aronowitz and Giroux (1985) proposed that teachers and administrators should "work collectively by refusing the role of the disconnected expert and specialist and by adopting in its place the role of the engaged and transformative intellectual" (p. 8). Henry (as cited in Dodd & Konzal, 2002) suggested that "the time is right for a shift to post bureaucratic structures that are organic, interactive, and participative" (p. 105).

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A seventh element: culture, ethnicity, class and gender. Issues about culture

combined with ethnicity, class, and gender were either peripheral to or absent from the

traditional educational leadership discourse (Anderson, 1996; Mitchell, Ortiz, & Mitchell,

1987) until the Civil Rights and Affirmative Action movements. Before these

movements, the interplay of cultures within schools, such as voluntary and involuntary

migrant student cultures, family cultures, community cultures, department cultures, and

faculty and student cultures, was not fully incorporated into the field of educational

leadership. Instead, these sources of culture were seen as competing with administrative

efforts to shape the school culture (Firestone et al., 1999). Class and racial issues have

also been challenging the "apparent egalitarianism and progressive universalism of the

dominant western culture" (Firestone et al., 1999, p. 313). Transformational and post-

transformational models (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990) are alternative efforts to incorporate

the external and internal environments. The difficulty lies in promoting cultural change

and cultural stability simultaneously. Gender studies in educational leadership have

contributed to the traditional leadership literature by incorporating nurturing and caring

ethics (Benham, 1997; Noddings, 1992) in an attempt to encourage rather than compete

with the interplay of multiple cultures in schools.

Towards an Engaged Leadership

In light of the differences or transitions presented here, alternative frames of

educational leadership can inform the once-dominant leadership frames to better serve

the needs of the 21st Century. Such needs include pressing issues of isolation or

disconnected positionality in leadership, lack of cultural and ethnic competence, lack of

respect and recognition of family and community, and the need for collective efforts in creating socially just environments.

A combination of paradigms may better serve as a base from which to study school leadership according to the group's culture and behavior in a context that may, at times, differ from preconceived "accepted knowledge." The combination of paradigms may offer a progression from positivistic views to a more critical contextual view. The integration of community life in schools is particularly important when examining a more engaged leadership that may add to Eurocentric traditions.

Cultural and ethnic competence is another vital element in alternative paradigms. As mentioned before, local-global divides are still pervasive in schools, and culturally respectful leadership efforts may be able to minimize such divisions. Ethnic competence, according to Daley and Wong (1994), entails the "professional's sensitivity to the resources and strengths of a culture as elements contributing to the community development process" (p. 19). Furthermore, Daley and Wong indicated that the major advantage of ethnic competence is the "recognition by both professionals and citizens of the resources and strengths inherent in the culture of the citizen and community" (p. 19).

In the past, leaders were trained to focus on problems, often excluding community members' strengths and resources. Hence, an engaged leadership model may address certain concerns, especially in relation to the dissociation between the educational institution and the ever-changing community it serves. Because engagement implies plurality, the research in this section is divided into three key elements—(a) the institution, (b) the community, and (c) school leaders—in an effort to propose a model of leadership.

Table 2.2 Engagement Characteristics of an Institution, Community, and Leaders

An Engaged Institution is	An Engaged Community is	An Engaged Leader is
• Open to reciprocal learning with the community • Respects the history, cultures, knowledge, and wisdom of the community • Understands that it benefits directly from investments of time and resources in the community • Creates structures that allow for effective listening to community, open communication, jointly learning, planning and implementing projects • Reflects the diversity of the community in its staffing and students • Designs its curriculum and extracurricular activities to involve faculty and students in community • Holds high expectations for the quality of its community activities and assesses them rigorously in partnership with community representatives	• Has organizations with the willingness to develop capacity to work across community/ school boundaries • Has open communication and participatory initiatives that include the diversity of the community • Shows evidence or willingness to mobilize on behalf of its residents, i.e., community organizing • Shares with institutions issues and concerns that are relevant to the community • Recognizes its history, skills, capacities, and resources, including those of its educational institutions • Sees the educational institutions as neutral facilitators and source of information when dealing with contentious issues • Sees the educational institution as the community's institution • Provides opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to enter the community, reducing barriers such as culture, language, and fear	• Perceives the institution as a service to the community • Substitutes choice and individual competitiveness with community, solidarity, and public responsibility (allocentric vs. idiocentric) • Looks for collaborative partnerships inside and outside the institution • Fosters internal and external resource allocation for learning-enhancement purposes • Is mentored by and/or mentors others • Seeks to expand schooling beyond the interests of the marketplace • Perceives diversity as important to the social development of communities • Reflects the diversity of the community in staffing and admissions practices • Cultivates relationships between the institution's faculty, staff and students and the community's problems or issues • Invites others for consensus decisions • Values the lessons to be learned from community members such as elders • Perceives and understands the community's historical social structures, oppression and resilience • Fosters a curriculum that promotes community engagement • Fosters professional development in the institution • Fosters civic competency in the institution's constituencies

Source: The table includes characteristics found in Hollander, Saltmarsh, & Zlotkowski, (2001); Kellogg Commission, (2001); Maeda, (1999); and Triandis, Brislin, & Hui, (1988).

The literature related to engagement is drawn from lessons provided by the

Kellogg Foundation Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities.

Models of engagement have been more prevalent in the higher education than in the K-12

literature. The Kellogg Commission report, *Returning to Our Roots* (Kellogg

Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities, 2001), indicated

characteristics of engagement within institutions (Table 2). The collectivist view and the

inclusion of visionary, moral, ethical, social and cultural aspects of the institution are

good indicators of a model that is committed to erasing the public perception that

institutions are out of touch or out of date.

The engaged perspective is based on the open system theory initially formulated

by Burns (1978), which conceived the essence of leadership to exist in relationships

between motives, resources, leaders, and followers. This concept resonates with

Benham, Tatto, Mabokela, Napier, Yakura, and Koshimura (1999) proposal that

alternative educational leadership requires one to "think seamlessly across physical and

organizational cultural spaces; thereby assuring that learning is accessible to all members

of the community" (p. 35). They added that a culturally based leadership model should

include "the balance and centrality of power and integrity, the balance of individual and

community/communal responsibility, and the deep understanding of history, culture, and

place" (p. 35).

Boyer (1996) further described the scholarship of engagement in higher education

as "connecting resources from the university to some of the most pressing social, civic,

and ethical problems"(p.11), whereas Giroux (1992) emphasized the importance to

"commit administrators, teachers, and students to a discerning conception of democratic

community in which the relationship between the self and the other is constituted of practices sustained by historical memories, actualities and further possibilities of a just and humane society" (p. 7). These scholars called on educators to ground school leadership in unity among stakeholders, while respecting their differences. Especially important is granting equal significance to scholars, practitioners, administrators, teachers, students, parents, and other constituents to create an engaged leadership that will benefit students as well as all members of the community. The "unity-in-difference" (Giroux, 1992) concept at the micro and macro levels in these examples was used in this study to develop an engaged-leadership concept that is respectful of culture, language, history, and place.

Engaged Institutions. Engaged institutions recognize that collaboration is a means of linking internal and external constituents to create an environment that is conducive to enriching students' experiences. According to the Returning to Our Roots report (Kellogg, 2001), the engaged institution must accomplish at least three things:

1. organize to respond to the needs of today's and tomorrow's students, not yesterday's;
2. enrich students' experiences by bringing research and engagement into the curriculum and offering practical opportunities for students to prepare for the world they will enter; and
3. situate its critical resources (knowledge and expertise) to work on the problems faced by the communities it serves. (p. 14)

Establishment of an engaged institution must be coupled with the community's capacity or willingness to develop this work across school/community boundaries. The initiative may also be ignited by the institution itself, for example, when a school realizes the need

to adjust its curriculum, teaching, and assessment to correspond to changes in the community. However, a partnership with the community is vital to this effort.

The Engaged Community. The institution is intrinsically dependent on the community to guide and support its programs. The community, in turn, must see the institution as the key partner in enriching and enhancing opportunities for its residents. In these terms, open communication and, participatory and collective initiatives between the community and the institution are the main factors leading to student success. This partnership not only provides external updates to the institution, but connects the institution with local history and evolution, thereby enhancing the institution's capacities and resources.

McCaleb (1994), reiterated the importance of building the relationship between teachers and the community, as well as of creating a community of learners:

> Building communities of learners demonstrates that by acquiring deeper levels of understanding about the past, present, and future educational realities of families, teachers can simultaneously expand their students' and their families' acquisition of literacy skills. What is proposed here is a way to bridge the gap between what is commonly acknowledged as the important need to involve all parents in their children's education and the obstacles that leave this need largely unfilled. (p. xi)

So, an open channel of communication between the community and the institution leads to engagement. This is similar to Lambert's reciprocal processes toward a common purpose in schooling. The school should not teach students in a vacuum, and in an engaged community, the school is part of the place. In other words, the school is seen as the community's institution.

The Engaged Leader. The engaged leader's role is to enhance and facilitate the partnership between the institution and the community. Such a leader needs to have certain characteristics that will help foster a climate of seamless internal and external collaboration. Hanson (1996) advocated that "to establish the best fit possible between the micro- and macro-environments of the educational system, the transformational leader must be prepared to conduct strategic long-term planning, read the changing nature of external and internal situations, and manage organizational cultural variables to align them with action plans" (p. 181). It is then reasonable to say that characteristics of an engaged leader may be detected by observing transformational leaders. Bennis (1999) wrote that "despite the rhetoric of collaboration, we continue to live in a by-line culture where recognition and status are conferred on individuals, not teams of people who make change possible" (p. 72). He also asserted that "the most urgent project requires the coordinated contributions of many talented people working together" (p. 73). Bennis expanded on to this idea when he talked about the power of great partnerships. Even though he based his leadership model on "the leader" and "the led," his construction of the following four competencies that determine the success of what he called the "new leadership" helped in determining the characteristics to explore when conducting research on engaged leaders:

1. The new leader understands and practices the power of appreciation and is a connoisseur of talent, more curator than creator.
2. The new leader keeps reminding people of what's important
3. The new leader generates and sustains trust
4. The new leader and the led are intimate allies

The main focus of engagement through contextual and relational aspects is on the idea of place and its' social constructions. It is not necessary to consider all the elements

of engagement to evaluate a community, a school, or a leader, and not all characteristics will necessarily be present in any given institution. Rather, when significant characteristics of engagement are encountered in one of the elements in the triad, characteristics of engagement in the other two elements will be present in those contexts, as well. This realization helped in identifying characteristics that influence leaders' success and the important "role leaders play in bringing engagement from the 'margins to the mainstream' in the academy" (Hollander, Saltmarsh, & Zlotkowski, 2001).

Leaders in Hybrid Contexts

A discussion of leaders in hybrid contexts is relevant to the study of leaders in American international schools. Such leaders may be perceived as transformational leaders, not only in their practice, but also in their adaptation to external variables. Hanson (1996) said that "to establish the best fit possible between the micro- and macro-environments of the educational system, the transformational leader must be prepared to conduct strategic long-term planning, read the changing nature of external and internal situations, and manage organizational cultural variables to align them with action plans" (p. 181). Such cultural values are especially complex in the case of leaders in American international schools.

Issues of Culture

It is important to consider the influence of cultural dualities in the lives of educational leaders in American international schools. In this review, cultural duality was perceived as the understanding of more than one culture in the individual. A significant part of the educators in American international schools are, American born.

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Therefore, some adaptation to the new environment is necessary, both in the level in which they are immersed in the country, as well as in the growth that occurs through a redefinition of one's own culture.

To understand educators who are facing what are termed cultural dualities, I began by looking at the human behavior of leaders as individuals who are immersed in interacting with others from different cultures. Hofstede (1991) noted that culture is learned, not inherited. It derives from one's social environment, not from one's genes. Human behavior can best be studied and understood in relation to its context (Cole, 1996), which can be considered the "unifying link between the analytic categories of macro-sociological and micro-sociological events" (Wentworth, 1980, p. 92).

By analyzing the school context, we can understand the behavior and the meaning of leaders' meta-cognitive process when faced with cultural dualities. In fact, Heck and Hallinger (1999) stressed that until we better understand the relationship between the leaders and the school context, it will be difficult to alter our belief that individual leaders provide the critical impetus for school improvement. They added that this line of critical inquiry should seek to understand leadership and schooling from the perspective of those who have been previously led or marginalized – "this and other alternate orientations toward the study of schooling offer the possibility of resolving persistent problems in the study of leadership by radically altering our perspective" (p. 158).

According to the ecological psychology theory of Bronfenbrenner (1979), the individual's link with micro- and macro-sociological events and his or her interactions with other people and the environment define key behaviors in human development. Bronfenbrenner claimed that all people experience more than one type of environment,

including (a) the microsystem—such as a family, or the immediate environment in which a person operates, like work or classroom; (b) the mesosystem—composed of two interacting microsystems, such as the connection between home and work; (c) the exosystem—an environment in which an individual is not involved, which is external to his or her experience, but which nonetheless affects him or her anyway, such as the local society; and finally (d) the macrosystem—the larger cultural context (Huitt, 1995).

By understanding the individual as immersed in the environments theorized by Bronfenbrenner, we can analyze people's emotional and affective core and perceive how their cognitive system helps them make sense of the world. For individuals operating in more than one exo- or macro-system, two mesosystems are in effect—the culture one comes from, and the new culture he or she is exposed to when moving to a different country. The culture of the country of origin encompasses the person's history, inherited parameters, and principles; the new culture, acquired as the individual is exposed to it, provides the person with new parameters and a newly acquired history. Hofstede stressed that cultural interpretations leave room for judgment: What may appear as a strength in one culture might be a weakness in another.

Another way to understand cultural dualities is through the lens of a two-world paradigm of ethnic groups in America. With Native Americans, as with African Americans, for example, the mesosystem might be composed of two worlds: one western oriented, responding to the world we live in today, its hegemonic culture and societal norms and the other a nonwestern (or indigenous) world, one of heritage and ancestral tradition.

Ladson-Billings (2000) discussed the work of Du Bois in showing the complexity

of this phenomenon in different ethnic groups. Du Bois' (1953) concept of *double*

consciousness or *two-ness* (two souls, two thoughts, two un-reconciled strivings) (p. 5) as

portrayed in *The Souls of Black Folks* is applicable here. Ladson-Billings described this

portrayal as a "transcendent position allowing one to see and understand positions of

inclusion and exclusion – margins and mainstreams" (p. 260). Stein (Stein, 1992)

expanded the margins and mainstreams idea, referring to the native and mainstream

cultural hybridism in relation to the poverty of Indian reservations in the western United

States. Lewis (1993) (Lewis, 1993) also endorsed the two-world paradigm, considering

Du Bois' concept as a gift of *second sight*—an intuitive faculty with a capacity to see

things further and deeper.

Even though Ladson-Billings did not expand the two-world paradigm to

encompass nonwestern ethnic groups, cross-cultural studies such as Bennett's (1986)

have provided developmental models of intercultural sensitivity. According to Bennett's

model, the adaptation process that different ethnic and foreign groups experience is

similar to the notions of cultural duality and two-world paradigm in human behavior.

Educators and leaders in American international schools may be perceived as being

exposed to two mesosystems—the one in which the educator grew up, and another one,

acquired as the individual is exposed to a new culture, new parameters, and a newly

acquired history. The inclusion of culture, different time frames, and alternative societal

views in the study of leadership was foreign to management and psychological research

in the past. Hence theories that "speak in a different voice, and that represent an

alternative paradigm have not been part of the story," attested Rost (1991, p.29).

Recognizing the link between the individual's comprehension of the world (micro), and the social system in which he or she must function (macro) may help in understanding the leader's thoughts and actions. On a scientific level, Bialakowsky (2002) demonstrated the complexity of analyzing the double relationship between the micro and macro social systems. "There is a double relation between the micro- and the macro-social systems which must be understood as a complex system: the incidence of the macro on the micro, and the incidence of the micro on the macro," Bialakowsky asserted (para.3). In addition, he stated, "Nowadays, as sociology and political science view [the] social dimension as subjective, the individual must be understood within his social dimension (for example, the economic development sets the necessities of sociability and subjectivity)" (para. 3). The analysis of the micro- and macro-social systems is especially significant when observing leaders functioning in a school with an American ideology, immersed in a foreign country.

Hanson (1996), too, stressed the strong influence that the context may exert in the organization. He indicated, "The school is sensitive and often vulnerable to shifts in its external environment whether they are political, economic, demographic, ideological, or technical" (p. 180). Moreover, Hanson concluded that "to establish the best fit possible between the micro- and macro- environments of the educational system, a transformational leader must be prepared to conduct strategic long-term planning, read the changing nature of external and internal situations, and manage organizational cultural variables to align them with action plans" (p. 181). Leaders operating in foreign countries seem to master an understanding of both micro- and macro-environments.

Ideas about engagement and leaders who are cognizant of their micro and macro

environments are not highlighted here to challenge the role of the established leader in

the institution, but rather to diffuse its scope. This approach, however, challenges

"micropolitics" and its relational roles. It is meant to reveal that structural-functional

approaches underestimate the influence of power and political relations in and around

schools. So, leadership research in this study seeks to provide added value orientation; to

recognize ethnographic and historical views; and to add symbolic, metaphorical, and

socially cognitive representations in an evolving constructivist perception.

These ideas shift our perspective from sense-making in schools to sense-making

about social constructions. Giroux (1992) contended that "leadership poses the issue of

responsibility as a social relationship in which difference and otherness [should] become

articulated into practices that offer resistance to forms of domination and oppression" (p.

7). Evidently, different degrees of domination and oppression may be at play in different

schools. Rost (1991) explored the issue of social constructions in leadership from four

basic relational standpoints (p. 126). Rost affirmed that (a) leadership is a relationship

based on influence, (b) leaders and followers develop that relationship, (c) they intend

real changes, and (d) they have mutual purposes. Such a relationship includes

questioning and reasoning, through political negotiations of conflict, as well as sense-

making in schools and, more important, seeing that leadership does not necessarily reside

in the school's administrator (Heck & Hallinger, 1999).

To participate in collaborative efforts, leaders must be learners, according to some

scholars. Studies like Lave and Wenger's (1991) enhanced their view of certain forms of

learning as social co-participation. In the preface to Lave and Wenger's book, Hanks

stated, "Rather than asking what kinds of cognitive processes and conceptual structures

are involved, [the authors] ask what kinds of social engagements provide the proper

context for learning to take place" (p. 14). This shift in thinking about leaders and their

participation in social engagements helps in understanding how leadership happens in the

micro-macro institutional and membership relations.

Lave and Wenger also proposed a descriptor of engagement in social practice in

which learning was an integral constituent. They wrote:

> Viewing learning as legitimate peripheral participation means that learning is not
> merely a condition for membership, but is itself an evolving form of membership.
> We conceive of identities as long-term, living relations between persons and their
> place and participation in communities of practice. Identity, knowing, and social
> membership entail one another (p. 53).

Relational aspects such as mentor-apprentice associations among agents in a school's

multi-level hierarchies, or moral-educative perspectives, were not included in leadership

theories in the past. Such views broaden the perception of leadership to include

paradigms that extend to communities of practice. Printy (2002) said that "in schools

where participation and interaction are high, communities of practice represent a rich web

of relationships that propels the school forward to school reform" (p. 4).

Even though social co-participation is seen as a characteristic of leadership, it is

necessary to recognize the leader's volition to become part of a larger whole. In that

capacity, Hickman (2002) clarified that:

> The leader is an activist who works internally and externally to bring about
> human and economic metamorphosis. Inside the organization they generate
> visions, mission, goals, and culture that contribute to the capacity of individuals,
> groups and the organization to practice its values, serve its purpose, maintain
> strong economic viability, and serve societal needs (para. 6).

Hickman continued by stating that leaders are "social entrepreneurs who build interconnectedness for organizational and societal purposes—they are highly credible leaders who generate follower commitment, which results in a sense of collective purpose" (p. 9).

Hickman's approach uses highly managerial, which can be counterpointed by Johnson and Johnson's (2003) social co-participation approach. In contrast to from Hickman, Johnson and Johnson examined motivation and achievement within a social context. They attested that individuals participate in joint activities while examining (a) the value or benefit of the goal, (b) the ability to achieve the goal (intrinsic and extrinsic motivation), and (c) by having epistemic curiosity and continuing motivation, as well as (d) a commitment to succeed (p. 142). Co-participation then, seems to be motivated by a purpose and a commitment.

Leaders who work to build interconnectedness between team and purpose can be seen as *leading from the back*. Benito Martinez Elementary School in El Paso, Texas, is an inspiring example of an engaged institution that requires leaders to "lead from the back," an institution that supports shared governance, whose leaders surround themselves with strong and powerful professionals (Ferguson & Meyer, 2002). Bennis was in accord with this type of leadership when he talked about the power of great partnerships. Even though Bennis concentrated on the leader and the led in his model of leadership, the four criteria he established for determining the success of what he called the "new leadership" helped to guide this investigation of engaged leaders:

1. The new leader understands and practices the power of appreciation. He or she is a connoisseur of talent, more curator than creator

2. The new leader keeps reminding people of what is important

3. The new leader generates and sustains trust

4. The new leader and the led are intimate allies

In addition to providing assistance in analyzing the historical movement in leadership

theories and in identifying characteristics of leaders who develop engaged practices,

examples such as Benito Martinez Elementary School inspired me to examine other

schools to explore the existence of integration both in the institutions and their leadership.

Thus, in this study, I sought to understand the kinds of leadership dynamics that may be

found in K-12 American international schools. These schools may reflect a microcosm

of United States schools, and they may also exemplify a fit between the paradigm of

engagement and the dynamics of multiple people engaged in the practice of leadership.

In the next section, I provide a brief overview of the American international schools'

context, including certain characteristics that will help in understanding integrative

practices in these unique situations of cross-cultural immersion.

An Introduction to American International Schools

American international schools were established in the 1960s and were created to

fulfill the needs of children of United States expatriates. The authority for providing

assistance to nonmilitary elementary and secondary overseas schools initially was

established through the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. Often related to the American

embassy, military settlements, American business society, or missionary groups, these

schools are independent; ownership and policy control typically are in the hands of

associations of parents of the children enrolled. Parents elect members of the school

board to supervise the chief administrator or superintendent whom the board chooses to administer the school.

> All schools are subject, in varying degrees, to host-country laws and regulations pertaining to educational practices, importation of educational materials, and personnel practices. Most of the administrators and about half of the teachers in these schools are Americans or educated in U.S. colleges and universities. A portion of the American staff is hired locally, and a number of these are US government-dependent spouses. All teachers are college graduates, and the majority holds teaching certificates. The local and third-country teachers are usually well qualified (U.S.Department of State, 2003).

In 2003, the U.S. Department of State estimated that some 250,000 Americans of school age were living. These children are served by different types of schools that espouse use the American philosophy of education, including the Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DODDs), missionary or church-related schools, proprietary schools (day and boarding units), company schools (owned by large corporate entities doing business in remote areas of the world), and not-for-profit schools (established by multinational groups such as the United Nations). These American international schools, in fact, comprise "a conglomeration of diverse educational institutions located in over 105 countries whose only affiliation is that they are all offered [a] modicum [of] assistance from the Office of Overseas Schools of the United States Department of Defense" (Vogel, 1992, pg. 6).

The American schools overseas often named "American School of (name of country)." In some cases they are called international schools, even though they have adopted an American philosophy of education. Hayden and Thompson (1996) increased the knowledge of American international schools. Among other things, they described the unique level of diversity found in these schools and the significant use of the English language curricula in host countries.

Matthews (1989) also wrote about the unique education provided in American international schools. He explained that the curricular methodology in overseas schools represents a combination of different traditions, with the international baccalaureate program[1] in most instances being at the center of the schools' pedagogical philosophy.

This study was focused on educators' interactions rather than on the policies, regulations, and curricula of American international schools. A more detailed description of American international schools and their characteristics can be found in a number of books and doctoral dissertations (Bale, 1984; Bentz, 1972; Flora, 1972; Gonzales, 1987; Vest, 1971; Vogel, 1992; Walters, 1983; Blanford et al., 2001; Hayden & Thompson, 2000).

An Example of an American International School

To understand the context of American international schools, it is important to highlight the similar ties and differences of constituents in American international schools as compared to their domestic counterparts. Hayden and Thompson (1996) warned us about the risk of comparisons, rather perceiving these schools as international instead of nationalizing them. Matthews (1989), on the other hand, provided a comprehensive example of students' and educators' diversity in his illustration of a middle-size international school:

- Population of 600 students, evenly divided between boys and girls, divided into three main categories: (a) English-speaking expatriates, with the expectation of returning to an English-speaking educational system; (b) non-English-speaking

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[1] The International Baccalaureate program is geared towards international education. The program aims to cultivate students as critical and compassionate thinkers, informed participants in local and world affairs, and the values of shared humanity. (IBO program mission, website www.ibo.org).

members of the expatriate community who desire an English-language education

in order to facilitate future moves around the world, or because of an intention to

attend college or university in the U.S. or the U.K.; and (c) local nationals who

desire an English-language education for the same reasons mentioned in (b), for

prestige, or because of poor adjustment to the local system

- 40 nationalities represented among students

- 47 % Americans among the students

- 89 % of students destined for higher education

- 61 teachers, 11 of them part time

- 36 % male faculty, 64 % female

- 8 different administrator, faculty, and staff nationalities

- average of 10.5 years of teaching experience

- average of 7.2 years of experience at present school

- pupil-teacher ratio of 9:5 (pp. 25, 28)

McKenzie (1998) affirmed that it is hard to define the differences between

national and international schools because "such attempts tend to become overly

schematic and ignore areas of overlap. These differences are usually located in the

composition of the student and staff bodies, the curriculum, and ownership and

accountability" (p. 248). Moreover, he indicated that a national school, even if it is

multicultural, will tend to have a more homogeneous staff and student group than an

international school. In an international school, "the promotion of the values takes place

in a more subtle fashion, through the ethos generated by the intermingling of students and

staff drawn from many nations.... Such heterogeneity is not a sufficient condition for this

to happen" (McKenzie, 1988, p. 248). Matthews' (1989) example of a middle-size

school overseas reflects the patterns of many American international schools and an

insight into the ecological atmosphere of the schools studied here.

A Highly Mobile Community

An important aspect of American international school communities that was not

mentioned in the preceding example is mobility. Matthews (1989) attested that in most

overseas schools "an annual turnover of students of 30 percent is regarded as normal" (p.

26). Interestingly, students often move from one American overseas school to the next as

parents move from country to country due to their job assignments. The turnover of

board members, who are often parents, as well as faculty and administrators, tends to be

high. Constituents range from long-term members (locally hired and long-term

international teachers) to those with commitments as short as 2 to 5 years (Blanford &

Shaw, 2001; Walters, 1983). Walters (1983) considered the constant change in board

members to be the biggest challenge facing American schools overseas. The high

turnover creates consistency problems in terms of vision, objectives, and the construction

of a cultural history (Littleford, 1999).

In terms of organizational culture, these schools often are immersed in European

or Eurocentric societies, the community and philosophy of the school often differ from

the host country's socioeconomic and educational context. This situation gives raise to

many organizational-identity questions that can permeate the school's ecology at a

number of levels, including how educators, students, parents, and friends of the

community relate to each other in defining a common good in school practices and

routines. Identity questions and organizational-culture issues influence the interface

between academic and social curriculum, redefinition of roles and practices, and place-of-birth culture and language challenges.

Support Systems

How does an educator or administrator prepare to work overseas? Some first-time overseas educators face challenging experiences. Recruiting educators who will be resilient while living abroad is a constant concern of superintendents and board chairs. Adaptation is a gradual process for everyone. Even if a move is just from one house to another in the same city or state, it still involves adaptation and a good attitude. Moving from country to country entails added stress for students, parents, and educators in American international schools. Furthermore, parents (who are sometimes board members), often have high expectations that the superintendent, for example, will immediately take over and "understand" the organization and contextual culture.

American international schools are connected to associations like the National Association of International Schools and accreditation entities in the United States, such as the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, or the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. However, on a day-to-day basis, these schools usually operate in isolation. By the 1970s, associations that specifically supported international schools and their educators were being established. Some worldwide accreditation organizations and professional associations providing support to these schools are the Council of International Schools, the European Council of International Schools, and the East Asia Regional Council of Overseas Schools.

These professional associations provide training and networking opportunities for incoming and more established educators in the international circuit. However, even

though support organizations are proliferating, educators and superintendents still are affected by the isolation. Solutions to problems and questions are now only a phone call away or may be found on the internet, but personal mentorship opportunities in which educators and administrators can share their stories and problems are meager. Challenges of adaptation connect educators to incoming students in their struggle to belong in the school community. Further, such adaptation challenges enhance educators' compassion and consideration, and the interaction among teachers and students.

Security Issues

Contrary to the initial philosophy of demonstrating to foreign nationals the philosophy and methods of an American education (U.S. Department of State, 2003), American international schools today must be concerned with the American image overseas, which is presently subject to volatile perceptions worldwide. As ambassadors and models of the American philosophy and culture, school members may know what it means to be an American school in times of war. September 11 also gave rise to implementation of changes in these schools. A sense of vulnerability and enhanced security measures are enmeshed in the schools' daily routines. High fences, patrolled gates, and the absence of a flag or identifying signs by school entrances have become the norm. School buses are not identifiable as American either. Such measures, however, have not prevented a slight decline in enrollment and the slow return of expatriate families from more vulnerable countries following September 11. Multinational companies are now sending unmarried individuals or often those from various ethnic backgrounds, most of them comfortable with blending into the host country's language and culture.

At this point it is essential to point out that these international schools do not serve just American expatriates. Families of a number of nationalities, who value the American philosophy of education or who do not have comparable schools that will provide their children with the education necessary to blend back into their home country's educational system, seek American international schools. The International Baccalaureate program has standardized the curriculum in most American international schools allowing students to move from one school to another with minimal stress and impact.

An interesting phenomenon has been taking place in American overseas schools during the last decade. A number of these schools have been changing their names to include the word *international*. Three circumstances seem to have motivated this move: (a) recognition that these schools provide an international curriculum through the International Baccalaureate program, which has become, even in some schools in the United States, a curriculum known to prepare students for the global world; (b) recognition of the increasingly diverse population in these schools, and in some cases a decrease in American students; and (c) growing discomfort, in comparison with four to five years ago, in publicly sustaining an American identity overseas. The issues highlighted here, including the figurative example of an American international school, the diversity, the international curriculum, population mobility, support systems, and security were intended to familiarize reader with the people and the context in which American international schools operate.

Leadership in American Schools Overseas

In 1972, Bentz conducted a study of chief school administrators in American

overseas schools. He indicated that the important patterns in the administrative affairs of

these schools included (a) the binational community, (b) the uniqueness of the board of

governance, (c) the binational or multinational professional staff, and (d) the

multinational student body. Bentz affirmed that these "social collectivities formed part of

the social universe in which the administrators pursued their work" (p. 382). Orr (1964)

stated that the administrator in an American overseas school "filled a position that was

infinitely more complex and apparently more demanding and difficult than it is in urban

schools in the U.S. or elsewhere" (p. 217), partly because these administrators work with

members of two or more disparate cultural groups. Not only students and their families,

but also teachers (whether hired in the United States or locally), experience "role shock"

in adapting to the American school overseas.

Even though chief administrators in these schools often are promoted to their

positions from the ranks of principals or teachers, mastery of such a highly transient

environment may require unique qualities in these individuals' leadership repertoire.

Matthews (1989) stated that "one of the most notable and admirable characteristics of

international school students is their willingness to take the initiative in approaching

newcomers and including them in their activities" (p. 26). The same characteristics may

be exemplified by administrators and faculty at American schools overseas.

Feelings of isolation among nonlocal educators, and especially administrators due

to their positions, are not caused solely by physical or geographical elements. As one

administrator in Walters' (1983) study realized, in overseas schools there is no central

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office to turn to for advice. In the last few decades, improvements have been made in

creating an informational network, but the reality of isolation of educators in American

schools overseas must be recognized.

This isolation and the pressing need to inform newcomers may initiate the

creation of learning communities. One would assume that it is not only the chief

educational administrator who takes the lead in training new faculty and administrators

about the culture and the dynamics of an overseas school. Lave and Wenger (1991)

added in studying learning process through their theory of legitimate peripheral

participation. They wrote:

> Legitimate peripheral participation is proposed as a descriptor of engagement in
> social practice that entails learning as an integral constituent. Viewing learning as
> legitimate peripheral participation means that learning is not merely a condition
> for membership, but is itself an evolving form of membership. We conceive of
> identities as long-term, living relations between persons and their place and
> participation in communities of practice. (p. 35)

Lave and Wenger defined a community of practice as:

> ....a set of relations among persons, activity, and the world, over time and in
> relation with other tangential and overlapping communities of practice. A
> community of practice is an intrinsic condition for the existence of knowledge,
> not least because it provides the interpretive support necessary for making sense
> of its heritage. Thus participation in the cultural practice in which any knowledge
> exists is an epistemological principle of learning. The social structure of this
> practice, its power relations, and its conditions for legitimacy define possibilities
> for learning (i.e., for legitimate peripheral participation). (p. 98)

These authors also reminded readers that "we must not forget that communities of

practice are engaged in the generative process of producing their own future" (p. 57).

The Study of Leadership Dynamics

Much has been said about leaders and leadership in this chapter. However, in studying leadership dynamics in American international schools, there is a need to explore what scholars have written about the observation of leadership (how-to) and leadership dynamics. Leadership dynamics may be studied by observing schools from a sense-making perspective on the organization of activities. Weick (1979) perceived organizing as an activity designed "to assemble ongoing interdependent actions into sensible sequences that generate sensible outcomes" (p. 3). He perceived leadership as a shared sense of appropriate procedures and appropriate interpretations, "an assemblage of behaviors distributed among two or more people, with [a] puzzle to be worked on. The conjunction of these procedures, interpretations, behaviors, and puzzles describes what organizing does and what an organization is." (p. 4)

Hatch (1997), on the other hand, proposed using dynamic models in the study of leadership, attesting that the study of organizational structures may take two different forms. One is historical, geared to explaining how an organization develops over a fairly long stretch of time.

> The other type of dynamic model is aimed at discovering the dynamics of change as these occur in the course of everyday life in organizations. In these views, the seeming stability of social structure is undermined by a view of the numerous interactions that shape and transform social structure on a continuous basis. Evolutionary or stage models tend to stay within the boundaries of the modernist approach, while everyday interaction views are more typical of symbolic-interpretive perspectives. (p.173)

Hatch's analysis suggests that the study of leadership dynamics involves development or growth. Similarly, Greiner (as cited in Hatch, 1997) perceived organizational growth as a sequence of evolutionary periods, punctuated by revolutionary

events. He described organizations as if they, like humans, have a life cycle that moves

through phases or stages of development (in Hatch, 1997, p. 174). The stages of

development were categorized into a series of phases met by series of crises. So, an

entrepreneurial phase (creating the product) is met by a leadership crisis (complexity). In

sequence, a collectivity phase (centralizing goals and routines) is met by an autonomy

crisis (the need to act and push the decisions down the hierarchy). Greiner then described

a delegation phase (usually through decentralization of decision-making), which is met

by a crisis of control (which in this case is the loss of control). Next is the bureaucratic

phase, which Greiner named the formalization phase (where complex control

mechanisms are placed), which is met by a crisis of red tape (when universal rules and

procedures are applied and may create ineffectiveness, as well as crises among workers,

especially if the management response is more control). If the organization emerges from

the red-tape crisis, according to Greiner, the organization may proceed to the

collaboration phase. In each stage of the organization's life cycle, the organization is

dominated by a different focus, and each phase ends with a crisis that threatens

organizational survival, according to Greiner. He concluded that when a crisis is

successfully met, the organization passes into its next developmental stage.

The organization is composed of people who create the network of dynamics.

Even though in this study of leadership dynamics I avoided a hierarchical perception,

scholars like MacLeod and Pai (2002) asserted that "the more people who are members

of the network, the more complicated the dynamics of the relationship between not only

the leader and followers but among the followers. Contemplating leadership in terms of

social networks enables the examination of leader behavior in terms of complex

relationships imbedded in an organizational context" (p. 9). Individual perspectives are valued because they acknowledge the complexities involved in the study of leadership dynamics.

Guba (1985) too, acknowledged the dynamic nature of organizational theory and social research. He perceived research as evolving across disciplines:

1. From viewing the world in simple probabilistic terms to viewing the world as made of complex systems.

2. From seeing things in terms of hierarchical order to a heterarchy of orders.

3. From expecting a mechanistic universe to one that is holographic and knowledge-embedded.

4. From seeing a determinate universe to an indeterminate one.

5. From explaining relationships in terms of direct causality to a more complex mutual causality.

6. From seeing whole systems as an assembly of small parts to thinking about the morphogenesis of systems.

7. From assuming of the possibility of pure objectivity to being aware of a perspectival (multiple views) nature of reality. (p. 89)

Summary

In this chapter I explored the field of leadership, including its theories and trends, from traditional, alternative, and engaged aspects. I also provided an overview of what is known about American international schools and how leaders may function and operate in such cross-cultural environments. The methodology used in this study to investigate leadership dynamics in American international schools is explained in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

My purpose in this study was to explore leadership dynamics in three K-12

American international schools, following a growing demand for qualitative researchers

to expand the documentation of the lived experience of key members in given

communities (Denis, Lamothe, & Langley, 2001; Janesick, 2000). The study of

American international schools was perceived as important because they reflect a

microcosm of US schools (Gonzales, 1987a) especially in relation to their diverse student

populations. The study was developed through the construction of three exploratory case

studies focusing on leadership initiatives in the three schools, asking the questions: What

kind of leadership dynamics may be found in K-12 American international schools? and,

How do educators in selected American international schools construct and mediate their

leadership roles?

I used a qualitative approach in this inquiry, looking at participants' common and

distinctive interactions, intensities and complexities, and how people make meaning of

their collective actions, values, and beliefs. Participants were considered through their

membership in a school leadership initiative rather than their formal roles or job titles, in

order to observe interactions in leadership activities that occurred through formal and/or

informal leadership initiatives. In this chapter I describe how a case study design

contributed to a holistic understanding of the participants' interactions in relationships

within social systems and cultures (Janesick, 2000), and how the case study method was

used for its methodological value as both the process and the product of an inquiry (Stake, 2000), portraying the empirical world of each school, its participants, and more specifically, the leadership dynamics, in a comprehensive format.

<div align="center">Approach and Rationale</div>

Using an interpretive and naturalistic approach (Creswell, 1998; Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Stake, 1994), I examined leadership dynamics through an evolving design, with an inductive interpretation and analysis of the school participants' multiple realities (Creswell, 1998). In uncovering the various kinds of leadership dynamics and the processes through which educators in selected American international schools constructed and mediated their leadership roles, I benefited from Richardson's (1994) methodological metaphor of the central image of a crystal. Richardson suggested that instead of triangulation, a postmodern methodology invites for the recognition of more than "three sides from which to approach the world" (p. 934). Crystals grow, change, vary, even though it is not shapeless, "prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves," attested Richardson (p. 522). This perception is metamorphic in the sense that more than a single *truth* is permitted, allowing for the consideration of multiple perspectives from the different participants in the leadership. Richardson's perspective is particularly relevant because an analysis of leadership dynamics includes the "multiple interactions that shape and transform [the organization's] social structure on a continuous basis" (Hatch, 1997, p. 173).

Denis, et al. (2001) cited three aspects to be considered in the analysis of leadership dynamics: (a) the characteristics of the leadership constellation during the study period (who are the important members, what roles do they play, what is their

degree of complementarity), (b) the actions of the leadership group (what was done, what kinds of tactics were used and (c) the effects of those actions (symbolic, substantive and political). I considered these aspects in constructing the cases.

The Sample of American International Schools

American international schools are situated in host countries and bring together a combination of expatriate and local educators, families and community participants. Identifying circles of people involved in programs or initiatives in such schools would allow me to understand "how leadership works" in a context where leaders' inventiveness brings multiple constituents together. Four main points in the engagement dynamics were of particular interest:

5. How members of a leadership initiative collaborated with each other

6. How they invited and involved different constituents

7. How they grew and learned in collaboration

8. How they focused the initiative in promoting change and advancement in the community

The sample included three American international schools selected for this study. The schools were chosen using a purposeful approach to identify administrators or teachers who could provide accounts of one ongoing leadership initiative per school. The initiatives were observed by the end of the school year (May). It was important to observe initiatives by the end of the school year because participants in American international schools may have been recently hired at the beginning of the school year, when they would not be entirely familiar with the school culture. By the end of the

school year, new members would be more comfortable in their roles and more participative in the initiative.

In the methodological matter of selection, I preferred institutions that evidenced indicators of engagement (Table 1). A representative from each school selected a leadership initiative in which multiple internal and external constituents were involved, such as school administrators, teachers, students, parents, business people and community members. Allowing schools to select an initiative provided variety in the cases. Initiatives were either at the planning stage or the implementation stage, or had recently been implemented. Such new initiatives enabled participants to give a historical account of events without a large time gap between need and inception. Because of the high turnover of members in American international schools, it was important to document the historical accounts from participants who were involved in the entire process, from need to inception.

Methodology

In this inquiry in which I aimed to identify the kind of leadership dynamics in these particular schools, the data collection methods included (a) school visitations to observe the initiatives, (b) interviews of initiative participants, individually and during focus groups, and (c) examination of documents and artifacts about the initiative and the school as described later in more detail. As I analyzed the initiative at each site, I respected its specific contextual programmatic uniqueness.

Employing a purposeful approach I made use of criterion sampling, in which all individuals selected for the study had experienced the phenomenon being studied. Such a sample is useful for quality assurance. I was guided by the indicators of engagement

(Table 1) in constructing the protocols, which were designed to identify characteristics of dynamics among leaders, institutions, and community members. These indicators helped in selecting a leadership initiative. Later, I used a conceptual framework to guide the empirical work, with open codes that included (a) community, (b) boundaries, (c) power and ethics, (d) culture, and (e) spirituality. These codes guided and informed the observations and interviews. To give dimension to the protocols, I composed a matrix to correlate open codes to empirical questions (Appendix C). The table indicates the extent to which codes' properties reached saturation in the in-depth interview protocol.

In making initial contacts with the schools, I respected issues of entry, asking for consent before visiting the schools (Appendix A). In a letter, I invited a school member to share with me information on the initiative that I proposed to observe. In addition, the research consisted of the following procedures:

1. In theoretical sampling, the researcher selects sample members on the basis of their contribution to the development of the theory in a grounded-theory approach. According to Creswell (1998), the process begins with a homogeneous sample of individuals who are similar, and, as data collection proceeds and categories emerge, "the researcher turns to a heterogeneous sample to see under what conditions the categories hold true" (p. 243).

2. *School Representatives.* Initially, I invited three school representatives, one from each school, to select a school initiative. These representatives were superintendents, grade level administrators, department chairs, or teacher leaders. I chose school representatives who had been educated in the United States and who had a minimum of three years of overseas experience for inclusion in this study, to minimize

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extreme variations in their personal and professional understanding of the American

international schools system. I sent each of these individuals a letter of introduction

(Appendix A) and after that initial contact, we communicated by telephone or email. The

school representatives received a packet containing a consent form (Appendix A), and an

organizational map sheet (Appendix B).

3. *Organizational Maps*. I asked the participants to produce organizational maps

(Appendix B) on which they would describe the initiative according to their own

interpretation of how the initiative had started, the people involved including themselves,

the school, and a description of the initiative. The organizational maps helped me gain a

broader understanding of each initiative and its participants, and helped in strategizing

the onsite observations and interviews.

4. *In-depth interviews*. The three school representatives helped identify key

participants in the leadership initiatives through the organizational maps and formal

introductions to group members. Through this technique, known as snowball sampling,

"cases of interest" are identified "from people who know people, who know what cases

are information-rich" (Creswell, 1998, p. 119). In-depth interviews provided a rich and

detailed account of the initiative (see Appendix B for the interview protocol). Scholars

such as Lindlof (1995) have cautioned researchers that one "can never be sure that what

the informant says represents the full story" and that participants, at times, "may claim

more knowledge than they really possess" (p. 166). Hence, all individuals' realities were

respected and considered as they were presented.

5. *Focus groups*. Focus groups and group observations provided valuable

information on interactions, because participants' actions furnished me with rich insights

into perceptions of the school dynamics. "Focus groups create settings in which diverse perceptions, judgments/ and experiences concerning particular topics can surface," Morgan affirmed (as cited in Lindolf, 1995, p. 174). Through focus groups it was possible to observe the phenomenon, as participants were constantly stimulated by others to articulate their perspectives during these group sessions. "The ways they support, debate or resolve issues with each other can resemble the dynamics of everyday social discourse" (Morgan as cited in Lindloff, 1995, p. 174), providing the researcher with information that could not be obtained through individual interviews alone. To ensure that the group's equilibrium in participation and interaction was maintained, observations, in-depth interviews and focus groups were used to complement each other in the data collection.

6. *Follow-up questions.* Follow-up questions (Appendix B) were prepared in case it was necessary to clarify certain points that had been left unclear or underdeveloped during the interviews. The follow-up questions were used in a few cases during member-check procedures, or after the interviews had been transcribed and narratives constructed.

7. *Observations, documents and artifacts*: The data collection was completed by the researcher's observations and field notes, as well as documents and artifacts provided by the schools. Documents included letters to parents, memoranda, reports, flyers, newsletters, and informational brochures. Artifacts included student-produced materials, and visuals.

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Case Study Design

This study was carried out through the construction of exploratory case studies based on a variety of evidence (Yin, 1994), including artifacts and public records, organizational reports, direct observations, and narratives constructed from in-depth and focus group interviews. The case study approach was used to provide a clearer portrait of the kind of leadership dynamics that might be found in selected K-12 American international schools. Polinghorne (1991) suggested that the inductive analysis constructed through case studies largely contributes to comprehension, clarity, and specificity. A unique feature of the case study approach is the opportunity it provides to construct a snapshot of leadership in process. This snapshot offers boundaries, enabling the researcher to isolate the case for analytical focus (Marshall et al., 1995).

Stake (2000) asserted, "[the] case study is not a methodological choice, but a choice of what is to be studied" (p. 435). Case studies, then, may be used to explore causal links in leadership endeavors that may be too complex for a survey to isolate. In this case, the case study enabled me to illustrate how leadership "happened" at the selected sites (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 1994). As both a process and the product of an inquiry (Stake, 2000, p. 436), case studies afford two pedagogical methods (Eisner, 1985): The case study can transmit what the researcher learned, and at the same time, the researcher can provide material for readers to learn on their own (Stake, 2000, p. 442).

The portrait of leadership dynamics constructed through these case studies was also informed by my own reflection—a process of revisiting my own ideas and the data to recreate an understanding in an evolving process (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Most important, case studies were substantially elaborated through the use of narratives from

in-depth interviews and focus groups. In-depth interviews contributed to my understanding of how participants imposed order on the flow of their experience and their events (Riessman, 1993). By telling stories, participants both learned and reconstructed the lived story in words, interpreting facts in a knowledge-generative process. Storytelling as a cultural representation is actually becoming a more disciplined line of work in narrative inquiry (Stake, 2000). Researchers also value the potential of narrative to provide readers vicariously to associate the narrative with other experiences, allowing instant knowledge transfer from researcher to reader.

The value of narrative is its power to provide participants with voice, a closer personal account of the context with special educative values (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). In this study, narratives as personal accounts, were perceived as a "culture's primary meaning-making tool" (Gudmundsdottir, 1999, p. 177), and they helped me make sense of leadership practices at a more personal level. Narratives were excerpted from the participants' in-depth interviews to inform the cases, and were couched in behaviors recorded in the field, participants' reflections on the organizational maps, and detailed accounts of my data collection in relation to the participants.

I followed Janesick's (2000) common rules of thumb in constructing the narratives: (a) the need to look for meaning in the participants' perspectives, (b) the observation of relationships in regard to structure, occurrence, and distribution of events over time, and (3) the observation of points of tension: "What does not fit? What are the conflicting points of evidence?" (p. 388). Narratives emerged as an important unit during the data-collection phase because through narratives, participants had a chance to tell their stories and simultaneously reflect as they described their experiences. Moreover,

narratives of relationships provided an account of interpretations (Denzin, 1989) and

negotiations among people within the context of social structures in the school (White,

1992). In the analysis, the narratives, embedded in the cases, were organized around

current theories and the emergent conceptual-framework themes for verification, using a

constructivist lens to further explore the significance of multiple meanings.

Verification and Standards

Crystallization was the verification method I used to provide a complex, and

thorough understanding of the leadership dynamics among participants in the selected

school leadership initiatives. Richardson's (1994) perspective of validity was considered,

wherein the central image of *validity* is not rigid, fixed, or two-dimensional. In place of a

psychometric paradigm, Richardson used the metaphor of the crystal which grows,

changes, varies, even though it is not shapeless, "prisms that reflect externalities and

refract within themselves" (p. 934). The perception of validity is metamorphic in a sense

that more than a single truth is permitted, allowing the consideration of different

perspectives from various participants in the analysis of leadership initiatives.

Richardson suggested that "what we see depends upon our angle of repose" (p. 934).

Richardson added that this lens allows us to know more, but also leads us to doubt what

we know, leaving us with the knowledge that there is always more to know.

Checkland's (1981; 1990; 1999) soft systems methodology (SSM) of observing

human actions or endeavors through purposeful activities also informs this study, because

one of the individual "characteristics of human beings is their readiness to attribute

meaning to what they observe and experience"(Checkland, 1999, p.1), and their

purposeful action in response to their experience of the world. By purposeful action,

Checkland (1999) meant "deliberate, decided, willed action, whether by an individual or

by a group" (p. 2). Consequently, crystallization and soft systems methodology allowed

for the use of a variety of data sources to inform an iterative process when developing

these case studies.

Verification in this study relied on detailed data collection, construction of

narratives, and use of a constructivist lens in identifying themes in the emergent

leadership framework, and the writing of case studies. In describing persons, places, and

events in the inquiry, I adhered to rigorous methodological standards to ensure that I met

the criteria of "fairness" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), including issues of positionality,

community, voice, critical subjectivity, reciprocity, sacredness, and privilege (Creswell,

1998, p. 196). These standards were beneficial guidelines as I formulated procedures for

verification based on "the emergent relations with respondents, to a set of stances, and to

a vision of research that enables and promotes justice" (Creswell, 1998, p. 195):

Positionality. The standard of positionality observes the epistemological

standpoint, meaning that "the 'text' should display honesty and authenticity about its own

stance and about the position of the author" (Creswell, 1998, p. 196). The researcher

adheres to this standard in striving to give an honest account when building narratives

and case studies.

Community. The standard of community "acknowledges that all research takes

place in, is addressed to, and serves the purposes of the community in which it was

carried out" (Creswell, 1998, p. 196). The community in which the study was embedded

was highly respected. To this end, narratives were constructed in order to provide

participants with voice.

Voice. The standard of voice means that participants have multiple and alternative opportunities to share their perceptions without being silenced, disengaged, or marginalized.

Critical subjectivity. The standard of critical subjectivity means that the researcher will sustain "high-quality awareness" in the process of personal and social transformation, "before, during, and after the research experience" (Creswell, 1998, p. 196). High-quality awareness was maintained during the data collection and the analysis.

Reciprocity. The standard of reciprocity is related to the intense sharing, trust, and mutuality that are involved in the research process. In constructing the narratives and cases, I valued and respected the reciprocity between the participants and myself, especially in being aware that there would be mutual sharing of information.

Sacredness. The standard of sacredness means having respect for the collaborative and egalitarian relationship inherent in the research-to-action continuum. The sacredness of the relationships was of utmost importance, and reminded me about the respect for *privilege*—that is, respect for the stories shared and the fact that this study belonged to all participants as well as to me.

I verified the data at each stage of the study giving careful attention to reliability and credibility of the data. I used the constant comparative method to relate the data collected to the emergent framework until a saturation point was reached. Saturation is achieved when no further information can illuminate the categories examined through incidents, events, or accounts from the data collection (Moustakis, 1990).

Data Analysis

First, I transcribed the interview responses. Then I analyzed those transcripts and pertinent documents for demographic and contextual information. Open coding, the first step in the data-analysis process, involves segmenting data into categories of information (Creswell, 1998) using a pre-conceptualized or emergent theory. A preliminary analysis of the data was conducted by evaluating the data and how they informed the emergent conceptual leadership-dynamics framework that I initially proposed. The analysis of the data using that framework showed additional data that were not validated through the emergent framework. In a second exploration of the data, I coded the interview transcripts by means of the NVivo computer program (Version 2.0, 1999-2000 edition), using nodes and subnodes. The nodes followed the emergent conceptual framework presented in chapter I, clustering around three major empirical elements: (a) the organization, (b) the initiative, and (c) the participants' dynamics. The organization cluster included information related to the school context, along with locational influences, such as the country, city, and school demographics. The initiative cluster included the stories, problems, and motives that surrounded the initiative's conception and the steps taken by the participants in relation to the initiative. The participants' dynamics cluster included the emergent framework attributes and interdependency relations.

There were cases in which portions of transcribed interviews were clustered in more than one node or subnode simultaneously as they informed more than one area. As the noding activity progressed, new topics surfaced from the data, which I then considered and coded. Some nodes, such as culture, unfolded into two nodes—culture

and organizational culture—when I noticed a difference in the way participants defined

culture. As a consequence, I added other nodes and subnodes to the initial framework, as

shown in figure 3.1
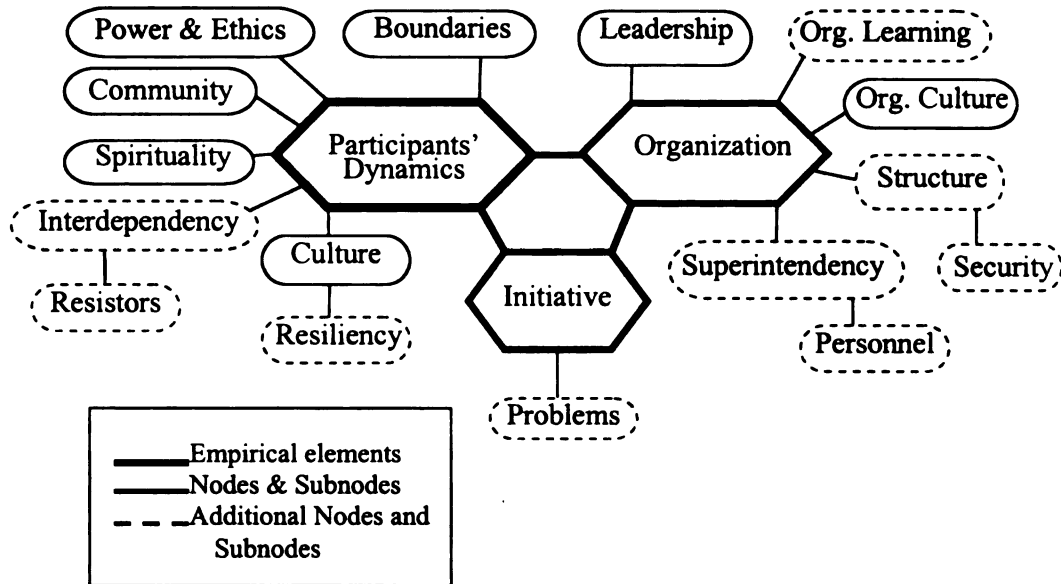
Figure 3.1 Exploration of the data

The empirical elements were named after the most evident clusters I perceived

during site visitations. The elements seemed to be confirmed by the participants, as their

accounts centered on their participation in the organization, their participation in the

initiative, and their interdependency with others. The NVivo program allowed for other

compositions between nodes and subnodes that were used before this final clustering.

As mentioned earlier, the nodes and subnodes were not as defined in the

preliminary data analysis, as many portions of the interviews provided layers and sub-

layers of information that could be likened to a painting, with colors merging and

changing as they were over-layered. In fact, Charmaz (2000) reaffirmed the metaphor of

a painting, instead of a photograph, in the analysis of a qualitative research product,

especially for its detailed and layered process of analysis. So, I analyzed the data collected, notes on site observations, and artifacts using Richardson's crystallization process in order to compose a "painting" of the case. During the analysis, I used a constructivist approach to offer both "explanation and understanding to fulfill a pragmatist criteria of usefulness" (Charmaz, 2000, p. 524), avoiding objectivist assumptions and procedures. That is, I carefully considered the collected evidence, the multiple voices, perspectives, incidents, and events, in crafting each step of the case.

In the constructive approach, categories, concepts, and theoretical levels of analysis emerge from the researcher's interaction within the field and his or her questions about the data (Charmaz, 2000). The questions raised from the data are thus a result of the exploration of the empirical world observed through the eyes, voices, and knowledge of the participants. These questions and/or propositions composed the heart of this study's qualitative nature because, as Lindlof (1995) attested, "every scene and situation presents a unique, never-before-encountered configuration of features, requiring strategic flexibility on the part of the investigator (p. 65).

As a consequence, in the analysis I considered causal conditions that may have influenced each initiative, the meanings and strategies participants described in their personal accounts, artifacts, and documents that provided contextual information. Such a relativistic approach may not be endorsed by opponents of qualitative research. However, I recognize that not all views and interpretations could be given an equal value. "Equality is an absolutist view," Stake (1995) asserted, and relativists believe in the value of variables in interpretation (p. 102). In short, even though I looked at how participants constructed their realities and perceptions of the initiative, or how "variables" were

grounded, the design allowed for variation, when the participants' meanings and actions took priority over my analytical interests and methodological technology.

The Crystallization Process of Verification

The crystallization process of verification permitted more than a single "truth" to be documented without diminishing the value of atypicalities, or flattening the richness of the cases. The crystallization process nurtured the participants' voices, valorizing their perspectives and texturizing the cases. In constructing the case studies, I was aware that "the search for particularity sometimes competes with the search for generalization" (Stake, 2000, p. 439). Each case was extremely important in its typical and atypical features, particularities, relationships, and situations. The texture of the cases also depended on the participants' narratives, as well as my self-knowledge and knowledge of the topic, which were recognized and inevitably interwoven.

I continually reassessed and refined the data (Janesick, 2000) in elaborating the case studies, and especially in constructing narratives from the participants' complex experiences. Sometimes the participants' complexities were reflected as tensions in the cases. The cases were perceived as allowing me to pose new questions, not only with the guidance of the open codes elaborated in the emergent framework used, but also through supplemental validation.

Delimitations

This study was delimited by the number of sites analyzed. Three sites might not seem to have been enough to reveal nuances and intensities of leadership dynamics that would be generalizable to other American international schools. However, I was strongly

inclined toward an in-depth data collection from a small sample of data as opposed to using a large sample. The study also was limited in terms of accessibility to sites, because the schools were located in different countries. Even so, my ability to travel to the sites or schedule constraints did not significantly restrict the data collection. Even though I gained access to educators in American international schools through site visitations, our communication relied in part on email and telephone conversations in building trust and rapport, due to constraints of time and location. Time and accessibility constraints on building trust between the site participants and myself, were minimized by establishing trust before the visits and data collection. In the analysis, I expected that the exploratory aspect of this research design would begin to take shape only at the point of closure, or that the "complex layered experience which was engaged here, would only make sense as a sensible 'whole'" (Meloy, 2002, p. 26)—after the data were organized, interpreted, and understood.

In addition, the cross-cultural aspects of this study deserved special attention, especially during the field work and in the data interpretation. Difficulties of transporting data across cultures have been noted (Ryen, 2002) and need to be acknowledged by the researcher, especially in relation to understanding the nuances of local culture and language (Deutscher, 1968). This is particularly important in the analysis of a culture within a culture, which is the case with American international schools. Often, the American philosophy or culture strives to create a space when the school is embedded in the host country and the influence of one or more cultures frequently is present in the school. In addition, because the population of American international schools often can be highly diverse, researchers need to be aware of possible

constraints in communication. In this study, however, the interviews did not involve languages other than English because participants were fluent in English. In addition, because I once worked in an American international school, the insider-outsider issue was significantly minimized.

It is important to emphasize, that this study was not about cultural richness in foreign countries, even though such richness might have been reflected in the participants' experiences and narratives. Being aware of cultural differences, I was then open to allowing the impact of this cultural richness on the leadership initiative to emerge and to inform the data analysis.

Case studies and narratives are vulnerable to possible contamination by the researcher. However, I claim only to have interpreted a reality, realizing that human realities are not unidimensional. I used follow-up questions for this purpose. I understand that my own personal experiences might have influenced how I interpreted participants' portrayals of their experiences. As a consequence, in constructing the case studies, I considered the human reality as well as the existence of individual worlds.

Limitations

A qualitative design requires the researcher to become a research instrument (Janesick, 2000). In constructing case studies, the researcher is responsible for giving participants a voice (Marshall and Rossman, 1995), as well as for building trust and openness in gathering data for constructing the cases. Even though I investigated leadership initiatives by means of individual in-depth interviews and focus groups, it is possible that I did not witness all the activities and relationships, especially because of time constraints in visiting these sites. This limitation was overcome by seeking

additional data after the visit, when necessary. Also, ontological accounts and may have

been diffused in the constructions of cases. Aggregating themes in the emergent

leadership framework helped me crystallize the findings, and detect patterns. A new

framework emerged from the cross-comparative phase.

Ethical Considerations

Of utmost importance is the fact that qualitative researchers are guests in the

private spaces of the world, so they must observe a strict code of ethics (Stake, 2000).

Consequently, I endeavored to observe this ethical code in constructing the case studies

(Yin, 1984), especially by avoiding preconceived notions of the field, personal

ideologies, and preconceptions. Nevertheless, I saw my previous experience in American

international schools as a positive feature in the development of this study. Having

several years of experience in American international schools, dealing with international

and local students and their families, interacting with foreign-hire and local-hire

personnel in the same school, and being aware of potential sources of misunderstanding

between individuals and groups made me familiar with the field. In addition, as

unexpected situations and opportunities arose, I remained flexible, adapting as necessary

to give a legitimate account of the issues being studied.

This study was approved by the Michigan State University Committee on

Research Involving Human Subjects (Appendix A). Rigorous protection of and respect

for participants' privacy was observed to the extent provided by law. The data collected

will be kept for at least five years in a safe location to maintain confidentiality. Names of

schools and participants will be kept anonymous when reporting the findings from the

study. One single pseudonym was used to name the country, the city, and the school to

simplify the location reference. The location as a reference was intended to provide the reader with a contextual reference, instead of geographical reference. The location as a context with one pseudonym was then perceived not to simplify the effects of the host country in the city where the school is located, but to create and idea of a permeable influence of the country in the city, as well as the influence of the country and the city into the school. The pseudonym for the school was then linked to the group of people working in the school initiative. Pseudonyms for participants were chosen at random, but were somehow linked to the names of schools. Case studies are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

CASE STUDIES OF LEADERSHIP DYNAMICS

Introduction

Cases of leadership dynamics were developed to increase the understanding of collaborative relationships in schools. Leadership was observed beyond role-specific spaces that historically have isolated an individual from other people involved in purposeful activities. In turn, the exploration of "how leadership works" was collective in its essence, with cases portraying circles of influential people focused on purposeful activities.

The cases show the development of three initiatives in three American international schools. The first case, of the American School of Nieuhaus, shows an initiative in its early planning stage. The second case, of the American International School of Arboretum, shows an initiative in its implementation stage. In the third case, of the American School of Whisperwind, an initiative in an advanced implementation stage is found. In each case, the participants' context, interaction, and leadership processes are documented, including intriguing stressful moments and tensions in building leadership.

Case Vignettes: A Snapshot of Collaborative Leadership Dynamics

To understand better how collaborative leadership was enacted in three K-12 American international schools, I used four subquestions in examining and organizing the data:

1. How did members of a leadership initiative collaborate with each other?

2. How did the members invite and involve different constituents?

3. How did members grow and learn in collaboration?

4. How did members focus the initiative in promoting change and advancement in the community?

These subquestions guided the construction of cases, and inspired a shared sense of the dynamics of leadership in action.

The cases were designed to reflect the most significant aspects of each initiative. Each case contains the following information: (a) the name of the initiative, (b) the names and positions of key participants around the table, introduced as figures (c) the project and the people, (d) the demographics of the school, (e) a description of the country and school context, (f) a snapshot of leadership dynamics, and (g) the stresses on building leadership through relationships.

Case I: A Collective Vision for the
New Campus of the American School of Nieuhaus

The Project and the People

A magnificent, state-of-the-art campus awaits visitors entering the gates of the American School of Nieuhaus. At the time of this study, the campus has been operational for only two years. After settling into the new campus, Mrs. Cardinal, the board chair, and Mr. Bluebird, the superintendent, agreed that now it was time to revisit the school's mission and goals by developing a strategic plan for the school. School members were defining foundational and philosophical goals in order to give the school a refreshed direction. According to some participants, this was a particularly important

moment to the school because the school divisions (K-elementary, middle, and high

School) had been separated in different sites before being brought together on this new

campus.

Around the table (figure 4.1), the board members and administrators were

formulating the initial guidelines for a strategic plan. Eight members in this case were

actively involved in developing an initiative that considered all constituents from the

school community. This was not, however, the first strategic plan in the history of the

American School of Nieuhaus, according to some of the participants. Mrs. Peacock,

middle school principal and one of the oldest administrators in the school, believed this

was the fourth time she had participated in developing a strategic plan in the past 10

years, in her tenure with four superintendents.

Mrs. Cardinal, Board chair/parent: a parent of a tenth grater and part of the American Embassy as an organizational consultant. This is her first time as a board chair.

Mr. Heron, Elementary school principal: started in the Peace Corps and later lived in Kenya, Cyprus, and Taiwan.

Mr. Hawk, High school principal: a Californian, who lived in Germany, Mexico, and the Middle East. He was involved in the previous strategic plan committee and sees the development of this new initiative positively.

Mr. Bluebird, Superintendent: started his international experience as a teacher and counselor in countries like Congo, Malaysia, Sumatra, Syria, and Russia.

American School of Nieuhaus

Ms. Seagull, Consultant: with experience helping international schools, she was hired to help the school in their strategic plan.

Ms. Owl, Elementary assistant principal: Her experience adds up from being a principal to a superintendent of two schools simultaneously over 20+ years in US schools.

Ms. Peacock, Middle school principal: one of the oldest administrators in school. She worked in Jakarta, Zambia, Abu Dhabi, and Kuwait, as well as in the state of New York. She created the middle school in 1996 and became its first principal.

Ms. Dove, Financial director/parent: having lived in Ireland prior to Nieuhaus, she is also a parent with two children in pre-K and grade four.

Figure 4.1 Around the table at the American School of Nieuhaus

During the course of formulating the initial guidelines, mainly due to time constraints, a consultant was invited to guide parts of the process. The inclusion of a consultant, however, seemed to have created miscommunications among members, according to some participants. Before describing the initiative and the leadership dynamics though, it will be helpful to understand the demographics and context of the school.

Demographics of the American School of Nieuhaus

Today, the American School of Nieuhaus houses approximately 800 students representing more than 50 nations. The new building is situated in a suburban neighborhood of Nieuhaus, a large city with a population of about two million. As one of the many countries belonging to the West Continent Union (WCU), the country witnessed a booming economy in the last decade, improving the living conditions of the locals and the school's expatriate population.

The school is not identifiable as a school building; rather, from a distance it resembles a large business structure. It is built at a fair distance from other edifices and is surrounded by a high wall and fence. About a hundred teachers and specialists from the United States and other countries serve the student population with an average class size of 18 students. Foreign languages are offered during the day, and a number of activities are offered after school. At this school, there is an emphasis on athletics, with teams traveling to other countries for sports as well as in art, drama, and music competitions.

Description of the Country and School Context

The American School of Nieuhaus is a not-for-profit school situated in an emerging country in the continent. The American Embassy aided in the establishment and continuity of this private, not-for-profit school for more than 40 years. Until 1989, the school served Kindergarten through 8th grades. According to school documents, after 1989, the school was slowly expanded to offer a middle school and then a full high school program; the first seniors graduated in 1994. The expanded program let to a quadrupling of the student population between 1989 and 1997. In addition, like other countries that recently joined the WCU, the country witnessed a booming economy in the last decade, which also caused the school population to grow.

Physically, the school was not prepared to accommodate such population growth; facilities were spread into small, adapted sites in two separate neighborhoods. Mr. Huron, the elementary principal, recalled that in 1999, when he arrived, the school did not even have a cafeteria: "Food was delivered to a desk in the hallway and then students came and got it. And students ate in their classrooms." Because of these limitations, a major construction project was initiated in the late 1990s to build a new complex that would house all students on one campus.

According to participants, the audacious project that started almost a decade ago has culminated in a state-of-the art campus and spacious buildings connected to each other by colorful hallways displaying flags from different countries, student sculptures, and paintings. Mrs. Peacock, the middle school principal, shared the enthusiasm of those educators, students, and parents who were part of the transition from the smaller, scattered buildings to the new complex:

We now have great facilities. We can extend our offerings and take advantage of the teaching potential. And we offer more as a K-12. It is nice to see the little kids. We do some things with the elementary and some things with the high school. And kids can see the history and tradition taking place—they see what they are going to be moving to. (Personal interview, May 2004)

Mrs. Peacock added that moving to the new complex had created a need to unify divisions that once were not so visible to each other.

A Snapshot of Leadership Dynamics: Building a Strategic Plan

Mr. Bluebird, who began his superintendency in the school's first year of operations on the new campus, researched the process of forming strategic plans. He learned that "we shouldn't start this process until we have a solid mission and vision statement in place—adapted, adopted." Mr. Bluebird hoped that the school vision and mission would help in the development of future plans for the school, especially in tailoring a school that meets the needs of its community. Many members of the group stressed the importance of telling a common story to the aim of creating unity across divisions. Ms. Owl, the elementary assistant principal, was among those in the community who emphasized the need for a common story:

We go through challenging periods when there's light at the end of the tunnel, and you see the light, but you don't know whether you're in a train tunnel, whether that's just the end of the tunnel or if the train is coming at you! You have to keep moving together and continue to talk it through. We want to be able to have a common voice and tell a common story. (Personal interview, May 2004)

The need to find a common voice motivated school members to initiate the strategic plan.

Mr. Heron, the elementary principal, as well as Mrs. Peacock and Mr. Hawk, the high school principal, perceived that the strategic plan would give direction and answers to many questions, such as Would we grow or stay constant? Do we want to grow? How

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big do we want to be? How international do we want to be? How American do we want to be? Is our program as strong as it could be? and Are there areas that need improvement? Mr. Heron added:

> I want the board to tell us, "Yes, we want to grow." Or I want the board to say "No, we like our size and we think it is okay to be selective." And then I can have parameters and say, "I'm sorry, but we are full." And until the board or a strategic plan gives us some direction one way or the other, I am making a decision without a lot of guidance. (Personal interview, May 2004)

In fact, since the schools were brought together onto the new campus, these administrators had sensed that decisions were being made as pressures and emergencies surfaced, without much consideration of the consequences for the school as a whole.

Eighteen school members including board members/parents, administrators/parents, and a consultant participated in the early planning stages of the strategic plan. All members seemed to contribute to the initiative in some way, by bringing historical experiences, rationalizing experiences and facts, bringing new ideas, making sense of the school's needs, or acknowledging the next steps in the development of a strategic plan. The initiative followed a preliminary period of adaptation during which "there was lots of shared decision making to be done," according to Mr. Huron:

> Even though previous attempts to begin a strategic plan were in place, the administrative team and the board held off the strategic plan, in a way, until we moved into the new complex. At the time of transition, our strategic plan was to build a new campus and move into it. The first year, again, we held off on doing any strategic planning because we were learning how to work together. We had never worked together before and had to share facilities. So there were lots of adjustments to make. (Personal interview, May 2004)

An important part of this process was Mrs. Cardinal, the board chair, who was enthusiastic both about the plan and about joining the board of governance. She was motivated in developing a strategic plan, not only because she enjoyed participating in

her daughter's school, but also because she had worked with non-profit boards as a professional consultant. Mrs. Peacock perceived Mrs. Cardinal as a great leader who efficiently engaged board members in productive meetings. "She is quite masterful, and meetings that used to be of two or three hours are now done in 20 minutes," said Mrs. Peacock. "The relationship with the board members and the school is very respectful now." Even though this was Mrs. Cardinal's first year as the board chair, she embraced her duty with confidence:

> For me it is a good opportunity to put some of my professional theories into practice. I have been part of other boards, but this is my first time as a chair. This board was a particular challenge because it has been through some very rough times over the past few years. And I think there was some healing that needed to be done. So I saw that as an opportunity and a challenge. (Personal interview, 2004)

Mrs. Cardinal's acknowledgement of problems with past boards of governance was important, according to some participants. Her commitment was instrumental in creating positive dynamics among board members, as well as in developing positive and fruitful relationships with the school superintendent and administrators.

Mr. Hawk, the high school principal, had also been instrumental in this new initiative. He had worked with previous boards of governance on strategic plans and was knowledgeable about why some of the ideas were not implemented in the past: "When I arrived, I caught just the tail end of a very dysfunctional period, a very political period in the board, and it had simply to do with the people involved and their perception of their roles," Mr. Hawk reflected. Mrs. Peacock added that the rough times in the past were related mostly to perpetual disagreements concerning board members' individual agendas. Disagreements resulted in micro-management, according to some administrators, mainly because board members' and parents' expectations were high,

especially parents who expected immediate changes. In most instances, these parents had come from other international schools and expected to find "exactly what they had left in the previous school," attested Mr. Bluebird.

Mr. Bluebird acknowledged that the recommendations from the last strategic plan were not really applicable to Nieuhaus. In fact, the report and recommendations resembled more of a product-launching strategy than a strategic plan, according to some members. "At the end it was interesting," stated Mr. Bluebird, "but it didn't begin to encompass the breadth or depth of what we were interested in, in the plan, nor had we a buy-in, because we were hardly involved in the survey process."

Mrs. Peacock attested that this time, however, the initiative seemed to serve a purpose more related to the organization's foundational issues:

> The main issues are divided into assessment and accountability, community relations, and resource management. But I believe one of the biggest ones is who are we and who do we serve? It directly affects us but nobody ever really wants to talk about it. Nobody wants to say, "This is what we do and this is what we don't do. This is who we serve, and this is who we don't serve." (Personal interview, May 2004)

Ms. Dove, the financial director, also attended the board meetings related to the strategic plan. Even though she did not believe she was directly involved in the decisions, she saw value in the initiative:

> I think it is good to be looking into the future, to have a direction, and to have goals, motivating the organization to move forward. The strategic plan may help us get motivated in stating, "We are going to be a better organization, and we will be serving the international community, offering them the best program." It enables us to pull people back out of the trenches and see the big picture. (Personal interview, May 2004)

Participants in this initiative reinforced their need to understand foundational concepts, like their mission, in order to create a strategic plan. Included in the foundational

concepts, then, was redefinition of a mission and vision for the school. In light of this experience, Mr. Bluebird and Mrs. Cardinal were committed to work on a strategic plan that would incorporate a shared approach to finding such direction.

Mr. Bluebird said that focus group meetings were held to ensure that the community was included in the process. There was a faculty and staff focus group, and a community focus group divided into subgroups of the many nationalities included in the community represented at Nieuhaus. The objective was to garner input from the school's multiple constituencies regarding "where should the school be in terms of growth," according to Ms. Owl, the elementary school assistant principal. Ms. Owl used a *bus* metaphor in reflecting about the activity of creating a direction for the school:

> It's like having the right people on the bus. You do not need to all know the direction the bus is going to go. You need to have an idea of the direction you'd want to take—but if you seem to match and you feel that you're the kind of person that can be on the bus, you together create that direction. That is the point in which we are at (Personal interview, May 2004).

In addition to collecting information from parents and faculty, Mr. Bluebird and Mrs. Cardinal hired an outside consultant to accelerate the process.

Mr. Bluebird stated that even though Mrs. Cardinal possessed the skill to help the school craft a strategic plan, they were both aware that such a plan needed to be developed quickly. Mrs. Cardinal's goal was to present evidence of some progress to the community by the end of the year (May). Mr. Bluebird then suggested Ms. Seagull, an outside consultant, as a professional who could help them in the process. She initially guided board members during a retreat in November. The retreat focused on revising of the school's mission statement and on Ms. Seagull's helping the board craft a vision

statement, guiding principles, and objectives, as well as fine-tuning the critical issues

communicated by the community and faculty.

Ms. Seagull led the board through a learning process during the retreat, helping

the group brainstorm ideas and then revise the school's mission and vision statements.

The new mission statement produced by the group read:

> We offer a rigorous, supportive and balanced PK-12 program in English for the
> international community of Nieuhaus that is driven by a strong commitment to
> prepare students for lives as responsible world citizens. (Strategic plan document
> draft, May 2004)

According to Mr. Huron, thinking about the mission helped the school members reframe

its identity:

> It gives some direction for the board to be thinking strategically, and it gives a lot
> of direction to the administration to collect data and to be more thoughtful about
> decision making around the whole idea of creating responsible world citizens, for
> example. (Personal interview, May 2004)

Because Ms. Seagull's success in conducting the retreat, the board agreed that she

would be a great asset in helping the group clarify a major concern that had surfaced in

previous discussions: What does it mean to be an international school? This concern was

related to administrators' question about whom they were focused on serving. Ms.

Seagull returned in March and conducted five focus group sessions to garner additional

input from the community. At the same time, Mrs. Cardinal, using her professional

expertise, produced a first draft of the strategic plan for the board and forwarded it to Mr.

Bluebird.   This plan included possible plans of action divided into five areas: (a)

international—intercultural, (b) quality of the program, (c) assessment and accountability,

(d) community relations, and (e) resource management.

Mrs. Cardinal was going to miss the March activities because she would be out of the country for a few months. Mr. Bluebird said they then agreed that in the interest of time, Ms. Seagull would refine and produce a final document by May to be presented to the community at large. By April, Mr. Bluebird, with the help of Ms. Seagull and the administrators, would work on summarizing the focus group results and craft the strategic plan while Mrs. Cardinal was out of the country. Ms. Seagull agreed to come to a meeting in May to review the document in a session with the full board of directors. According to the administrators, they all helped revise and edit the document before copies were distributed to Mrs. Cardinal, who was now back in the country, as well as all board members and administrators. Yet, according to Mr. Bluebird, the final product surprised Mrs. Cardinal because it did not resemble the format she had drafted before her trip.

Stresses on Building Leadership through Relationships:
The Power of Personal Agendas

Use of collaborative forms of leadership seemed to depend on the participants' relationship dynamics especially in this particular activity. To bring focus to the case, it is important to highlight particular tensions that arose between participants. Such tensions were evidenced in participants' interactions and their intention to have their own personal agendas considered. Participants at Nieuhaus evidenced at least two tensions: (a) the relationship dynamics between Mrs. Cardinal, the board chair, and Ms. Seagull, the consultant; and (b) the dynamics between Mr. Bluebird, the superintendent, and the administrators.

The first tension concerned the dynamics between Mrs. Cardinal and Ms. Seagull. Because all board members and administrators held full-time jobs and had numerous responsibilities, Mrs. Cardinal realized that it would be hard to research the community, consider all the information, and craft a final document by the end of the school year. "We had never developed a grand identity or we had never developed our mission statement. We had never as a community decided 'This is who we are and this is who we aren't,' and we needed to have an agreement on defining a strategic direction of the school," Mrs. Cardinal reminisced, in relation to the decision to hire Ms. Seagull midway through the school year. Mrs. Cardinal's reasons for involving Ms. Seagull in the strategic plan were concrete and objective.

On the other hand, Ms. Seagull's consulting style was not concerned primarily with the end product, but rather on strategic planning as a process. She focused on the "opportunity for the group to define the vision and mission, and all the information gathered, to perceive what paths the school would choose to follow to build a shared future." Ms. Seagull's approach centered on institutional growth and the participants' personal progress, whereby "the individual as a survival personality is somebody who can adjust their behavior to the situation." Her philosophy of leadership was based on shared principles: "When you look at shared leadership, the leadership has to adjust to what is needed to move the organization forward." This adjustment, or growth, according to Ms. Seagull, is the key element in becoming a reflective person and adjusting one's behavior to the situation. "The most difficult and most dangerous leaders," she said, "are those who are not open to feedback from their environment, because they can't address their behavior accordingly." Ms. Seagull was intent on

providing the participants at the American School of Nieuhaus with the tools they needed, not the end product.

According to Ms. Owl, not all administrators and board members were focused on the end product. Like Ms. Seagull, she emphasized the importance of looking at the initiative as a process: "Sometimes the process of adding is more important than the product at the end." In addition, Ms. Owl considered two important elements in the process—group *learning* and *time*—as influencing the group's performance in the initiative. Learning, according to Ms. Owl, involves dealing with changes and having the flexibility to walk away from a single, individual perspective:

> People aren't really comfortable processing because process is uncomfortable and change is awkward. People hope that they can hold on to a little piece of the world and hope that the way they see things is what will go. In our case, we had battles over things like "Do we call this an international community?," or "What does it mean to be a world citizen?" In that battle there were some that just would not want to let go. Part of the process was about understanding where we are going to jointly move the target to. (Personal interview, May 2004)

The second tension concerned the dynamics between Mr. Bluebird and the administrators. Many of the administrators, such as Mr. Huron and Ms. Peacock, perceived Mr. Bluebird as friendly, charismatic, and reflective. Mr. Bluebird described himself as "just starting off, trying to prove myself--that's how I see my job. I see myself as a learner—a head-learner."

Ms. Owl believed that Mr. Bluebird did a good job of empowering the administrators to be decision makers, "so we are able to process with him because he often brings issues forward to determine the directions we need to take as an administrative group." She recognized the dynamics of the group as being based on "equality, honesty, trustworthiness, empowerment of one another, honor and respect."

Nevertheless, at one point, some administrators felt like mere spectators during the tension that arose between Mrs. Cardinal and Ms. Seagull, and were unable to take a stand without Mr. Bluebird's intervention. Mr. Hawk thought that even though Mr. Bluebird worked well with respect to board dynamics, he was "hypersensitive" to the board: "He may be overly concerned about the board. But that is just my opinion and perspective. That may be necessary politically in a position like his, to spend as much time cultivating and massaging and managing the board," reflected Mr. Hawk.

Ms. Dove acknowledged the need for a decisive voice in the group, which Mr. Bluebird did not necessarily generate. She believed he could have exercised his authority to have the final say on a contentious issue:

> I believe that we lead together and we have a common understanding of the goals; we have collegiality, respect for one another, and open communications amongst each other. I do think, however, that a direction is needed. You can have a nice group of people all sort of working together. However, I question whether you can have a circle and not need a head in the circle to point the team in a direction—a pole in the middle of that circle which says this is the direction that we're all going in—and then the team implements the decision together. (Personal interview, May 2004)

The administrators expressed the need for meetings to be given direction, especially when there were disagreements. At one of the meetings, Ms. Dove was impressed with Mr. Hawk, who stepped into the decision-making role:

> I don't think there is any harm in having a debate and even having disagreements on the board. Sometimes we don't know where to go from here. In one of the meetings were asking ourselves, "Where is the next issue?" and Mr. Hawk just came and stepped into a directive role at the meeting, trying to move the group forward. And he got consensus, and he moved the group on. (Personal interview, May 2004)

Even though participants shared the need of a decisive voice during the meetings, they also recognized that "things in schools are not black and white as in business—with

credits and debits—and we cannot consider that if something doesn't come out in a positive column, then there's something wrong with the system," Ms. Owl attested. Most participants were focused on creating functional participation. Within this focus, the administrators appreciated Mr. Bluebird's transparent leadership style. Mr. Hawk exemplified the positive perspective on the shared decision-making process:

> In my own experience, I've found more support than not for a transparent style of management. I think that some leaders tend not to want to come to the bottom line for fear that there's some constituent that is going to be unhappy and is going to stir it up. Again, my experience has been, yes, that's true, but if consensus is on the side of the decision that you made, then let them come. The greater good has caused or the greater good is served by the decision that we made. (Personal interview, May 2004)

Even though tensions were part of the dynamics, Mrs. Cardinal, Mr. Bluebird, and most of the participants were in agreement that plans for future directives were timely. Mr. Bluebird, for example mentioned that the school was not facing any critical issues at the time these meetings were being carried out, which allowed participants with time to build their future actions.

Case II: The Ready-Made Formula at the American
International School of Arboretum

The Project and the People

In an effort to improve the coordination of events and to welcome the community at large to the school facility, the American International School of Arboretum mirrored a successful initiative from another international school. The initiative involved centralizing control over scheduling school facilities. Figure 4.2 shows the composition of the participants involved in this initiative. The scheduling of facilities' use had been

inconsistent at Arboretum, thereby hindering the effective use and proper care of

facilities. Hence, Mr. Olivier, the athletics director, had decided to centralize the

scheduling of facilities as part of his effort to improve the Athletics Department since his

promotion three years ago.

Mr. Olivier, Athletics director: previously a physical education chair and instructor, he has lived in the United Kingdom. He has been part of the school for eight years.

Dr. Cypress, Superintendent: with deep knowledge of international schools, he previously worked in Zambia, Cameroon, Gabon, and Tunisia.

Mrs. Marigold, Events secretary: is a trailing spouse for her husband, who is on assignment in Arboretum. Mrs. Marigold's older son has now graduated from Arboretum and her daughter is in tenth grade.

Mrs. Lucerne, PTA president/parent: a native of Arboretum and with children in the first and sixth grades, Mrs. Lucerne understands the multicultural parent composition.

American International School of Arboretum

Mr. Lavender, Events director: hired this year for the position of Events director and middle school P.E. teacher. His prior experience was as an athletic director in Japan. His daughter is in tenth grade.

Ms. Periwinkle, Development director: a school alumnus, stayed in Arboretum after her father's passing when on assignment in the country. Her son continues the school tradition in the family.

Mr. Rose, Facilities supervisor: experienced in security and facilities management, Mr. Rose moved to Arboretum after living in the Czech Republic.

Mr. Maple, Financial director: a native of Arboretum, he worked in the United Kingdom before working at Arboretum for 12 years. His two children attended the school.

Figure 4.2 Around the table at the American International School of Arboretum

The initiative was ignited by changing the name of the Athletics Office to *Events*

Office at the beginning of the year. The Athletics Office proposed the change to the

superintendent, Dr. Cypress, who proceeded to obtain board approval. The new

scheduling routine was introduced to the school members through large and small

department meetings and general get-togethers at the beginning of the year, as well as

through Parent Teacher Association meetings, printed newsletters, and a newly launched

school-wide electronic medium (online newsletter). This case finds the implementation

of the Events Office at the end of its first year, with eight members of the initiative

sharing their experience and group dynamics during the transition from "how it was before," to how things were after the first year. Next, the school demographics and context of what athletic activities mean in American international schools are presented before exploring the initiative and the dynamics of its participants in depth.

Demographics of the American International School of Arboretum

At the time of this study, the city of Arboretum had a population of approximately 1.8 million. The American International School of Arboretum housed about 750 students from pre-K through 12. The students came from more than 50 countries. About 60% of the teachers were Americans; the rest represented 28 different nationalities. According to Dr. Cypress, the superintendent, the usual tenure of American and international teachers at the school was about four years. Some teachers, however, stayed longer due to the country's economic stability. The country's economy had been stable for the past three years, although this situation did not necessarily bring new businesses to the city, according to locals from the school community. The economic stability was evidenced by the country's controlled growth, not only in terms of population, but also in the economy, with its low unemployment rate. The controlled economic growth was reflected in the school because American and other foreign corporations in many instances maintained a consistent number of families in the country for long periods of time or just replaced them, which translated into a predictable enrollment (School documents, May 2004).

Description of the Country and School Context

The mission of the American International School of Arboretum's was to serve

children of diplomats and employees of international organizations and businesses, as

well as the local community. The school's mission statement reads:

> The American International School of Arboretum offers a university preparatory
> education in the American day-school style for children of all nationalities from
> pre-kindergarten through high school. We provide a culture of educational
> excellence, a nurturing environment, and an atmosphere of open communication.
> We inspire our youth to discover their highest potential in diverse areas of
> endeavor. We foster personal integrity and democratic values and aim to prepare
> our students to become responsible, globally-conscious citizens. (School
> brochure, May 2004)

The school offered a U.S. high school diploma, an International Baccalaureate,

and a local high school diploma. The American International School of Arboretum was

established as a not-for-profit school in 1959, after the U.S. Ambassador helped to make

U.S. funds available in 1956. According to school documents, in 1958, the Arboretum

Ministry of Education officially recognized the school's American curriculum. The

Canadian Embassy offered further support in establishing the school.

The school is located in the suburbs of the country's capital. It is situated close to

a historical park, on 15 acres conveniently removed from the downtown traffic. A

historic villa houses the administrative offices and central operations. Seven adjoining

buildings were constructed, branching out from the villa and forming layers that cluster

the pre-K, elementary, middle, and high school levels. During most of the day, students

from preschool, elementary, middle and high school seldom interact because of the

layered structure, according to Dr. Cypress. The cafeteria and adjacent outdoor

amphitheater serve as a central location where students and faculty of different grade

levels intermingle. Other facilities that join students from various grade levels are the

auditorium and sports areas, including a covered gym, tennis courts, and outdoor courts; an outdoor soccer area is planned, as well.

Co-curricular activities such as athletics, music, and drama, as well as extra-curricular activities such as Amnesty International, bridge, chess, judo, karate, and ballet are popular. These activities help students develop leadership roles and learn the values of community service. Athletic competitions are given significant attention, according to the athletics director, Mr. Olivier, with competitions and workshops being scheduled among American schools located in more than 10 adjacent countries. School brochures emphasize the many opportunities students have to participate in athletic activities, as well as the performing arts, drama, and band.

A Snapshot of Leadership Dynamics: The Athletic Game

Three historical issues of concern motivated the Mr. Olivier, the athletics director to step forward and head the initiative of coordinating school events: (a) decentralized management of facilities, which was a chronic problem hindering the coordination of events, (b) security, ensuring safe and well-maintained buildings; and (c) school image, creating a structure to welcome visitors to school events. The participants were focused on a schoolwide vision to improve internal operations, and to better accommodate the needs of students, parents, the community, and outside visitors, according to Dr. Cypress, the superintendent. The decentralized scheduling of facilities by different teachers created territorial power, according to Mr. Lavender, the events coordinator. Participants cited issues of whose needs were given preference, and lack of communication across departments and school divisions with regard to "who got priority" when several events were taking place simultaneously or there were conflict regarding use of facilities. Mr.

Lavender, the events coordinator, attested that "whoever cried louder would get the facility—and there were overlaps even when it was done on the computer." Dr. Cypress was also concerned about this problem.

When Mr. Olivier learned that the Athletics Office at another American international school coordinated all of that school's facilities, he considered adopting that practiced and proposed the idea to Dr. Cypress. After all, the athletics department represents a large enterprise in American international schools, and careful coordination of facilities is essential to its smooth functioning.

"I don't think anyone has an idea of how busy we are in this office," claimed Ms. Marigold, the department secretary. The Athletics Office resembled an almost independent organization, "a microcosm of the school," added Mr. Olivier. The office staff included Mrs. Marigold, the secretary; the athletics director, Mr. Olivier; and the activities coordinator, Mr. Lavender. Mr. Olivier had a partial teaching load and coordinated competitions and events. He had initiated many of the practices in that office, such as using the school's website to keep parents and other school directors informed about the students' well-being during athletics competitions. Mr. Lavender had a three-quarter teaching load. As the activities coordinator, his responsibilities included interviewing and hiring after-school instructors for a number of activities, including Amnesty International, model United Nations, bridge, chess, judo, karate, and ballet. Organizing after-school activities was a complex task, according to Mr. Lavender, involving hiring instructors from within and outside the school, and coordinating the facilities and budget with the financial director, Mr. Maple.

Mr. Lavender coordinated the school calendar as well, because most of the activities and competitions used the school facilities. Posting the calendar on a website for parents was a new endeavor this year. The greatest responsibility of the office, however, according to Mr. Olivier, was organizational—coordinating sports and other events with local schools and with other American schools in neighboring countries.

School and community members positively perceived the integration of sports into the curriculum. Thus on any given weekend, the school might have welcomed 20 to 100 students from other schools for a competition and at the same time sent their athletes to compete in a different sport at another school. Unlike stateside schools with their district and regional competitions, the American International School in Arboretum sent its students out of the country for almost every competition that was not held at the school.

Mrs. Periwinkle, the development director, valued the integration of sports and academics: "The American curriculum is well integrated, especially from an Arboretum perspective [and] especially the way people are honored in a positive approach to learning and the way we integrate sports and academics." She added:

> It is something that I really like and the reason I sent my son to this school. And it is just very well embedded in this international setting because you have American teaching methods, but it is unique, because you are teaching people from all over the world, and you have to deal with the way they react to it. The program is flexible and it seems to work well for the students. (Personal interview, May 2004)

Mrs. Lucerne, Parent-Teacher Association president, who as a child had attended a local school in Arboretum, attested that the local schools considered sports an extra curricular activity, rather than an essential part of school spirit, as it was at Arboretum. She said she had learned much about the differences between the Arboretum and

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American educational philosophies, and about the degree of involvement American families have with the school. "In the culture I come from, parents are not so involved in what the school is doing," attested Mrs. Lucerne, "and you wouldn't even get a newsletter. You would get something from the teacher only if something is wrong or if a trip is planned, whereas I think the American culture in this respect is completely different."

Dr. Cypress, the superintendent, confirmed that one of the staples of American education is its emphasis on extra-curricular activities, "a hallmark of our educational system." "It is about an interaction with teachers in a holistic approach to education—that includes music and art, physical education, and sports." The emphasis on extra curricular activities was related to the school's concern to connect its students with those from similar schools, especially because a certain level of isolation is characteristic of American international schools, according to Dr. Cypress. Hence, students traveled to more than 10 countries to participate in music, arts, or sports competitions. In the aim to connect students with peers from other schools, parents also played a major role, because they realized that "the kids learn a lot outside the classroom," affirmed Dr. Cypress. Parents paid their children's travel expenses, whereas the school contributed with housing, logistics, and cultural opportunities. Thus, events at the American International School of Arboretum received much support from the administration, according to Mr. Olivier. Events provided local and expatriate students and parents, an opportunity to interact with members of other American international schools.

In relation to sports, Mr. Olivier recalled past criticism in earlier years when the community thought there was no school spirit: "I believe it was true in this school

because we never coordinated many events on campus," he affirmed. Mr. Olivier believed that the school as a community should be invested in the tournaments, in order to create community cohesion. In light of these facts, Mr. Olivier challenged the school by hosting the basketball competition two years in a row. "Classes came and watched the tournament and got behind the basketball program, which had a spin-off on the school spirit," according to Mr. Olivier. Especially important to Mr. Olivier was to see a math teacher of 25 years sitting in the bleachers at the basketball tournament, standing up and cheering for the team. For Mr. Olivier, this was a double reward.

Because Mr. Olivier sometimes needed to pull students out of class to participate in some competition, he was pleased to see the teachers looking at athletics in a different light. According to Mr. Olivier, not only was the faculty having an opportunity to see students in a different light, but also students were able to show their teachers and peers other qualities beyond those they exhibited in the classroom setting. In addition, Mr. Olivier noted that students in American International Schools often are from different countries and frequently move. Therefore, he believed that sports helped students deal with culture shock. Mr. Olivier believed that sports, teamwork, and traveling provided some healing of culture shock to students facing adaptation and disengagement issues. For example, to compete outside of the country, students were housed with host families whose backgrounds often differed from their own. A student of Dutch origin who lived in Arboretum might thus spend the weekend with a Korean family. Mrs. Marigold attested that the varied housing experience enriched the Arboretum children's development:

> You cannot put a price tag on the experience. It is an absolute privilege for the
> children who attend an international school and travel to surrounding countries for

whatever occasion, like speech and debate, or sports. My children are so used to traveling all over and being housed from an African-American family to an Israeli family to a Pakistani family to a Korean family. (Personal interview, May 2004)

The arrival of athletes from different countries for a competition was challenging from an organizational standpoint because competitions usually took place on weekends. Arranging multiple rides to and from the airport, housing accommodations for athletes, and hotel accommodations for the coaches was part of the office's weekly tasks. Mrs. Marigold, who was fluent in the Arboretum language, helped with purchasing train and airline tickets, and checking student visas (students were from different countries and thus had a variety of visa requirements).

According to Mr. Maple, because of the number of activities and visitors to the school, it was difficult to organize the scheduling of facilities. The operations sometimes included combined arranging for combined scheduling of cafeteria and sports courts or theater. In addition, enhanced security support inside and outside the school was needed, especially on weekends. Prior to the creation of the Events Office, negotiations for facilities were once handled by Mr. Maple and the faculty advisors. To Mr. Maple, the task led to an impasse. According to Mr. Maple, he had to function in two worlds—the business world and the education world. His task then, was to juggle two modes of negotiating:

> When I am coming from business negotiations, like building our soccer field, I have two-or three-hour negotiations with a company and solutions are made. Right after that a teacher comes to me, and then I have to really calm down and think about it because it is a totally different approach, when teachers do not expect that you present an immediate solution, but would like to develop negotiations over time. (Personal interview, May 2004)

According to Mr. Maple, "the number of events was increasing at a dramatic speed in the last five years." He commented:

> We have one or more teams from 50 to 120 students traveling for educational purposes or for sports competitions almost every week. One or more teams come to our site for athletic interactions at least every three weeks. We welcome at least 15 international schools once every year for a theater festival. We just started band classes, and that will bring more events to the campus. (Personal interview, May 2004)

Therefore, the idea of the Events Office, according to Mr. Olivier, was a great starting point for any inquiries or information gathering:

> There would be no budgetary impact to Mr. Lavender and me taking on the extra responsibility of managing the calendar and managing the facilities with the help of the facilities manager. And what it meant was a lot of teachers were absolved of their responsibility for organizing and booking and contracting people out. So the reaction was very favorable. (Personal interview, May 2004)

Dr. Cypress was aware however, that the more seasoned faculty members supported the school's established traditions of facility use. Because many superintendents, administrators, and teachers moved to and from other countries, long-term or more seasoned teachers naturally assumed the responsibility for organizing activities and scheduling use of the facilities. Such need-based traditions would prove difficult to change.

In fact, the longevity of faculty at Arboretum presented a challenge, according to Dr. Cypress; such longevity is unique for American international schools in general. "When people stay a long time, or an average of 12 years in our case, they build a great deal of autonomy and a great deal of power and authority," affirmed Dr. Cypress, "and the structure becomes more rigid. In such a rigid structure, change agents have more difficulty in effecting change."

Nevertheless, Dr. Cypress believed that the introduction of this initiative would help infuse positive change in the routines at Arboretum. He believed that the best way

to initiate change was often from the bottom up, especially as this stable community had seen so many superintendents come and go. In an attempt to improve the institution's health, Dr. Cypress often sought to hire new people, like Mr. Lavender, who were supportive of change: "It takes changing the climate one person at a time, division by division," affirmed Dr. Cypress. In relation to establishing the Events Office, Dr. Cypress and Mr. Olivier anticipated that people who were used to doing things autonomously would have trouble adjusting. "They like what they have been doing," said Dr. Cypress, "because they only know the little part that they do, they don't know the big picture."

Mr. Olivier and Mr. Lavender saw themselves as serving and contributing to the "big picture," especially due to their leadership styles. "I see myself as a referee— they're only good when they are invisible," said Mr. Lavender. In turn, Mr. Olivier used a *bus* metaphor to describe how he saw his position in relation to the department: "I think of it as if we created a bus, an events bus, and the bus is in the parking lot and now it started moving and people could decide to get on or off. Most people got on. Some got off. That is just the way it is."

Stresses on Building Leadership through Relationships:
What Is the Value-Added to School Members?

The participants' relationship dynamics around the Events Office initiative presented unique tensions. The participants acknowledged at least three tensions: (a) The implementation of the Events Office challenging the autonomy of faculty who had once been responsible for coordinating events; (b) whether internal and external members understood the proposed change; and (c) the consequent scope of the task now being performed by Mr. Olivier and Mr. Lavender.

The first tension related to the faculty who had once been involved with coordinating events. This tension about implementation of the Events Office could be sensed in some school members' criticism of and resistance to the initiative. Even though Dr. Cypress recognized that many teachers and staff were in favor of the initiative, he did not see its being accepted so easily by a few of the faculty involved. As Mr. Olivier indicated, some faculty tended to fix their criticism on mistakes that were made, rather than overall improvement. Dr. Cypress cited an example of the events calendar to illustrate the point:

> The calendar that the events office is now coordinating used to be done by somebody else, and that person is still not sure they're comfortable with the change. If they see a mistake, they see that as a drawback, not remembering that they made lots of mistakes when they did the calendar as well—and that overall, it's probably better than it used to be. But that doesn't mean that the person that used to do it would see it that way. (Personal interview, May 2004)

Ms. Periwinkle, the development director, shared that the function of the Events Office had not been communicated in enough detail: "It was clear that we now had Mr. Lavender coordinating the after-school activities from the Events Office. However, the magnitude of his responsibilities was not clear. It made some people confused in the beginning and they would come to my office asking, 'Do you know who does this now?—and I didn't even know.' Ms. Periwinkle's resistance could also be sensed from her reasoning about the initiative:

> I am sure the initiative was moved by rather logical reasons because having one person in charge of athletics and non athletics activities is a good idea. I know we have a very big extra curricular activities program as well as sports competitions. And then, of course, the next step was to know what facilities all activities would be using, so the calendar coordination was transferred to the Events Office as well. I am not the one to say if it was the best decision, but that is just the way it sort of worked, which doesn't seem illogical. (Personal interview, May 2004)

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Second, the way in which the initiative was implemented seemed to create tension. According to Mr. Olivier, the initiative, which mirrored another school's practice, had a chance to work well at Arboretum. Nevertheless, Mrs. Marigold thought that the department's name change to *Events Office* confused people in the school: "I wish they would come up with a different name. Because *events* does not say anything for athletics—it is misleading." Mrs. Marigold could not recall when the faculty had been informed of the name change and believed people had been confused initially about where to go: "I don't think it was clarified what exactly the Events Office was and who was doing what." As a parent, Mrs. Lucerne agreed with Mrs. Marigold. She perceived that the change to the Events Office improved the coordination of activities. However, in the announcement of this change to the community, things were not very clear:

> I am not sure whether [the change] was received by the community. It was not very clear to us, who were in charge of what. Mr. Lavender is now in charge of the facilities calendar, but there are lots of people who do not know about this, or who probably know it and have read it but it has not become a routine yet. (Personal interview, May 2004)

The pace at which the change was implemented seemed to have influenced a number of constituents' adoption of the new routine. Ms. Periwinkle, for example, was somewhat resistant, especially when she discovered that two events were scheduled for the same location, a discovery she made when organizing the annual alumni reunion dinner, a long standing school tradition. According to Mr. Lavender, such conflicts occurred because some school members were still booking the facilities on their own: "There were people who would still book themselves after I took over, but we had to remind them that it would now be coordinated by the Events Office," Mr. Lavender explained.

Mr. Olivier recognized that a few teachers thought their power had been taken away. "We struggled with it because one can change things quickly or slowly. And when one is a quick changer, then you need to do the quick change, cause the damage, and get out!" Mr. Olivier recognized that it would have been beneficial to go through the transition as a slow change agent, which would have involved getting Dr. Cypress to explain to the community members "why we are doing this change, here's how we are making the change, here are the benefits of the change, here are the problems that have been caused, and here's what we are doing about the problems." However, because he had taken the quick approach, Mr. Olivier recognized that things did not go so well in the first semester:

> There was a big announcement that I and Mr. Lavender would run the Events Office, and then everything went quiet. And we had benefits and we had problems but we were running into more and more resistance, i.e., people slipping back to the old mechanism. We would go into a facilities meeting and we would check the calendars, and we would see things being added in the theatre and they had not come through this office. (Personal interview, May 2004)

Mr. Lavender added that Dr. Cypress needed to remind the community about the new initiative:

> Though the change had been communicated broadly, we got to the point where we went to Dr. Cypress and said, "We need you to step in here and we need you to make people aware." And he did, to be honest. He then stood up at a meeting and said exactly what needed to be said at every meeting. (Personal interview, May 2004)

Mr. Maple, who used to be more involved in scheduling the facilities, perceived that a new initiative can sometimes deteriorate school operations before dramatically improving them. "We are in the stage that we can improve to where we had it before and *then* improve further," he stated. His perception about using a successful model from another school was that creating "a few hiccups in the organization" should not prevent

implementation. "Mr. Olivier and Mr. Lavender now supervise and bring solutions to the problems we once faced," Mr. Maple reflected. "On the other hand, now it is up to them to make the income. They are responsible to rent, negotiate with those interested in renting our facilities, and make enough money to upkeep the facilities. So they find it is not as easy." Mr. Maple perceived the process as a work in progress, where no improvements were yet visible: "I believe that the initiative was bigger than they imagined and they find that some things are harder to be done better." Mr. Maple's also was concerned about the Events Office's additional load of managing the calendar of activities.

The third tension was related to the consequent scope of the task now being performed by Mr. Olivier and Mr. Lavender. Neither man had foreseen that the organization of facilities and the calendar was so "inherently married—which is a problem," Mr. Olivier declared. Changing the calendar to an electronic format at the beginning of the school year was another improvement in school communications. So, when a calendar change was made from the Events Office, Mr. Olivier and Mr. Lavender made requisite facilities changes and communicated those changes through the school website. Not everyone was checking the website regularly, though. Encouraging the community to be more online oriented was one of the goals of the Events Office Mr. Olivier explained:

> When you generate a printed calendar in August for the school year and give it to the community, you're asking for serious trouble because hardly anything is going to stay the same. But people will have that calendar and will cling onto it for grim death and will say, "Look, it is on the calendar." (Personal interview, May 2004)

In saying this, Mr. Olivier, touched at the heart of a school tradition. Mrs. Lucerne spoke

to the symbolism of the calendar, saying that families often found some sort of "comfort"

in having printed calendars:

> The PTA sold printed calendars for the last time at the beginning of this year as a
> fundraising activity. Newcomers and returning families feel comfortable having
> the printed calendar at home to hang it on the refrigerator, even though we all
> know that the calendar may be outdated on the day it comes out. So when the
> newsletter was mailed to our homes with a calendar addendum, we would mark
> the changes. That is how it worked. (Personal interview, May 2004)

Mrs. Lucerne also was concerned about the significant decrease in parent responses to

PTA invitations since the calendar and announcements went electronic:

> We have gone electronic since the fall after a trial period at the end of last year.
> The school provided families with news on paper for four or five weeks and then
> an email was sent to every family with a link to the internet. But I am sure we
> lost—and this is very conservatively, at least 50% of those who used to read the
> school information, because I do not get responses to our invitations anymore.
> (Personal interview, May 2004)

Even though Mr. Olivier was enthusiastic about the improvements brought about

by this initiative, he now realized the magnitude of the change: "I think we now see the

task of the Events Office, and the calendar maintenance, as a bigger portion than I had

realized," he admitted. Mr. Lavender attested that "lots of conflicts and things would

appear in the calendar that we would not know about." He found it hard to control the

facilities when there were conflicting events. "School activities require a lot of planning,

as we need to accommodate sports, model United Nations, and many other activities that

bring students from other schools to the campus." However, the number of activities that

were not coordinated by the Events Office was hard to control. In reflecting on the

calendar coordination toward the end of the year, Mr. Olivier concluded that it should be

coordinated by someone else:

Our suggestion to the school is going to be that the calendar can go somewhere else. We will do all of the facilitating, but somebody has to keep the calendar up to date, so we will look at the calendar and facilitate what is on the calendar. And that calendar manager will sit in that meeting, but I don't think we are capable of doing all that we do plus the calendar maintenance. (Personal interview, May 2004)

Mr. Olivier predicted that his and Mr. Lavender's giving up the task of calendar coordination would have some repercussions when this change was announced to Dr. Cypress at the end of the year. Mr. Lavender saw it as a difficult decision that would entail difficult negotiation. Mrs. Lucerne agreed that if the school was committed to changing communication methods in order to reach the community more effectively, "and if it turns out that the community does not respond to anything anymore, we might have to think of something else."

Case III: The Lay-Off Survivors at the American School of Whisperwind

The Project and the People

Behind the peaceful gardens of the American School of Whisperwind, the school was healing, according to school participants. Longer-serving faculty and staff at Whisperwind claimed people still held intense feelings and avoided talking about the superintendent who had been asked to leave in 1998 after serving the institution for almost 20 years. Well-liked by many constituents, the superintendent, his wife (a teacher at the school), and their son (a high school student at the time), were asked to leave for undisclosed reasons. The superintendent filed a lawsuit against the school, which divided the community, caused many teachers to resign, and left the remaining ones confused and bitter. According to school members, in the four years since that episode, the American

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School of Whisperwind had employed two other superintendents who had been unable to change the organizational culture, thus perpetuating the disengagement and resistance of faculty and staff. Now, six years after the event, this case finds a third superintendent, now in her second year, considering the resistance of school members while implementing a schoolwide strategic plan. Around the table, participants are introduced in figure 4.3. Before expanding on the school initiative, information on the demographics and the context influencing the American School of Whisperwind today is provided.
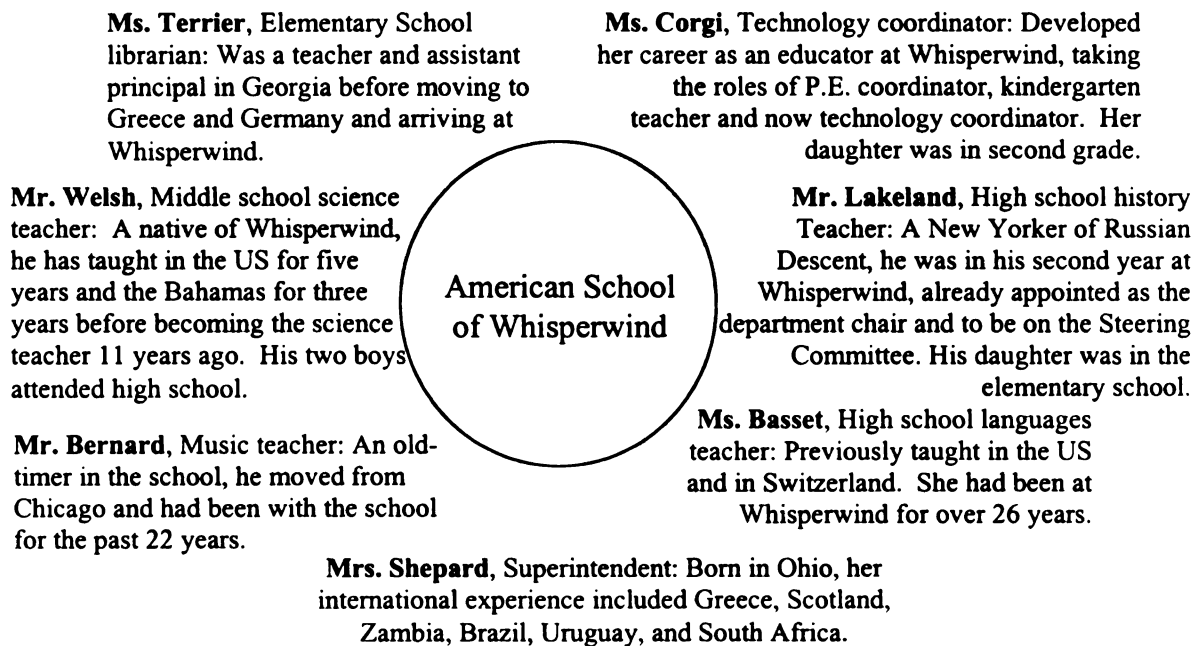
Ms. Terrier, Elementary School librarian: Was a teacher and assistant principal in Georgia before moving to Greece and Germany and arriving at Whisperwind.

Ms. Corgi, Technology coordinator: Developed her career as an educator at Whisperwind, taking the roles of P.E. coordinator, kindergarten teacher and now technology coordinator. Her daughter was in second grade.

Mr. Welsh, Middle school science teacher: A native of Whisperwind, he has taught in the US for five years and the Bahamas for three years before becoming the science teacher 11 years ago. His two boys attended high school.

Mr. Lakeland, High school history Teacher: A New Yorker of Russian Descent, he was in his second year at Whisperwind, already appointed as the department chair and to be on the Steering Committee. His daughter was in the elementary school.

American School of Whisperwind

Ms. Basset, High school languages teacher: Previously taught in the US and in Switzerland. She had been at Whisperwind for over 26 years.

Mr. Bernard, Music teacher: An old-timer in the school, he moved from Chicago and had been with the school for the past 22 years.

Mrs. Shepard, Superintendent: Born in Ohio, her international experience included Greece, Scotland, Zambia, Brazil, Uruguay, and South Africa.

Figure 4.3 Around the table at the American School of Whisperwind

Demographics of the American School of Whisperwind

The American School of Whisperwind is a proprietary school located in the suburb of a large metropolitan area. The American School of Whisperwind opened 26 years ago with 50 students. Today the school welcomes more than 600 students from ages 4 to 18. According to information provided by the school, the American School of

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Whisperwind houses a medium-size population of expatriate children of about 40 nationalities and 26 languages. The Whisperwind campus encompasses 11 acres; facilities include a stately mansion and adjacent buildings that house classrooms, computer labs, libraries, and an auditorium, surrounded by well-manicured gardens. The city, with approximately 360,000 inhabitants, harbors people of all nationalities. The diverse business and expatriate communities concentrated in the country are mirrored in the American School of Whisperwind. Nevertheless, Mrs. Shepard, the present superintendent noted that the school's demographics changed after September 11, 2001:

> Americans coming overseas have decreased, or if the companies have maintained the same number, they are choosing older executives whose children already graduated, or they're choosing executives that are single because many American families were very sensitive after September 11 to bring young families overseas. They're starting to come back, but I would say that if you talked to all the schools in [Whisperwind], I'd say that most of them experienced anywhere from 5% to 15% drop in enrollment. (Personal interview, May 2004)

Description of the Country and School Context

According to school brochures, the city's progressive economy has attracted people of many nationalities to invest in businesses there, especially because the city of Whisperwind is located at a convenient port of entry for business and product exchange. The city's inviting economy also has contributed to the establishment of more than six American schools in the vicinity. Because expatriates in the city of Whisperwind have several educational options, the school is challenged to deliver quality education and unique options to its constituents. Therefore, the American School of Whisperwind offers an "international program based on American values," according to Mrs. Shepard, the superintendent. The program includes Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses, and the curriculum is one of the most international of those

offered by the American schools. In addition, the American School of Whisperwind is subject to local accreditation processes. Whisperwind's mission statement reflects the school's commitment to serving multiple cultures and a highly mobile population:

> At Whisperwind we encourage a positive attitude toward education and lifelong learning; provide meaningful educational experiences that enable students to acquire and apply knowledge, concepts, and skills; help each student realize his/her academic, creative, and physical potential; provide opportunities for students to understand, appreciate and develop sensitivity for other cultures; encourage charities; promote a partnership with parents to meet the needs of students; and offer programs that address issues associated with a highly mobile population. (School document, May 2004)

Because the American School of Whisperwind is a proprietary school, the superintendent is seen as a middle manager, serving under an executive director and a board of governance located in the largest of the three schools owned by the proprietary entity in another part of town. Teachers had little interaction with the executive director. For example, Mrs. Bassett, the languages teacher, who had served the school for more than 26 years, did not recall ever being visited by or even talking to the executive director.

Mrs. Shepard, the superintendent, did most of the planning and made most of the decisions regarding to curriculum, personnel issues, and budgetary concerns. She attested:

> What is so wonderful about this position for me is that I do not have to operate directly with a board of directors—a lot of your time is taken up not being an educational leader. I don't have to deal with any of that—and that may take 40% of my time. So going from a position where I could spend 60% of my time being an educational leader, now I can spend 100% of my time in educational leadership. (Personal interview, May 2004)

Nevertheless, as in U.S. public school districts, Mrs. Shepard was somewhat limited in her decision making. Sometimes she had to defer to the executive director and the central office when making decisions.

A Snapshot of Leadership Dynamics: The New
Superintendent Initiates Change

Many of the participants at Whisperwind stressed that they did not want to talk about episodes involving the well-liked superintendent who had been asked to leave. It was evident, however, from the participants' frequent references to past episodes, that almost all of them revisited the school's historical wounds during the interviews and made sure that I was aware of how that history had affected interrelations among people at the school. Most of them indicated the importance of retelling their story.

The following is a condensed version of the events that occurred as the participants recounted them: After the well-liked superintendent and his family were asked to leave, the current middle school principal showed an interest in the position. The executive director and the board of governance announced their decision to promote the middle school principal to the superintendency. This decision made the teachers and staff suspicious that the well-liked superintendent had been a victim of a scheme, according to some participants.

The former middle school principal, now the superintendent, found it extremely difficult to operate with such faculty and staff resistance and left after two years. Ms. Terrier, the school librarian, recalled her own arrival at Whisperwind as a "time of incredible turmoil," when the well-liked superintendent had been fired and was protesting that action in court. His replacement, the former middle school principal, was the one

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who had hired Ms. Terrier, but she soon learned that school members did not trust him. Many teachers left at that time, recalled Ms. Terrier; in fact, six new teachers were hired that year for the lower school alone: "We sort of started a subculture of change, and I realized it was hard for people who had been here a long time and liked the way they were doing things, especially on the heels of such an emotional upheaval," she attested.

Even after two years, the middle school principal had not been accepted as superintendent, according to Mr. Welsh, the middle school science teacher. He said that in the face of such resistance, the executive director and board of governance decided that perhaps it was time to bring in an administrator from the United States, someone who could bring a refreshing spirit to the community, and restore an authentic American educational philosophy to Whisperwind. Full of enthusiasm, the new superintendent implemented many innovations, according to Ms. Terrier. However, he was inexperienced in relating to people of other nationalities, and he often made stereotypical remarks that caused the faculty and staff at Whisperwind to become even more disengaged. As a result, the new superintendent did not help rebuild the school culture, according to Ms. Terrier:

> He would just make flippant remarks and showed that he wasn't thinking in a multicultural way. He was very tunnel-visioned and it didn't work...It didn't work. He didn't realize that this was a multicultural not a multiethnic community. Therefore in the last superintendent search, when Mrs. Shepard was hired, I don't think we looked at any people with no international experience. The school had learned a lesson. (Personal interview, May 2004)

Ms. Corgi and Mr. Welsh used a *ship* metaphor to describe the result of numerous difficult episodes with previous superintendents. Ms. Corgi described the situation this way:

We were a ship that was in very strong waters and a lot of people would not accept just anybody as a new superintendent. And you cannot change a ship by simply changing the superintendent. And that was a problem because we had too much history floating around. The rumbling and the after flow was still there. (Personal interview, May, 2004)

Mr. Welsh, the science teacher at Whisperwind for the past 11 years, believed that people in the school were indeed resistant to change: "I think it is fear. It takes them out of their comfort zone. They are not risk takers; they're not used to this sort of change. But if you don't change you die—you become a dinosaur." Nevertheless, teachers retreated to their classrooms and were no longer engaged to new school matters. After two years, this superintendent also left. These episodes did not bring about a significant decrease in student enrollment, but they did cause high turnover among faculty and staff. Following that superintendent's departure, Mrs. Shepard was hired as the new superintendent.

Mrs. Shepard learned about the aforementioned sequence of events and the school culture before she accepted the superintendency. *Resistance* was the word the executive director used when describing to her the school culture at the American School of Whisperwind. Mrs. Shepard attested:

> I think that one of the most important things to do as a head of school, when you come in and you're new to a new job, to a new culture, is to listen and not move too fast. What I found when I came here was that there were a lot of problems with staff morale. (Personal interview, May 2004)

Mrs. Shepard sensed resistance especially from the middle and high school teachers:

> There was a large group of middle and high school teachers that were very resistant to any changes in curriculum, for example, because they felt that they had one head that came in and wanted to do this and that, and another head, and another head....and they pretty much put their feet down and sort of refused to do anything. So we had to start very, very small, and very, very slowly, and things that I would view as a normal procedure such as introducing curriculum mapping and having teachers put their curriculum online – I had to facilitate because they were so resistant. (Personal interview, May 2004)

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According to Ms. Terrier, the school needed to heal its wounds from the past, with an administrator who "would not come in firing guns—but who would come in to look at what was here with respect to the people involved and then try to move it forward." Considering the past was important for Mr. Terrier:

> I think Mrs. Shepard is the right person for this job—if she can't do it, no one can at this point. To gain respect from this community is no small feat because so many people are jaded about the kind of leadership that we had and from the mistrust issues. We needed someone with a teaching background, and Mrs. Shepard brought something new to our school. She is open and transparent. So having the communication going back and forth again is so healthy. Being approachable is healthy. (Personal interview, May 2004)

Mr. Lakeland, the history chair pointed out that the institutional culture at Whisperwind was not static due to its international character. He stressed that an institutional memory was not widely shared, due to the nature of international schools: "It is simply that international educators, just as their students and the families they teach, often move. It is a fact and reality of this circuit." For this and other reasons, Mr. Lakeland recognized that Mrs. Shepard had a formidable task facing her:

> She needed to convince the faculty of her – she needed to get the faculty behind her. The reason why she needed to do that is because in a way we are a dysfunctional family—dysfunctional individuals who have been traumatized by something in the past and therefore do not respond normally or appropriately to what is actually happening. (Personal interview, May 2004)

At the same time, the faculty was scrutinizing Mrs. Shepard's moves and values. For example, Mr. Bernard, the music teacher, noticed that one way Mrs. Shepard resembled the well-liked superintendent was her practice of meeting everybody each morning when they entered the school. "All of the students and most of the teachers come in through the old part of the school, the front way I like to call it. So we see her and she sees

everybody." Thus, Mrs. Shepard was visible to the community, and the school members began to acknowledge and accept her.

Mrs. Shepard then initiated the development of a strategic plan involving everyone in school. The process of developing that plan began in a general session. Mrs. Shepard reflected:

> This is the first time that I've ever done a strategic plan where I invited every single member from the staff—from the security personnel to the principal. I've written every single thing that every person said, and had it fed back to them, and did not leave anybody's opinion out—I cannot tell you the amount of work it was—it was absolutely unbelievable. (Personal interview, May 2004)

Participants described the initial meetings Mrs. Shepard held to develop the strategic plan. At Mrs. Shepard's first monthly meeting with the entire faculty and staff, she proposed that they identify school-related concerns. All faculty and staff filled in a one-question survey that asked, "From your perspective, what is the most significant concern about the school?" From the survey responses, Mrs. Shepard identified six areas of concern: facilities, communication, administration, professional development, student life, and curriculum.

At the second meeting, Mrs. Shepard proposed that the entire faculty and staff divide into groups according to grade level and subject area. They would again cite their concerns, but this time, list them under the six main areas of concern identified earlier. During the meeting, people fired many questions at Mrs. Shepard about the value of such a plan, and asked her to clarify the group's participation. The faculty and staff were hesitant to cooperate, and after two hours of questions, Mrs. Shepard pleaded: "Let's just try it, OK? Let's just try it." Mrs. Shepard recalled that they had 10 meetings related to the strategic plan that first year:

We did get through all six areas. And after the groups would meet, I would take each group's folder with what they found out from their meetings, of what every single member of that group felt should be on that strategic plan. All the inputs were screened by the steering committee, and the document is on the school intranet now. So every teacher can look at it and see where we are every year. (Personal interview, May 2004)

The need to define the school's purpose surfaced during participants' discussions of the strategic plan. To define the school's direction, participants indicated they first needed to decide whether the school should be considered American or international. According to Ms. Bassett, the languages teacher, the school had been "sitting on the fence" about this question. Mr. Welsh concurred with Ms. Basset saying the school needed to define a direction, and express publicly what they offered to students, as an institution:

We sell ourselves as an American school to American parents, and then they come here and they are unhappy because this is not American enough. We sell ourselves as an international school to the international parents and when they come here, they are unhappy because it's too American. And it's only recently that some people said, we have to decide who we are and we can decide where we're going. There are still certain things about the strategic plan where we are still deciding where we're going, but we still haven't decided who we are. (Personal interview, May 2004)

Ms. Basset acknowledged that it was difficult to formulate a strategic plan before defining the school's purpose:

To me this is really difficult to do because in some way any plan would have to take into consideration the clientele, the nature of the school, of what do we want to be. So basically I was questioning, how can I plan what we want to do in five years if we don't know who we are? (Personal interview, May 2004)

In subsequent months, the faculty and staff were gradually getting involved in identifying areas of concern within the various divisions of the school. However, even though people had begun participating in delineating the concerns, they did not

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necessarily agree with how the meetings were conducted, or how the plan was being organized. Mr. Lakeland talked about some school members' resistance to taking part in the initiative:

> The process initiated by Mrs. Shepard is cumbersome, it takes up time. People wonder if it is a waste of time. They wonder why for example, I as a high school teacher would have to comment on some facet of lower school instruction or facilities—and what do I know, what do I care?—And, of course, there is merit to that objection. But overall I would say if we were to look at it on balance, I think that Mrs. Shepard's approach is fairly daring and innovative, even though admittedly inefficient. I don't think that efficiency is her number one goal anyway--but as far as interacting with the faculty, I think Mrs. Shepard wisely and in a way reflects who she is as a human being—her humanity and her essential sense of fairness and democracy. She really wanted input. (Personal interview, May 2004)

Mr. Lakeland's concern was related not only to the pace at which the initiative was being developed, but also the need for consistency in a highly mobile community such as the American School of Whisperwind:

> I must say that our structure and our culture here could be tighter and better organized. Our top administrator matters a huge amount and it may take longer to get things done in Mrs. Shepard's mode. And the number of things that need to get done, the list of unfinished business items, is large because consistency tends to suffer at international schools. So Mrs. Shepard is criticized for the inherent ineffectiveness of that kind of approach. But I really take her at face value when she says that she is doing this for reasons of our institutional health. I think she is really right. (Personal interview, May 2004)

Mr. Barnard, on the other hand, thought the process of developing a strategic plan showed that the faculty could participate in school life beyond the classroom:

> In some ways what [the strategic plan] is doing is keeping everybody hopefully somewhat involved in the ongoing growth of the school, not just "I am going to come here teach and leave at 3:30 or 4:00," or whatever. [It is showing] that there is a life in the school as well as a life in the classroom. (Personal interview, May 2004)

Mr. Barnard saw the strategic plan as an initiative that was educating many members of the American School of Whisperwind:

> In education sometimes the journey is what you need to learn—not the finished goal. And I think that our strategic plan started us off on a journey. It has given us a map and "here's some ways that we can go and change things." I don't think that the real true goal of a strategic plan is that everything on that checklist is going to be done at the end of five years. But I think there is a process that will be taking place between the administration and the staff and various people saying, "Look, is this important, how do we go here? How did we get here? Why did we say we wanted to do this?" I think the biggest part has been that collectively there is a voice now that has been given an avenue of expression. (Personal interview, May 2004)

Mrs. Shepard said that subsequent meetings related to the strategic plan gradually became more engaging. People were thinking more deeply about building facilities, curricular needs, professional development, and especially the administration. Mr. Bernard recalled that various groups commented on each other's recommendations on different issues, and that many good ideas emerged. Mrs. Shepard indicated maintaining that steady pace was important in trust-building:

> I learned that you have to keep the momentum moving, that you have to get the right balance—if you move too fast, you're going to have to go backwards, and if you move too slow you'll never get people on board. So for me, it was a matter of pacing and knowing how to work with people when they feel that they have input. And they feel all along the line that they have input. I learned most about pacing and feeling how people will react and be willing to be flexible and say "Okay, you've got a point. Let's slow down, and let's analyze this." (Personal interview, May 2004)

Mrs. Shepard relied on the expertise of a steering committee when dealing with issues of this magnitude. A steering committee was already in place when she arrived at Whisperwind: it was composed of principals and some teachers to fulfill the requirements of an accreditation process. Once the accreditation process was completed, Mrs. Shepard invited the steering committee to continue its monthly meetings to oversee the strategic

plan. "My idea behind the concept of the steering committee, which generally goes with accreditation, was that we needed a small group to be able to coordinate the work produced by the general meetings." Some members were not able to continue with their duties, so invitations were extended at faculty meetings to fill the vacant seats. The steering committee formed for the accreditation process included principals and teachers from the elementary, middle, and high school divisions.

Mrs. Shepard saw a problem with having principals serve on the steering committee because this might inhibit teachers' full participation. Hence, the new steering committee comprised Ms. Terrier, the Elementary school librarian; Mr. Welsh, the middle school science teacher; Mr. Lakeland, a high school history teacher and department chair; and Ms. Daschund, an elementary teacher (Ms. Daschund did not participate in the interviews). The participants recognized each other's unique qualities. Ms. Terrier thought the group members evidenced many talents. "Mr. Lakeland is always very careful to speak only from his experience, which is high school based," she said. "Mr. Welsh has been here much longer and brings his middle school perspective, and Ms. Daschund is very task oriented. She is the one who keeps us moving."

Ms. Terrier believed that the group could express their ideas more openly and honestly when the principals did not attend the meetings:

> I would like to honor my principal's opinion, but at times, it would jeopardize the direct communication with Mrs. Shepard. Without the principals there we can be honest with her. So, I feel much more like she is a peer in the conversation, and this level of honesty from people she can trust will allow her to be truly effective. I think she's encouraging that. (Personal interview, May 2004)

Mr. Lakeland was a willing participant on the committee because the structure of the group was not top-down:

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I have to be honest. At my previous school I would not have worked as easily with my administration even if they had promoted me because it was a much more top-down structure where the efficiency was better taken care of but the discussion of issues and the substance, and the tact, and the concern for people's well-being was not there. And in that sense I feel I really click with the living culture of this place, meaning the individuals who make things happen. (Personal interview, May 2004)

Mr. Welsh believed that he was included on the steering committee for a reason:

Maybe it's because I tend to be holistic at looking at things. I look at what is best as far as how it works out for the school as an entity, not just a little fraction of the school or a division. People respect me like this. I don't have a hidden agenda. I'm just me. (Personal interview, May 2004)

According to Mr. Welsh, everyone get along well with each other, even when there are discussions and disagreements. He affirmed, "In the end we come up with a consensus and that's what you need to solve problems." He offered his perspective of a leader's role:

I don't believe in the leader being a point man all the time—that is being a dictator. It is collaboration, and pulling it together. It's almost like a facilitator, pulling it together and agreeing, and saying Okay, here's the direction and if we're going this direction, I help the struggler, I help the one who's going out— saying sorry, that's not the direction we need to go, this is the direction we need to go. It's keeping the people together, keeping them moving, keeping them happy, contented. It's being part of a team. Leadership is a team. (Personal interview, May 2004)

Only a select few were involved on the steering committee before Mrs. Shepard arrived, Mr. Welsh said:

Before it was just invited people. And as soon as you invite people and don't involve everyone, the rest has no ownership. Everyone has to have ownership for things to move forward. Everyone has to believe that there is "something in it for me."(Personal interview, May 2004)

Ms. Corgi was not part of the steering committee, but she provided an outsider's perspective. She trusted the steering committee and saw it acting as a genuine representative of the faculty and staff:

> I think the committee is being used in a much more proactive way than it was before—it is actually acting as a representative of us. So, we don't have to be at every meeting, but representatives from the three divisions work with the administrative team on the strategic plan and try to move it forward and implement it, and then they come back and report. We get feedback. I think it has a knock on it if people see things improving in one area, then you have that carry over. (Personal interview, May 2004)

The steering committee and the strategic plan were helping to open some channels of communication at the school. Another matter that was important to participants at the American School of Whisperwind was the superintendent's evaluation, one of the six areas of concern included in the strategic plan. So, at the end of the first year, Mrs. Shepard initiated a faculty and staff evaluation process.

Mrs. Shepard decided to begin the evaluation process by making her own evaluation available to school members on the intranet. She sent a survey to the faculty and posted the results of the evaluation on the intranet system so everyone could access view the results. The survey showed that faculty members were honest and open about how Mrs. Shepard could be a more effective superintendent. She perceived that:

> Everybody is open enough and knows me well enough—I think it's great that they come forward now and ask, "How did you do this? Why did you do it that way? You should have involved more people! Or we should have talked about this in a meeting." It's great, instead of the silence that I don't know for sure if people are with me, or nobody's talking to me at all, so I am wondering if I am reaching anyone. So definitely we are on the move now [in relation to faculty and staff participation], and I feel good about that. (Personal interview, May 2004)

Ms. Corgi recognized that things were *really* happening now: "I do see things in the list being ticked off. Like fixing the windows, for example, which will be done this summer, is something that I had asked to be done for the past 15 years."

Stresses on Building Leadership through Relationships:
The New Superintendent Initiates Change

Participants at Whisperwind voiced at least two critical tensions: (a) faculty and staff needed to build trust with the superintendent in order to work collectively, and (b) faculty and staff sensed the superintendent's vulnerability in relation to the central office.

The first tension among the faculty and staff was related to building trust with the new superintendent. Mrs. Shepard's efforts to build trust with faculty and staff so that they would actively participate in the strategic plan were thwarted by participants' deep-seated resistance and fear. Mr. Welsh explained that teachers at Whisperwind had seen many initiatives come and go. "Here we try to do things, but they've always died on the vine," he said. "We've got to a stage where every time there is a new initiative, we go 'Oh, God'—flavor of the year." Mr. Welsh continued:

> There is a good cartoon of Hagar, where he is standing back on a boat, and all are there and they got their oars, they're ready to roll, and he says: "Right, guys, oars in the water!" The next picture is all these oars floating in the water and Hagar says: "Humm… I do not think I quite got that right." That is how we think. We have never had a direction. We've drifted and floated, and gone nowhere. So people have been very frustrated, they have been very negative to any new initiatives because of past experiences. (Personal interview, May 2004)

Ms. Corgi spoke of the frustration experienced by those with the longest tenure in the school, including herself:

> I think some of the frustrations among the oldies were that we saw things cycling and we thought, "Hum…yeah, doing this again, are we?" So I think that is kind of when I do disengage a bit because I am kind of scared. And when

administrators say that we need to do something, I say, "Yeah, right, no way, we tried it—been there, done that, wore the T-shirt!" And I think that is the frustration. (Personal interview, May 2004)

Ms. Terrier referred to her fear of participating in school initiatives again by saying, "I wanted to feel the waters before going for a swim—to just test how safe it is." She sensed that many teachers still were hesitant to participate:

> I think the strategic plan is viewed by many as a waste of time, especially from those who grew accustomed to helping the administrators and later finding their ideas on a dusty shelf and not as a living document. But Mrs. Shepard's goal with us is for us to keep the strategic planning alive. The items on the plan can't be carried out by us—they have to be carried out by the parties concerned. So it takes everybody in the circle to make it happen. (Personal interview, May 2004)

Nevertheless, the participants recognized that their voices were now being heard. Ms. Corgi, for example, believed this was the first time that people from the whole school had been approached to start a project. When people broke up into small groups to examine the initiative's goals, "that was really an occasion for the three divisions to get together and have a really good chitchat," reflected Ms. Corgi, "It was valuable in a sense that you had people within your group who were in three different divisions so they could actually bring their own perspective." She continued: "After a few meetings we were in our groups setting goals and watching other groups setting other goals. But it was not necessarily one of the greatest things. We were all very apprehensive about it."

Nevertheless, even though everyone in the school was allowed to participate and have a voice, some teachers were not only apprehensive about but disagreed with the way the initiative was being implemented. Mr. Lakeland, the history teacher and department chair, said that his colleagues agreed with him that involving the whole school was not the most efficient way to implement a strategic plan:

Some colleagues objected to the strategic plan process on those grounds [considering everyone's input]. I did not object because I don't believe that efficiency is always the most important thing. Things that may look efficient, or that may appear to be efficient, may, in fact, just be top-down announcement sessions. And then you get people grumbling that they have just been handed orders for 40 minutes or that they have been given propaganda or something. (Personal interview, May 2004)

The second tension was related to faculty and staff members' awareness that Mrs. Shepard was somewhat limited in making decisions (and in stability) because she served under an executive director and a board of governance. This tension did not allow the faculty and staff to forget the traumatic experiences in the past or trust that the new superintendent was a stable presence in the school. Furthermore, that tension made them reluctant to engage in new school activities. Mr. Bernard poignantly described her situation: "Mrs. Shepard is trying to do a very good job and trying to be open and trying to be friendly and doing everything that she can. And in the back of us old timer's minds there is still somebody above her who could go, *bang!*"

Even though the participants perceived that tension, they also thought Mrs. Shepard represented a bridge between the school's needs and the executive director. In fact, Ms. Terrier thought Mrs. Shepard was succeeding at representing the school:

Mrs. Shepard protects and defends the interest of our school, even though the executive director hired her—and she would do that just as powerfully as she can. I think she is very fair, and a good voice for us. She is bearing the weight of a bridge. Just like any bridge, she has got all of that go between, she has all of the decisions of when do I take what my staff is saying across the bridge again? And how will it be received? And whenever she gets there, she brings back the information and shares with the staff as a follow-up. (Personal interview, May 2004)

Mr. Bernard corroborated Ms. Terrier's comments, attesting that much more of a two-way flow had developed on campus:

Mrs. Shepard very much tries to keep [communications] open to everybody who has a question. And she is very honest and will say to people, "If I can change or if it is something that I can do, I will try to do it, but if it is something that I can't—then I will let you know that I put your point forward." And she has done that for us on many occasions. (Personal interview, May 2004)

Mr. Bernard added that Mrs. Shepard was providing "a lot of feedback to the group, and helping the group try to focus on a path of growth." He perceived that "she has been very good at trying to remain transparent so everyone knows what is going on."

Mr. Lakeland admitted that the degree of democracy and the "free speech zone." created by Mrs. Shepard had been healthy for the institution, despite the fragility of her position:

I have to say that the process of working here, not a snapshot picture, but the process of working here is much healthier and a more pleasant one. I want to be frank about the difficulties and challenges. I do think that the degree of democracy that has been encouraged, the degree of grassroots input, is remarkable and very healthy. And it certainly makes me a happy colleague and professional. (Personal interview, May 2004)

Mr. Welsh admitted, "There are some people that still don't like or don't agree with what she's doing. But at least, there's a sense of purpose, there's a sense of direction, there's a sense of commitment, involvement, investment in time and effort." For the first time, Ms. Corgi thought things were not being changed for change's sake. "The school is much calmer," she affirmed. "Finally the waters have started to calm again, and we are quite steady. There are still odd peaks, but from my perspective I feel that we're going in the right direction."

The case studies of leadership dynamics reflected the school initiatives in the American international schools studied, and how participants perceived the events from their perspectives. The participants provided a rich description of their collective

activities, including tensions in their relationship with others. An analysis of the case

studies and their leadership dynamics is provided in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYTICAL DISCUSSION

Introduction

Reasoning from the premise that schools are complex soft systems (Checkland, 2004), comprising people and their relationships, in this analysis I considered that leadership dynamics include elements proposed in the conceptual framework presented at the beginning of this study (Chapter 1). The model included elements of group interaction while people worked on a school initiative. It depicted a leadership-dynamics wheel, which included (a) community, (b) boundaries, (c) power and ethics, (d) culture, and (e) spirituality. These elements were considered part of a generative process, in a participatory engagement among the participants. However, after collecting the data and constructing the cases, it became apparent that leadership dynamics in American international schools involved an even more complex system, which involved the integration of yet other elements in its dynamics.

So, to answer the research question "What kind of leadership dynamics may be found in American international schools?" I perceived that leadership dynamics is a process that is best viewed through the use of an integrative perspective. In such a perspective, leadership is perceived as rising from a process that when fostered, enables collective forms of leadership to emerge. An integrative perspective included the interplay of participants constructing their leadership roles through four fundamental layers: Leadership dynamics was then, (a) reliant on a propitious organizational ecosystem, (b) contingent on group interdependency, (c) associated with capacity

building, and (d) fostering organizational learning. However, in the schools studied, the interplay of these fundamental layers seemed to be highly challenged, not only due to constant change and power relations, but also due to constrained human capital and time in order to create stable spaces and enduring traditions of excellence.

To further develop these layers, I did a thematic analysis that allowed me to perceive the process as in motion, using McLeod's (2002) fishing-net metaphor. Using that metaphor in analyzing leadership, McLeod stated, "All of us stand around the fishing net as equals. Sometimes one person pulls harder than another. Sometimes a person pulls for another. Leadership is like that. Leadership moves around the circle." (p. 13)

The idea of people standing around a fishing-net can be linked to the initially proposed leadership dynamics wheel, or group interdependency. However, I suggest that, from an integrative perspective, there is much more to be considered. Relating the topic of leadership to the fishing-net metaphor, group interdependency could, for example, be portrayed by people working around a fishing-net, relying on a supportive ecosystem in order to unfold the fishing-net and use it in a concerted way.

The fishing ecosystem includes unpredictable conditions of the ocean, weather, the beach, the tides, and the fish. The mastery of such an environment relates to a subquestion posed in this study: "How do educators in selected American international schools construct and mediate their leadership roles?" By developing an understanding of the larger ecosystem in their schools, it seems that educators in the selected American international schools will be better able to connect and contribute to school initiatives. A learning process seemed to be involved in the construction and mediation of the participants' leadership roles. In Figure 5.1, I offer an approximate visual depiction of

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this concept, in which the thematic layers should not be seen as static, or shape-determined, but should be viewed as continuously morphing in intensity, form, and permeability.
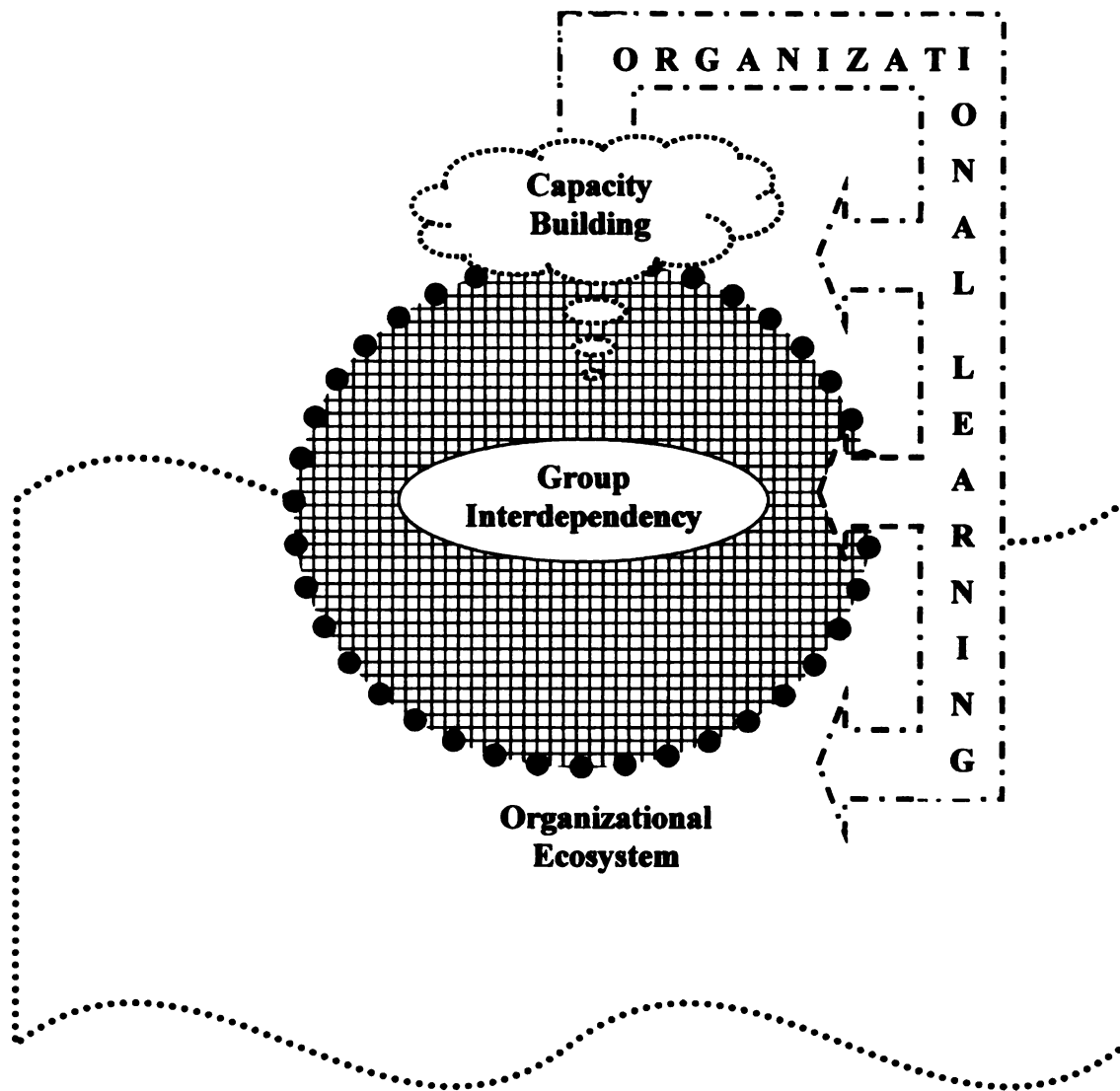

Figure 5.1 Leadership dynamics from an integrative perspective

One of the primary conditions in which people are able to get together and begin unfolding a fishing-net is a balanced ecosystem. In this study, instead of observing an ecosystem as an organization's life span, I viewed the ecosystem as a vertical slice.

Seeing it as a vertical slice allowed me to view the school ecosystem in terms of organizational momentum, in which the group was preparing to give shape to an initiative. So, leadership dynamics would depend on the interplay of these four layers, and be effected by influential factors, as defined here:

1. Leadership dynamics seemed to depend on a propitious organizational ecosystem. The organizational ecosystem in this study was the foundation on which the school participants found themselves. It determined their conditions and where they found support in order to engage in initiatives. In the schools studied, the ecosystem included the school members' agreed upon values, ideologies, and policies, such as their school vision and mission. The organizational culture and climate influenced the ecosystem. In the organizational culture, worldmindedness of its members, for example, especially influenced the schools studied.

2. Leadership dynamics seemed to be contingent on group interdependency. In turn, group interdependency appeared to be subject to influential factors that fostered or hindered the participants' collective efforts to create and implement initiatives. Using the fishing-net metaphor, the net linked participants, and it linked people's individual contributions (stories, histories, experiences, perspectives) through the tension generated by participants holding the net. However, while the net provided powerful connections, at the same time, those connections were permeable and volatile. Formal and informal power relations, issues of trust, time limitations, and personnel turnover challenged the participants' collective efforts. A chaotic momentum was also evident. While collectively unfolding the fishing-net, and preparing to fish, participants struggled to find a direction and to reach consensus with one another about how to use the net efficiently.

3. Leadership dynamics seemed to generate collective capacity building. In this study, I perceived capacity building as a shared process, an outcome of the group's interdependency—a social and transformative process. Capacity-building included the motivation and the momentum through which conflict negotiations, norms of reciprocity, and people's individual realities that developed mastery in the group while they were creating and implement initiatives.

4. Finally, leadership dynamics seemed to foster organizational learning. The learning did not seem to depend on whether an initiative was readily applicable or not. Every time group members interacted, their realities and perspectives—toward each other and toward the organization—would change. Whether the interactions were positive or negative, they would inexorably affect decisions at the organizational level because the learning in this instance was focused on the purposeful activity. The degree of organizational learning, however, seemed to depend on people's readiness to process the knowledge (the development of collective capacity), and to incorporate the lessons they had learned into their individual and collective practices.

The value in observing these four themes as ever-changing layers was the realization that the quality of the process is more important than the interaction per se. The layered themes (the ecosystem, group interdependency, capacity building, and organizational learning) were unique in each school and in each interaction among participants. If the quality of the process allowed the four themes to evolve, the leadership among members seemed then to be more conducive to fruitful outcomes. Examples drawn from the cases in this study are included to augment the following discussion of themes that emerged from the cases.

Leadership Dynamics as Depending on a Propitious Organizational Ecosystem

Perceiving an ecosystem in place helps in understanding the participants' sense-making before engaging in an initiative. The organizational ecosystem is where concerted action takes place, in spatial terms. This is not intended to imply idyllic suppositions of organizational harmony. However, the ecosystem suggests that the group initially work on agreed values. An example is the challenge faced by two of the schools in defining whether they were American or international. In both Nieuhaus and Whisperwind, the participants had to discover "Who are *we*?" before they could decide on their strategic plans.

Mr. Bluebird, the superintendent at Nieuhaus, gave an example of participants' sense-making process while they were defining whether their school name should be the American School of Nieuhaus or the American *International* School of Nieuhaus. Deciding what the word *international* in the school name would mean, would determine the organization's future objectives, vision, and mission. Participants would need to develop worldmindedness (Jones-Rikkers & Douglas, 2000) to decide whether the school was to serve primarily the international or the American community involved.

Worldmindedness is related to individuals whose primary reference group is humankind instead of a specific ethnic group. Some participants suggested the paramount importance to embrace such value in highly diverse schools as the ones included in this study. This value would consequently be reflected in the school's mission. For instance, the mission of the American School of Nieuhaus' was "to prepare students for lives as responsible world citizens," whereas Arboretum's mission was to

have students "become responsible, globally-conscious citizens." In turn, the mission of the American School of Whisperwind was to cultivate students who "appreciate and develop sensitivity for other cultures."

Until each school's universal values were shared by the educators, the groups would not be able to work on initiatives. Mr. Huron, the elementary principal, mentioned that in their first year at the new Nieuhaus campus, "we held off on doing any strategic planning because we were learning how to work together. We had never worked together before or had to share facilities" (Personal interview, May 2004).

In addition, an interesting element was imprinted on the ecosystem in these schools—a certainty that everyone *would* eventually leave. Mr. Lakeland, a teacher at Whisperwind, stressed the importance of considering this aspect of international schools: "It is simply that international educators, just as their students and the families [of students] they teach, often move. It is a fact and reality of this circuit" (Personal interview, May 2004). Because of this transiency, participants in these schools needed to be given the latitude to develop leadership abilities.

The case of Nieuhaus, for example, reflected difficult times brought about by disagreements among board members because they could not seem to agree on certain issues at the ecosystem level. Until foundational values were negotiated, people were unable to move forward. Boards of governance are also influential in the organizational ecosystem as they are the ones who will allow the educational leaders latitude in using their expertise. By being given such latitude, educators may decide it is safe to implement innovations and perhaps to fail in their attempts. Failed attempts in such cases are considered as beneficial to the exercise of leadership.

Agreed upon values was not the primary focus in the Arboretum school. Because the participants used a ready-made model in carrying out the initiative, they may have ignored certain steps necessary to adapt the community to the new routine. For example, Mr. Maple, the financial director, did not consider the Events Office initiative to be fully functioning by the end of the first year. Rather, he defined that phase as a *hiccup* in the organization (personal interview, 2004), when certain adjustments made operations a little bumpy before they began to run smoothly.

Consideration of the organizational ecosystem and other significant elements described here is necessary to provide the grounds and the balance for leadership activities to occur in American international schools. In specific schools, other elements may be at play that may be equally worthy of consideration in order to provide a supportive ecosystem for the creation and implementation of initiatives.

Leadership Dynamics as Being Contingent on Group Interdependency

As participants around the fishing-net generated their own set of universal values, they were then able to develop interdependency in their focus on creating initiatives. Nevertheless, they faced issues of formal and informal power relations, trust, time limitations, and personnel turnover, to name a few of the influential factors in this process. Many elements were suggested in the leadership dynamics wheel (Figure 1.1). However, I shall cite but some examples of factors influencing group interdependency. Ms. Owl, from Nieuhaus, asserted that communicating with each other was of utmost importance:

> We go through challenging periods when there's light at the end of the tunnel, and you see the light, but you don't know whether you're in a train tunnel, whether

that's just the end of the tunnel or if the train is coming at you! You have to keep moving together and continue to talk it through. (Personal interview, May 2004)

Inevitably, during group interactions, power relations were a constant. At Nieuhaus, there was tension between Mrs. Cardinal, a board member, and Ms. Seagull, the consultant. Ms. Seagull was an outsider and thus had not experienced the history and traditions at Nieuhaus. Moreover, board members were bringing personal agendas to the table; according to the administrators, these agendas currently were not interfering with group interdependency, but they had caused problems in years past. Until participants articulated and clarified their perspectives and expectations, Mr. Bluebird and others around the table were unable to move the initiative forward. That is, the power of individuals in relation to each other, not within themselves, constrained their interdependency.

A consideration of conflict as functional was introduced while discoursing about the ecosystem; this notion was reinforced after observing the American School of Whisperwind. Fearful and hurt, the faculty and staff at Whisperwind displayed attributes characteristic of lay-off survivors (Noer, 1993). Participants at Whisperwind were challenged to voice their concerns, not personally but through a purposeful activity. They were being stimulated through an initiative that would give them some ownership of decisions concerning the school. Along the same lines, Harris, Moran, and Moran (2004) stated that human systems—or collections of people—may suffer identity crises, having to go through a discovery of their collective selves.

In the schools studied, the construction of a collective identity in some instances was subject to political factors, such as the influence of the American Embassy. Such diplomatic relations between the school and the American Embassy were especially

evident when influential parents from the host country served on the school's board of

governance. At Nieuhaus, not only was the American Embassy represented on the board

of governance, but local community members also lent a powerful voice, especially on

issues of curriculum and language acquisition. Mr. Bluebird and Mr. Huron were among

the administrators at Nieuhaus who were trying to accommodate requests from native

Nieuhaus parents to include the local language in the curriculum, while at the same time

keeping the American curriculum intact.

Authority needs to be considered along with power. Authority, as distinct from

power, is a privilege granted to others (Barnard, 1968), not necessarily because the

grantors hold power over others but in some instances because of their expertise or

seniority. The challenge of redistributing authority was evident in the Arboretum case,

where some group members exercised power or control through resistance, preventing

the adoption of a new routine. The Arboretum community had not granted the Events

Office full authority to coordinate events. Similarly, the larger community at

Whisperwind did not own the initiative. There were different opinions about the value

added to the community by this initiative.

Trust is yet another influential factor in group interdependency. Returning to the

fishing-net metaphor, an ideal tension is needed from participants to make the fishing-net

effective. The participants' pulling and pushing involves trust, and that trust would in

some instances define their direction. For example, Mr. Welsh, from Whisperwind,

indicated the need for negotiation: "I could be the one in the middle, but somehow

between us we all got the direction that we are going there together. Hard decisions have

to be done with the benefit of the community, not to the benefit of one person." But how

can trust be developed when people are constantly leaving the group? When losses were the result of dismissal, the participants went through a difficult grieving process, as in the case of Whisperwind. Losses due to the completion of educators' contracts were more frequent and not as traumatic. However, in both instances, readapatation and relearning seemed equally difficult.

Leadership Dynamics as Generating Collective Capacity Building

A social and transformative process is perceived in this theme. Positive or negative interactions may influence the outcome of any situation (Johnson et al., 2003). Therefore, motivation and momentum were factors that would determine the outcome of conflict negotiations, agreed-upon norms of reciprocity, or people's individual realities. The right spirit, in the right time, would provoke collective understanding of problems and possible alternatives. Capacity building was considered here as negotiation among participants focusing on the means necessary to attain desired ends. Specifically, in the groups studied, capacity building seemed to be related to the development of the group within the organization.

Motivation or participants' inner strength seemed to be a constant as they became cognizant of their influence on group interdependency. However, a character transformation often impelled participants to channel their motivation into a collective intent. Mrs. Cardinal, the board chair at Nieuhaus, affirmed that her motivation involved "being able to balance your sense of who you are as an individual and what you believe in. And yet at the same time be open and willing to work as part of the community for a greater interest" (personal interview, May 2004). Collective involvement thus was influenced by an individual's determination.

A higher level thinking process led the groups to capacity building as the participants' work on the initiatives evolved, whereby knowledge about the possibilities was developed independently, whether the initiative was implemented, adopted, abandoned, or perpetuated. People were no longer focused on the fishing-net, but were now attentive to the fishing activity. Mrs. Shepard from Whisperwind perceived the importance of

> .....the shared nature of participants learning about and from each other, and the nurturing significance of sharing the baby steps toward the planning, development and implementation of the initiative's steps, or recognizing the momentum and keeping the momentum going. (Personal interview, 2004)

Being able to recognize the momentum seemed to be the peak lesson from group interaction that built participants' leadership capacity. Mrs. Shepard expanded on this idea: "I learned that you have to keep the momentum moving, that you have to get the right balance—if you move too fast, you're going to have to go backwards, and if you move too slow you'll never get people on board" (personal interview, May 2004). In the case of Arboretum, Mr. Olivier, perceived changes in attitudes among school members as part of the group dynamics, using the metaphor of a bus to represent the transformation:

> I think of it as I created a bus, an athletic bus, and the bus stayed in the parking lot for a couple of years. And then it started moving and people could decide to get on or off. Most people got on. Some got off. That is the way it is. (Personal interview, May 2004)

Leadership Dynamics as Fostering Organizational Learning

The amount of organizational learning that took place seemed to depend on people's readiness to process the knowledge generated from the participation in the initiative (the development of collective capacity), and their readiness to incorporate new

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routines into their individual and collective practices. Ms. Owl, the assistant principal at Nieuhaus, for example, mentioned that "people aren't really comfortable processing because process is uncomfortable and change is awkward. People hope that they can hold on to a little piece of the world and hope that the way they see things is what will go" (personal interview, May 2004). Nevertheless, some participants evidenced a collective understanding of the organization after working on the initiatives. Participants at Nieuhaus, for example, used the metaphor of a *ship* or a *bus* in referring to their schools. Participants at Arboretum, specifically Mr. Olivier, talked about leadership as a departing bus; all people have a chance to get on, but some may be left behind. Ms. Owl, the assistant principal at Nieuhaus, said that not everyone needs to know where the bus is going, but that it is important to have the *right* people on the bus in order to go in the desired direction. In turn, participants at Whisperwind envisioned themselves as sailing on a ship that had tossed on tumultuous seas during three superintendent changes in six years. Mrs. Corgi, the technology coordinator, stressed that a ship's course does not necessarily change by solely changing the captain.

Included in group interdependency were prospects of change, not only change among individual participants planning the initiative, but also change in the implementation of the initiative itself, which involved change at an organizational level. Negotiations in building capacity brought about changes in the group and in members' interactions. Such changes were generated through learning. The group dynamics were unique in each school studied, and the learning process was particular to each initiative and group of participants. Even if the same group met again for the same purposeful action, their reflections, decisions, and commitments would not be identical. Unarguably,

every time there was contact among participants, their lives were touched and as a consequence, they learned, and changed. Ms. Owl, from Nieuhaus indeed affirmed:

> We're circles, and our circles are crossing one another, and that space that we share and enhance one another during that time, we learn from one another before the circle parts and we become more whole and better people because of what we give to each other. It's kind of a shared process. (Personal interview, May 2004)

I also observed organizational learning in this study through the tensions and difficulties encountered in the implementation of initiatives. The use of an existing model in the Arboretum school, for example, showed that not only do models that work in one locale need to be adapted to fit a new setting, but also that leadership style affects the implementation process.

Whether participants are individual learners or learning organizations, people composing the systems attempt to align their decisions and actions toward goals they have set for themselves within their environments (Goerner, 1995; Prigogine, 1996). In doing so, they create and maintain communications among their own internal structures and between themselves and their environments. Such a process was analyzed in this study. In fact, the process demonstrated that "when a group acquires the know-how associated with its ability to carry out its collective activities, *that* constitutes organizational learning" (Cook & Yanow, 1996, p. 438).

Summary of Thematic Analysis

In this chapter, a thematic analysis of three school initiatives was used to link the cases presented in Chapter 4 by using the metaphor of a fishing-net. Using a fishing-net to fish necessitates group participation; hence it is a collective activity. It may take the fishers a while to learn how to stretch the net so that they can all walk into the ocean to

make the net work. It also involves learning how not to let go of the net. If someone has to leave the circle, the remaining fishers need to re-examine their participation and rearrange themselves. The participants in the cases studied shared their interdependent experiences and their individual realities as they focused on purposeful activities.

Four themes emerged from the experiences of these participants, indicating that leadership was generated from dynamics in schools that capitalized on members' individual expertise and gave them the latitude to work together. This latitude, which allows individuals to become part of a collective but also to try new things and make mistakes, is what enriches the process. If the quality of the process from the ecosystem to the act of fishing is enhanced, the school may have more opportunities to achieve fruitful outcomes.

Organizations, which are in fact the act of people, can be sentient systems, reacting to the conditions provided by the ecosystem. Responsive systems furnish the groundwork for leadership dynamics among participants in an initiative. In this study, through the initiatives, participants learned to articulate their internal and external pressures, and to reflect on improvements to the state of affairs in their schools. This, in turn, seemed to bring about individual change and generate organizational learning. Participants in the schools studied seemed to learn to change and change to learn. In the next chapter, concluding thoughts and suggestions for further research are offered.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

We are, in my view, faced with an entirely new situation in education where the goal of education, if we are to survive, is the facilitation of change and learning. The only man who is educated is the man who has learned how to learn; the man who has learned to adapt and change; the man who realized that no knowledge is secure, that only the process of seeking knowledge gives a basis for security. Changeness, a reliance on process rather than upon static knowledge, is the only thing that makes any sense as a goal for education in the modern world.
---- (Hefzallah, 1990, p. 8)

Introduction

In this study I examined leadership dynamics using an integrative perspective, asking the questions, "What kind of leadership dynamics may be found in K-12 American international schools?" and "How do educators in selected American international schools construct and mediate their leadership roles?" The study showed that leadership dynamics from an integrative perspective is a process that when fostered, enables collective forms of leadership to emerge. An integrative perspective included the interplay of participants constructing their leadership roles through four fundamental layers. Leadership dynamics then would be: (a) reliant on a propitious organizational ecosystem, (b) contingent on group interdependency, (c) associated with capacity building, and (d) fostering organizational learning. However, in the schools studied, the interplay of these fundamental layers seemed to be challenged, not only due to constant change and power relations, but also due to constrained human capital and time.

Through the study of American international schools, the process by which people developed purposeful activities was a significant factor in understanding leadership

dynamics, and how the process generated personal, group, and organizational learning. It appeared that learning played an important part in the process. Hefzallah (1990) realized in his study, which acknowledged the fast-paced world of technology and telecommunications that the goal of education today should be to facilitate change and learning, especially at a time when knowledge is far from static.

The fast pace of our world can be sensed through the vast leaps in technology, as well as from changes in the mid-1980's to a postcorporate world, when companies began downsizing, decentralizing, globalizing, and breaking away from large corporate constructions. Even though many scholars have cautioned against comparing corporations and schools, I believe that similar trends affect both entities. An employee who was once expected to be loyal to his or her company, to develop a skill, and leave only upon retirement is no longer the desired worker model, either in corporations or in schools. Nowadays, individuals are encouraged to be creative and innovative. We now participate in a world of disorganized capitalism, affirmed Limerick, Cunnington, and Crowther (1998), "oriented to process rather than to structure; that is ecologically driven rather than hierarchically driven; that is value-added rather than competitive; that is holistic rather than functional; and that is collaborative and innovative" (p. 22). This is a dramatic change from early bureaucratic models. As a consequence, it seems that employees do not find job security as in the past, but instead are empowered and valued for their resourceful contributions. Schools are slowly adopting such models of decentralization of control.

The complexities of the postcorporate inevitably affect us all. As a result, studies in educational leadership have begun to observe the decentralization of schools and less

bureaucratic control of individuals (Gronn, 2002; Spillane et al., 2001), favoring performance indicators instead. If individuals are accountable for their contributions, those who do not contribute can be quickly replaced. School superintendents, for example, who used to serve schools for over 20 years or more, now have national average tenures of three to seven years (Ossian, 2003). A similar pattern seems to be present in American international schools. Turnover of educators in these schools is in general, even higher, thus providing a study setting in which I also was able to address the issue of school sustainability. This study of American international schools, therefore, will add to the growing body of research on the behavior of educators in postcorporate school organizations, and how these educators engage in activities in the face of challenges they encounter in working environments of disorganized capitalism and job uncertainty.

While schools are responsive to changes to their structure in the postcorporate world, they still retain precepts from hierarchical structures. Much like large corporate bureaucracies, especially those in the public sector, schools seem to vacillate between encouraging individuals to lead with ideas and enthusiasm, while at the same time maintaining tight hierarchical control. The enhanced benefit of individuals' involvement as contributor-educators in school issues, then, is questioned when such engagement is still subject to power relations. When all are invited to lead, why is the idea of a leader in a stratified position of one still reinforced? As a consequence, I began this study by questioning the public perception of a school leader as an idealist, an altruistic hero.

In this study, then, I sought to observe leaders beyond the image of a solitary "public persona," challenging both the idea of leadership from a hierarchical position and a perspective that obscures the active participation of others in school initiatives. Murphy

(1988) approached this idea when he questioned whether a leader should be both a lion and a lamb. To be a lion, Murphy argued, a leader must first be a lamb –leaders can act like followers and at the same time depend on followers to act like leaders—"to be a lamb is really to be a lion," he affirmed (p. 659).

Some might view Murphy's metaphor as a recognition of multiple constituents in the study of leadership. However, others might think the metaphor implies a social order constructed from a positivistic perspective or from a human-constructed fairy tale in which lions are considered kings of the animal world, and lambs follow lions in some sort of social order. Murphy made a distinction between leaders and followers, in which we are incapable of uniting the actors toward a collective purpose. In this study, the idea was to walk away from social constructions that create nonegalitarian ways of perceiving the world, and the work of educators in schools. In turn, I perceived schools as social institutions comprising people (not animals of different species) focused on collective social actions.

Yet, in the push to document nonhierarchical social processes, it was equally important to question why individuals tend to place themselves on the receiving end of leadership. Perhaps being a recipient of leadership may seem comfortable, because democratic practices and empowerment bring added responsibility. It may take some time, and many more studies, to document a paradigm shift in individual perceptions before one is able to validate the empowerment of multiple constituents in schools.

Observing nonhierarchical models of leadership proved to be a significant learning process in this research. It meant learning to break away from mental models of *lions and lambs* hierarchical structures, and to seek other ways to perceive leaders and

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leadership. In the cases in this study, some of the participants said that leadership means being "the one in the middle" (personal interview, 2004). The one in the middle was likened to a person standing in a crowd and suddenly looking up and pointing to the sky. How many of us could resist looking up? How many of us would believe we really saw something? That person, pointing up to the sky, pulls people together. Mrs. Dove questioned whether one "can have a circle and not need a head in the circle to point the team in a direction—a pole in the middle of that circle which says this is the direction that we're all going in—and then the team implements the decision together" (personal interview, May 2004). Therefore, participation and leadership were explored through the use of a fishing-net metaphor. The idea of people standing in a circle around their fishing net helped in understanding power relations from a leveled perspective.

After careful analysis of the cases, I decided leadership dynamics in American international schools would be better represented through what I have called here an integrative perspective. Power relations were still introduced in the tensions among people pushing or pulling the fishing net, but the dynamics were enriched by the participants' personal contributions to the initiatives. Leadership was then perceived as rising from processes that, when fostered, enabled the emergence of collective forms of leadership. The process included the interplay of four fundamental layers in its dynamics: (a) an organizational ecosystem, (b) group interdependency, (c) collective capacity building, and (d) organizational learning.

A number of scholars of engagement have suggested giving considerable thoughtfulness to context (Benham, 2003; Boyer, 1996; Hollander et al, 2001). I agreed, perceiving that context would include not only the schools' location, but the conditions

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created by those involved, which would constitute the schools' ecosystem. This ecosystem, much like a living organism, may include people, such as a board of governance, as well as policies that are conducive to the active participation of groups of people in different school initiatives. A set of agreed-upon values seemed to provide participants in school initiatives with the latitude to exercise their ideas. Trust in the participants' capacity, which challenges hierarchical models, also appeared to provide opportunities for participation. Participants were then able to learn the agreed upon values, and incorporate those values in their planning.

While observing group members' interdependence as participants prepared to work on initiatives, I saw that school members were no longer recipients of tasks as in the past, but creators and innovators in the process. To achieve generative levels of participation and interdependence, participants were involved in a process in which they learned from each other and from the ecosystem; they also learned about the necessity or applicability of their planned initiatives. Initial chaos was recognized as beneficial in this process. Trust was a fundamental element at this point, restricting or fostering the participation in and development of activities among those involved.

Even when disagreements and negotiations among participants could not be resolved, the participants learned about their context—the school's ecosystem (universal values, mission, and goals)—and about each other's roles within and outside the group. This is the layer in which participants were perceived as building collective capacity. In summary, leadership dynamics in American international schools occurred through a combination of such elements from the organizational ecosystem, which when it supported group interdependence would generate collective capacity building and

provide individual and organizational learning. Ultimately, change could also be acknowledged at the organizational level, especially when initiatives were adopted.

Reaching the Tipping Point

In the schools studied, initiatives seemed to reach the *tipping point*—the point at which an initiative becomes an adopted routine and consequently changes the organization, especially if there has been comprehensive learning and a positive cathexis (mental and emotional investment) among all members (Johnson & Johnson, 2003). Gladwell (2000) said that "the tipping point is the moment of critical mass, the threshold, the boiling point" (p. 12). Interestingly, he perceived changes in human behavior as epidemics—giving examples of factors that sparked an epidemic and how the change spread out. Gladwell's use of the idea of an epidemic related to the power of factors which at first sight may be considered insignificant, and which may suddenly ignite a dramatic change in the current scenario.

The tipping point at Whisperwind, for example, was being reached when the faculty and staff were again becoming responsive to the school as a unity, after working collectively in the strategic plan for a year. Faculty and staff were slowly building trust toward each other, and toward the school as an organization, engaging in collective activities after a hiatus of 6 years of disengagement. Mrs. Shepard acknowledged the momentum, by recognizing "the shared nature of participants learning about and from each other," as well as recognizing the momentum when the participants were engaging in the activities, the importance of keeping the momentum going.

After the data analysis, the cases suggested that detecting when the tipping point is achieved and what factors contributed to the achievement of a tipping point in planning

school initiatives is of utmost importance for further studies in school leadership. The Whisperwind case showed a path of reconstruction of school members' trust, in which the tipping point is reached when the faculty and staff become engaged in school activities. However, without an in-depth study of the circumstances, at this point it is difficult to affirm which factor (the strategic plan as an initiative, the composition of members in the steering committee without principals, or the superintendent's insistence to carry on with the strategic plan even when faced by resistance) if not all, contributed to reaching the momentum, or the tipping point, at Whisperwind.

Even though this study was not focused on change, it appeared that the most significant element in constructing and mediating leadership roles in the schools studied was, in fact, related to change. Change was perceived as a capacity-building factor, as pointed out by Mrs. Shepard, at the personal, collective, and organizational levels. Educators in American international schools seemed to face the challenge of working on their personal adaptation to the new culture of school and country, to be able to consequently function in the school's organizational culture as creative initiators of change. Change was perceived as an internal transformation among the participants, as they learned meanings of *what, who,* and *where*: what they were would define their roles as representatives from the school, which in the case of Nieuhaus, for example, helped the participants focus on the school's future.

The tipping point was reached when the ecosystem provided the participants with propitious conditions to learn and change. Complex experiences and the freedom to exercise choices intensified the interactions among participants. Participants learned to develop leadership capacity as they worked together, changing the organization and

changing themselves in the process. In this study, changes in people and initiatives were perceived as a consequence of a larger and supportive endeavor in which learning appeared to be the element that sparked the change. Participants learned to change and changed to learn throughout the process.

Sustainability in American International Schools

The examination of collective participation in schools with a high turnover of educators necessitated additional attention to issues of sustainability. Two major factors influenced sustainability in the American international schools studied: (a) the isolation and mobility of school constituents and (b) time. The isolation of American international schools in different countries helped to establish tighter connections among school constituents.

Community members drew closer in achieving their common purposes, and this cohesiveness contributed to speed agreement on universal values. Such cohesiveness could also have resulted from the only certainty among members in this study—that everyone in these schools was somewhat transient, and that everyone *would* eventually leave. Sustainability then surfaced as a genuine concern among participants: "Who picks up the ball next?" and "Who runs with it?" Moving out was a constant characteristic of students, as well. This characteristic seemed to create a concern for a mobile curriculum, one that would help students move with their parents from country to country with minimal negative effects from the transition.

Time limitations, on the other hand, seemed to encourage educators in American international schools to *make a difference* while in their short time overseas. With such challenging time pressures, educators seemed to share leadership with certain urgency,

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adopting *norms of reciprocity* (shared empowerment) in order to attain the intended outcomes. Much like explorers in inhospitable terrains, these leaders had to learn fast, in order to be able to strategize and see results. In fact, some superintendents in the study evidenced characteristics of servant leaders,[2] (Greenleaf, 1982; Spears, 2002), not necessarily being prominent in the initiatives. A servant leadership style seemed to allow the superintendents to capitalize on individual participants' expertise, with new members bringing fresh ideas and long-time members bringing history and traditions to the table.

Even though some universal values were easily agreed upon, cultural factors prevented the success of some initiatives. These cultural factors included differences in decision makers' nationalities, cultures, and realities, and participants' unique understandings and funds of knowledge, which were at times misinterpreted or conflicted with the school's core American philosophy of education. There is still much to be learned about how educators learn to lead in collaborative ways and build capacity in diversity-rich environments. Perhaps these conditions are not unique to American international schools, but are true of domestic school environments, as well.

Constrained by time, human capital, and sustainable systems, educators in American international schools seemed to struggle to create stable spaces for building capacity while at the same time maintaining historical traditions. Remarkably, however, this characteristic did not influence the educators not to act. Instead, the educators' focused on creating sustainable but mobile environments at a fast pace. In addition, they

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[2] Greenleaf defined the servant leader from the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant--first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. (Spears, 2002, para. 5). This model, according to Spears, "advocates a group-oriented approach to analysis and decision-making as a means of strengthening institutions, and of improving society. It also emphasizes the power of persuasion and seeking consensus over the old "top-down" form of leadership." (Spears, 2002, para. 7).

created curricula that could travel with the students as they moved from one country to another. For example, with the IB curriculum students did not encounter a different curriculum when they moved to another country. Also, the use of similar organizational routines was justifiable under such conditions, which was the case at Arboretum, and was perceived as favorable in the operations of American international schools.

Lessons Learned from an Integrative Perspective in Leadership

Observing these school leaders, I noticed that, educators in itinerant contexts were concerned with nurturing leadership as a contributing factor in creating a school ethos, an identity, and institutional success. Mrs. Basset, the language teacher at Whisperwind, pondered whether leadership was strength of character or a learned skill: "I am not sure how much leadership can be learned in some way. I think it is in some way a quality and sometimes it is a very quiet quality. I think it is strength of character, it is a belief in something and it is certainly working by examples" (personal interview, May 2004). Whether educators were in formal leadership positions or not, they were, in one way or another, exercising and reflecting on leadership.

I perceived the participants' questions about the nature of leadership as a powerful attempt to understand the craft, and as electing useful knowledge as the participants acquired experience in their leadership roles. For example, some participants presented detached and broad pictures of their situation. Perhaps due to the constrained realities of American international schools and the small community they served in foreign countries, the participants viewed themselves as all being *in the same boat.* Indeed, some of the participants used a metaphor of a *ship* or a *bus* in referring to their situations. Some writers have questioned whether schools would be better if sailed rather than

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driven (Welton, 2001), as sailing allows for some latitude in the decision-making process

and consequently provides more chances for capacity building.

As I observed leadership dynamics from an integrative perspective, I perceived

that ethical and democratic participation was a key element of such dynamics. Of utmost

importance was the consideration of collective endeavors and respect for all participants

in school initiatives where "every person has a role and each role is important to the

whole" (Benham & Mann, 2003, p.144). This is especially true when considering the

expatriate community's well-being and the health of the organization that serves them.

Implications

In this study I challenged some preconceived ideas in the field, using alternative

lenses in observing leadership practices. Nevertheless, there is still much to learn in

terms of research, practice, and policy.

Implications for Research

Aside from searching for a plural concept in the term leadership, the exploration

of leadership dynamics presented a methodological challenge. A traditional

understanding of leadership and organizations, according to some scholars (Gibson,

1999; Prigogine, 1996; Putnam, 1988), is often "based on records that are locked in

snapshots of time, pictures taken by various experts at different points in a process"

(Gibson, 1999, p. 10). In this study I analyzed leadership as a process, using metaphors

and perspectives that allowed multiple interpretations to better represent an ever-

changing leadership-dynamics process.

Implications for Practice

Crucial to the examination of new forms of leadership in schools is the development of studies that examine whether such postcorporate trends can guarantee healthy and sustainable environments for student learning and growth. Participants often mentioned that the goals set by the group were focused on benefiting the organization as a whole. The participants' commitment is strongly connected to the notion of spirituality proposed in the emergent conceptual framework in this study. Spirituality considers the inclusion of passion in leadership, joining mind and body in a commitment to overcome socially constructed barriers. Such a commitment suggest resiliency. Two applicable lessons in this study were related to keeping the motivation strong, and keeping the momentum—resilient characteristics needed by educators in American international schools. Such characteristics seemed to build institutional culture and consequently create the right climate to reach the tipping point in the adoption of routines.

However, a principle of ecology or the impossibility of transferring successful biophysical processes from one community to another without changes (Odum, 1993), should be carefully considered. It is not reasonable to think that people's decision-making processes, capacity building, and knowledge will be developed similarly in different schools. The use of a ready-made formula at Arboretum is such an example. Nevertheless, participants in the schools studied highlighted the fact that the fast pace in which initiatives must be planned may in part explain the use of ready-made formulas. The same urgency, provided initiative members enough time to get "on board," as well as sufficient time for an initiative to blossom into a shared vision and ultimately be adopted and absorbed as a routine. In addition, a survival characteristic of learning in leadership

surfaced in relation to adaptation—the importance of initiative members' adapting or

adjusting to whatever was needed to move the organization forward.

Implications for Policy

American schools in foreign countries may provide interesting perspectives for

policy studies. Accreditation processes were in place in all the schools I visited; schools

sometimes were examined by a number of different institutions from the U.S. and/or

from regional offices. In some instances, accreditation processes were seen as positive

interventions with the aim of validating the quality of education offered, especially in the

market-driven schools I visited. Yet, this study was focused less on policies and more on

relationships among leaders.

Even though these schools were free from district or state policies, they were

affected by host-country policies. This feature of American international schools has not

gone unnoticed, and institutions like the International Schools Association and the

European Council for International Schools, among many others, are actively engaged in

exploring supranational issues and helping these schools cope with them. Nevertheless,

there is a concern that, in defining and setting criteria and standards for these schools, the

process does not become rigid, delivering restrictive recommendations to an ever-

changing educational scene (Hayden & Thompson, 2000). An effort to improve the state

of affairs was a constant concern in the schools I visited. This was perceived as a pro-

active attitude, where schools were no less committed just because they enjoyed some

latitude in their practices, or because they could set their own policies in relation to a

number of issues.

Suggestions for Further Research

Before addressing recommendations for further research, I realized that a lack of manifest is present in schools in general—a lack of early-appearing disaster criteria for educators (Welton, 2001, p. 102). Welton called our attention to the fact that educators, unlike Roman architects in ancient times, for example, do not have to stand under a bridge they just built while the scaffolding is removed—to witness the quality of their work. Furthermore, the school-age years are not repeatable, making the responsibilities of educators even greater. It is the responsibility of educators and administrators in these schools, then, to perhaps minimize hierarchical and structural obstacles, and join forces in offering students healthy educational environments. Such concerns, which are applicable in any school system, may be even more troubling to expatriate families served by American international schools. These concerns necessitate further research and the exploration of questions such as:

- In what other alternative ways can leadership dynamics in schools be studied?

- What does it mean to lead in highly diverse communities as the American international schools?

- What are the differences between the attitudes and practices of educators in American international schools in relation to definitions of multicultural and multiethnic environments?

In this study I worked beyond attribution theories (that the errors explain the events) that isolate school leaders in schools. Instead, I valued and included multiple school constituents that participate in the process of leadership initiatives. Exploring leadership dynamics in American international schools, I observed a microcosm of U.S.

schools (Gonzales, 1987) performing in host countries. Embedded in foreign countries, these schools work toward engaging their community members to provide education for children of U.S. expatriates and demonstrate to foreign nationals the philosophy and methods of American education (U.S. Department of State, 2003) .

American international schools were considered in this study as manageable ecological environments because these schools bring together a combination of committed educators, families, and community participation. Many expatriate families in American international schools perceive the benefit of providing continuity to their children's success (Blanford & Shaw, 2001).

Final Reflections

Returning to the American international schools' circuit as a researcher was an interesting experience for me. As I entered the school hallways I was surprised at how familiar the atmosphere was, and at the same time, I was surprised at how my perception of such familiarity had changed after being away from the American international schools' setting for almost four years. In these four years, I negotiated my understanding of American international schools by advancing my understanding of school policies, organizational theories, and most importantly, I was able to further understand formal and informal structures in which educators exercise their functions. The recognition of formal and informal relationships motivated me to conduct this study of leadership dynamics from an integrative perspective.

In American international schools, newly arrived educators join in school activities with the guidance of old-timers. Old-timers provide the historical continuity, and communicate what initiatives have worked, and what initiatives have not worked in

the past. Independently from hierarchical positions, educators at this point create working relationships that are primarily based on reciprocal capacity building. I was both the newcomer and the old-timer and was able to identify myself with many of the participants in this study, like Mr. Hawk, the high school principal at Nieuhaus, for example. As an old-timer, he often articulated problems encountered in the past and invited new members to share their perceptions. Because I was once part of a group of educators in such high turnover environments, I could see the power of the knowledge obtained by these interactions.

However, even though these interactions are powerful and productive, I am aware that schools are still observed from a hierarchical standpoint, where the superintendent often takes the credit and the blame for the school's success or failure. I was interested therefore in connecting the informal experience, with what was being officially legitimated as leadership in schools. A compelling comment was offered by one of the participants: "You cannot change a ship by simply changing the superintendent," affirmed Ms. Corgi. She showed me that I was in the right path.

As I began interviewing educators, they often referred to the idea that all school members were in the same boat. I identified the feeling of being in the same boat in my own experience as an educator in an American international school, where you are aware geographically away from home, and is also serving a philosophy that is foreign to the place you are located physically.

When I begun this study, I realized that some people viewed American international schools as satellite systems, isolated outposts, with educators serving small groups of expatriate families during their overseas assignments. Some might think that

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these schools provide just a minimum level of education—to maintain the children in sufficient educational conditions while they trail their parents around the world. On the contrary, I encountered groups of highly prepared and committed educators, serving not only American expatriates but a larger community of expatriates and local families, delivering quality curricula and worldminded education.

I believe worldmindedness deserves special attention in the quest to understand domestic issues of pluralism. The value of worldmindedness is in the focus of individuals on humankind instead of specific ethnic groups. American international schools' educators negotiate their identities not only in their profession, but as members of a highly mixed community, immersed in a different country. Lessons about how these educators negotiate their identities and how they teach children from multiple backgrounds may inform the preparation of students in urban schools, especially in this era of enhanced globalization. It appears that schools in the U.S. are preparing students for globalization by teaching students a foreign language and providing business negotiation skills. In turn, American international schools seemed to be more concerned about preparing responsible, globally-conscious citizens, as stated by Arboretum, or culturally-sensitive citizens, as declared by Whisperwind.

Interestingly, everyone—educators, parents, and students—realized that they would eventually leave the host country. Nonetheless, all of those interviewed were committed to providing students with the best possible education. In fact, one of the participants noted: "Life for most people in the world is more similar than it is different. We are all interested in getting ahead, and having our kids be well educated, and living comfortably" (personal interview, May 2004). Furthermore, the schools were concerned

with providing students with not only a college-preparatory curriculum, but a curriculum they could find in other schools if they moved before graduating.

In my experience with American international schools, I saw the difficult task these schools faced in meeting the needs of their communities. One of the difficulties was related to the highly diverse population and their cultural differences. Expectations and assumptions were just as diverse, and interpretations of what was best for the students were seldom unanimous. However, there are inexorable universal values, such as the recognition that students cannot repeat their school years and that the responsibility of school personnel for the students is colossal.

Lessons about leadership for diversity were under-explored in this study. However, the educators who took part in this study, had much to offer in terms of their understanding of teaching and leading in highly diverse environments. To promote ecological stability in the American international schools studied, participants seemed to need much self-determination, and self-organization of pre-conceived ideas, in order to enhance their teaching and leading.

This study aroused my interest in further documenting not only collective work toward purposeful activities, but the knowledge developed in schools where educators are cultural hybrids—possessing knowledge from two or more cultures. Knowledge from educators with experience overseas should not be shunned, but enhanced and valued. Such a move would contribute to the recognition of and pro-active stance against society's avoidance of ethnicity in a monolithic conception of culture, as highlighted by Giroux (1995)—a postmodern notion of democracy—one in which students and educators will be attentive to "negotiating and constructing the social, political and

cultural conditions for diverse cultural identities to flourish within an increasingly multicentric, international, and transnational world" (p. 55). Lessons learned from educators in the American international schools studied can certainly be applied to local schools struggling with issues of diversity.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

APPROVAL LETTER FROM THE UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON
RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS, LETTERS
OF INTRODUCTION AND CONSENT LETTERS

MICHIGAN STATE
U N I V E R S I T Y

April 7, 2004

TO: Maenette K. BENHAM
        419A Erickson Hall
        MSU

RE: **IRB# 04-225**   CATEGORY: EXPEDITED 2-5, 2-6, 2-7

        APPROVAL DATE: April 6, 2004
        EXPIRATION DATE March 6, 2005

TITLE: Leadership from an Integrative Perspective in American International Schools

The University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects' (UCRIHS) review of this project is complete and I am pleased to advise that the rights and welfare of the human subjects appear to be adequately protected and methods to obtain informed consent are appropriate. Therefore, the **UCRIHS approved this project.**

RENEWALS: UCRIHS approval is valid until the expiration date listed above. Projects continuing beyond this date must be renewed with the renewal form. A maximum of four such expedited renewals are possible. Investigators wishing to continue a project beyond that time need to submit a 5-year application for a complete review.

REVISIONS: UCRIHS must review any changes in procedures involving human subjects, prior to initiation of the change. If this is done at the time of renewal, please include a revision form with the renewal. To revise an approved protocol at any other time during the year, send your written request with an attached revision cover sheet to the UCRIHS Chair, requesting revised approval and referencing the project's IRB# and title. Include in your request a description of the change and any revised instruments, consent forms or advertisements that are applicable.

PROBLEMS/CHANGES: Should either of the following arise during the course of the work, notify UCRIHS promptly: 1) problems (unexpected side effects, complaints, etc.) involving human subjects or 2) changes in the research environment or new information indicating greater risk to the human subjects than existed when the protocol was previously reviewed and approved.

If we can be of further assistance, please contact us at (517) 355-2180 or via email: UCRIHS@msu.edu. Please note that all UCRIHS forms are located on the web: http://www.humanresearch.msu.edu

Sincerely,

Peter Vasilenko, Ph.D.
UCRIHS Chair

PV: kab

cc: Elizabeth Ramalho
      808 Cherry Lane Apt G
      East Lansing, MI 48823

Letter of Introduction to Obtain Permission for School Visitation

Date

Dear _____,

My name is Elizabeth Murakami-Ramalho, a Ph.D. Candidate at Michigan State University in K-12 Educational Administration. I am writing to you because I am conducting a study entitled "Leadership from an Integrative Perspective in American International Schools."

My dissertation will examine how people work together and build leadership through school initiatives. I am particularly interested in initiatives that create leadership dynamics, bringing together educators, parents, and community members working together for institutional growth and learning for all stakeholders. I will be investigating one initiative per site observing leadership dynamics particular to K-12 American international schools and how members of these initiatives construct and mediate their leadership roles.

The information provided through this process will be recorded and used as part of completing my Ph.D. in educational administration at Michigan State University. The study is contingent on your approval and joint identification of an initiative to be studied. Your schools' cooperation, participation and sharing of information will be maintained confidential – names of schools and people will not be disclosed. All data and information will be kept in a locked file for a period of 5 years after which they will be destroyed.

I plan to visit the school around late April and May. During the visit, I plan to observe the activities, and conduct in-depth interviews of about ninety minutes in length with initiative coordinators to talk about their perceptions and participation, followed by a focus group interview with initiative members (teachers, parents, staff and other community members) in a ninety minute session.

Should you have any concerns or questions regarding this study, the rights of subjects and the duties of investigators, please contact the doctoral student, Elizabeth Murakami-Ramalho or the primary investigator Dr. Maenette Benham. If you have questions or

concerns about this study regarding your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact – anonymously, if you wish – Peter Vasilenko, Ph.D., Chair of the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) by phone: (517) 355-2180, fax: (517) 432-4503, e-mail: ucrihs@msu.edu, or regular mail: 202 Olds Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Murakami-Ramalho
Doctoral Candidate, Michigan State University
K-12 Educational Administration
College of Education, 403 Erickson Hall
East Lansing, MI 48824, USA
(517) 353-5461, (517) 353-6393
murakam4@msu.edu
www.msu.edu/~murakam4

Maenette Benham
Advisor, Michigan State University
K-12 Educational Administration
College of Education, 419A Erickson Hall
East Lansing, MI 48824, USA
(517) 355-6613, fax (517) 353-6393.
mbenham@msu.edu

Letter of Introduction to Participants

Date

Dear _____,

My name is Elizabeth Murakami-Ramalho, a Ph.D. Candidate at Michigan State University in K-12 Educational Administration. I am writing to you because I am conducting a study entitled "Leadership from an Integrative Perspective in American International Schools," and you were referred by the school as part of the [name of initiative].

My dissertation will examine how people work together and build leadership through school initiatives. I am particularly interested in initiatives that create leadership dynamics, bringing together educators, parents, and community members working together for institutional growth and learning for all stakeholders. I will be investigating one initiative per site, looking at leadership dynamics particular to K-12 American international schools and how you as members of these initiatives construct and mediate your leadership role.

I plan to visit your school in late April or early May. During my visit I would like to invite you to be part of the (indicate either the in-depth interview or the focus group interview). If you agree to participate I will send you a biographical questionnaire to complete prior to my visit. During my visit, I plan to conduct in-depth interviews of about ninety minutes in length followed by a focus group interview (teachers, parents, staff and other community members) in a ninety minute session. You may be asked to participate in one or both of the interviews if you agree to participate.

The information provided through this process will be recorded and used as part of completing my Ph.D. in educational administration at Michigan State University. Your participation and sharing of information will be maintained confidential – names of schools and people will not be disclosed. All data and information will be kept in a locked file for a period of 5 years after which they will be destroyed.

Should you have any concerns or questions regarding this study, the rights of subjects and the duties of investigators, please contact the doctoral student, Elizabeth Murakami-Ramalho or the primary investigator Dr. Maenette Benham. If you have questions or concerns about this study regarding your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact – anonymously, if you wish – Peter Vasilenko, Ph.D., Chair of the University Committee on Research Involving

Human Subjects (UCRIHS) by phone: (517) 355-2180, fax: (517) 432-4503, e-mail: ucrihs@msu.edu, or regular mail: 202 Olds Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Murakami-Ramalho
Doctoral Candidate, Michigan State University
K-12 Educational Administration
College of Education, 403 Erickson Hall
East Lansing, MI 48824, USA
(517) 353-5461, (517) 353-6393
murakam4@msu.edu
www.msu.edu/~murakam4

Maenette Benham
Advisor, Michigan State University
K-12 Educational Administration
College of Education, 419A Erickson Hall
East Lansing, MI 48824, USA
(517) 355-6613, fax (517) 353-6393.
mbenham@msu.edu

Consent Form

Thank you for participating in this study. By participating in this study you will help researchers at Michigan State University document leadership dynamics particular to K-12 American international schools and how you as a member of this initiative construct and mediate your leadership role. Your participation will include a biographical questionnaire, an in-depth interview, or a focus group interview.

The interviews will take approximately ninety minutes and will be audio taped and transcribed by the doctoral candidate. Please know that you can request to have the tape recorder turned off at any time. You also have the right not to answer any particular questions.

Your identity will be maintained anonymous and will not be disclosed or identified in any report of research findings. Pseudonyms will be used to protect your voluntary and confidential participation to the maximum extent allowable by law. All information gathered in the study will be kept confidential, in a locked file cabinet, in a safe location. Upon request, and respecting confidentiality and anonymity restrictions, results may be made available to participants.

Please know that participation in this study is voluntary and that you may choose not to participate at any time. Your withdrawal will not incur in any penalty or loss of benefits to you. Should you have any concerns or questions regarding this study, the rights of subjects and the duties of investigators, please contact the doctoral student, Elizabeth Murakami-Ramalho, or the primary investigator Dr. Maenette Benham.

If you have questions or concerns about this study regarding your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact – anonymously, if you wish –Peter Vasilenko, Ph.D., Chair of the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) by phone: (517) 355-2180, fax: (517) 432-4503, e-mail: ucrihs@msu.edu, or regular mail: 202 Olds Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Murakami-Ramalho
Doctoral Candidate, Michigan State University
K-12 Educational Administration
College of Education, 403 Erickson Hall
East Lansing, MI 48824, USA
(517) 353-5461, (517) 353-6393
murakam4@msu.edu

Maenette Benham
Advisor, Michigan State University
K-12 Educational Administration
College of Education, 419A Erickson Hall
East Lansing, MI 48824, USA
(517) 355-6613, fax (517) 353-6393.
mbenham@msu.edu

Your signature below indicates your voluntary agreement to participate and to be audio-taped for the study: <u>Leadership from an Integrative Perspective</u>
<u>in American International Schools</u>
.

Participant name (please print):_____

Contact information: (address) _____

(phone number and email): _____

_____   _____
Participant Signature   Date

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

Leadership Organizational Map

Based on the leadership initiative we selected, please draw a map of your organization, including the school departments and other places that are involved in the initiative. Please feel free to design an organizational map that better represents your understanding of the initiative. Please know that you are not obliged to use this form to guide your map. You can use any other form of designing your map, but please include:

1. Name of the school, your name and name of the initiative;

2. a representation of the departments, divisions, corporations that are involved in the initiative;

3. how they are linked in working for this initiative;

4. the people involved in the initiative (administrators, teachers, students, parents, board members, corporation representatives, etc), and where they are located in your organizational map;

5. a brief description of these peoples' participation in the initiative – how are they linked? How do they communicate with each other?

6. the people that were involved but no longer are participating in the initiative – either because their contribution was determined and limited, or because they disengaged from the initiative for different reasons.

7. After completing the map, please respond to this question: "What does leadership means to you?"

Please mail the questionnaire and the organizational map to me (in an envelope using the address provided in the questionnaire) or by email prior to my school visitation.

Leadership Organizational Map

Name of Participant:

Name of School:

Name of initiative:

Organizational Map:

After completing the map, please respond to this question: "What does leadership mean

to you?"

Leadership Interview Protocol for In-depth Interviews and

Focus Group Interviews

The purpose of the interview is to understand the participant's involvement in the

school initiative and to explore the participant's perception of how leadership worked in

the initiative. The researcher's role is to pose open-ended questions and invite the

participant to share stories about the initiative to illustrate how the leadership dynamics

engaged into intended outcomes.

Instruction to the participant(s):

Thank you for participating in this interview. The purpose of this interview is to explore

how people work together and build leadership through school programs or initiatives.

This interview will include a variety of probes that will be used to expand your

responses: to understand your participation in the initiative and your leadership; to

better understand what you are saying; to understand definitions and clarify the meaning

of the responses; to explore what leadership means to you.

This interview should take about 90 minutes. I will be tape recording our conversation

and you can ask me to stop the recording at any time. I will also be taking notes during

our interview. You can also ask some questions during this process. The tape will be

kept in a safe place, and if you choose so, your identity will not be disclosed (I will use

different names, or pseudonyms).

If you'd like to follow along, here is a copy of the questions that we will be talking about.

As we go, I will appreciate it if you refer to the organizational map you designed or share

any documents or artifacts that you believe will help in explaining the program or

initiative.

1. The leadership initiative

    a) Using your organizational map, please tell me about each member's participation in the initiative

    b) Tell me about the intended contribution of this initiative

    c) Tell me about the school's involvement in the initiative - tell me about the community involvement

    d) Tell me about limitations or difficulties your group encountered in implementing the initiative

2. The leadership engagement

    e) Tell me about the engagement among people in the initiative including people inside and outside the school - how did people work together to support and solidify the implementation of the initiative?

    f) Who initiated the engagement among participants in the initiative?

    g) How important was the participation of members in the initiative? Was the collaboration and leadership top-down (or horizontal)?

3. The challenges to the dynamics

    h) What were the challenges that this initiative faced? Can you recall any particular stances where you or other members encountered difficulties in the implementation of the initiative, especially in working with each other?

    i) Do you believe the relationships with other people foster or hinder the initiative?

    j) How open were the participants to learning from this experience?

k) Did the school's location (country) in which you work influence your participation?

4. Personal perspective

l) Tell me about your relationship with others in this initiative. What opportunities to lead and learn have you experienced in this initiative?

m) I would like you to tell me a story that you feel best captures the essence of your involvement in the project, be it about the project, the partners in the project journey, or that contains any personal/individual spiritual values significant to you.

n) Is there anything else you would like to add?

o) Are there any questions you would like to ask me?

Thank you very much for your time and for sharing your knowledge with me.

The follow-up questions will be used for member checks, additional participants, or to collect additional information from participants in the leadership initiative observed. The in-depth interview questions will then be used and participants may respond to the questions remotely by email. It is possible that additional questions will be conceptualized after transcription and preliminary analysis of interviews collected.

1. Purpose of the follow-up questions (circle one):   member check

                                                        additional information

2. For member check follow up, include narrative or case study with this form.

3. Sample additional questions in case the primary analysis requires more information:

   a. Could you please clarify your response to question (in-depth interview question)?

   b. What did you mean when you said _____?

   c. Could you please expand on the experience you depicted in the (in-depth interview question)?

APPENDIX C

MATRIX FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF PROTOCOLS BASED ON THE
EMERGENT CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Matrix for the Construction of Protocols based on the Emergent Conceptual Framework

Elements	Biographical Questionnaire	Organizational Map	Individual Interviews	Artifacts and Documents	Focus Group Interviews	Observations	Follow-up Interviews
Collective and Individual Learning	Experience overseas and professional and educational attainment may reflect individual learning	Portrait of the distribution of leadership tasks and responsibilities. The process of increasing contact with others may suggest learning progress	How did participants perceive the dynamics? What did the participant learn from being part of the experience? How did the participant learn from being part of the leadership initiative?	Organizational growth in supporting the initiative. What is the degree of institutional involvement with school members, outside stakeholders, community at large?	How did participants perceive their leadership? How did the participant learn from being part of the leadership initiative? What was the group's impression in learning through participation in the initiative?	Initiative dynamics through the participants engagement in the activity. How are roles shared and how does learning occurs through the sharing	Additional interviews from individuals identified in conversations with groups and individuals in initial interviews. Further understanding of participants' recognition in the learning process
Community		Links among participants in the initiative; Links between departments; Links with outside stakeholders	Participants' perception of community participation	Institution's interest in fostering community participation	Group's interest in including community and other stakeholders in the initiative	How the community and families interact with school participants?	Complete the community portrait; Interview those who were not able to be in the focus group
Culture		Description of map by participants during interviews will help the research understand the organizational culture. Who speaks to whom? What departments were involved?	What kind of culture has the initiative fostered? Or hindered? How has the school culture contributed to the leadership initiative efforts?	Institutional culture will be reflected in different artifacts and documents provided by the institution; How has the initiative impacted the institution?	Group culture towards the initiative; Group culture towards the institution; Group culture towards community participation;	How does the initiative cultivate the culture?	Complete the community portrait; Interview those who were not able to be in the focus group

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Elements	Biographical Questionnaire	Organizational Map	Individual Interviews	Artifacts and Documents	Focus Group Interviews	Observations	Follow-up Interviews
Power & Ethics		Identification of influential people and departments or outside companies in influencing the initiative's leadership; Will provide hierarchical structures in organization	What was the participant's perception of the constraints in developing and implementing the initiative?	How has the initiative impacted the institution? Was the initiative and participants recognized for their leadership?	What was the group's perception of the constraints the initiative?	Decision making and roadblocks	Pursue additional interviews from individuals identified in conversations with groups and individuals in initial interviews
Spirituality	Formal school experiences may include commitment to working overseas	Map may reflect commitment and goals of the initiative	What was the participant's personal account in participating in this initiative?	Institution's recognition of leadership efforts? Recognition of initiative's contribution to the community at large	Was there group synergy in feeling rewarded in participating in this initiative?		
Boundaries	How do participants perceive their overseas experience?	Context information of American school immersed in a foreign country	How did the context constrained or helped in fostering the initiative? How does the participant perceive the context?	Influence of outside factors in the American school's perception of being part of the host country; Initiative's contribution in the context	How did the context constrained or helped in fostering the initiative? How do participants perceive the context?	How does the context influence the decision making?	Further exploration of factors that may influence the development of initiatives
Change	How do participants perceive their overseas experience?		How did participant's perceive the initiative's influence in changing the context, leadership efforts, and collective participation	How did the institution perceive the initiative in terms of positive (or negative) changes	How did the group perceive the initiative's influence in changing the context, leadership efforts, and collective participation	How has the initiative change the institution?	

Verification of open codes and properties in the protocol questions and themes:

Elements	Biographical Questionnaire	Organizational Map	Individual Interviews	Artifacts and Documents	Focus Group Interviews	Follow-up Questios
Collective and Individual Learning	Q # 8 Q # 9 Q # 10	Q # 3 Q # 4 Q # 5 Q # 6 Q # 7	Q # 1.b. Q # 1.c. Q # 1.d. Q # 2.e. Q # 2.g. Q # 3.h. Q # 3.j. Q # 4.l.	X	Q # 1.b. Q # 1.c. Q # 1.d. Q # 2.e. Q # 2.g. Q # 3.h. Q # 3.j. Q # 4.l.	Dependent on need
Community		Q # 2 Q # 3 Q # 4 Q # 7	Q # 1.a. Q # 1.b. Q # 1.c. Q # 2.e. Q # 2.g. Q # 3.h. Q # 3.k. Q # 4.m.	X	Q # 1.a. Q # 1.b. Q # 1.c. Q # 2.e. Q # 2.g. Q # 3.h. Q # 3.k. Q # 4.m.	Dependent on need
Culture		Q # 4 Q # 5 Q # 6 Q # 7	Q # 1.a. Q # 1.b. Q # 1.d. Q # 2.e. Q # 2.f. Q # 2.g. Q # 3.h. Q # 3.i. Q # 3.j. Q # 3.k. Q # 4.m.	X	Q # 1.a. Q # 1.b. Q # 1.d. Q # 2.e. Q # 2.f. Q # 2.g. Q # 3.h. Q # 3.i. Q # 3.j. Q # 3.k. Q # 4.m.	Dependent on need
Power & Ethics		Q # 6 Q # 7	Q # 1.b. Q # 1.d. Q # 2.f. Q # 3.h. Q # 3.i. Q # 3.k. Q # 4.m.		Q # 1.b. Q # 1.d. Q # 2.f. Q # 3.h. Q # 3.i. Q # 3.k. Q # 4.m.	Dependent on need
Spirituality	Q # 8 Q # 10	Q # 3	Q # 1.b. Q # 1.c. Q # 2.e. Q # 2.g. Q # 3.i. Q # 4.l. Q # 4.m.		Q # 1.b. Q # 1.c. Q # 2.e. Q # 2.g. Q # 3.i. Q # 4.l. Q # 4.m.	Dependent on need
Boundaries	Q # 9 Q # 10	Q # 5 Q # 6	Q # 1.a. Q # 1.b. Q # 1.d. Q # 2.g. Q # 3.h. Q # 3.k. Q # 4.l. Q # 4.m.	X	Q # 1.a. Q # 1.b. Q # 1.d. Q # 2.g. Q # 3.h. Q # 3.k. Q # 4.l. Q # 4.m.	Dependent on need
Change	Q # 8 Q # 9 Q # 10	Q # 6 Q # 7	Q # 2.e. Q # 2.f. Q # 2.g. Q # 3.h. Q # 3.i. Q # 3.j. Q # 3.k. Q # 4.l. Q # 4.m.	X	Q # 2.e. Q # 2.f. Q # 2.g. Q # 3.h. Q # 3.i. Q # 3.j. Q # 3.k. Q # 4.l. Q # 4.m.	Dependent on need

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