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IN LEADERSHIP AND
FOLLOWERSHIP

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THE DYNAMICS OF BALANCING
LEADERSHIP WITH FOLLOWERSHIP

EDITED BY
NEHA CHATWANI



Palgrave Studies in Leadership and Followership

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Payal Kumar
New Delhi, India

Leadership has traditionally been defined as a process whereby an individual exerts influence over a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. While earlier theories placed the leader at the center of the model, only recently has the other actor in the picture, the 'follower,' become a focus for significant research and exploration. Within this context, however, the follower is still largely seen as a recipient of the leader's influence and power, who is subservient and passive, rather than as an organizational agent in his own right.

Palgrave Studies in Leadership and Followership aims to bring the follower-centric leadership approach to the fore. It is based on the premise that followers are largely proactive sense-makers who react in different ways to leadership and to change management. Adding value to leadership theory as well as organizational behavior literature, this series situates leadership in the eye of the beholder, exploring how followers make sense of leaders and leadership, and what impact this has on their own identity, work relationships, the leader and the firm.

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Neha Chatwani
Editor

Distributed Leadership

The Dynamics of Balancing Leadership
with Followership

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Editor

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Foreword

The Leadership–Followership Interdependency: From Knowledge to Action Through Collective Intelligence and Systems Thinking

The Idea

The idea of followership as a complementary relational frame for augmenting and enhancing participatory leadership modalities is not new. It is found in practices and organizational dynamics from nature to classical and contemporary societies the world over. What is new is recognizing it, characterizing it, understanding the patterning and the politics that comprise the followership dynamic, and explicating the type of leadership orientations and implementations that foster this dance of interdependence between leaders and followers. Learning how to curate the emergence of both roles through recognition of the types of relational dynamics that give rise to thriving systems of collaborative decision-taking is much

needed in today's ever more interdependent world. To this point, Parker Palmer notes in his classic work on authentic leadership that –

“Leadership” is a concept we often resist. It seems immodest, even self-aggrandizing, to think of ourselves as leaders. But if it is true that we are made for community, then leadership is everyone's vocation, and it can be an evasion to insist that it is not. When we live in the close-knit ecosystem called community, everyone follows and everyone leads. (Palmer, 2000, p. 22)

Neha Chatwani has drawn together a collection of essays that address this point, and through her careful curating of their flow and thematic relation, presents the reader with a guide that not only helps understand the fundamentals of distributed leadership (DL) but also suggests concrete ways of manifesting them in teams, communities, organizations, and collaborative endeavors of all kind.

Distributed Leadership Fundamentals

The notion of DL is rooted in the study of relational dynamics among social organisms. DL serves interests of systemic thriving by promoting patterns of the joint optimization of shared visions, values, and ideals among all the actors in a group rather than the maximization of any subset of particular individual interests.

The field of DL is characterized by the progressive contemporary shift from hierarchically structured command and control patterns of decision-taking, to decentralized patterns that place authority in semi-autonomous local sub-units, to distributed patterns that are either acephalous (with no clearly designated leadership function) or rhizomic (with multi-nodal and inter-linked leadership functions). This shift is both inspired and enabled by developments in computing and the Internet. The shift from isolated individual computers, to networked computer arrays, to cloud computing, provides a functional cognitive reference to how we organize and process data, subtly suggesting new modes of thinking/being/doing that embody these modes in other relational domains. And more directly, this shift in information processing and communication technologies has

freed human decision-taking from the need for single-point reference systems. In other words, the need for knowledge to be vested in an individual wise leader who has access to and understands all that is required to make the best decisions for the group is past (although there still are circumscribed situations in which such modalities are both appropriate and effective). Indeed, such centralized and single-point decision-making authority tends to be both impractical and often simply impossible in this day and age of Big Data and systemic complexity. DL is not just a nice idea. It is a mode of collective being whose time has come.

Distributed Leadership Manifestations

The literature on leadership is multitudinous. Books and articles abound on leadership skills and how to develop them. The relationship between the leader and the follower is one that has been studied for centuries, with weighty tomes dedicated to the subject of how leaders can cultivate faithful followers. But what of followership? Very little exists in the way of the formal study of the skills of a good follower, and even less regarding how followers can best support and contribute to good leadership.

As the authors of the various chapters of this book show, followership is an art, a skill, a disposition, and an intention that only makes sense in service of the whole. With a focus on synergy among participants and a premium on harnessing the power of collective intelligence, an effective leadership–followership dynamic foment the flourishing of communities in context. That is to say, DL serves to evolve communities in the context of their living social and ecosystemic environments, both effectively and affectively.

The contributions that comprise this book are organized in a delightful sequence that takes the reader on an exploration of DL and the leadership–followership interdependency. The journey begins with a look at how leadership and followership manifest in nature and represent in the social dynamics of animals, to conceptual considerations and implications that challenge mainstream models of leadership, to human-centered models of DL, to specific case considerations in industry and organization contexts, to arrive finally back again to

consideration of leadership and followership in ecosystem dynamics. This flow of focus is powerful and in its own way represents the sensitivity of DL by capturing the collective intelligence of the contributing authors and curating a greater synergy among their respective works than would otherwise obtain in a more eclectic presentation of the same chapters.

The onto-epistemological journey of this book is vested in a transdisciplinary appreciation that places leadership and followership in a holistic perspective. That is to say, through the well-woven yet broad-ranging considerations of the authors of the chapters, DL is presented so as to integrate natural, personal, social, economic, and sustainability factors. The result affords the reader a systemic understanding of DL and the interdependence of leadership and followership dynamics. This understanding draws on the sciences of chaos and complexity for the effective contemplation of the interrelated aspects of leadership/followership that are simultaneously intellectual, human, social, natural, and technological. It is precisely this perspective that offers the greatest potential for charting evolutionary pathways of collective human presence on Earth by emphasizing an overarching ethic of systemic metastability between and among humans, the institutions they create and inhabit, and the living environment that nurtures and sustains them (Laszlo, 2009). The implications for enhancing and evolving collective self-governance toward the ideal of Evolutionary Learning Community (ELC) and the possibility of networked communities of such community, or what would amount to an evolutionary learning society and ultimately an evolutionary learning ecosystem are timely and significant (Laszlo, 2015).

Systemic Design for Curating Possibility

An emergent aspect of consideration that derives from the chapters of this book is that of the *evolutionary development* of our species. The design of interdependent pathways for the collective thriving of people and planet is a challenge that our species is only just beginning to confront in an organized, collective, and conscious way. The ability

to address issues of economic, social, cultural, and environmental well-being held in common by various peoples and groups of people will be effective to the extent that it emerges from the experience and participation of those it involves (Johansen, 2012). While most people nowadays have access to relevant information sources for effective, efficient, efficacious decision-taking through the ubiquity of the Internet and its pervasion among those who wish to be a part of making change, what is missing are opportunities and support structures for participatory inclusion and collaborative involvement that are commensurate with these same technologies of communication and information processing (TICs). DL takes into account those situations in which human potential can be engaged to its full potential, weaving mutual interests and interrelated competencies to strengthen collective response ability by leveraging collective intelligence with the appropriate use of relevant TICs.

Truly, DL involves leaders who know how to follow and followers who know how to lead. In their respective roles, each honors and is deferent to the other, seeking to play their role well so that the other is best supported and fulfilled in theirs. It is a symbiotic relationship of mutual co-arising and interdependence (Wheeler, 2006). In a thriving DL community, everyone is interested in learning and doing in ways that benefit the entire community, without regard to age, gender, occupation, level of education, or socio-economic status—or rather, with healthy regard to them. The idea is to be an evolutionary change agent in conscious and purposeful service of the individual and collective needs and potential of one's ELC. This calls for leadership and followership in dynamic harmony. Through such relationships of interdependence, leaders and followers co-create enduring value at the heart of the transformative change process of their community (Roces, 2011). The hallmark of thrivable DL is the sensed presence of consonance, coherence, and connection in what then is truly an ELC. It is by consciously curating these dynamic relational components that followers and leaders together may foster systemic innovations that give rise to both the thrivability of the community as a whole and the flourishing of a supportive social and environmental context in which it is embedded (Laszlo, 2017).

Concrete Potentials

DL is a mode of individual and collective self-realization and has tremendous “goodness of fit” with the times and challenges that currently contextualize much of humanity. It is less about micro-managing people in hierarchical top-down command and control relationships and more about curating potential that allows for the emergence collective creativity. For this, the dance of interdependence between the follower and the leader that comprises DL must be curated without fear of losing control or distrust in either the people or the processes that comprise the community. Curating for consonance, coherence, and connection means that the dance of the leader and the follower facilitates the interweaving of the skills, potentials, aspirations, and intentions present in healthy and authentic community. This book substantiates and communicates this claim. Through a well-woven set of contributions by leading (and following) edge thinkers in the emerging field of DL, Chatwani offers an accessible foray into the challenging terrain of relational dynamics in groups that seek to work, play, and learn together.

By beginning with the work of Marc Hurwitz, “Exploring Distributed Leadership: A Leader-Follower Collaborative Lens,” we are afforded insight into the relational dynamics among social animals, with a focus on two species in particular: stickleback fish and wolves. From an empathetic and astute observation of status and role expressions in both groups, Hurwitz notes that “leadership and followership are mutual influence processes,” and that “distributed leadership was more commonly observed than either centralized or leaderless groups in the species studied.”

This leads into the second chapter by Neha Chatwani, the volume editor of this book as part of the series Palgrave Studies in Leadership and Followership. Her chapter, “Followership Engagement in Hybrid Distributed Leadership,” delves into the literature through a phenomenological inquiry of three narrative case studies that explore the nature of DL from an experiential viewpoint. Chatwani notes that “DL is less about the idea that everyone is a leader but more about a choice in attitude of leadership [emphasizing the holistic quality of] the followership-leadership dichotomy as one that is complementary and of mutual engagement.”

In Chap. 3 Koen Marichal, Jesse Segers, Karen Wouters, and Jeroen Stouten provide further exploration of the issue by focusing on leader-centric narratives of verticality among leaders who experience organizational change and the shift in identity it implies. Their chapter, “Investigating the Dynamism of Change in Leadership Identity,” provides a deontological consideration that “advances our understanding of vertical leadership at the identity level and its role in enhancing distributed leadership ... [especially in] bureaucratic organizations who aim to engage in distributed leadership and rely on their formal, hierarchical leaders to realize that ambition.”

Mark Clark and Martina Buljac-Samardžić bring our attention to a particular focus of DL in the healthcare industry. Chapter 4, “The Changing Role of the Patient in the Healthcare Team: Factors Influencing Decisions to Follow and Lead,” provides a systemic consideration of stakeholder viewpoints in the complexity of interests involved in healthcare decisions. With this chapter, the authors aim “to contribute to the paradigm shift needed to achieve an appropriate level of followership and shared leadership in healthcare, with the ultimate goal of improving patient well-being within a sustainable healthcare system.”

Chapter 5 takes us into cultural considerations that span both geographical and generational divides. Shalini Sahni’s “Investigating Team Performance in Generation Y in Delhi (India)” brings forth a sensitive and empathic view to the ways in which “team co-operation, climate for self-initiative and empowerment are extrapolative predictors of shared leadership” and offers the insight that “Generation Y in India does not prefer ‘traditional’ leadership model.”

Regina Rowland’s chapter, “Fostering Creative Engagement through the Use of Collaborative Visual Mapping,” brings attention to another level of how to frame exploration of the emerging field of DL. Her work points to how “hierarchies in leadership and followership are constructed and dismantled during creative group engagement, shared and exchanged and guided by the shifting dynamics in diverse groups (the whole gestalt), not by individual actors (as would be the case in traditional leadership practice).”

The seventh chapter by Martín Echavarría, “A Methodology for Enabling Collaboration Inspired by Enrique Pichon-Rivière,” the

Argentinian psychoanalyst whose work on operative group process established the therapeutic methodology of *Operative Groups* in the area of applied social and group psychology. Echavarría contends that in “the co-creation of solutions in relationship with and through others ... adaptation occurs through the systemic psychosocial roles that participants take on as they work in groups, accommodating to each other’s inter and intra subjective relating based on implicit challenges they must make explicit and reconcile.”

In Chap. 8, “Human Developmental Processes as Key to Creating Impactful Leadership,” Graham Boyd and Otto Laske bring us back to consideration of human developmental dynamics as the ground for effective (and affective) DL. Their postulation of what they term deliberately developmental processes (DDP) suggests the need for social structures that function as deliberately developmental organizations (DDO) to best nurture DDP. They “detect a crucial need for adult-developmental processes (meaning making and thinking) supporting people in non-hierarchic organizations ... [supporting] the hypothesis ... that distributed leadership and followership is developmentally determined.”

And finally, the ninth and last chapter by Domenica Devine brings our consideration of DL and the leader–follower relational dynamic full circle to deep ecology and the science of ecosystems. Her chapter, “Following Nature’s Lead,” provides an excellent final consideration of the themes of this book, “using the metaphors of ecological systems [to] explore patterns linking concepts of ecological systems and organizational systems together, questioning how shared leadership is reflected in the metaphors.”

Readable, timely, relevant, and both thought-provoking and, more importantly, action-inducing, this collection of essays contributes significantly to the establishment of DL as a domain of action inquiry worthy of attention by transdisciplinary scholar-practitioners the world over. It serves as a conceptual compass by which to navigate the emerging terrain of new leadership and followership dynamics, providing a guide to contemporary individual and collective struggles to make the next evolutionary leap in collective consciousness from a world of unitary and

undifferentiated fragmentation to one of multi-faceted and diverse oneness. DL affirms the increasingly undeniable fact of our interdependence and provides a way for humankind to cross this bridge in unity.

Alexander Laszlo, Ph.D.

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Preface: Why This Book?

It is often argued that without followership there is no leadership. The question of whether followership can exist without leadership is seldom raised. Distributed leadership is a notion that challenges the widely assumed binary dichotomy between followership and leadership. It emphasizes a symbiotic and dynamic relationship between the two while addressing a pragmatic opportunity to fully exploit and leverage competencies and resources to master complex challenges. Distributed leadership is generally considered a sustainable form of leadership. While the intricacies of its workings still need to be further explored, the current revival of discourse around it clearly reflects the general distrust in other forms of leadership that prevail today, both in the political and the business context.

A number of terms describing distributed leadership have been coined, including collaborative, purposeful, shared, inclusive. Some scholars insist on these nuanced differences, sometimes citing, for example, various organizational structures as pertinent distinguishing factors. However, in this book, we attempt to explore the space beyond the obvious parameters for defining leadership while we look at distributed leadership as a vehicle for engaging with and embracing followership. Through this lens we start to untangle the assumptions in which the understanding of leadership is embedded. We do this, on the one hand, by focusing on observable examples or case studies, not only to improve our understanding of the

phenomenon but also to enhance the practice of distributed leadership; and, on the other hand, by critically reflecting on the approach taken in theoretical models contributing thus far, allowing ourselves to be inspired by systems in nature and human developmental processes.

The chapters in this book show that distributed leadership is not the dispersion of responsibility or the fragmentation of decision-making power, but rather a purposeful and specifically defined corporate culture of empowered individuals aligned to organizational goals, a system of leadership that equally allows for checks and balances in governance. Consequently, we postulate that shared leadership does not dismantle leadership—instead, it raises leadership into an informed authority which through meaningful communication nurtures the agile competency of the organization. This ability to navigate followership around a purpose through the choppy waters of uncertainty and turmoil is what makes distributed leadership particularly appealing at the current juncture.

I would now like to sincerely thank Payal Kumar for including this volume in the Palgrave Leadership and Followership series. Her guidance and encouragement were fundamental in the creation of this work. Further, I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their meticulous work and helpful comments, as well as all the authors for their insightful contributions.

Vienna, Austria

Neha Chatwani

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Series Note

Leadership has been defined as a process that involves exerting influence on followers (Yukl, 2012). It is also said to consist of power dynamics in which leaders are bestowed authority and legitimate power by the organization, largely because of their technical, human, and conceptual skills (Katz, 1955).

Earlier theories of leadership such as trait theory, or charismatic theory, placed the leader at the centre of the model. Followers were seen as recipients of a leader's influence and power, rather than as organizational agents in their own right, akin to devotees revering the leader as a God-like figure (Gabriel, 1997). From the role-based perspective of a follower in a hierarchical setting, even the word 'follower' implies that the agent is subservient and passive (Katz & Kahn, 1978).

More recently the 'other' actor in the picture, namely the follower, has become the focus of significant scholarly work (Baker, 2007; Bligh, 2011), including the follower's perception of the leader (Antonakis, House & Simonton, 2017; Gottfredson & Aguinis, 2016). 'It is now widely accepted that leadership cannot be fully understood without considering the role of followers in the leadership process,' (Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe & Carsten, 2014, p. 88).

Based on the assumption that the identities of both leaders and followers are socially constructed, interlinked, and can transform each other

(Meindl, 1995), this series intends to bring to the fore the follower as a largely proactive sensemaker who reacts to and shapes both leadership and organizational change. This merits deeper study, because the multifaceted and ever-changing follower identity is possibly more complex than was once thought (Collinson, 2006).

Gaining deeper insight into followers' identity, sensemaking, and co-construction of leadership is essential for the advancement of leadership knowledge (Brown, 2012) for several reasons:

- Followership determines how leaders are perceived (Carsten, Uhl-Bien, West, Patera & McGregor, 2010)
- Followership identity predicts how a follower will follow, which affects both individual and organizational outcomes (Dasborough, Ashkanasy, Tee & Herman, 2009).
- Followership predicts how a follower will lead (Koonce, 2013)

This book series follows seven different perspectives of key components in the follower–leader dynamic. Each volume consists of empirical and conceptual chapters on leadership and followership, interspersed with a few chapters by practitioners in the first person narrative style.

Each volume editor has chosen a specific aspect to explore in order to expand the full range of understanding of how followers shape leadership dynamics, largely from two levels of analysis:

1. Follower identity and behaviour at a micro level
2. Follower relationship with the leader at the dyadic level

What distinguishes this series from books in this domain is the distinct international appeal: The volume editors themselves span five countries (America, France, Australia, Canada, and India), and the research contributions are from scholars who are from all over the world. In fact, many of the volumes—such as on Authentic Leadership and Followership; The Dynamics of Role Modelling in the Workplace; and Inclusive Leadership—Negotiating Gendered Spaces—explore this topic specifically from international and diversity perspectives. This series also has a

strong interdisciplinary appeal, with the volumes drawing on perspectives spanning gender studies, philosophy, and neuroscience.

I have had the privilege of working with some fine scholars, who have worked diligently over the last few years to produce volumes, some of which are described below:

1. ***Servant Leadership and Followership: Examining the Impact on Workplace Behaviour*** 978-3-319-59365-4

Editor: Crystal Davis.

Providing a deeper understanding of servant leadership and followership theory, this volume contributes to the literature on servant leadership and selfless service through the lens of the servant as follower. The collection brings together both empirical and conceptual research from around the globe that showcases servant leadership from the viewpoint of the follower.

2. ***Distributed Leadership: The Dynamics of Balancing Leadership with Followership*** 978-3-319-59580-1

Editor: Neha Chatwani.

Challenging the current definitions of leadership by exploring more inclusive and holistic paradigms, this volume contributes towards the current discourse on distributed leadership by examining this as an inclusive form of leader–follower engagement. Qualitative and quantitative studies showcase the dynamics of followership in distributive leadership, covering several themes such as collective decision-making, leadership identity, roles and demographic composition of groups in a variety of settings, and human development processes.

3. ***Inclusive Leadership: Negotiating Gendered Spaces*** 978-3-319-60665-1

Editors: Sujana Adapa and Alison Sheridan.

Questioning traditional perceptions of a leader as white and male, this volume presents leadership from a gender equity lens, and includes topics such as feminine leadership, leadership legitimacy, and co-creating creativity between leaders and followers. With contributions from scholars in Australia, India, and the United Kingdom, this volume also touches on diversity within these countries, for example Chinese migrants in Australia and Indian women accountants in Australia.

4. *Authentic Leadership and Followership: International Perspectives*
978-3-319-65306-8

Editor: Dorianne Cotter-Lockard.

Authentic leadership, albeit controversial, is a well-accepted form of leadership. Given that the characteristics of authentic leadership and followership are largely context specific, this volume explores leader–follower dynamics in different cultural contexts. This volume is divided into two broad themes: Global perspectives, including chapters from the Middle East, Mexico, and South Africa; and Conceptual perspectives, including chapters ranging from early career relationships to an existential perspective. The foreword to this volume has been written by Prof. William L. Gardner, a foremost expert on Authentic Leadership.

5. *Leadership and Role Modelling: Understanding Workplace Dynamics*
978-3-319-69055-1

Editors: Shruti Vidyasagar and Poornima Hatti.

Presenting role modelling as an independent construct, separate from the other developmental relationships in the workplace, this volume is a deep exploration of role modelling as both a concept and as a dynamic process which impacts career development and outcomes. The chapters, consisting of literature reviews and research studies, reflect both academic and practitioner perspectives from across the globe. This volume also has sections on gender diversity and regional diversity (India).

To conclude, this series situates leadership in the eye of the beholder, exploring how followers make sense of leaders and leadership, and the impact this has on follower identity, work relationships, the leader, and the firm. ‘Leadership is really not about leaders themselves. It’s about a collective practice among people who work together—accomplishing the choices we make together in our mutual work,’ Raelin (2015, p. 96).

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1

Exploring Distributed Leadership: A Leader–Follower Collaborative Lens

Marc Hurwitz

Leadership narratives tend to be individual-centric, that is, exceptional team outcomes, whether negative or positive, are due to the actions of one person (Meindl, Ehrlich, & Dukerich, 1985; O’Toole, Galbraith, & Lawler, 2003; Yukl, 1999; Zaccaro, Rittman, & Marks, 2001). Theories such as transformational, charismatic, servant, or authentic leadership theories largely incorporate this perspective into their research paradigms, although some disagree that it produces a necessary or desirable description of leadership (Burns, 1978; Kelley, 1992; Malakyan, 2015).

According to DeRue (2011), leadership and followership are reciprocal, interdependent actions (see also DeRue & Ashford, 2010; Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001; Shamir, 2007; Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, & Carsten, 2014). The leader acts and the follower reacts; but it is the reaction that permits ascription of leadership. Furthermore, the followers’ reactions shape future leadership actions, a process known as a double interact. Over

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time, double interacts can define and support both individual and group-level identifications of leadership (and followership). Within this framework, four different leader–follower configurations emerge: centralized leadership, in which a single group member occupies the leader role most of the time; distributed leadership (DL), wherein different group members act as leaders over time but such roles change infrequently; shared leadership, which is similar to DL except there are frequent role changes; and a leadership void, which exists when members interact weakly, perhaps because tasks require pooled or sequential interdependence to complete (Thompson, 2003).

Any of the four leadership configurations could emerge but environmental, individual, ecological, and social factors are likely to play a role in determining the outcome (Collinson, 2006; DeRue, 2011; Hollander & Julian, 1969). For example, a group in which a single individual has a strong leadership identity may gravitate to centralized leadership, or a group requiring diverse skills may exhibit DL. The predominance of leadership hierarchies in organizations—a form of leadership characterized by centralization—suggests that in humans there are powerful social, cultural, and/or biological influences on leadership structure emergence.

Forces that shape a leadership configuration may not produce an optimal outcome, however. Despite the prevalence of hierarchical, centralized leadership structures, Vanderslice (1988) contends that centralization creates passive, self-limiting followers who fail to maximize their efforts or potential. Moreover, many organizations operate suboptimally as a result. Carson, Tesluk, and Marrone (2007) contrasted distributed with centralized leadership and found that DL was superior in a study of MBA consulting teams. While consulting relies on collaborative, knowledge-based teams, a recent meta-analysis by D’Innocenzo, Mathieu, and Kukenberger (2016) also found a positive correlation between DL and team outcomes (distributed, in this case, did not distinguish between the shared or distributed categories of DeRue) moderated by task complexity. Since the meta-analysis was unable to include direct comparisons between distributed and other types of leadership, however, there is nothing that suggests distributed is more effective. Two other meta-analyses (Nicolaidis et al., 2014; Wang, Waldman, & Zhang, 2014) did find that DL contributed additional variance over traditional, hierarchical leader-

ship. Overall, though, determining which type of leadership is best and under what circumstances is unresolved.

Because research has typically assumed that leadership is centralized, it is also unknown which leadership configuration is most common.

This suggests three fundamental questions:

Research Question 1. *How common is shared/distributed leadership relative to either leaderless or centralized configurations?*

Research Question 2. *What is the optimal leadership structure and under what conditions?*

Research Question 3. *How is followership manifested in distributed leadership?*

Defining Leadership

The purpose of this chapter is to test the first research question and shed some light on the second. A difficulty with both research questions is the lack of an agreed definition of leadership. In fact, many definitions have been proposed over the years, including leadership as a trait, an emergent property of a system, or a social construct. Yukl (2013), for example, offers the idea that leadership is “the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives” (p. 7). Definitions that rely on influence (Bass, 1985; Carson et al., 2007; Katz & Kahn, 1978; Yukl, 2013) assume that influence is unidirectional or, at the very least, has a dominant directionality. Others, however, disagree that influence is a useful description of leadership (e.g., Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001) or that influence is measurable in most leadership theories (e.g., Yukl, 1999). In addition, if leadership is a process of claiming and granting (Chaleff, 2008; DeRue & Ashford, 2010) or a double interact, then influence flows in both directions (Follett, 1949; Oc & Bashshur, 2013; Shamir, 2007); as Hollander and Julian (1969) observed, “The very sustenance of the relationship (between leaders and followers) depends upon some yielding to influence on both sides” (p. 390). There is no a priori reason to prefer claiming

over granting, or leadership influence over followership influence, if the purpose of both is to move the group toward a collective goal.

For the purpose of this chapter, then, I adopt an alternative definition suggested by Hurwitz and Hurwitz (2015) that avoids the concept of influence: *leadership is setting a framework that others adopt; followership is working within a framework created by another*. This definition incorporates the idea of claiming and granting while being founded on measurable behaviors. For example, if someone models a behavior which a peer subsequently mimics, then the action was leadership, the person doing it a leader, the reaction followership, and the person doing it a follower (at least for that one moment). If no individual had reciprocated the initial action or engaged in a complementary action, then it would have been an unsuccessful leadership attempt. Standard leadership interventions, such as creating a vision and mission, setting goals, removing roadblocks, managing tasks, or encouraging teamwork, all comfortably fit within the category of building a framework for action and, inasmuch as others work within that framework, are acts of leadership.

Note that this definition is temporally limited. Leadership can shift as the person setting a framework or working within it changes. DL, then, describes situations where multiple individuals create frameworks within which their teammates work.

Why Animals?

It would be surprising if leadership in humans did not share characteristics with animals. Animals provide useful models of human social interactions in many other domains. Why, then, have there not been more direct experiments involving animals?

One reason is that leadership models preclude interpretation in animals. Transformational leadership, for example, posits four behaviors of effective leaders: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation. None of these categories of behavior is a meaningful description of leadership in dogs, or horses, or fish. The problem is that transformational leadership has a distinct human-only bias. A second reason is that tests of transformational leadership and other

human-centric theories either ignore followership or use it as a dependent variable, i.e., leadership is agentic but not followership (see, however, Oc & Bashshur, 2013; Shamir, 2007). In the absence of research indicating that leadership is more valuable than followership, the most likely reason for this is a bias in favor of leadership (Meindl et al., 1985) and against followership (Hopton, Christie, & Barling, 2015; Hurwitz & Hurwitz, 2009).

Leadership in animals is important, then, because it can illuminate aspects of leadership that might otherwise be missed. It provides a theory-agnostic test bed and a different lens through which to view leadership interactions. For these reasons, it is useful to examine how animals enact leadership in the context of the three research questions.

A number of animals have been found to exhibit DL, including monkeys (Kummer, 1968; Leca, Gunst, Thierry, & Petit, 2003; Lee & Teichroeb, 2016; Stueckle & Zinner, 2008), horses (Bourjade, Thierry, Hausberger, & Petit, 2015; Krueger, Flauger, Farmer, & Hemelrijk, 2014), ungulates (Fischhoff et al., 2007; Ramos, Petit, Longour, Pasquaretta, & Sueur 2015), and eusocial insects (Collignon & Detrain, 2010; Visscher, 2007). In the next section, “Guppies and Stickleback Fish,” I consider how two types of fish enact leadership and followership. Next, I summarize the leadership behaviors of a species known for both strong group behavior and individualism, the wolf. In the sections “Discussion” and “Conclusions,” I consider the implications of these studies for humans.

Guppies and Stickleback Fish

Guppies

Guppies, *Poecilia reticulata*, have some cognitive abilities that are similar to humans such as the ability to learn from others (Brown, 2015) and two distinct systems for comparing numerosity—counting for comparing small quantities and ratio discrimination for comparing larger quantities (Agrillo, Piffer, Bisazza, & Butterworth, 2012). Like many prey fish, guppies swim in schools. Schooling behavior is associated with greater foraging success due to information sharing about food location within the group, a reduced need for individual fish to monitor the environ-

ment for predators, and efficiency gained through role specialization (Beauchamp, 2014). A school of guppies also confers other individual survival benefits such as an enhanced ability to detect prey, a greater likelihood of escape from predators due to the confusing presence of a large number of potential targets (Landeau & Terborgh, 1986), and a reduced chance to be targeted by a predator (the dilution effect), especially if there are less healthy or fit individuals in the school.

Dyer, Croft, Morrell, and Krause (2008) caught wild guppies in Trinidad and categorized them as either bold or shy fish according to how each responded to a simulated bird attack. Fish were then placed into shoals with four fish each¹ based on whether they scored at the top or bottom of the boldness continuum (fish with a medium degree of boldness were not used). Three types of shoals were created in this way: (1) all four bold fish, (2) all four shy fish, and (3) a mix of two bold and two shy fish. Each experimental trial consisted of a shoal being placed into a tank and, after a suitable time for the shoal to acclimatize to the new environment, a food source was introduced. The number of fish that fed, the timing of feeding by each fish, and the order in which each fish fed were measured.

Shoals with all shy fish took the longest time to approach the food and the fewest number of fish fed on average—commonly, none of the four ventured into the feeder and none fed. All-bold shoals were more effective than all-shy shoals. Fish in those shoals approached the feeder more quickly and, in more groups than not, one of the fish entered and fed. However, in none of the all-bold trials did a bold fish follow another bold fish into the feeder. In other words, at most one of the fish fed and, in a few of the all-bold shoals, all fish failed to feed.

In mixed groups, an average of three of the four fish fed; mixed shoals were far better at foraging for both the bold and shy fish. These shoals approached the feeder faster and, in most cases, it was a shy fish that followed a bold fish into the feeder. In other words, bold fish acted as leaders, shy fish acted as followers, and groups that had an equal proportion of each behavioral type had better outcomes for all members.²

Dyer and colleagues concluded that this effect—mixed groups forage more effectively—could be explained as producer–scrounger role specialization that develops between phenotypically different fish. In

such relationships, a food producer actively explores for food while minimizing the time spent on vigilance for predators. The scrounger, on the other hand, waits for the producer to find food and then takes what is left. Scroungers contribute to group fitness by devoting extra attentional resources to vigilance and alerting the producers to the presence of a predator. Another mechanism is needed, however, to explain why none of the shy fish in the all-shy trials fed, and to explain why at most one bold fish in the all-bold shoals entered the feeding area. In the latter situation, the experimenters saw little evidence of inter-fish aggression that could have excluded the other three bold fish from feeding. Indeed, in the mixed group both bold fish fed in some trials. An alternate hypothesis that better explains these results is that a bold fish took a leadership role while the non-bold fish accepted follower roles. Supporting this hypothesis was the observation that shy fish only entered the feeding area *after* bold fish. In the all-bold trials, without the benefit of shy fish modeling follower behavior, bold fish were unable to follow—perhaps they lacked social license to act as followers. It was the complementary leader–follower roles and the modeling of followership rather than producer–scrounger relationships that governed fish behavior.

Stickleback Fish

The three-spined stickleback (*Gasterosteus aculeatus*) is a northern latitude fish closely related to both the pipefish and seahorse. They are small—2–4 cm in length—having silvery flanks and an armored dorsal plate with three bony spines for protection, hence their name. Like guppies, sticklebacks are prey, and shoal for protection and foraging except during mating season when the males become territorial.

Harcourt, Ang, Sweetman, Johnstone, and Manica (2009) paired bold and shy sticklebacks randomly rather than assigning individuals to groups based on degree of boldness. First, individuals were placed in a tank with weeds at one end where the fish could hide, and a feeder was located at the other end. Boldness was assessed by the number of times a fish left cover and how long it stayed out during an hour-long individual trial. Two fish were then placed in adjacent transparent tanks. The bolder fish

in each pair was labelled “bold” and the other “shy” regardless of their absolute temperament score. The number of trips each fish took during paired trials was recorded as well as which fish (bold or shy) initiated the trip out from cover, what the other fish did as a result, which fish initiated the trip back to cover, and what the other fish did as a result.

First of all, in the paired condition, both fish left cover more often than as individuals. The average number of trips for bold fish went from 48.1 to 64.3, and for shy fish from 17.3 to 43.6. Both fish also spent more time in the open (bold fish: 41.3 to 50.8%; shy fish: 14.3 to 33%). All changes in behavior were significant. As with guppies, the foraging efficiency of both fish was improved in the paired condition, although shy fish showed the greatest gain. The degree of improvement was related to the absolute difference in phenotypic diversity, as would be predicted by complementary fit theory (Grant, Gino, & Hofmann, 2011; Humphrey, Hollenbeck, Meyer, & Ilgen, 2011). As Harcourt and colleagues (2009) noted:

An individual’s temperament affected not only its own behavior but also that of its partner ... very bold individuals made better leaders, enhancing the followership characteristics of their shy partners. At the same time, very shy individuals made better followers and elicited greater leadership tendencies in their bold partners. (p. 250)

Shyer fish initiated about one-third of joint trips, representing most of the gain in bold fish foraging. Furthermore, when the shy fish did venture from cover, the bold fish was more likely to venture out than in the converse situation. In other words, shy fish were more successful at claiming the leadership role (another interpretation is that bold fish were more willing to grant the leadership role). However, when both fish were out and the bold fish returned under cover, it was much more likely that the shy fish would also return to cover than the converse: the bold fish was more successful leading back under cover. In both leaving and returning, then, leadership success was related to the non-leader’s preferred state—remaining under cover for shy fish, or leaving cover for bold fish—and the exchange of roles between going out and coming in was important to overall team effectiveness. In other words, influence

was mutual and this complex interaction had a positive impact on both group and individual outcomes.

In a follow-up study, Nakayama, Harcourt, Johnstone, and Manica (2012) measured how acts of leadership—in this case defined solely by which fish initiated the trip out from cover (not back in)—changed the behavior of the leader-fish as well as how it changed the interaction between the two fish. The same study was conducted as before but this time the researchers also measured how each trip out affected behavior on the next trip out.

What impact did it have when the shyer fish initiated the previous trip? What about when the bolder fish led? First, previous success at initiating a joint trip increased the likelihood that the same fish would lead the next trip. However, shy fish were more sensitive to failure (i.e., not recruiting the other fish on a previous trip made them less likely to try claiming leadership on the next trial) than their bolder partner, whose behavior was relatively unchanged by what had happened in the previous excursion. And, rather like you might imagine would happen with a bold person when a shy person did something “bold,” the bold fish would be less likely to return to cover if it had followed the shy fish out from cover. In other words, a successful act of leadership–follower-ship resulted in a behavioral change consonant with the double interact hypothesis; however, the nature of that behavioral change was a function of individual-level traits.

In sticklebacks, taking on a leadership role had another double interact effect: it reduced the responsiveness of the leader of that trip to its partner. While all fish—bold or shy—exhibited this change, it persisted longer for bold fish. Conversely, the fish that followed out from cover on the previous trip became more responsive to the leader-fish. As Nakayama and colleagues (2012) explained: “Temperamental differences exert a persistent influence on behavior, but leadership changes dynamically on a much shorter time-scale, with individuals altering their responses to one another as they exchange roles between trips” (p. 4). In other words, there is something intrinsic and possibly ecologically valuable about a leader showing reduced sensitivity to followers’ actions or ignoring behavioral norms, and a follower becoming more sensitized to a leader’s actions.

Sumpter, Krause, James, Couzin, and Ward (2008) investigated leadership emergence in sticklebacks. Two conspecific images were introduced to shoals of one to ten fish each. Of the two images, one was of a fish in better health and/or showing signs of having had greater foraging success than the other. However, the images were similar enough that in only 55% of individual trials (i.e., trials with shoal size = one) did a fish follow the healthier and better-fed-looking image. As group size increased, the number of fish choosing the superior fish also increased, although there were times when an entire shoal would follow the inferior choice. Decision-making in this instance could be explained using two simple rules:

1. A few fish immediately followed an image without waiting to see what other fish did. These were the “first followers.”
2. The rest applied a consensus-based rule, that is, each fish waited to join one of the images until enough other fish had already done so.

Not all fish ended up following the fittest image, but this consensus decision-making approach maintained group unity in almost all trials, a result that was more pronounced for larger shoals. Note that leadership emergence (by one of the two images) was influenced by the first few followers, or squires as Weber and Moore (2014) call them. The squires also occupied a leadership role, albeit only in the context of modeling which fish to follow. The leadership of the squires was aggregated, too: no single squire was solely responsible for influencing the decision of other fish.

Finally, Nakayama, Stumpe, Manica, and Johnstone (2013) attempted to shape sticklebacks to be either better leaders or followers. While both interventions were successful, it was easier to train both leader-type and follower-type fish to follow than it was to train them to lead. Training was more effective when it was aligned with personality type, that is, it was easier to train leaders to lead and followers to follow, and once a follower-type fish was trained to lead, it stopped following altogether (the same was not true of leader-type fish). These last two results have to be tempered by the observation that leading out from cover was counter to the preference of shy fish. Perhaps the results would have been reversed had the experimenters been training fish to lead back under cover.

Wolves

Two images of wolves (*Canis lupus*) emerge from popular media. The first is of the lone wolf; a solitary creature that takes what it needs without relying on other wolves for support. Witness, for example, the main character from the movie *The Wolf of Wall Street*, Jordan Belfort, who rapaciously defrauds the weak, runs his company as a fiefdom, and takes whatever he wants with little regard for family, friends, or associates.

The second popular image is of the animal that lives and hunts in a pack; within the pack a well-defined dominance hierarchy mimics the most rigid, high-power-distance organizational structure. The alpha male is at the top, unquestioningly leading the pack whether coordinating the hunt, granting access to food, or determining where the pack travels, while the other pack members maintain a well-ordered place in relation to their pack mates. This dominance–submissive hierarchy is presumed to benefit all members by creating a highly efficient, cohesive hunting group able to take down dangerous prey due to superior coordination and group intelligence. This organizational structure should also be more capable of fending off scavengers, defending territory against other packs, and successfully rearing young (Kaczensky, Hayes, & Promberger, 2005).

Both beliefs about wolf behavior have some substance but are nevertheless wrong, being based as they are on brief human–wolf interactions, studies of captive wolves, and what can be observed in their domesticated cousin, the dog. Dogs, however, exhibit stronger dominance gradients within a group than do wolves as demonstrated by greater within-pack aggression (Range, Ritter, & Virányi, 2015), while wolves may be better than dogs at conspecific social learning (Range & Virányi, 2014) which is a hallmark of coordinated action. One caveat to the discussion that follows is that our understanding of wolf behavior is still emerging: there are disagreements about important aspects of wolf ecology such as how wolves hunt, rear their young, and form packs.

I consider two aspects of wolf behavior in this section: the first is the linkage between dominance and leadership. Dominance is associated with strong leadership in many cultures and may, therefore, produce leaders or help leaders attract followers regardless of whether it is advantageous to group outcomes. Contrarily, theories such as servant leadership

(Northouse, 2015) and level 5 leadership (Collins, 2005) assume that dominance reduces group effectiveness. The question, then, is to what extent does leadership necessitate dominance in wolves?

Next, I consider whether collaboration exists within a wolf pack while hunting, and what group process is most prevalent in the pack: centralized, distributed, shared, or absent leadership?

Dominance and Leadership

Dominance, broadly defined, is the ability to wield power over others. A dominant animal may feed first, take the choicest food, eat the most, or have preferential/exclusive mating privileges. Some of the ways dominance is expressed in wolves include mounting, standing over, forcing down, or grabbing the muzzle, while submissive behaviors include crouching, moving away slowly, avoiding, or putting the tail between the legs (Essler et al., 2016; Range et al., 2015). None of these behaviors is an exercise of leadership or followership since all of them establish a relationship framework without resulting in group action.

What, then, is the purpose of dominance? *Byproduct dominance theory* (Van Vugt, 2006) proposes that a dominance hierarchy exists to form the framework of a leadership hierarchy. Consequently, the more dominant an animal, the more it should engage in leadership and, for any subgroup, the most dominant animal assumes the leadership role. Byproduct dominance theory is founded on three propositions:

1. A dominance hierarchy exists.
2. The group needs coordinated action, that is, leadership and followership are important for ecological fitness.
3. Leadership is based on dominance.

Proposition 1: A Dominance Hierarchy Exists Wolves associate in family units in the wild composed of a breeding pair and pups or young adults under the age of three (Mech, 1999). The breeding pair dominates all other pack members, with the male breeder dominant over the female (Fox, 1970; Peterson & Ciucci, 2003). From there, the dominance

position of each other member of the pack is determined by age and gender, that is, within sex (however, see Mech, 1999), and then by an amalgam of family history, temperament, mood, health, availability of food, and other external factors (Packard, 2003). If the breeding male becomes injured or less capable, a younger male can take over his role and occasionally, in this situation, multiple females may breed. If one of the breeding pair is replaced, the hierarchy may be less linear for a time, perhaps because interactions are no longer parent–child. In wolves, then, Proposition 1 holds.

Proposition 2: The Group Needs Coordinated Action The primary purpose of the wolf pack is for rearing young rather than as protection against predators or for foraging—wolves are effective solo hunters (see the section “[Collaboration and Leadership](#),” however). Rearing juveniles requires feeding, teaching, and protecting the young both while denning and once the pups are weaned. In addition, a pack has to roam extensively to forage, demarcate their territory, and defend it against individual wolves as well as other packs. All these require some form of group coordination. Thus, Proposition 2 holds, also, albeit not for hunting.

Proposition 3: Leadership Is Based on Dominance When roaming, the dominant male either leads the line (Mech, 2000; Packard, 2003) or shares that function about equally with the dominant female (Peterson, Jacobs, Drummer, Mech, & Smith, 2002), although other pack members have been observed to lead for as much as one-third of the time.

When it comes to morning social activities such as waking and foraging, the breeding female often wakes first and then tries “to awaken the male. Furthermore, the female sometimes seemed to urge the male to become active and go foraging. She would lead the male away only to have him lie down again” (Mech, 2000, p. 266).

For hunting, the dominant pair initiates the hunt more often than not and leads the attack, although a young adult may take over if the breeding pair is old (Peterson & Ciucci, 2003). In observations of three wild packs from 1997 to 1999, Peterson and colleagues (2002) found that one of the dominant pair initiated a chase, defended against another pack, or

was first to greet a pack member about three-quarters of the time. Some of these behaviors could be an indication of leadership, but another possibility is that it is simply due to greater experience, size, and physical coordination.

Because wolves rarely fight within a pack but will fight to death with other packs if they meet, it is critical to prevent inter-pack meetings. Boundaries are created using scent to buffer and create a neutral region between pack territories. Such boundaries demarcate the furthest point a pack member will roam until they are old enough to leave the pack permanently. The breeding pair creates the boundary, with the male doing most of the marking.

Overall, then, while there is no single leader in all situations, some leadership tasks are dominance-based. The dominant male and female take the leader role most of the time, although subordinate animals do contribute occasionally. Proposition 3 is only partially supported in wolf packs and it is associated with child-rearing tasks. On the other hand, shared leadership is common to situation such as roaming or hunting.

Collaboration and Leadership

From the perspective of hunting, Bailey, Myatt, and Wilson (2013, p. 3) define collaboration—what they consider to be the highest form of cooperation—as follows:

Hunters perform different complimentary (*sic*) actions, all directed towards the same prey ... There must be clear role differentiation resulting in team-like behaviour. The same individuals may perform the same specialised roles repeatedly in different hunts ... Timing and positioning are much more strongly based on each others', rather than on the prey's, behaviour than during lower levels of cooperation ... Prey is shared.

Examples of collaborative actions observed in wolves include pack members flushing or driving prey toward others waiting in ambush, heading off prey, taking turns chasing, engaging the prey's mother while others attack the calf, fighting off scavengers, or surrounding an isolated prey and attacking unprotected sides (Bailey et al., 2013; Kaczensky et al., 2005; MacNulty,

Tallian, Stahler, & Smith, 2014; Mech, 2000; Peterson & Ciucci, 2003). MacNulty and colleagues (2014) found that a coordination of larger packs (over six wolves) was required to bring down the most dangerous and hard-to-catch prey, the bison (*Bison bison*); however, even in large group hunts surrounding a prey does not require a leader, it can be done if each member follows a simple individual rule such as staying just out of reach of the prey's defenses (e.g., horns, hooves, teeth) while maximizing the distance between pack mates. Attacking from the back by one pack member to distract the prey is another such rule that does not require coordination. To what extent, then, does hunting require leadership and what form does that leadership take?

For wolves, hunting is staged: preparation, locating prey, stalking, encountering, chasing, capturing, and killing the prey. Mech (2000) notes, "it is the breeders that seem to initiate and press the attack" (p. 260). However, computer simulations of wolf-pack hunting during the chase and capture phases (Escobedo, Muro, Spector, & Coppinger, 2014; Muro, Escobedo, Spector, & Coppinger, 2011) show that wolves can and perhaps do encircle prey, maintain pack cohesion, engage in relay hunting (successive wolves chasing prey), ambush, react to escaped prey, capture, and even coordinate large packs based on individual rules that do not require role specialization, particularly a leadership role: "Agents are homogeneous, *no a priori leaders or followers are designated*" (Muro et al., 2011, p. 193, italics added). In contrast, Escobedo and colleagues (2014) found that leadership could appear as an emergent property of a simulation rather than from the introduction of intelligent, independent, and purposeful agents; in other words, complexity leadership (e.g., Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007) or shared leadership are possible configurations. In neither of these simulation studies was role specialization nor responsiveness to pack mates' behavior necessary.

A similar arrangement happens in human teams. Imagine, for example, how a professional soccer or basketball team plays during an intense game. The best teams minimize on-field communication and reduce the need for centralized leadership because specific plays or sequences of tasks need to be done quickly and efficiently. The pace of situational adaptation and contingency is too quick for coordination based on information-rich communication channels. Rather, team athletes are taught to follow a set

of simple rules, ideas, or processes without the need for explicit direction other than, perhaps, a quickly shouted instruction or a glance to confirm an understanding of the situation. In other words, actions must be reflexive, instinctual, and rule-based, rather than directed or led, to be effective in “hunt-like” conditions.

Leadership might be advantageous in more deliberative phases of the hunt such as preparation, locating, stalking, encountering, and killing. For example, Mech (2007) found that a wolf was able to stop a pack member from playing to go investigate a nearby herd of muskoxen it had spotted. The leader in this case was not the dominant male or female of the pack, but a pack mate. Wolves possess the cognitive functioning that supports intelligent, directed leadership in situations such as this: they can follow the gaze of other wolves (and humans) around a visual barrier or into the distance and use that information meaningfully (Range & Virányi, 2011). Only primates and corvids (the most intelligent of the birds, e.g., ravens and crows) have a similar capability.

What can we take away from this? Unfortunately, evidence for leadership in hunting is equivocal and scarce and there is minimal direct evidence of collaboration. Furthermore, there is little agreement on the extent to which wolves cooperate during hunting, while for carnivorans as a whole, “detailed descriptions of behavior during cooperative hunts are rare” (Bailey et al., 2013, p. 13). If there is leadership in hunting, it is most likely to be in the early stages of the hunt before the situation requires rapidly coordinated action. And, while the early part of the hunt might be led by one of the dominant wolves, it seems to be more fluid, more distributed, and more leaderless than is popularly portrayed. Wolves are not confirmatory exemplars of dominance byproduct theory, at least with regards to hunting.

Discussion

There has always been a suspicion that role switching and DL were the norm, rather than the exception. As early as 1948, Stogdill noted that, “leadership is a relation that exists between persons in a social situation, and that persons who are leaders in one situation may not be leaders in another situation” (p. 65). Gibb (1954) observed that leadership was a set

of functions distributed among a group rather than being centralized in any one person (as cited in Thorpe, Gold, & Lawler, 2011, p. 6).

From a theoretical perspective, the four leadership configurations—centralized, distributed, shared, and leaderless—form a continuum of outcomes along a single dimension: degree of centralization. Where any particular group, shoal, pack, or team falls on that continuum depends on variables such as species, culture, composition, individual traits, and situational factors. Centralized leadership occupies one extreme of the continuum, leaderless teams the other extreme, while shared and DL constitute the fuzzy middle ground. As Stogdill and Gibb both asserted, and as this chapter also suggests, the middle ground—shared and DL—is the most common configuration (or at least much more common than previously believed).

In the stickleback experiments, bolder fish led out from cover more often and were therefore identified as leaders. However, applying a DL perspective actually suggests that much of the improvement in foraging was due to the leadership of the shy fish. In addition, if both going out *and* going back under cover are forms of leadership, it was the preference of the follower-fish that determined leader success: bold fish were more successful leading shy fish back under cover while shy fish were more successful leading bold fish out from cover. Only a DL–followership framework captures such nuances. Any model that begins with the premise of a single leader for all situations is unsatisfactory. Rather just as epicycles and the belief in the harmony of the spheres stunted growth in astronomical theory, centralized leadership (without followership) fails to be an adequate explanation of the data. By searching for the perfect leadership recipe, we have missed the inherent and useful dynamics between both roles.

One consequence is that leadership training might actually produce poorer team outcomes. With guppies, followership actions allowed for greater foraging success; adding more leadership, that is, the all-bold condition, had minimal impact. Training on followership was easier, more universal, and more effective than training for leadership, not to mention that leadership training reduced followership behaviors. In other words, effective followership was critical for team performance (see Research Question 3). Given that billions of dollars are spent each year on individual-centric leadership training with at best moderate

returns, perhaps the money would be better allocated to distributed followership development? In 2007, for example, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, a branch of the US government, had lackluster engagement scores, being ranked near the bottom of places to work in the federal government (*private communication*). Rather than put more money into a standard leadership program, they chose to develop and deliver an organization-wide training program on followership based on Chaleff's (2003) model of courageous followership. The result was a dramatic improvement in engagement indicators, including becoming rated by employees as the best agency to work at the US government for three years in a row.

The animal studies in this chapter highlighted additional features of leader–follower dynamics that have applications both as interventions and theoretically. Acts of leadership produced predictable behavioral changes in the leader–follower dynamic, as when stickleback fish became desensitized to followers after an act of leadership. The most likely explanation is that desensitization is evolutionary: it allows leaders to make bolder, swifter responses; creates a primary leader (i.e., persistent role specialization); and improves leader–follower dynamics by leveraging the one-to-many relationship of leader to followers—it is easier for many followers to adapt to one leader than have one leader to adapt to many followers. This is an alternative narrative to the oft-given advice that leaders need to adapt to each individual follower. It was also intriguing how bold and shy fish reacted differently to failed attempts at claiming leadership. Persistence and willingness to continue claiming leadership may be beneficial in a number of ways, including reducing the time spent on leadership emergence, allowing groups to form and then perform more quickly, and preferencing the fish better suited to assuming the leadership role. It is also a situational response: What would have happened had the experimenters attempted to train leadership for going under cover instead of going out from cover? Perhaps, in this case, the results would have been reversed because the shy fish were fitter at leading in this circumstance. Foraging is related to fish survival, but so is staying under cover. Producers of food are needed, but scroungers also have an important role. And only DL provides a satisfactory theoretical framework that accounts for both roles and the results.

DL, then, is both more common and provides a richer theoretical tool for investigating team dynamics than centralized or leaderless models. It is the framework of task-based DL that allows for multiple concurrent leaders. Leadership in wolf packs was domain-specific, switching both the individual leader and configuration by task. In humans, task-dependent role switching occurs often (Colbry, Hurwitz, & Adair, 2014). For example, a project could have both a formal manager and a technical expert, each of whom exerts leadership within a specific domain. In the latter case, the domain of the manager is task leadership while for the technical expert it is thought or process leadership. Both the manager and technical expert lead, but they do so using concurrent (rather than serial) leadership in distinct domains. If multiple domains of leadership exist, such as in this example, they could either be combined into one role or separated into two distinct roles.

Conclusion

Almost thirty years ago, Yukl remarked that leadership theory was “tilting toward increased emphasis on shared leadership” (1989, p. 252). For whatever reason, although research into shared and DL has increased since Yukl’s review, the promise has been unfulfilled and DL research is only just emerging. James MacGregor Burns (1978), the founder of transformational leadership theory, wrote, “One of the most serious failures in the study of leadership has been the bifurcation between the literature on leadership and the literature on followership” (p. 3). Leadership needs to be studied as DL, and DL has to incorporate followers as active agents. That is the important purpose of this chapter and this volume, shining a DL–followership light on how teams work.

Notes

1. A shoal is a group of fish. A shoal becomes a school when the fish start swimming in the same direction, i.e., acting as a coherent unit.
2. It does leave open the question of whether shoals with one bold and three shy fish might do better still.

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2

Followership Engagement in Hybrid Distributed Leadership

Neha Chatwani

Introduction

The inspiration for this chapter was born while listening to an interview with the recently appointed rector at the University of Economics and Business (Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien, also known as WU) in Vienna at a networking event at the end of February 2016. Dr. Edeltraud Hanappi-Egger spoke about how she had presented her future leadership team at the hearing when applying for the position of rector and proceeded to describe her leadership style within this team. Without explicitly using the term “distributed leadership” (DL), she described some of its attributes. Completely taken by surprise that a traditional, public institution such as the WU would appoint a rector with an unusual leadership attitude and impressed by her enthusiasm, I spontaneously asked her for an interview. I was delighted when she accepted my request. Keenly reminded of my own bias about where one might find evidence of DL in

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practice, I decided to scout for possible “others” in my vicinity. Treading the fine line between scientific rigor and professional intuition, I told myself that if I could randomly find and interview two further individuals who were “leading” with a DL attitude within a given time frame, then I would have gathered enough material to write a chapter in this volume. I found two more interview partners at another business event. Both did not immediately recognize or subscribe to the term “DL,” despite the fact that their leadership practice demonstrated endorsement of it.

By a DL leadership attitude,¹ I mean a clear acknowledgment of leadership as a social construct: “Distributed leadership is not something ‘done’ by an individual ‘to’ others, or a set of individual actions through which people contribute to a group or organization ... [it] is a group activity that works through and within relationships, rather than individual action” (Bennett, Wise, Woods, & Harvey, 2003, p. 3). It embraces three premises: “Leadership is an emergent property of a group or network of interacting individuals”; “the openness to the boundaries of leadership”; and, “varieties of expertise are distributed across the many, not the few” (Bennett et al., 2003, p. 7).

As many other authors, I do believe that the current revival of the discussion on DL is not a coincidence. It reflects the search for more sustainable leadership in organizations that are embedded in a mood of uncertainty and even despair at a turbulent juncture. It also signifies an attempt to move away from a conventional notion of the heroic leadership of the individual to a more seemingly intangible notion of shared leadership in an increasingly complex and globalized world, which on the one hand demands greater expertise and on the other an increasing breadth of awareness in leadership roles.

In essence, the discourse on DL questions some predefining premises relating to power, decision-making, and governance in the way organizations have been “run” thus far. It underlines the perception that the leader-centric approach that appeared to work so well is no longer “fit for purpose and needs to be revised” (Bolden, 2011, p. 253). In this vein, although not new to the leadership, the discourse on DL contributes toward a general perception that a reframing of our understanding of leadership is needed.

At the same time, I postulate that an important reason for the lack of anchoring and recognition of the terminology of DL in practice, aside

from the multitude of terminologies associated with it, is that the discourse on DL has been side-tracked. On the one hand, there is still comparatively little research on DL; on the other hand, much of this research has been determined by notions and assumptions based on the idea of a more individualistic hierarchical type of leadership, for example, in the way it is linked to structures, certain industries, or types of organizations or the dichotomy of leadership–followership. This would also explain why little evidence has been found to clearly establish the effectiveness of DL, albeit the very definition of effectiveness is also biased and blurred.

Measuring DL with inappropriate measuring sticks yields an intangible or complex notion of it contributing toward its mystification. Consequently, DL is sometimes written off as a new age, niche concept for leadership and management. Unfortunately, the general approach of management research is one that is focused on a quasi-competition between “vertical leadership” versus “shared leadership.” Therefore, it is my conviction that the discourse on DL deserves to be looked at through fresh lenses and that the current status of investigation is insufficient, and often biased or misled.

The social construct underlying DL promotes the understanding that leadership is a collective social process created by interactions of multiple actors and not something that one group of people (leaders) do to another group of people (followers). In this way it is more like the idea *gestalt*, whereby the sum of its parts is more than the whole—a more holistic approach to leadership. DL “is more appropriately understood as a fluid and emergent, rather than as a fixed, phenomenon” (Gronn, 2000, p. 324). Or, leaders “don’t have to see eye-to-eye or even have to get along with one another to co-perform leadership routines and tasks ... Whether two or more leaders seek similar, different, or even opposing goals is just another dimension of the analysis” (Spillane and Diamond, 2007, p. 11). In this way, DL calls for a fundamental reframing of the understanding of leadership and may even provoke a discussion on whether leadership deserves to be a distinct concept in literature in its own right at all, since leadership is a situational and embedded practice rather than the attributes and actions of individual leaders. Therefore, “a distributed perspective on leadership involves two aspects—the leader plus aspect and the practice aspect” (Spillane and Diamond, 2007, p. 7).

The interactive and intuitive nature of DL, as well as its dynamic and adaptable qualities, calls for reflexive, qualitative, in-depth ethnographic study of it at multiple levels with a greater focus on situational leadership practices and their impact. More in-depth questions need to be raised, for example, “how and when is leadership most appropriately shared?” rather than in which structures and industries it might work. In an increasingly knowledge-based economy, how does shared leadership allow for the effective leverage of the capabilities of knowledge entailed in an organization (Pearce, 2004) may be an equally relevant question.

Although the individual case studies in this chapter presented themselves randomly, exploring DL in different contexts is helpful in clarifying whether differences in terminology are purely rhetorical or whether they point to more fundamental differences and similarities in the ways in which this leadership is accomplished. In this way and through “listening” to these narratives, this chapter aims to further the debate on the practice of DL and contribute toward unraveling its mystification (Spillane et al., 2007) while unleashing a discourse on the followership ontology within this framework.

Methodology

The methodology borrows from the framework of grounded theory. Based on semi-structured interviews that contain open questions,² three individual case studies or reflective narratives were documented. The interviews were 45–70 minutes long and are presented largely *ad verbatim*. They have been validated by the interviewees.

They are purposefully presented as whole stories and have not been dissected (tagged and coded) for analysis. Readers are invited to delve into the three individual scenarios to appreciate the full context of the stories and follow the reflective thought processes of the leaders/storytellers. This allows for more individualistic and dynamic expression. Comparing and contrasting these very different narratives would have rightly provoked criticism of inadequate scientific rigor and would have undermined this experimental approach. The narratives are intended to serve as a pilot for further in-depth study. In the same spirit as an intuitive scientific

approach, no conclusions are drawn at the end of this chapter; rather, observations are offered as food for thought and further contemplation.

The stories take place in three completely different contexts. In chronological order, the first narrative by Dr. Edeltraud Hanappi-Egger, rector at the WU in Vienna, who spoke to me on March 14, 2016, about how she developed her notion of DL for her management team within the rectorate, prior to her successful application for rectorship at the university.

In the second narrative, Uwe Luebbermann, the founder of Premium Cola, a beverage brand, explains how he intentionally created his own leadership principles when he founded his company and how this concept has been extended to his wider network of commercial partners and even customers. He spoke to me over Skype on March 19, 2016.

Third, Christine Kipke, a member of the sales team at Tele Haase, a family-run technology company (who, in contrast to my other two interview partners, would, in a vertical structure, be considered a follower and not a leader) spoke of a new and evolving style in DL in that organization. Tele Haase was founded over fifty years ago and triggered a turn-around toward a more DL style three years ago.

Case Study 1: Dr. Edeltraud Hanappi-Egger, Rector, WU When asked how she arrived at the idea of presenting her candidature for the position of rector as a team, Edeltraud explained: “When I decided to apply for this position, I was reflecting on what I thought the issues were for a public university like the WU.³ I sat down and created a mind map—visualizing my own idea about which issues are related to each other and if so, how, why. I started having very basic thoughts about what it means to be a public university in the future; what kind of frameworks do I face and determining the ways to go further, in terms of limitations and also opportunities and chances. I figured out that this is a huge task and that you need several perspectives to come up with good solutions. So, I got the feeling that it is not only that I will be challenged as a rector but that I will need people who will challenge me.” She further emphasized the importance of being surrounded by people who would also allow *themselves* to be challenged to come up with excellent solutions for issues at stake, and co-create strategic plans and viable working programs.

“So, that is why I decided that if I go for the application for this position, then I will only do it if I can have the team I want to have. I identified people who I knew from previously working together at the WU. I approached four individuals. I told them that I am in the phase of thinking over if I will apply for the job and will do so if you would be willing to share the responsibility with me and all four of them said immediately ‘yes.’ Well I mean some of them said ‘ok let me think it over this for some time because this is a big surprise.’ But then all four of them accepted the invitation to form a team.”

“I took the next step and designed a working program for the next four years and I sent these ideas to all four of them and I asked them would you sign up to this working program because you will be part of the leadership team. Then we set up a meeting, I think for one whole day, and talked through all these ideas and topics. It was a way of already sharing ideas and getting to know each other from a more strategic perspective. I adapted the program, so that it was finally our product, our program and not only my program. I would say that the ideas were mine but the application of the working program was the result of this discussion and debate within the team.” Edeltraud added that the distribution of responsibilities was also set out within the work program.

When asked how important she thought this phase was in establishing her leadership, she replied: “I think this was a crucial phase. It was a little bit intense and it was a little bit vague. In terms of, we know the university but we did not know the details of how the different areas are working together, [or the size and importance of all the matters we would have to deal with].”

In identifying her team members, she looked for a mix of personalities: “I really very consciously chose the people because I was looking for maximum diversity within the team. I always had the basic idea that being challenged is good for the quality of the decisions that we will make. I was not looking for people, who would be agreeing with me all the time. We have two full-time women and we have three part-time men working as part of the rector’s council. I was trying to have different disciplines. One is coming from the law department, the other from the economics department, the third from the finance department, so I was mixing up the disciplines. And also we have different kinds of scientific

socializations: the youngest member was very much socialized along the new ways of what science and teaching science is about. I, as well as the vice-director of human resources management, for example, grew up in a very traditional professional career path. That means if you are a professor then you have an institute, then you are the head of the department. I had the idea that we can be more creative in our mixture when we were part of the strategic discussions and also in our different roles. By being together we really have different perspectives on different levels and I really appreciate this very much in my discussions with them.”

“At the beginning, we needed more time, so we had long open-end discussions and now we start to be organized in a better way. We still have the idea that we have distributed responsibilities—each of us has their own resort but the strategically relevant things are put together. So, we have a weekly meeting and we have an agenda on which we put strategically important topics. Whoever has a topic in mind. Some things we have to do and make certain decisions as a governance body but whoever wants to share or whoever has a strategically relevant decision that has to be made, has to put it on the agenda.”

One part of the agenda is reserved for exchanging ideas, getting feedback, and reflecting, while another is focused on consulting and making decisions. Finally, the meetings include a topic, which is chosen in turn by the attendees and addresses the specific current topics and issues. This helps the team keep abreast of new developments.

One of the biggest challenges in this process is time. “We discuss until we decide because we know we have to decide. Of course, I could decide many issues on my own, that is my formal role, but we have not yet had one situation where we could not find a compromise. If someone identifies a special topic and we need to re-discuss, then we really exchange ideas and think over the issue carefully. It works out: we either finally come up with a decision or [realize that] we need more information. Sometimes we need more time to rethink.”

In order to mitigate the urgency sometimes entailed in decision-making—particularly with regard to complicated issues—where a longer discussion is anticipated and issues are put ahead of time on the agenda: “we need to sometimes put an issue on the agenda a little bit earlier because we anticipate that there might be a first exchange and a first

impression and feedback and finally [the sense] that we have to say ok we have to think this over again and we need to collect the data we would need. And then there is another round of discussion. So, there is a need for a very efficient time schedule.”

How important is trust and how is it gained? Edeltraud declared: “I am very clear in saying that I always want an open discussion. I have learnt to distinguish between constructive critique and a harsher discussion where it is not about reason or possibility but more about political issues. So, I think that what we do is have a kind of agreement where we are able to speak out things very frankly and that this is not about emotional feelings. It is about having an argument. We do also take time out together. We decided recently to have dinner from time to time after the meeting session ...because we did not have the idea of meeting in a more informal way before. It was always very focused on what we needed to do and what we needed to decide. Now we have a dinner where we share ideas and speak out things.”

“The last time we had for the first time an exchange about how do we work with each other, how do you feel working in this team, do we still have fun, do we have the feeling of appreciation, commitment and trust and of believing in each other.” These informal talks give team members an opportunity to address more personal issues, such as “‘what you said made me feel a little bit uncomfortable, there is a strange tone in your voice or is there another [underlying] message.’ It is also about having the courage to ask. Then the other one has a chance to say ‘no, I’m just stressed out’ or ‘I just got a call on something and I am freaking out but it has nothing to do with you.’ So, I think there is a little space for rethinking and reflection in the atmospheric phase of cooperation and shared leadership.”

A weekly meeting takes place every Tuesday from 2 to 6 pm. The agenda is settled on the previous Friday afternoon. “This is something we learned to do because we would add topics even on Tuesday morning and then we would freak out! The agenda was much too long. We realized that this doesn’t work and we need give each other time to be prepared for the meeting. Normally I have a lot of appointments so it is during the weekend that I need to go through the agenda and the papers or information or inputs provided ...The weekly meeting is fine for organizing

things and it is not too long to the next meeting, so there are no high priority items or pushing things.” In addition to the once-a-month post-meeting dinner, three strategic off-site sessions take place in February, July, and September. When asked whether any of the “rules” had been broken to date, Edeltraud responded firmly: “Not yet!”

“We had to start with negotiating a performance contract with the ministry. There was a transition phase during which none of us was formally in charge. Of course, it was clear that from October 1, 2015, we will be in charge.” In the transition phase of the appointment, the outgoing rector and vice-rectors were formally in charge and, while the incoming team was not, it needed to be involved in certain decisions. This transition phase “is not described in a formal way, so we had to decide how are we going to use this. . . So, for me it was nice. I had a weekly *jour fixe* with the [former] rector and we were collecting [relevant] topics. I would write down things that I needed to ask and he would note things he needed to tell me [as incoming rector]. We were working along these lists of issues. It took us almost half a year . . . Since I was on sabbatical at that time, it was easier for me to focus on the upcoming duties and to finish things at the institute.”

Edeltraud explained that, by contrast, during this phase, her incoming vice-rectors, who were also full professors, were challenged by their dual roles, which were not formally fully compatible. Also, the administrative staff of the outgoing rectorate found a lack of clarity with regard to issues of loyalty and confidentiality—to whom were they allowed to give information and to whom could they speak about specific issues. These difficulties reflect the limitations of the institutional framework, according to which this transitional phase is designed.

“The formal hand-over of responsibilities was on . . . October 1, 2015, which was difficult because the negotiation of the performance contract and fight for money for the university from the ministry for the next three years had already started then. So, we had a kind of document sharing. The documents were shared with me [as the in-coming rector] and I was sharing them with my team. The last two or three rectorate meetings were shared meetings between the new and old team and then we had a chance to see what do we need to know, and share information. It was not an easy task.”

Knowledge sharing within the team: “Whenever a topic concerns more than one resort then they have to organize their own information sharing. We write several emails and put the others on cc. I as the rector do have individual meetings with the one or other vice-rector on certain issues, also depending on the urgency of an issue. This is not so much about the decision-making power but I need to know [what is happening in certain issues] as the media and ministry will talk [directly] to me, so we think I have to be well informed and of course I should also inform the others if anything comes up.... In very urgent cases we use our WhatsApp group—the information is put on the mobile phones and everyone needs to react to that.”

When asked about how this leadership style impacts work–life balance or job stress, Edeltraud said that being a professor was a “highly privileged position and very autonomous. My time is mostly externally determined now. I like to do [what I do] but there is an endless list of people asking me for an appointment, or to open a conference, or to take part in a panel discussion. This is definitely an issue of setting priorities as well as the fun factor. Sometimes I accept invitations I like to do, even if this does not have the highest priority. But of course, many things simply have to be scheduled as part of the job. [For example,] I do know the meetings of the internal committees, workshops, or meetings of the Austrian universities’ association. We know when these meetings take place, so this is a long-term planning process. I try to limit my evening meetings. I at least try to have two evenings per week without any obligation. We have a shared responsibility for evening meetings and social events. We are very cooperative in distributing responsibilities for social events. So, we are negotiating who can and will take over. This goes very smoothly.”

“I think this is an important advantage of shared leadership; it is a way of rebalancing things, a dynamic process allowing a dynamic way of maintaining a balance. On the one side, I need long-term planning; on the other side, shared leadership helps to rebalance some things. Most of the time you are responsible for your own work–life balance but the shared leadership also helps to have a sounding board. Sometimes I would also say to someone, are you sure this is not a little bit too much for you, are you sure you want to take this too. When I have the feeling that I have a tough week and more and more things are coming in, I can

clearly say I need help or support. Then people can say I can split [a task with you] ...Or if you have a problem in your private life, you say I cannot do this now and someone will ask you if you need any help. It works like a 'net.' It is not only your own shoulders that you have, you have even eight other shoulders too!"

In short, DL is "not only about you ...it is about being more dynamic and flexible in sharing responsibility and because you are a leadership team; people will accept it."

In closing the interview, I asked Edeltraud if there was anything she wanted to add and she replied that while she did not want to add anything new, she felt it important to "highlight and reflect on the issue of trust. I think trust is an important issue in shared leadership. I do not believe that we have to love each other but we have to respect each other and we have to have common ground, common objective and same or common understanding of how to further develop this university ...of what we are going to do and why [each of us] would like to contribute personal energy and time."

"It is not important to me at least that there are friendships or love. We have to respect each other or appreciate each other and we have to have a shared understanding of what is our job about and why do we love the things we are doing. This is not about fitting to each other in the sense of friendships."

Case Study 2: Mr. Uwe Luebbermann, Founder, Premium Cola "They did not let us co-decide on their company decisions which they should have because we as consumers build the foundation of their company. We buy the bottles ...at minimum we should be informed about the decisions they are going to make; the why and the how."

Furious that the formula and taste of his favorite soft drink had been changed without any notice, Uwe founded a community of like-minded people and set out to convince the drink producer to revert to the original beverage formula.⁴ They sought ways to mitigate the situation in a dialogue with the manufacturer for two years from December 1999 until November 2001. It was during this time that Uwe started to cultivate his own notion of "democratic consensus" that was to become his leadership style. The basic idea being if a decision affects one person it should be

decided by that person; if it affects a group of people then they primarily should decide; and if it affects a company, suppliers, and customers then all should decide by means of consensus democracy.

Realizing that it was possible to order bottles directly from the bottling plant, the idea of further trying to convince the original drink producer to revert to the old formula was abandoned and Premium Cola was founded. The company started with a paced growth path, that is, 1,000 bottles at a time and, after these were sold, another 1,000 bottles were invested in. In 2015, 1.4 million bottles were sold in 200 German cities. As this chapter goes into print we know that this number has increased to 1.55 million in 2016.

“I decided against taking uninformed decisions on the one hand and deciding for other people on the other hand ...the main idea is that humans should be treated as equal as possible.... From the beginning, we invited everyone who will be affected by our company decisions, for example, truck drivers, bottling plant owners, the bottle label manufacturer, the gastronomies, and, of course, the consumers at the local pudel [pudel.com] club in Hamburg on Sunday evenings. There we discussed everything and we discussed until everyone agreed ...If someone did not agree then this person issued a veto, then no decision can be made and we discuss again.” Uwe added that it is likely that consensus was particularly important in the setting-up phase, where each decision had a “long reach” for all stakeholders.

Premium Cola is a network of self-employed employees who are free, even encouraged to work for other beverage producers. At the time of the interview in 2016 the core team at Premium was composed of nine people, to date it has eleven people. Uwe, as the owner of the company, is responsible for the organization of production and logistics, moderating issues and communication (website, external talks, etc.). However, the other colleagues can also participate in these tasks if they so wish. This approach enables an agile structure. Everyone in the team earns the same salary and financial allowances are made for workplace, child benefits, and handicaps. “You cannot get more money for working more quickly or better and you can also not get less money if you have a personal crisis and work less.... People pick up the work they like to do and work that they can actually do. They are happy over the long term.” There has been

an annual approximate fluctuation of 2% across the organization since its foundation on November 23, 2001.

Uwe remains true to his notion of democratic consensus; he emphasizes that “we are running this organization with normal people: truck drivers not lefties and hippies.” As the current company size does not allow for Sunday evening pudel club meetings, until recently the community, which includes all 1680 commercial partners and registered consumers,⁵ has kept in contact through email lists. Uwe explained that despite the difficulty of looking up past decisions and the sheer flood of emails, this method worked because discussing an issue in writing rather than in person means that people have to engage in a topic and they have to take the time to read and think about it. Also, it helps avoid difficult scenarios of personal interactions. “On the downside, you have to be online and formulate your thoughts.” The email list was replaced in 2014 by an online platform. The numbers of users increased from 150 to 200 from the time of the interview to the print date of this chapter with a ratio of 50:50 of commercial partners to consumers who are active on it.

The participants decide which themes to be involved in, create topics, make suggestions, or issue a veto. Anyone can post a suggestion. If no veto is issued within a week or so, then the suggestion will be taken up. Silence is agreement. Complex decisions, for example, price changes, can stimulate two-month discussions. It appears to be a good idea to take the time: when the cola price was raised due to increase in raw material prices Premium Cola didn't lose a single consumer. Decisions are indefinite and temporary at the same time. Issues can be raised again and decisions changed. This has made the company stable and dynamic because it is constantly adapting.

Premium Cola has a value proposition but not business strategy. “Our main product is not the cola. The main product is caring for the stakeholders needs and balancing them and moderating them, and coming up with smarter and more social and more efficient solutions than typical businesses would do. We are a services provider and not a drinks producer. The idea that all stakeholders should be treated equally still drives the business.”

“Without me and the way I am, the company would not exist in this way; but also without the other people and their thoughts it also could

not exist in this way either. So, it is not only about me but I am playing a central role and this is directly connected to my leadership style: it feels a little like something between Forrest Gump and a boy scout caretaker. Forrest Gump has an idea and starts running and people just go with him on his journey. I had the idea I wanted to do things differently but I do not know how and I did not want to take decisions for everybody else nor on my own. The idea of equality of humans in business was important to me. Everyone is invited to bring their thoughts and needs to the table and we decide together. People joined me because they liked the idea of doing things in this way.”

However, when people join in, there is a leadership responsibility. A “caretaker” for the group is needed who “suggests a direction that people might like to follow and cares for the group on the way. When there is a crisis, the group will look to the caretaker first for guidance. If the caretaker manages to guide the group without giving orders and resolves issues/crisis for the good of everybody, then this person will be rewarded with trust. Then the group ride will be even smoother for the next chapter of its journey. This further increases the trust not only for the moderator but also between the individuals.” It also mitigates a more “capitalistic” dynamic of individuals negotiating their own personal needs/wants. A good decision is one that is best for the group as a whole and not just for individual members. For Uwe, the latter still implies that individual needs can be met, though not necessarily at the expense of others. In this sense, “distributed leadership is all about caring for everybody and providing orientation” and not about issuing orders.

As evidence of the success of this approach, Premium Cola has no written contracts with any of its 1,700 commercial partners and has never had any litigious issues with any of them. In short, the company showcases a leadership style that does not exert formal power by giving instructions; instead it embraces a moderating attitude, balancing the needs of all the members of the group, and thus creating a high level trust, which results in very few problems. Uwe is the sole owner of the Premium Cola. He does not collect company profits and gets the same hourly rate as everyone else, because the financial goal is always to post a “black zero” at the end of the financial year after putting away 1 cent per bottle for a safety net. The company brand is its main formal asset and ensures continuity.

On the question of decision-making, Uwe points out that there are very few decisions that have to be made quickly. He could think of only one critical situation—when the caffeine amount in the drinks had been doubled by mistake in the production process and the bottles needed to be recalled from the retailers. The sense of “we” enabled the quick retrieval of the bottles, as there was a strong relationship between producer and dealers. He further mentioned two critical stalemate situations. First, when the production of bottles threatened to be delayed because the group could not agree on the picture for the labels on the back of the bottles. So, one series of bottles was produced without pictures to avoid financial loss until a consensus could be reached. Second, when there was a lack of agreement regarding a tagline for the label on the front of the bottle. This was resolved, unusually, through a majority vote.

When asked for examples of crisis situations, Uwe mentioned two. In 2012, Premium Cola experienced a financial crisis due to accelerated growth; the company suddenly could not afford the financial installment for the next production of bottles. The two biggest wholesalers offered to pay their bills early, mitigating the financial bottleneck. Again, the larger sense of “we” motivated their action. The second crisis occurred when an employee demanded a fourfold salary increase, which was not granted. The employee then started to sabotage business proceedings, insulting other colleagues and issuing vetoes randomly. The behavior was tolerated by Uwe at first because he did not want to give validity to the idea that someone could be fired for being unreasonable. After a year, however, this person significantly damaged a project and, when the subject of firing him was raised on the platform, except for his own veto, which did not count because he was himself under discussion, no veto was issued.

“As a result of the first crisis we have kept the level of growth at ten percent a year.⁶ We do not want it to be higher than that for financial, organizational and cultural reasons.... There will be a maximum size also because I think at one point we may lose our understanding of the network when there are too many partners involved. I don’t know when this will be reached but when we realize that things are getting out of hand we will stop the growth of the company.” In the second crisis, Uwe did not think in hindsight that there had been a better way to deal with the

situation except wait until the employee escalated his behavior so that the consensus opinion was that it was unacceptable to hold on to him.

Uwe describes the first years of Premium Cola as “easy” as there was little pressure. The turning point was in the seventh year when he still had a full-time job at the university and had to make a decision to quit this and commit fully to Premium Cola. “These were very, very hard times. I had three nervous breakdowns during that period. From April 2010 things got easier and easier and now I have a standard 40-hour work week. I do not have standard working hours but I work when I feel like it. I feel pretty free.”

At Premium Cola people can design their own jobs; however, Uwe observes that, at first, often “the complex jobs land on my desk [and] I need to address these issues. This is a different level of stress on the one hand but on the other hand I have the feeling that most members have the trust in me to do the job correctly and they know they can issue a veto.” This is rapidly changing as members of the team and collective assume the readiness to tackle these complex tasks too.

At Premium Cola, life balance (not work–life balance because work is a part of life) is not only about hours, but about quality of work and what you get out of it. It consists of “six salaries”: (1) salary or monetary reward that includes the innate understanding that everyone gets the same salary; (2) stability and flexibility all employees are freelancers and encouraged to work with other beverage manufacturers, there are no written contracts with commercial partners and there have never been any legal disputes; (3) freedom to say and do things; (4) sense of meaning: by setting new rules and working in an environment that differs from the usual it is demonstrated that change is possible in an economy that is typically driven by free markets or big players; (5) ability to advocate/reach for ideas for “doing business differently”; and, (6) personal development of each individual.

Everyone at Premium Cola can enjoy all of these salaries. People can rearrange their job description if they feel like it or join in at public talks and workshops. They appreciate the fairness of knowing that if they cannot work for some time, they will continue to get paid. Uwe says that “Giving away decision-making power, sharing resources, security, freedom, and getting back happy employees/co-workers brings the whole

thing further.” He adds: “I can make a living by caring for everybody else, which is insane!”

He rejects the terms “social business” or “social entrepreneurship” as such organizations often try to compensate for the negative outcomes of business interactions but remain very conventional businesses themselves. “I want to change the fundamentals of doing business itself . . . One person is enough—one person trying to make difference. You need to follow up and stick to your idea to go long distance. You can make a difference as a single person. It is a journey, of course. It has been tough. It is difficult because you have to come up with solutions for issues that no one has had before and solve problems that typical companies do not see as their own problems. So it was difficult. And it still is but at the same time it has been easy. I did not have to overcome prejudices or break the law; I did not have to fight. Although this may seem to be a more complicated way to run a company, I think it is the easier way.” Reflecting on the past fifteen years, Uwe says, “If I started the company again, I am not sure I would do things differently.”

Case Study 3: Ms. Christine Kipke, Member of Sales Team, Tele Haase At Tele Haase,⁷ a technical innovation company, “we literally live distributed leadership. We call every employee a leader and an entrepreneur at our company. We are a family-owned company. The owner doesn’t live in Austria but we have a CEO here in Austria and all the decisions are made by my own co-colleagues, the employees of the company in a democratic based decision-making system.”

It wasn’t always this way, adds Christine, an employee who has been with the company since 2011. In February 2013, the company owner, Christoph Haase, who had returned to the organization from a sabbatical a few years earlier, in 2010, and the current CEO, Markus Stelzmann, announced an organizational redesign, transforming the company’s classical hierarchical structure of departments and a top-down command chain to a flat structure, thus abolishing management levels.

The company legend suggests that the motivation for this was triggered by a specific technically complex issue that was brought forward to management for a decision. The management recognized that the technical competencies needed to find the correct solutions to the issues at stake

lay within the engineering staff but that the staff needed to be empowered to take the decisions: “Why don’t the people who know, decide?”

“So, they redesigned the company and started thinking about the business in terms of processes instead of departments. They translated the old hierarchical system into a new system of processes and got rid of the old management levels.” When I asked Christine, who was then in charge, she casually replied, “We are. We are a running system and we have to keep it alive.”

Christine remembers being told, as a staff member, that henceforth she was a leader like everyone else and that there were no more department heads. She explains: “This is my first job. I didn’t have thousands of years of experience in a hierarchical company, so I think for someone like me it was easier. But it was strange. I couldn’t understand it—people were not saying we are doing it like someone else because we weren’t. We were doing it like a pioneer for ourselves. So, we didn’t follow, for example, the principles of holacracy. Maybe we were inspired by these or similar principles but Christoph [Haase] always called it an intelligent organism, so it kind of runs by itself, people work and the structure is self-organizing.”

Christine adds that this transformation is still on-going and feels like two points on a continuum; a continual evolution away from the hierarchical structure toward a new design. “We are still evolving. We continue to improve constantly. It is not the same as when we started. We had 14 processes when we started three main ones [sales, production, and innovation] and eleven supporting processes. Now we only have eight supporting ones [finance, human resource, information technology, marketing, office management, purchasing and logistics, quality management, and strategy] because we realized that there are overlaps . . .”

One of the ongoing challenges that Christine mentioned is “to get people to have the courage to take more responsibility. It is getting better of course but we still have to sometimes encourage them.” The redesign of the company entailed a shift in mindsets and the change was perceived differently across the organization. Christine explains: “It was not a big bang for me, it was more evolutionary. It took me longer to understand what was happening. There were people who left and said, ‘I know where this is going and this is nothing for me’—which is their choice. Others said ‘great’ and wanted to go for it. Although there was a lot of uncer-

tainty as to where we were going with this. Others said well let's see. So, there was a spectrum of responses. Most of the previous managers have left the organization.” Christine assumes that the current staff fluctuation is very stable and at the industry average.

The two bodies that meet regularly support the decision-making processes—an organization committee and a business committee—and include process-responsible persons.

“Someone brings up an issue. You have to prepare everything and give people a basis to discuss the agenda item. There is an agenda where you put the information ... At the beginning people sat together for a long, long time so we had to learn to limit the time to two hours. Decisions were made by a show of hands. Everybody can add to the agenda issues not directly related to their own work.”

Christine could not recall a situation of stalemate in voting nor a situation of tension between the minority and majority. She feels that: “Everybody has to take the responsibility for decisions that might go wrong and that normally a minority opinion is heard out properly.” She did not feel that those less eloquent were at a disadvantage.

Everybody in the company has a basic function/role that belongs to a named process group, for example, customer service in sales. In addition, everybody can have an additional role as process-responsible (*Prozessverantwortlicher*) or part-process-responsible (*Teilprozessverantwortlicher*) person. “Last year we did an exercise where we described our roles and what we do. We filled out a form on our own. Every process has a responsible person who is responsible for the content and technical aspects, each individual is assigned to a process and knows what to do within the scope of this process.” Each process also has a personnel-responsible (*Personalverantwortlicher*) person who is not a member of that same process staff. This person leads the annual appraisal discussion with the staff inside the process. There is a no link between personnel responsibility and technical responsibility. Therefore, the salary negotiation and personnel development is separated from technical skill. There are 10–12 personnel-responsible actors within the company. Personnel is an additional responsibility to the regular job. “For example, Markus is currently personnel responsible for the sales team but that contradicts his role as CEO as well as being responsible for all personnel

responsible actors. So, we have set up a list of possible candidates who we would like for this role and have submitted it to the personnel responsible group. Someone from the innovation process volunteered for the role and was chosen. However, she needs to give up some of her other additional responsibilities before she begins.”

People can be chosen for a role without the specific expertise and experience if they are interested in learning it. This supports organizational cohesion. Christine confirmed that the working days were not exceptionally long and that there is the perception of a good balance of responsibilities as it is possible to exchange, give up, or take up responsibilities at any time. Christine, for example, only has two mandatory meetings a week.

There has been a working group that has looked at issues of equity of pay in terms of fairness and assumed responsibilities. A number of historical and legal hurdles still remain in tackling these issues. In her opinion, the success of the current organizational design depends on “the mix of the right people—willing to take responsibility and push things forward and to say that something is wrong. On the other hand, you need real hands-on workers too and not just people developing ideas.”

“Decision-making sometimes takes so long. We learn to discuss faster and better. We have so many overlaps and talk to lots of people to understand which are the best ways forward. It is a process of learning. Previously, you went to [the] head of department, presented the issue and got an instruction. Now you realize that there are so many people you need to ask—and that is meaningful in getting to the best solution. It is nothing you can erase or change. We have an opportunity to talk through an issue in a reasonable way.” Christine explained further that in one critical situation: “We have been able to react quickly through just calling directly on the process responsible [person] for an immediate decision.”

In summary, Tele Haase has an “advantage that we are still medium size [90 staff], we are able to have an overview; if you are very big, it is difficult to have an overview. We are still evolving and can always improve things. What I think is problematic is that people try and break down our structures into something they know. One must go in like a child, with a very open mind. This structure is not about a substitution of terms. There are different assumptions behind the terms ‘head of department’ and ‘process responsible.’ Internal discussions are important to consis-

tently understand where we are in the process: How do we live the idea of our organization?”

At the end of the interview, Christine mused: “What will happen if I need to look for another job ... where will I go?”

Observations

I share my observations of these three case studies bearing in mind the “four common myths of distributed leadership” described by Spillane and Diamond (2007, pp. 149–152): “(1) that DL is a blueprint for leadership and management; (2) that DL negates the role of school principals (or CEOs elsewhere); (3) that from a distributed perspective, everyone is a leader; and (4) that DL is only about collaborative situations.”

Despite their varying contexts—that is, the first scenario where DL only concerns the senior management team embedded in a vertical structure; the second, which embraces DL from the onset; the third at Tele Haase, which depicts an organization in the middle of a turn-around toward DL—all narratives show that the primary focus of DL is on the interaction between leaders and followers. In the day-to-day practice of leadership, management is constructed of functions, roles, and competencies rather than individual leaders in their respective structures. Several commonalities are present in this expression of DL.

First, it is an inspiring individual who maintains the formal authority (ownership or appointment by stakeholders) and chooses this form of leadership for the group. Inherent to this choice is this individual’s understanding and appreciation of leadership quality and competence in others. In turn, the leader’s position is strengthened by the followership, who have not necessarily become leaders themselves, in the traditional sense, but are highly engaged and are given room to express their competence. This powerful and dynamic relationship is self-reinforcing. It is also carefully engineered by the leader and nurtured through communication and relational skills. In this way, DL amplifies followership through engaging followers as active participants in an ongoing and evolutionary leadership process of continual adaptations. DL is an agile expression of leadership whereby the leader and follower are complementary and inter-

dependent, that is, leaders need followers to be leaders and vice versa. It is not an expression of polarized dichotomy.

Second, DL is an inclusive expression of collective leadership, it does not negate or replace formal authority anchored in the legal set-up of any organization. DL is a leadership attitude of enabling or facilitating within a given context. It pays tribute to the dynamic quality of organizational contexts—leveraging from individuals in it at varying times to various extents (temporal and spatial dimensions). The degrees of DL expression fluctuate, taking into account organizational history and structure, as well as stakeholder and purpose. Therefore, this spectrum of agency is dynamic, ranging between institutionalized practices (things that must be done, for example, reporting) and spontaneous or intuitive practices also in times of crisis. The latter, on the one hand, seek to address unexpected institutional challenges; and, on the other, nurture the leadership approach by addressing human issues such as work–life balance. It is through these complementary practices that DL appears to transcend other mediating parameters, such as organizational structure, industry, and such like, which do not play primary roles.

Third, DL is guided by a purposeful focus (“why”) and is a demonstration of the “how” in leadership. The “what” and the “who” appear secondary. The conscious choice for DL is driven by values and business acumen, although, taken by an individual, is embedded in values of equity as it inherently appears to strive for a more diverse and ethical form of governance while keenly leveraging knowledge for sound decision-making that recognizes environmental complexities. Therefore, DL is primarily about a leadership that is driven by furthering organizational outcomes. In this way, the role of the leader is pivotal, not everyone concerned can be considered a leader in the same vein and not all action is collaborative—dispelling three of four myths mentioned above.

In short, DL challenges the assumed dichotomy of leadership–followership in management theory through giving issues of empowerment, competencies, and common goals greater importance, while placing emphasis on task and goal interdependence, as well as on the relationship between shared leadership and organizational performance. It is not merely about having more leaders, defying conventional authorities, or flattening conventional vertical organizational structures. It is more

about allowing individual actors see and contribute toward the enactment of leadership by their contribution to organizational outcomes. In this sense, it is also about human development or maturity, which might be a prerequisite for the impactful implementation of DL.

What does all this mean for DL's followership ontology specifically? In all case studies, we see that followership does exist; however, the follower identities are more fluid, guided less by individual persons and their stringently defined roles than by the organizational outcomes. Also, the enactment of followership is not from a subordinate place. In the case of DL, the construct of followership, which is commonly believed to be about follower roles and behaviors (Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, & Carsten, 2014), is here about a dynamic and evolving leadership dialogue of mutual influence, information, and knowledge as well as decision sharing. In addition, the narratives concur with the observation that "in order [for DL] to be effective, there is a need to balance different 'hybrid configurations' of practice" (Bolden, 2011, p. 251). Therefore, an over-emphasis on attributing DL to certain industries (such as education or start-ups) or types of organizational structures (e.g. holacracy) is likely futile.

To conclude, it appears pertinent that for DL to succeed and achieve the impact that it promises, it needs to meaningfully connect the experiences and aspirations of leadership practitioners with organizational outcomes while consciously respecting and recognizing the political nature of leadership and complexities of its environment. This attitude needs to be nurtured by the group. The real challenge in DL therefore seems to lie in the struggle that "for most people [it] is simply counterintuitive: leadership is obviously and manifestly an individual trait and activity" (O'Toole, Galbraith, & Lawler, 2003, p. 251). The notion of vertical leadership is so engrained in our practices that individuals grapple with assuming a more empowered role in organizations. In this sense, none of the interview partners actually make a case for DL. They do not propagate it as the ultimate form of leadership or a state-of-the-art goal but rather as an on-going effort of engaging followers and as a continual challenge but also as a necessary pathway toward complex decision-making. The dynamic and evolving nature of DL doesn't allow it to formulate a blueprint per se.

Finally, it appears that the current discourse and research on DL only appears to scratch the surface of the concept. We need to wear holistic glasses and challenge current assumptions in leadership research when peering at DL. Even when the foggy mystification is lifted from the subject, there are still a number of important questions that require keen investigation. More precisely, what exactly is this leadership that is being distributed and who/what exactly controls this distribution? When and how can it (co)exist within hybrid or singular forms of organizational contexts while embracing its dynamic and evolving nature? Is diversity key to embracing a DL attitude? What is the “real” impact of DL? Can it be measured? If yes, then how?

Notes

1. I include the terms shared and dispersed leadership in DL.
2. Questions included: How did this leadership style come about? How does it work in practice? What are the challenges? How are the decisions made? What impact does DL has on work–life balance? All interviews ended by asking the interviewee if there was anything else that needed to be added/ addressed.
3. See <https://www.wu.ac.at/en/the-university/organizational-structure/>. All websites were accessed on October 5, 2016.
4. <http://www.premium-cola.de> and <http://augenhoche-film.de/en/film-2/augenhoche-film/>.
5. In 2017 the number of commercial partners increased to 1,700.
6. In an email exchange in April 2017 Uwe admitted to me that he “failed” this target as in 2016 the company posted an 11 percent growth!
7. See <http://www.tele-online.com/en/>.

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3

Investigating the Dynamism of Change in Leadership Identity

Koen Marichal, Jesse Segers, Karen Wouters,
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Introduction

More and more organizations opt for more teamwork (Burke, DiazGranados, & Salas, 2011) and shared leadership (Aime, Humphrey, Derue, & Paul, 2014; Pearce, Conger, & Locke, 2007; Wassenaar & Pearce, 2012) to overcome the lack of speed and flexibility in hierarchies (Aime et al., 2014; Anderson & Brown, 2010; Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007). “The traditional hierarchical model of managers being

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in control of employees is no longer viable” (Mills & Ungson, 2003, p. 143). Organizations today are inclined to look beyond the vertical leader as the main source of leadership. Distributed leadership (DL) theory (Gronn, 2002) acknowledges this evolution away from leader-centricity toward a more systemic and collective view of leadership. Our research was undertaken in the context of self-managing teams and draws specifically from shared leadership theory, which has its roots in team literature and can be seen as a specific, entity-based approach of DL (Bolden, 2011; Fitzsimons, James, & Denyer, 2011; Thorpe, Gold, & Lawler, 2011).

Shared leadership theory recognizes that leadership in teams does not necessarily replace vertical, downward leadership, yet the vertical leader’s role changes. Vertical leaders are expected to create empowering conditions for teams, fostering shared leadership instead of controlling and commanding them directly (Cox, Pearce, & Perry, 2003; Locke, 2003; Pearce, Hoch, Jeppesen, & Wegge, 2010). They need to develop a different stance toward their followers so that those followers act as leaders. In fact, the change toward shared leadership implies that leaders gradually advance toward followers, whereas followers advance toward leaders.

This raises an unexamined but important point. How do vertical leaders perceive the implementation of shared leadership, and how do they adapt their role and behavior? This question is important because vertical leaders are an important condition for shared leadership. If they do not adapt, they can become an obstacle. The question is unexamined to the best of our knowledge. Theory and practice seem to assume that leaders automatically adapt to the new situation in which their team is more autonomous, makes decisions, and does not need to consult with leadership all the time.

We draw from identity theory (Ashforth, Harrison, & Corley, 2008) and recent leadership development literature to understand how vertical leaders respond to shared leadership (Day, Harrison, & Halpin, 2009; Lord & Hall, 2005). We look at motivation to lead (Kark & Van Dijk, 2007), implicit leadership (Epitropaki, Sy, Martin, Tram-Quon, & Topakas, 2013), power theory (Coleman, 2004), and constructionist development theory (Day et al., 2009) to better understand how the ver-

tical leaders react to the implementation of shared leadership and what kind of leader identity is needed to support this implementation.

Vertical leaders may experience identity threat and conflict. Identity threat happens when events are potentially harmful for the value, meaning, or enactment of the identity (Petriglieri, 2011). Identity conflicts arise when parts of the self-identity react inconsistently, for instance, when faced with conflicting demands (Horton, Bayerl, & Jacobs, 2014). Threats and conflicts can have severe negative personal impact and deflate a person's sense of belonging, lower their self-efficacy, and create anxiety and negative thoughts, all leading to a drop in performance (Scheepers, Ellemers, & Sintemaartensdijk, 2009; Stout & Dasgupta, 2013). This negative impact predicts resistance to change (Murtagh, Gatersleben, & Uzzell, 2012; Van Dijk & van Dick, 2009). This means that vertical leaders would then tend to discourage rather than encourage the distribution of leadership in their teams.

The threat and conflict experience of the vertical leaders initiates identity work, defined by Snow and Anderson (1987) as "the range of activities individuals engage in to create, present and sustain personal identities that are congruent with and supportive of the self-concept" (p. 1348). They need to find their way between the organizational discourse, in this case "shared leadership," and their "self-as-a-leader" identity (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002; Ashforth et al., 2008).

Starting from shared leadership and identity theory, we were keen to explore the impact of shared leadership on the identity of the vertical leader. Our research questions are the following: (1) How does the implementation of shared leadership in a bureaucracy impact the identity of the vertical leaders? (2) Which kind of leader identity do vertical leaders develop to support the implementation of shared leadership in their organization? Our research contributes to leadership theory by specifying the vertical leader identity enabling shared leadership in teams. Second, we contribute to the identity perspective of leadership development theory in the context of organizational change. Third, we contribute to the field of identity work, testing existing theory applied in a new situation, namely, forced role change of leaders. Finally, we contribute to the field of practice. Our research may help organizations to gain insight in how leaders may enable rather than resist the implementation of DL.

The Case of an Aggressive Implementation of Shared Leadership

The organization that we researched was organized as a professional bureaucracy with high vertical and horizontal standardization of skills and strong rules and regulations (Mintzberg, 1980). The home nursing organization with 1,706 employees was divided into 4 departments: personnel and organization, quality and innovation, nursing, and administration. Over 85% of the 1,706 employees depended on the director “nursing” through 4 regional coordinators and 30 department heads. Overall, at the start of the organizational change, the hierarchy counted 50 formal positions.

The board of directors and general management wanted to implement “integrated patient care” and a working context that enables nurses to empower patients and work more closely with local hospitals, doctors, and other health professionals. They wanted to move from a bureaucratic organization to an organizational model with self-managing teams and minimal hierarchy.

Thirty operational, manager-led departments with 31–65 nurses were reorganized into 104 self-managing teams supported by 10 coaches. Support and staff services were reorganized in order to become supportive of the teams instead of controlling. The total number of hierarchical positions decreased from 50 to 9 over the course of 2 years. The whole organization was expected to share leadership.

The leaders in our interviews acknowledged and emphasized the importance of the conscious change approach. The organizational change was carefully planned and implemented in a fair and supportive way (Caldwell, Herold, & Fedor, 2004). A clear vision and ambition, strong management support, inspiration sessions, participative decision-making through work groups and town hall meetings, individual career meetings, a formal training program, clear communication about progress, the use of pilot groups, and access to individual coaching helped leaders and employees to understand and accept the change.

At the same time, the change was fast-paced and hard-hitting. The organization deliberately chose a strictly planned, ambitious change program, with clear messages, strict timing, and the use of formal procedures such as job descriptions, assessments, training programs. In this way, the

change program could be characterized as “aggressive,” a strategy used to make organizational change in companies with low readiness and a low sense of urgency (Armenakis, Harris, & Mossholder, 1993).

The case has received a lot of attention sector- and nationwide. It was presented on television in prime time. The organization’s managers have written a book about their story that was launched at a highly successful conference (Colman, De Caluwé, Dendooven, & Van Landuyt, 2015). The general manager has been interviewed in the national press numerous times and presented her story as a keynote speaker on different occasions. The organization has inspired other organizations in the same and other sectors to implement shared leadership. All this public attention was part of a deliberate change strategy to provide credibility and recognition for the development track of the employees, teams, and their leaders.

Research Method

Our findings are grounded in a qualitative, exploratory study (Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007) of an extreme case (Flyvbjerg, 2006). The case is extreme because of the clarity and scope of the organizational change toward shared leadership. The clear transition from hierarchy to self-managing teams provided a unique context for examining the consequences for vertical leaders and their identities.

The purpose of the study was to develop an understanding of the issues that vertical leaders face when confronted with an organizational ambition “to share leadership.” To date, the attitudes, cognitions, and emotions leaders go through when shared leadership is implemented has not been under examination; this would require an open exploration methodology. Our research design was open-ended, allowing unplanned findings to emerge from the data.

The research approach was inspired by the call for more qualitative research in leadership (Alvesson, 1996; Conger, 1998). Leadership research has been dominated by (neo-)positivist assumptions that led to results that don’t take into account the rich context of leadership, the interdependence of multiple levels of leadership, and leadership’s dynamic nature. The results of this kind of leadership are also not so

easy to translate into practical recommendations. Our open, longitudinal, exploratory approach allowed a richer and practically relevant understanding of shared leadership development at organizational level.

We worked with semi-structured interviews in a reflexive way, meaning that we engaged in them as open dialogues, seeing interviews as interventions in a social process of sense-making, using theory and testing insights that we developed along the way (Burawoy, 1998). This abductive approach (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009), going back from data to research and vice versa, supported a continuously deepening understanding of the research questions.

Data Collection

We were fortunate to have full and open access to an organization that was at the beginning of a very ambitious change, installing self-managing teams and dismantling hierarchy in a disruptive way. One of the authors had the opportunity to be involved at the beginning of the change, conducting a workshop about “shared leadership” for the board of directors. This workshop inspired the organization to adapt the idea of “shared leadership” and make it a central aim of the organizational change. The workshop created a level of trust at the highest level of the organization and enabled the researcher to gather data through observations, interviews, and document analysis. Another co-author was, later on, involved as a head of a larger research project on the leadership challenges of empowering organizations.

Data were gathered over a period of one year. In total, 16 interviews were held with 14 managers, taking a minimum of 71 minutes up to 104 minutes. One co-author interviewed the general and the HR manager together, another co-author interviewed them separately. The general manager was interviewed three times in the course of one year. The president of the board was also interviewed. All other interviews took place with hierarchical leaders who were targeted by the organizational change. Eight of them were first-line leaders with 31–65 employees. The other three interviewees were middle managers. Together with being present at two different workshops, having extensive access to organizational data, employing an open, qualitative survey within the teams about their expe-

rience with self-management (Marichal & Geens, 2015), and being able to use a book published on the case, written by the general manager and her team (Colman et al., 2015), the researchers were allowed to develop a rich view on the case.

The interviews were semi-structured. They had three basic questions with a number of subtopics: (1) How would you describe your leadership before the change (in terms of behavior, motivation, attitude, and meaning)? (2) How do you experience the change (in terms of meaning, personal impact, clarity, and support)? (3) How are you adapting your leadership (in terms of behavior, motivation, attitude, meaning, support, and obstacles)? The first question allowed a safe start of the interview and an understanding of the vertical leadership at the start. The second question targeted the emotional impact of the change: How distressing was the communication of the change? The last question aimed at revealing the adaptation process.

Data Analysis

We follow the advice of Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) to be straightforward in clarifying the research strategy and “convey the theory-building strategy clearly while avoiding confusion, philosophical pitfalls and unrealistic reader expectations” (p. 28). In Table 3.1 we explain the data analysis process in a chronological way.

In a first phase we familiarized ourselves with the topic and the case. This happened in a natural, unplanned way. Conducting a workshop for the board of the organization about shared leadership enabled us to understand the culture, structure, context, and ambition of the organization. We also gathered good insights into shared leadership theory. This phase was important as it allowed us to gain trust as a research partner for the organization. In the second phase we analyzed the interview data in a very analytical and formal way. We fully transcribed the interviews, took notes during and after, and coded the text using a qualitative research software (Boeije, 2012; Lämsäsalmi, Peiró, & Kivimäki, 2004). The text fragments were coded as precisely as possible in order to develop a fine-grained view on the data. In Table 3.2 we use text fragments and label them as M (manager) 1–12.

Table 3.1 Data analysis process

Steps in analysis	Description
1. Familiarizing	Through a workshop with the board of the organization, we got to know the culture and structure of the organization, as well as its ambition. We also became familiarized with shared leadership theory and with leadership development through theory and practice before we began
2. Analyzing	We transcribed the interviews and analyzed the texts in analytical ways, supported by a specific software program for qualitative studies. This analysis led to a first list of 120 specific codes that later on evolved with further interviews and discussions with co-authors. Overall, the analysis felt frustrating, as if we couldn't keep the richness of the case intact, that is, multilevel and dynamic over time, intra- and interpersonal
3. Interpreting	A few months after the detailed analysis, we analyzed the interviews as mini-cases, in a more profound, hermeneutic way. This approach led to new insights, for instance, the different ways people coped with the change, e.g., by complaining or minimizing. We planned additional interviews to address and test these insights. At the same time, we were prudent because this approach felt far more subjective and vulnerable to personal bias
4. Taking distance	We took time to read and summarize additional literature. We reviewed identity theory in general and leadership identity theory specifically. In retrospect, this phase was an answer to the challenge of the former phase—not to become too emotionally involved
5. Discussion	A first draft of conclusions and insights was discussed with expert researchers and practitioners, as well as with user groups of organizations dealing with the same leadership challenge. This gave us confidence that our research was relevant and, at the same time, solid
6. Integrating	The open discussions, the new insights from theory, the detailed analysis of text fragments, and the more hermeneutic understanding of the individual stories came together in the development of a data structure and model of shared leader identity development

Table 3.2 Overview of data structure

"I have a strong work ethic, that's true, that has its toll" (M8)	Normative motivation	<i>Vertical leader identity</i>
"[A]s head you are responsible, ... enormous responsibility for a number of results" (M1)	to lead "I must"	
"I felt this during all these years, ... you build a status, people respect you ..." (M5)		
"I didn't know my colleagues, I sat on an island ... I had a winners mentality." (M5)	Stand-alone attitude	
"In such a position, you couldn't get close with your employees ... It was lonely ..." (M9)		
"People knew 'she holds up her own pants.' I solved my own problems." (M3)		
"It was a function I grew into. I did what was expected from me." (M5)	Socialized mindset	
"I did my best. You have to plan this meeting, have an evaluation meeting there, solve problems in between ... it went on and on." (M8)		
"There was a tremendous level of loyalty in the organization." (M11)		
"[P]eople got an adrenaline shock" (M2)	Identity shock	<i>Leadership sense break</i>
"The most shocking thing was that the organization took the decision, just like that." (M1)		
"It was pretty confronting." (M6)		
"You think, how on earth will they manage?" (M12)	Disbelief	
"First I listened with disbelief." (M5)		
"The majority thought: 'Come on. Really?'" (M9)		

(continued)

Table 3.2 (continued)

<p>"It's only a matter of seeing it positively and seeing what happens." (M2)</p> <p>"It's OK. It's more or less what I studied at the university. It is recognizable. I'm not surprised." (M6)</p> <p>"It's a little bit difficult. But anyway. I believe in myself." (M6)</p>	<p>Minimizing, rationalizing</p>	<p><i>Protective identity work</i></p>
<p>"I find myself thinking regularly, 'this is not professional, this is not ok.' Hence the frustration." (M7)</p> <p>"They didn't do that well. And you see things going down the drain." (M6)</p> <p>"I have serious doubts about what they are doing ... It's not that simple" (M12)</p> <p>"Yes, I have to learn to like it." (M2)</p> <p>"You have to question yourself. You need somehow to get to know yourself. That's not a bad thing, isn't it?" (M6)</p> <p>"You need to let go a lot. And you must think, 'no, don't solve it, let it come from the group.'" (M8)</p>	<p>Commenting, blaming</p> <p>Self-normative narrative</p>	
<p>"[I]t has the effect on me that I commit for 100% instead of 300%. I don't know if that's ok, but it is what it is." (M7)</p> <p>"I let go. I let go! It's ok. Worrying only costs energy." (M6)</p> <p>"Work used to be on the first place. Work is still important, but I'm more available for my children, I'm more at home." (M9)</p> <p>"I really felt the urge to check, but I didn't do it." (M1)</p> <p>"OK, that result driven part of me, I separated that from myself." (M5)</p> <p>"[N]ot directly offering solutions ..." (M2)</p> <p>"Letting go that sense of responsibility for the results of the team." (M8)</p> <p>"I do my best as coach, I try to do good, to practice, you know, what I learn in the program." (M2)</p> <p>"Then I studied all weekend about 'how to put something on the agenda of a team in an indirect way.'" (M1)</p> <p>"No, it wasn't like waking up in the morning and knowing how to act. No. Not really." (M5)</p>	<p>Emotional withdrawal</p> <p>No longer behaving in a vertical way</p> <p>Learning to coach</p>	<p><i>Restructuring identity work</i></p>

(continued)

Table 3.2 (continued)

"I immediately knew, I think as one of the first that I didn't want to become coach." (M9)	Abandoning	<i>Leader identity loss</i>
"[N]ow I find satisfaction in seeing how they solve problems" (M3)	Motivation to coach	<i>Shared leader identity</i>
"Sometimes I can feel happy, to see it happen, and I think 'yes! Well done.'" (M10)		
"It's only now I get it. I do enjoy it. It's beautiful." (M1)		
"You don't have to become what the others expect ... bit by bit, layers of my personality have disappeared." (M5)	Self-authoring mindset	
"I want to keep this freedom in my head." (M11)		
"I'm now at this stage that I'm wondering, 'who have I been all this time?' ... it's only now that I really can say what it is to be coach." (M1)		
"That as an individual, you are not alone, I mean, you don't have to ... it made me realize that I don't need a winner mentality." (M5)	Collaborative, developmental attitude	
"I really feel that I need my colleagues more than I used to." (M1)		
"It doesn't make it easier, working together, but it makes it richer." (M10)		

In the third phase, after a few months we reread the transcripts in a more interpretative, hermeneutic way, aiming at a more thorough understanding of the case. New insights were discovered respecting the uniqueness of each story, the complexity of the organizational change, and the struggle of the leaders. Triggered by these, we explored, in the next phase of analysis, additional theory, more specifically on identity work and leadership identity. Overall, these two phases were inspiring, putting our research into a broader and deeper research context.

Both former phases led to a discussion phase in which we presented and discussed the high-level ideas in numerous ways with academic and practitioner experts and with small groups of organizations. This phase gave us confidence that our key findings were practical, relevant, and

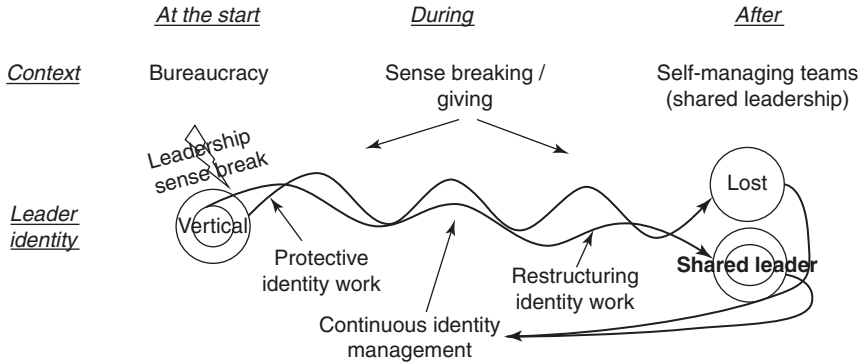


Fig. 3.1 Identity development of vertical leaders during implementation of organization-wide shared leadership

theoretically solid as well. The last phase integrated all former phases of the analysis. We used the fine-grain codes, the coarse-grain interpretative insights, theory, and discussions to finalize the data structure as presented in Table 3.2 and to develop an overall framework as presented in Fig. 3.1.

Results in a Nutshell

In Fig. 3.1 we summarize our findings. The starting point of our research is leadership in a bureaucratic organization. The data confirmed that the formal leaders in such an organization are expected to direct in a top-down way. Respondents expressed that they had to execute the commands of higher levels and control the activities within the scope of their authority. These leaders had developed a specific identity, which we call “vertical leader identity.”

The introduction of shared leadership in the organization came as a shock to those vertical leaders. Their leadership sense was broken as it was immediately clear that hierarchical positions were being taken away and replaced by new positions that demanded “leading with people” rather than above people (Galinsky, Jordan, & Sivanathan, 2008). The change also provoked strong emotions of anxiety, anger, and doubt, and triggered identity work. This identity work was, on the one hand, protective

of their “vertical leader identity,” and, on the other, transformative into a new positive leadership identity (Petriglieri, 2011). The result of the identity work was determined by the amount of sense-breaking and sense-giving of the organization (Ashforth et al., 2008), and by leaders’ vertical identity strength and their overall identity management strategies (Kreiner & Sheep, 2009). Only a few leaders developed a “shared leader identity” that enabled followers to share leadership.

The Vertical Leader Identity

The leadership climate (Chen, Kirkman, Kanfer, Allen, & Rosen, 2007) in the organization was hierarchical. The newly appointed general manager described it in the following way: “People asked for approval for the most silly things, as for instance, the form of the glass that should be bought as relation gift, or if the flower pot could be moved to the other corner of the office, or if they could leave an hour earlier that day.” She described the meetings deeper in the organization as follows: “The meetings were one-way, top-down. The regional manager conducted the meeting one point after the other. Everybody approved everything without discussion.”

Within this climate, the vertical leaders had developed a “vertical leader identity.” The core of their self-concept as a leader was “being responsible for results and people” and was characterized by the following cognitions, attitudes, and motivation (see also Table 3.2). A first category of responses, defining the vertical leader identity, was the stand-alone attitude. “I didn’t know my colleagues, I sat on an island ... I had a winners mentality” (M5). Vertical leaders in a hierarchy seem to uphold an image of being strong and independent. Their leadership is defined by a positional power that cannot or is not meant to be distributed among followers. This attribute of a vertical leader identity relates to the fixed implicit power theory of Coleman (2004). He contrasted this implicit theory, following Dweck, Hong, and Chiu (1993)—a more developmental, collaborative idea about power—and hypothesized that people in authority positions with a fixed idea about power would be less inclined to share power.

Second, motivation to lead was mostly social-normative, characterized by a sense of duty and obligation, and less by, for instance, affective or non-calculative reasons (Chan & Drasgow, 2001). One leader stated that: “as head you are responsible ... you carry an enormous responsibility for a number of results” (M1). The vertical leaders tended to define leadership as a burden, a continuous weight that differentiated them from their followers.

Third, the mindset was more socialized (Kegan, 1994; Voronov & Yorks, 2015), living up to the expectations of stakeholders, emphasizing “I must,” as, for instance, this leader: “Then I had to have a meeting ... As department head, one has to know ... You have a budget and you have to respect it” (M2). Vertical leaders in a hierarchy seem to be expected to be obedient and respectful followers of their own bosses: “In a way, they are the boss, they get to decide things, they run the show, not me” (M7).

Interviewed leaders differed in degree of “vertical leader identity,” visualized in Fig. 3.1 by a small or large circle. One leader said, for instance: “I’m not the kind of leader that holds control in a very tight way, or expects people to justify their actions, or tells them what to do” (M1). Her vertical leader identity was less deep and less critical for her overall self-identity (Ashforth et al., 2008).

Broken Leadership Sense

The announcement of dismantling hierarchy came as a shock for all hierarchical leaders, except for those at the top who were orchestrating the change. Leaders used words as “I was in shock. I literally could not talk to anyone about it without crying ...” (M2) or “It’s a hard blow, even while I knew this was coming” (M4). Or, “When I left that day, I was lost, I didn’t even know anymore where I had left my car” (M5).

After the shock came the emotions. Leaders felt angry. The psychological contract with their organization had been breached: “It felt so ungrateful. After all these years of dedication” (M6). They felt scared: “Yes, sleepless nights, because of this uncertainty” (M5). “It was confronting. I wanted security but which options did I have?” (M6).

In sum, the announcement of shared leadership initiated “a rollercoaster of emotions” (M2) and seemed to have been experienced as

a loss of leadership status and a threat to the leader identity (Marr & Thau, 2014; Scheepers et al., 2009). Petriglieri (2011) defines an identity threat as “experiences that are appraised as indicating potential harm to the value, meanings or enactment of an identity” (p. 644). The “vertical leader identity” clearly was potentially harmed by the announcement of a change to a restricted hierarchy.

The results indicate that the level of identity threat was influenced by three factors. First, by the degree of sense-breaking. The organization was explicit and formal about the change, by using disciplinary power in the form of job descriptions, assessments, and development programs, and by being clear on the timing and the number of vacant positions. In this way the organization broke the sense of vertical leaders (Ashforth et al., 2008). Sense-breaking activities question “who one is.” They accentuate competency gaps, in this case the gap between newly desired leadership and holding a hierarchical position. Sense-breaking creates tension, threatens identity.

Besides the amount of sense-breaking from the organizational side, the vertical leader identity’s strength determined the amount of leader sense broken. For some leaders the broken leadership sense was not very dramatic: “I found the idea of autonomous teams interesting from the beginning ... I immediately decided to become coach ... I struggled with the decision, but I was not afraid” (M1). For other leaders, their leadership sense was broken in a more dramatic way as described at the beginning of this section, because their whole sense of self-esteem depended on “being a manager.”

Third, identity threat seemed to be defined by the continuous identity development of the person. One leader, for instance, stated: “I’ve been through hell and back ... There is always a following day ... It’s hard to lose my job, but I also see it as an opportunity” (M11). This leader is used to differentiating her professional identity and felt less threatened by the implementation of shared leadership. Another leader had a very integrated identity: “I was department head for 14 years, 12 of which with the same team ... I loved it ... Even after all these months, I’m still in shock ... I’m terrified” (M2). This leader integrated her whole life around her vertical leader identity. For her, the identity work to be done was much vaster. Integration and differentiation are both needed in

identity work (Beech, 2008; Kreiner & Sheep, 2009; Ramarajan, 2014), but people differ in the way they develop their identity, by adopting, for instance, a continuous identity growth tactic or by being proactive rather than reactive to identity threats and conflicts (Kreiner & Sheep, 2009).

Protective Identity Work

Petriglieri (2011) states that, by default, people react to identity threats in a protective way. Protective identity work tries to limit the hard work of changing oneself and directs energy outward, to the source of the identity threat, for example, by derogating it or by concealing their own identity. When the change endures, protection is not enough. The identity continues to be threatened. Only restructuring identity work, as, for instance, exiting the threatened identity, removes the threat.

In our case, vertical leaders expressed both protective and restructuring tactics. Both are intertwined, as visualized in Fig. 3.1. The moment that leader sense was broken, the vertical leaders entered a difficult and fuzzy period of uncertainty (Horton et al., 2014; Pratt, Rockmann, & Kaufmann, 2006). Beech (2011) refers to the anthropological roots of identity theory to describe the effect of sense-breaking as entering liminality, a position of ambiguity in an unstable social context. We first discuss the protective identity work that we observed, then look at “restructuring identity work” in the section of that title.

We identified three major protective behavioral strategies. Some leaders clearly started to rationalize and minimize the identity threat (Ashforth et al., 2008). One leader, for instance, was halfway through the program when she said: “It’s OK. It’s more or less what I studied at the university. It is recognizable. I’m not surprised” (M6). At the same time, she expressed a lot of frustration and uncertainty in the interview and also had to stay at home for several months with a diagnosed “burn-out.” The minimizing helped her to cope with the situation but at the same time didn’t help her to fully integrate the learnings of the education program. Other leaders coped with the threat by complaining and pointing to others: “The communication is a disaster ... It’s incompetence. It’s not professional” (M7). A third common protective identity tactic

we found was what we call self-normative narrative. For instance: “You have to question yourself. You have to get know yourself better. It’s not bad to question yourself, you know?” (M6). This person gave the impression during the interview of not accepting the change while developing a compliant narrative.

We do not consider our description of protective identity work description to be complete, nor is it absolute. For the purpose of the current chapter, we were more interested at what happens at the intersection of organizational discourse and leaders, and not so much in the micro, intra-personal side of identity work (Stets & Burke, 2000). Our findings reveal that some leaders were more engaged in protecting themselves than others. Hence, the one line for protective identity work in Fig. 3.1, emphasizing that leaders engage in some way and up to a certain level in protection.

To conclude, it is important to note that we do not consider this protective identity work as purely driven by self-interested resistance. Vertical leaders are typically motivated by a heavy sense of duty and responsibility. They are genuinely concerned with people and results: “the change is quicksand. I can only hope we are taking the right course ... Will the results be ok?” (M8). The effects of organizational change are uncertain and it is only natural that vertical leaders do not give up easily on their vertical leader identity, not only for themselves but also for their people and the results of the organization. Recent identity research highlights this reframing of “resistance to change” as active identity work (Carroll & Levy, 2010; Carroll & Nicholson, 2014).

Restructuring Identity Work

Identity threat not only leads to protective reactions. Another category of responses targets the identity itself. Petriglieri (2011) uses the term “restructuring” for this kind of identity work. In general, it is the process of making sense of the organizational change by adapting the identity (Ashforth et al., 2008). We found, overall, three tactics commonly used by the leaders in change.

First of all, leaders withdrew emotionally from their leader identity, thus changing the importance of the identity (Ashforth et al., 2008;

Carroll & Levy, 2010; Petriglieri, 2011): “On me it has the effect that I commit for 100 % to my work and no longer 300 %” (M7). Second, vertical leaders stopped behaving in a vertical way, coming close to the idea of *identicide* (Ashforth et al., 2008; Maurer & London, 2015). This was part of the learning process of becoming a coach: “I felt the urge to follow up on a decision, but I didn’t do it” (M1). This part of the identity work is hard. Most of the interviewees dealt with feelings of loss: “They didn’t seem to need me anymore” (M1). Finally, a key part of restructuring identity work was learning new behaviors and thus changing one’s self-narrative (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010). “I do my best as team coach. I try to do it in a good way. I try to practice what I learn in the program” (M2). This last part of identity work is also tough. The leaders are confronted with uncertainty about their competence, motivation, and/or role. They describe the whole process as “chaos” (M5), “a roller coaster” (M2), “very frustrating” (M6), “nerve wrecking” (M9).

The Importance of Sense-Giving

Adapting to the new role of coach created a conflict with the old identity. Although in today’s work-life managers hold multiple self-concepts and shift position from one meeting to the other (Ashforth et al., 2008; Stryker & Burke, 2000), the managers in our case clearly experienced the new leader role as something that could not easily be added to their identity repertoire.

This explains why, at the organizational level, not only sense-breaking, but also sense-giving, are important—to support restructuring identity work and relieve emotional and mental stress (Ashforth et al., 2008). Sense-giving is a part of the identity regulatory work of organizations that supports the sense-making process of the individuals, for instance, by providing social validation, expressing concern, and passing on outsider praise.

In our case, leaders expressed the value of being heard by the senior manager, the access on a voluntary basis to personal coaching, and the support of peers in the training program. Being heard and having personal coaching helped to make sense of the change at the identity level. The training program had a more ambivalent effect. Some of the manag-

ers had made a clear choice and were willing to restructure their identity. For them, the training was supportive of this aim and for gaining new competencies as a leader. It became an identity workspace, defined by G. Petriglieri and Petriglieri (2010) as “an institution that provides a holding environment for identity work” (p. 44). Other managers were still struggling when they enrolled in the program. As identity threat and conflict were not directly addressed, the training triggered more protective identity work and made it more difficult for them to gain competencies.

Sense-giving was also organized for the newly formed self-managing teams. Their experience in learning to share leadership is out of scope for this chapter, but the testimonials of the leaders clearly showed the interdependence between the teams and coaches in handling and developing a new leader and a new follower identity. “It’s a gradual process off course. The team is not yet self-managing and I am not yet a coach” (M7). Some teams actively helped the newly appointed coach to adapt by openly negotiating expectations, allowing the coach to experiment. Other teams wanted to be left alone and experienced each coaching intervention as an intrusion on their newly defined status of “self-managing.” This interdependent quality of the relationship between leader and follower, including being able to let the relationship evolve, is an essential part of the learning process and needs identity work from both parties.

Shared Leader Identity

Kreiner and Sheep (2009) define a positive identity as an identity “that is competent, resilient, authentic, transcendent & holistically integrated” (p. 24). This is what we saw as the result of the identity work of some of the leaders that we interviewed. They had no longer the vertical leader identity they used to have. They had transformed it: “it’s totally different” (M3), “it is as if I received a mental bath” (M5), “I even relate in a different way to my children” (M1). They have found the benefits that can come with loss and increased their self-awareness through adaptive identity development (Conroy & O’Leary-Kelly, 2014).

We call this new identity a “shared leader” identity. It combines the core element of being a leader with new meaning, cognition, and emotion.

First of all, such leaders show a more self-authoring mindset (Voronov & Yorks, 2015). They take a stand in the organization in a more personal way. The “I must” of the vertical leader identity has grown into an “I want”: “I’ve become a more gentle, spontaneous, helping person” (M5).

Second, their motivation to lead has shifted toward a motivation to coach. They have learned to enjoy this new way of leading, the pleasure of power *with* people (Galinsky et al., 2008): “You have to enjoy the process, they told me. Now I get it and I do enjoy it. It’s beautiful” (M1). This comes close to the motivation to serve, as driver for the servant leadership theorized by van Dierendonck (2011).

Finally, these leaders with a shared leader identity view leadership from a more collaborative and developmental perspective. They developed a more relational idea about leadership. It’s less top down and more about ongoing building relations and working together: “That as an individual, you are not alone, I mean, you don’t have to ... it made me realize that I don’t need a winner mentality” (M5).

Those leaders also developed a more open idea about identity development. They integrated the notion of never-ending development into their leader identity: “I don’t know if I’ll find my place. We will see. It will depend on how things will evolve. I want to keep this freedom in my head” (M11). Recent theory focuses on the necessary capacity of leaders for such identity work and sees identity work as an integral part of leadership development (Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm, & McKee, 2014; Maurer & London, 2015; Petriglieri & Stein, 2012), especially in contexts where leadership is co-constructed or distributed (Nicholson & Carroll, 2013). Ashforth and colleagues (2008) hypothesize that high-level identities as, for instance, in the case “I see myself as an adaptive leader,” may well become necessary in today’s working environments.

Lost Leader Identity

Not all leader identity development is gain (Kreiner & Sheep, 2009). Some leaders abandoned their leader identity completely and chose a more operational or supporting role. They had had enough of the burden of leadership: “I knew rather fast—I think as one of the first department

heads—that I didn't want to become coach. I wasn't a typical head in the first place. I was exhausted" (M9). Also, a number of leaders just froze when their leadership sense got broken (Ashforth et al., 2008): "My biggest concern is the group of people that didn't move or react. They just waited" (M11).

Of the 30 department heads, 16 enrolled in the formal coaching program. Ten of them received a positive evaluation after two years. Of the remaining 20 department heads, 5 left the organization. The others withdrew in operational or supporting functions, as, for instance, nursing or planning support. Nine other hierarchical positions in the organization were suppressed. Two of these position holders left the organization. These numbers indicate that, even in a more quantitative way, the lost leadership identity of dismantling hierarchy shows.

The cost of lost leadership identity is also a personal and emotional one. Even when leaders, for example, left the organization for a similar leadership role elsewhere, their identity was hurt. They struggled with the fact that they were unable to adapt in an organization that is widely recognized as proactive and future-oriented. "What are my options? Looking for another employer? And what if they also choose to work with self-managing teams," one leader pondered (M2).

How do we evaluate the risk of leader identity loss? On the one hand, losing part of the vertical leader identity is desirable, as the ambition is to have more shared leadership in the teams and self-leadership from the employees (Pearce & Manz, 2005). It was the desire of the organization's top to focus attention on the teams and less on the leaders during the organizational change. On the other hand, the loss of vertical leader identity can be a risk. Evidence shows that shared leadership in teams needs vertical leaders (Locke, 2003; Pearce, 2004; Pearce & Sims, 2002; Pearce et al., 2002) and that empowering leaders is especially important for leadership-sharing teams (Hill & Bartol, 2016; Magni & Maruping, 2013). The general manager expressed this concern: "One thing I do regret is that we did not engage our leaders earlier on in the process. Or maybe we should have used external coaches from the beginning and not have waited so long on the vertical leaders to change." Vertical leaders did not develop fast enough into a coaching role to follow the self-managing pace of the teams.

Conclusions and Discussion

Our results reveal that the decision to introduce DL and, more specifically, shared leadership in teams in a bureaucracy, had a dramatic impact on the identity of vertical leaders. Only a few vertical leaders came to terms with the change at identity level and developed what we call a “shared leader identity.” This is characterized by a motivation to coach, a self-authoring mindset, and a collaborative attitude. This identity helped the leaders to learn to coach and empower and answered the organizational need for empowering shared leadership.

The identity development process involved restructuring and protective identity work, triggered by the identity threat leaders’ appraised in the announcement of the organizational change (Petriglieri, 2011). The appraisal of the threat was conditioned by the strength of the initial leader identity, which we framed as “vertical leader identity,” the sense-breaking and sense-giving by the organization (Ashforth et al., 2008), and the overall identity management of the leaders. A majority of the leaders suffered leader identity loss. They abandoned leadership positions, and thus exited their leader identity and/or left the organization with a damaged leader identity.

Our research contributes to distributed and shared leadership theory, leadership development, and identity theory. First of all, not much is known about vertical leadership at identity level enabling more distributed and, specifically, shared leadership in teams. Our research suggests that a specific leader identity is needed. It is not only a question of leadership behavior or style, but also of a specific mindset and motivation. Here, our research supports the theory of Maurer and London (2015) that new concepts of leadership imply a role identity shift, a change in implicit leadership theory (Epitropaki et al., 2013) and motivation to lead (Chan & Drasgow, 2001; Kark & Van Dijk, 2007).

Second, we contribute to the “how” of shared leadership development. Some qualitative research about leader identity development has been undertaken (Andersson, 2012; Carroll & Levy, 2010; Maurer & London, 2015), but, to the best of our knowledge, not about the development of leader identity in a shared leadership context. Our research suggests that shared leader identity development in a bureaucracy asks

for sense-breaking of the leader identity and sense-giving in order to deal with the identity threat and conflict not only in a protective but also a restructuring way.

Third, we contribute to the body of knowledge on identity and identity work. Identity work has been examined in several forms: career transitions (e.g., promotion, training), professions (e.g., consultants, academics, rugby players), and organizational contexts (change, development). We refer to the reviews of Brown and Coupland (2015) and Horton and colleagues (2014). Current research explores a new context for identity work: managers that are expected to shift their role and behavior without status gain.

The conclusions of our research are to be understood within the specific context of this case. The organizational change was, at the same time, aggressive and supportive. This provoked a specific context for extensive identity work, as predicted by Ashforth and colleagues (2008). Further research is needed to test and validate our findings with regard to organizations in different sectors and with other change strategies, for example, less aggressive or limited to one part of an organization. Follow-up research will test our developed hypotheses by creating specific identity interventions and measuring their impact on the identity of the vertical leaders and on shared leadership in their teams.

Crafting a New Deal Between Leaders and Followers

Our results open perspectives for practice. They put identity work at the heart of leadership development during organizational change to enable more empowered followership. Although in the case that we examined, much effort was put in managing the change in a fair and supportive way (Caldwell et al., 2004), it was experienced as aggressive (Armenakis et al., 1993), led to severe identity threat, protective identity work, and finally leader identity loss. This loss was possibly not critical for the organization, as leadership was being shared with teams. On the other hand, it was unexpected, undesired, and considered a risk for the needed support of the followers on their path toward self-management. It is as if the

organization invested too much in activating followership by installing self-managing teams and neglected to make a new deal with its leaders and to settle the conflict on an identity level. For the general manager, a lesson learned of the process was to “involve leaders earlier on into defining new leadership.”

Our results can inspire organizations that want to implement shared leadership in an aggressive way to organize a formal leader “identity work space”, as defined by G. Petriglieri and Petriglieri (2010) as “an institution that provides a holding environment for identity work” (p. 44). Facilitated work spaces could help leaders to reflect, make sense, learn from experiments, and deal with emotions of identity loss (Carroll & Levy, 2010). Our research supports the statement of Day and colleagues (2009, p. 219) that “rather than trying to construct the perfect competency model as the sole input guiding the design of leader development, widening the instructional lens to influence the foundational processes, could lead to major advancements in the overarching goal of accelerating leader development.”

We expect more leadership identity growth (Kreiner & Sheep, 2009) to take place when the significant emotional labor of leaders in identity work is recognized (Hay, 2014), and leadership development is conceived as “intrapersonal innovation” (Maurer & London, 2015, p. 6), within a more interpretative and less functional technical discourse, as is still dominant in research and practice (Mabey, 2013). Work spaces also imply the notion of “voluntarily.” Too strong identity regulation limits agency, which is needed for the kind of positive leadership identity (Kreiner & Sheep, 2009) for which organizations are looking. Identity workspace does not only work short term but also benefits the continuous identity development of leaders, leading to the needed self-complexity (Campbell, Assanand, & Di Paula, 2003; Pilarska & Suchanska, 2015) in today’s organizations (Ashforth et al., 2008).

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4

From Followership to Shared Leadership: The Changing Role of the Patient in the Healthcare Team

Mark A. Clark and Martina Buljac-Samardžić

Carol is a 56-year-old woman,¹ with ongoing diabetes, who recently underwent treatment for breast cancer at a large urban hospital in Washington, DC (USA). Launched into the healthcare system after a self-exam revealed multiple cysts, Carol readily took direction from the medical staff, following where they led. After surgery, she joined a survivors' support group but hesitated to speak up when the members discussed their treatment. She found it fascinating to listen to others, like Nora, who she probably wouldn't have ever met if they hadn't been part of the group; they traveled in different socioeconomic circles. This type of difference didn't seem so much of a barrier, however, and Carol felt some comfort in hearing stories about how all of the survivors' lives had changed in the healing process.

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While patients are unquestionably part of the healthcare equation, their specific roles can and have been viewed in many ways. Patients can be recipients of healthcare, products of the healthcare process, consumers of healthcare, stakeholders in the system, or partners in the experience. While healthcare systems and providers have historically been the major determinant in prescribing this patient experience, changes in the healthcare environment have opened the door for a changing role with increased patient involvement and influence. Medical doctors such as Dave deBronkart and Hunter “Patch” Adams advocate for involving the patient in the healthcare journey and its associated decisions, with the latter stating, “You treat a disease, you win, you lose. You treat a person, I guarantee you’ll win” (Binder, 2013).

This chapter explores the changing role of patients in healthcare teams at the intersection of follower-centered leadership (e.g., Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, & Carsten, 2014) and shared leadership (e.g., Carson, Tesluk, & Marrone, 2007) approaches, offering individual and team-context factors that influence this role. The continued emergence of these theoretical perspectives coincides with a shift in healthcare delivery in many Western and other nations (e.g., Japan), which increasingly calls for proactivity of the patient in managing their medical needs (Thompson, 2007). We see the patient role as emerging from a traditional principal–agent relationship in which a patient (principal) is seen as the recipient of medical decisions and prescriptions made by the caregivers (agent) (Scott & Vick, 1999), toward a relationship between the patient and a team of caregivers, who share complementary knowledge, authority, and responsibility in choices about health services.

The patient role and optimal health outcomes may be similarly affected by attributes of the healthcare system, medical staff, and the patient him/herself, which together determine patient effectiveness as followers who are increasingly likely to share in the leadership of healthcare teams. The roles of a healthcare team include both followership and leadership, with varied members of the team embracing different roles at appropriate times. Good followership not only includes understanding where the team is heading, but also providing both support and clear feedback to other members about decisions and actions that influence the patient experience. This attention to process helps healthcare teams achieve

continual improvement, attuning to the environment (and its resources and challenges), member capabilities, and patient needs.

In this chapter we explore the factors and processes related to shared leadership and followership from the varied contexts of the existing research literature, applying lessons to the healthcare environment. First, we introduce the changing views about the composition of a healthcare team: who is included, and when. Next, we consider how the research perspectives of followership and shared leadership may apply to the roles enacted in these healthcare teams. We then briefly review factors in the team context (within and around the team, including organizational-level factors) and attributes of team members that influence the incidence and effectiveness of followership and shared leadership. We conclude this chapter by offering directions for future research and practice. Our perspective is informed by work with patients in multiple healthcare systems, represented by the vignettes in each chapter section that are drawn from a long-term project with an oncology treatment center.

What Is a Healthcare Team?

The initial diagnosis had been a blur. Carol's world got larger and more confusing in a matter of moments, and new people came into her life. Medical professionals mostly, she presumed, but she didn't always know. She had already gone from GP to specialist in those first weeks, then was passed from nurse to radiologist to surgeon to yet another set of nurses, and she wasn't always certain who was behind the lab coat in front of her. Her husband wasn't much help, between his work and own poor health, but luckily her daughter Sheila kept track for her, mostly by writing notes in an old sketchpad. Carol was grateful; while not everyone in her support group had even the basic level of resources that she had, all of them had access to other help from the hospital. Sheila also worked with the social worker on home-life adjustments and a finance counselor to track what was covered by insurance and what needed payment. The dietitian, Denise, had even arranged for a fitness instructor to lead weekly sessions to bring vigor back to treatment-worn bodies. Carol was continually amazed at how many people had an impact on her recovery and her life beyond.

Healthcare teams include a variety of actors, each of whom may move in and out of the picture over time and situations. Traditionally, a great portion of the research on teams and leadership in the healthcare arena keeps its eye on the core medical staff within a given organization—surgeons, other physicians, and nurses (e.g., Scott & Cares, 2005; Spooner, Keenan, & Card, 1997; Steinert, Goebel, & Rieger, 2006). From a patient's perspective, however, the journey through detection, diagnosis, treatment, recovery, and follow-up care includes a larger set of entities most significantly affecting him or her (Weaver, Feitosa, Salas, Seddon, & Vozenilek, 2013; Wyskiel, Weeks, & Marsteller, 2015). Conceptualizing these entities as part of the healthcare team, including the patient, non-medical informal caregivers (who may be family or friends), technical staff such as radiology technicians, patient advocates, and even healthcare system administration staff, represents a departure from the more traditional focus (Frosch, 2015; Greenfield et al., 2014). These team boundaries may be expanded further by including medical staff of related healthcare organizations (e.g., outpatient nurses, physiotherapist of homecare organizations), as the number of healthcare organizations that a patient encounters tends to increase with the complexity of the disease and age of the patient.

The move from a focus on traditional medical staff to an expanding healthcare team, like the increasingly proactive role of the patient, is a change that is predicated by larger societal trends. Medical advances, healthcare industry complexity, aging populations, resource limitations, increasing access to technology, and informed patients together provide challenges that fundamentally alter healthcare systems. The heights which medical science has reached escalates the need for specialization of medical practitioners (e.g., surgeons, technicians), necessitating the addition of these specialists to teams and increasing the likelihood of involving multiple healthcare organizations (O'Leary, Sehgal, Terrell, & Williams, 2012), along with their administrative support in areas such as finance and facility management. Medical systems are also increasingly cost-sensitive, paying special attention to process efficiencies that may help to reduce the use of their most expensive resources (Peikes, Chen, Schore, & Brown, 2009; Pronovost et al., 2006), opening the door to an augmented role for non-medical specialists and non-employees (e.g., informal caregivers, volunteers).

The need for multiple specialists on the healthcare team, beyond the increased number of technicians operating equipment for medical tests, is exacerbated by an aging population with growing likelihood of co- or multimorbidities, a set of two or more chronic disease states in a single patient (Boeckxstaens & De Graaf, 2011), which require multiple sets of medical professionals who may be distributed over facilities, time, and conditions. For instance, there may be a set of acute care specialists at one stage of treatment who transfer care to a step-down unit, then to outpatient professionals for recovery or palliative care. Lee and colleagues (2016) review a case of a patient with multiple morbidities, whose treatment was through a set of intersecting care units (characterized as a multiteam system, MTS), which had to coordinate their efforts to achieve patient outcomes.

This also has the effect of placing the patient at the center of a system of medical teams, with the accompanying necessity of coordinating how the various entities impinge upon the patient experience. Fortunately, patients and their informal caregivers also have access to technology serving to increase transparency of the medical system, tools to manage the engagement, and better quality information about their own medical condition and treatment options. This information may lead to increased knowledge efficacy, confidence in navigating the healthcare landscape, and engagement with medical entities such as members of the healthcare team. In this way, it can be seen that there are coordination tasks that can be managed by the patients themselves and their non-medical informal caregiver support network. Finally, the movement toward recognition of patient ability and right to own their healthcare experience is in keeping with evolving Western societal and organizational norms of individual empowerment and accompanying reduction in power differential between the insider and outsider of a given system or hierarchical level.

The resulting perspective allows, and perhaps demands, inclusion of the patient, non-medical informal caregivers (who may be family or friends), technical staff, patient advocates, and even administrative staff on the healthcare team, alongside physicians and other medical practitioners, albeit in different roles. Kanfer, Luciano, & Clark, 2015, p. 14526 state that:

To date, the strongest evidence for the value of teamwork in providing high quality hospital care derives from studies that demonstrate the benefits of

teamwork among frontline workers, including physicians, nurses, and other healthcare professionals. These activities serve to increase a common understanding of patient care, more frequent inter-professional communications and higher levels of coordination of care.

We echo the implicit call for increased attention to factors promoting good teamwork in healthcare, but advocate for expanding the view of who can provide valuable input and influence in the healthcare team, and who qualifies as a team member. Particularly, we believe it necessary to shape and support the patient experience by including their first-hand knowledge of their own condition. In this sense, we believe it to be important to consider the patient as a whole person, including all aspects of their experience, in the process of diagnosis, treatment, recovery, follow-up care, and readjustment to post-treatment life. To this end, we offer simple, functional definitions of a healthcare team and team member:

Healthcare team: The collection of entities that influence patient experience, whether inside or outside the formal healthcare system, within and across multiple units which attend to patient needs relating to health, well-being, and the ability to access health services.

Team member: A person who influences a patient's medical journey, with or without recognized medical knowledge or experience, with or without a formal position in the healthcare system, who is able to contribute to the patient's treatment, experience, well-being, awareness, and access to health services.

In line with these definitions, a healthcare team might consist not only of the traditional medical team of formal caregivers but also the patient and a number of informal caregivers who are not medical professionals. The patient's role on the team is critical, because he or she is able to provide knowledge of his or her own condition and experience with treatment. While some patients' questions and concerns could at times slow down or hinder the recovery process, their perspective is needed as they are the only one with a complete picture of the healthcare journey, interacting with all formal and informal caregivers. Informal caregivers are a

necessary part of the healthcare team in their role of providing physical and emotional support to the patient. Such caregivers, who may include the patient's partner, family member, or friend, may be present at consultations with formal medical caregivers and can thus be a secondary information assessor, a source of emotional support, and perhaps physically assist the patient in daily life tasks. In this way, non-medical informal caregivers are able to contribute to patient experience and well-being, and potentially have a voice in the medical decision-making in support of the patient, including at times of patient incapacity.

It is notable that while these team members may fill various roles, their influence on the treatment process can vary according to the patient's perspective. The contribution of particular team members may also be modified over time, as stages of a disease progress and patient conditions change. As with teams in many types of organizations, there is no requirement for members to be equal in terms of influence or any other particular standard. In the end, team members fulfill specific roles, with varying status and duties, which depend to some extent on one another, in service of the experience of the patient.

Leadership, Followership, and Team Roles

Carol increasingly looked forward to her survivor group meeting each week, and began to think of them as her new group of friends—the “#1 ladies” as they called themselves (even though there had been a few men attending the group from time to time). They bonded through their commonalities of survivorship and their appreciation of their differences—they came from different walks of life, various ethnic and geographic backgrounds, spanned socioeconomic classes, and enjoyed varying levels of health outside of their oncology diagnosis. She even established some real friendships outside of the group. She and Betsy, who lived near her neighborhood, had started walking together once a week. Betsy was one of the older members of the group and had lived in the area all her life. She had several grown children and grandchildren around, but still needed to speak with survivors who could understand her daily challenges.

The group had also started discussing readings, a type of book club based around health—physical, nutritional, and spiritual health—exercising their brains. It came easier to some, but everyone could participate. Denise, the dietitian, started the choice of books, but insisted that the true experts were within the group. So Nora, an active and proactive patient, started bringing the latest articles on treatment to the group sessions for discussion. From a family of African diplomats, Nora was well schooled and curious, confident that she would live a hale life beyond her 52 years, and was ceaselessly cheery.

As already discussed, healthcare teams include a variety of actors, some of whom will move in and out of the picture over time and situations, and each of whom will exert influence of varying intensity and effectiveness on the patient experience. Following the traditional definition of leadership as influence toward organizational goals, in the medical context this influence has often been considered to be unidirectional, from a hierarchical authority to a set of followers (cf. Frosch, 2015; Scott & Vick, 1999), such as, when a medical leader influences patient actions toward specific behaviors involved in, for example, treatment compliance. This tradition of hierarchical leadership may be seen as having a firm basis within the customary relationships in healthcare. One insider has likened the culture of medicine to that of maverick test pilots, where the leaders are high-flying expert surgeons who often resist input from others, or any restriction of their central role in patient treatment (Gawande, 2007). However, as the author points out, the advance of technology and complexity of medical procedures necessitates the spreading of the knowledge base of patient treatment across human and technological support systems.

Such a changing conception of leadership and how it fits into well-run healthcare organizations may be necessary to achieve coordinated healthcare outcomes for the patient, team, and system. This approach may consider leadership to be distributed and coordinated among members of a team, operating through a team process (e.g., DeChurch & Marks, 2006; Zaccaro, 2001) with the goal of coordinating action through an interdependent set of members and components. Increasingly, therefore, there is discussion of sharing this leadership influence with others on the medical team (e.g., Steinert et al., 2006), whether as prescriptive advice or a recognition of the reality of how medical teams function. There is also increased understanding of followership, and its impact on leadership,

through the attributes, behaviors, and social construction (e.g., Kean, Haycock-Stuart, Baggaley, & Carson, 2011; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014).

We believe that application of followership and shared leadership theories to healthcare contexts will increase our understanding of the shift in the role of healthcare team members, particularly the role of patients and their informal caregivers. Perspectives and models of shared leadership and empowering patients have developed relatively independently, but have commonalities that may engender a progressive or temporal process of shifting between roles of follower and leader at appropriate times. To successfully apply these theories and explore their intersection, we must be clear in our descriptions and careful not to blur the useful definition of shared leadership and followership constructs.

Theories on patient empowerment are based philosophically on a view of patients as human beings who have the right and ability to choose by and for themselves. Patient empowerment can be seen as “as a process of communication and education in which knowledge, values and power are shared.” Within this interactive process, power is “given by someone to somebody” (Aujoulat, d’Hoore, & Deccache, 2007, p. 15). This requires an intense relationship between healthcare providers and the patient and a shift in the representation of roles.

Shared Leadership and Followership

Shared leadership allows for a shifting distribution of influence from team members operating from multiple status levels without regard to formal roles (Pearce & Conger, 2003). Followership, on the other hand, is a set of roles, behaviors, and outcomes within a co-constructed leadership context (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). This co-construction could be seen as a form of influence; indeed, other scholars support this idea of followers challenging and co-creating with the titular leaders (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2013; Nye, 2002). Good followership, in this vein, not only includes understanding where the team is heading, but also provides support and clear feedback to other members about decisions and actions that influence the team goals (in our context of interest, the patient experience and health-related outcomes).

However, if we argue that followers also impart this type of influence, this argument may blur the useful definition of both the leadership and followership constructs. One way to resolve this is to define followership in terms of compliance behavior in the service of the leader's direction, which we believe is in keeping with the review of Uhl-Bien and colleagues (2014) that allows for a variation of follower types and behaviors, as long as they are considered in relation to the overt leadership structure. Thus, any influence that a follower has on other members crosses the line to shared leadership. Because the same person, or the roles that people play, may shift over time and situations, this demarcation is consistent with both shared leadership and followership definitions.

Shared Leadership and Followership in the Healthcare Context

Applying these models to healthcare contexts, it may be that the prescribed role of the patient is generally seen as a particular point on a continuum. On one end, the patient may be seen as a relatively passive follower, a consumer of medical treatment, or perhaps even a product, with the medical team members operating in a paternalistic role. On the other end of the continuum, the patient shares leadership with the medical team, interacting with potentially differential resources (e.g., perspectives and information) to exude some level of influence of the patient experience. However, as noted at the beginning of this chapter, it is likely that patients, like other healthcare team members, actually shift between followership and shared leadership over time and situations.

It is evident that the traditional model of patient as consumer or product of the medical treatment could be reexamined in terms of potential paths moving between followership and shared leadership, such as through modifying behaviors and expected scripts in relationship to traditional leaders. This relationship and progression to shared leadership roles is moderated at different levels; the extent of opportunity built within the system (e.g., shared purpose of the patient and the healthcare system, mechanisms of social support and voice such as educational programs, time, and continuity); behavior (e.g. patient centeredness,

acknowledgment, relatedness, reinforcing feedback versus resistance); and perception (i.e., implicit beliefs, incremental versus entity perspective) of healthcare providers and those of the patient (i.e., beliefs about mindsets of healthcare actors, attitude).

So, what benefit can be gained through considering patient roles as both followership and shared leadership? Followership is important in that it includes stakeholder perspective and also represents one important factor of what makes a leader—having someone to be led. This is particularly important as patients increase their agency through greater access to pertinent medical information, expanding their ability to exercise choice in their options. Because patients may be closer to the process, in that they are living through the treatment process and thus are a vital source of feedback as to treatment efficacy, including their input in medical decisions may help healthcare teams achieve continual improvement by attuning the environment (and its resources and challenges) and member capabilities to patient needs (Peikes et al., 2009).

Followership Toward Shared Leadership

Followership can be understood through “follower-focused” or “follower-centric” perspectives (Kean et al., 2011). The former explores how following is operationalized and socially constructed by followers, exploring the variation in such behaviors and types (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Follower-focused approaches emphasize understanding the ways in which followers collectively construct leadership. Generally, the literature adopts a follower-centric approach by investigating followers’ perceptions of their leaders, or asking leaders for their perceptions of followers. However, a focus on the followers can be useful in understanding patient roles on healthcare teams. From this perspective, followers can be said to enact distinctive roles in relation to their leader and team: passivity (rule following), activity (participating, but deferring to the leader’s preferences or direction), and proactive engagement (critically engaging, speaking up) (Carsten, Uhl-Bien, West, Patera, & McGregor, 2010). This last role, proactivity, includes the sharing of critical information, which may potentially be very important with regard to patients gaining influence

on the healthcare team, such as providing critical information about their own health or understanding of treatment. Speaking up in this proactive way allows this type of follower to challenge and actually co-create with their leader (Carsten & Uhl-Bien, 2013).

This step from generally active to proactive follower may represent a shift to shared leadership, if the proactive follower's input is influential in the team's direction. Shared leadership at its heart is lateral influence among peers (Cox, Pearce, & Perry, 2003) that emerges as a consequence of internal factors (shared purpose, social support, and voice) and external coaching (Carson et al., 2007). This dynamic process of sharing leadership influence when and where it is needed is generally considered to improve performance toward team goals by encouraging collaboration and commitment (Ensley, Pearson, & Pearce, 2003). Viewed in this way, it seems apparent that the patient and perhaps his/her informal caregivers have a valuable perspective that would potentially add to the set of positive outcomes for a healthcare team, while a failure to include patients could potentially cause healthcare teams to fall short of their potential, especially with regard to aspects of patient care that are more likely to be influenced by patient self-knowledge.

For example, a patient with a chronic disease such as diabetes may, at initial diagnosis, be unfamiliar with the disease state and treatment options, which influence the patient to be more of a follower, with the medical professionals as influential team leaders. After time and experience with the disease, treatment, and changes in lifestyle, including idiosyncratic knowledge of what works in his or her own case, the patient may adopt a more proactive stance, increasingly influencing other healthcare team members. As can be seen, in the experience of a patient in a chronic, relatively stable disease with its associated treatment process, the patient may progress from followership to shared leadership.

There are also opportunities for patients to share leadership in more acute cases, especially early in the diagnosis and when there are well-established treatment options. One such example could include a relatively treatable form of cancer such as breast cancer, where a patient may move quickly to influence the course of treatment taken by the medical professionals, while also leading informal caregivers in their manner of

support. Depending on the progression of the cancer, it is also possible for the patient to revert to more of a follower role at times, such as when treatment causes physical and mental exhaustion or when the condition becomes more acute.

Team Context and Patient Factors

One aspect about her oncology survivor support group that Carol really liked was that each of the members, she believed, could bring her whole self to the group. Carol's "whole self" included not only her status as a survivor and as a patient but also her roles as wife, mother, church member, and member of the community. In group sessions, they could talk about all of those things. It actually helped, she supposed, to have the continual contact with the medical staff, as she was almost surprised to feel so comfortable with coming to the hospital and navigating the system. Even her other appointments were easier now. While sometimes the appointment process for her ongoing diabetes treatment, her oncology follow-up, not to mention her general health exams, could be confusing, she found that her time at the support group made it all a bit easier. She learned from the other ladies, and even from their group readings, at least enough to ask better questions.

There has been increasing interest in human process variables in healthcare, driven by the recognition that factors deriving from the context and from the patient him/herself have a real influence on healthcare coordination, patient well-being, fiscal outcomes, and related performance (Epstein, 2014; Manser, 2009; Peikes et al., 2009; Pronovost et al., 2006). This burgeoning appreciation for such factors comes at a critical junction in healthcare, where increasing complexity of healthcare systems, aging populations, resource limitations, technological advances, and informed patients all provide challenges that compel innovation in healthcare management approaches. Understanding a little about these factors, in an ecological system across people, teams, and organizations (Street, 2003), can provide a basis for configuring their operation in particular settings, prescribing a range of practical roles for patients on the healthcare team. In the section "[Team-Context Factors](#)" and in Fig. 4.1, we discuss factors

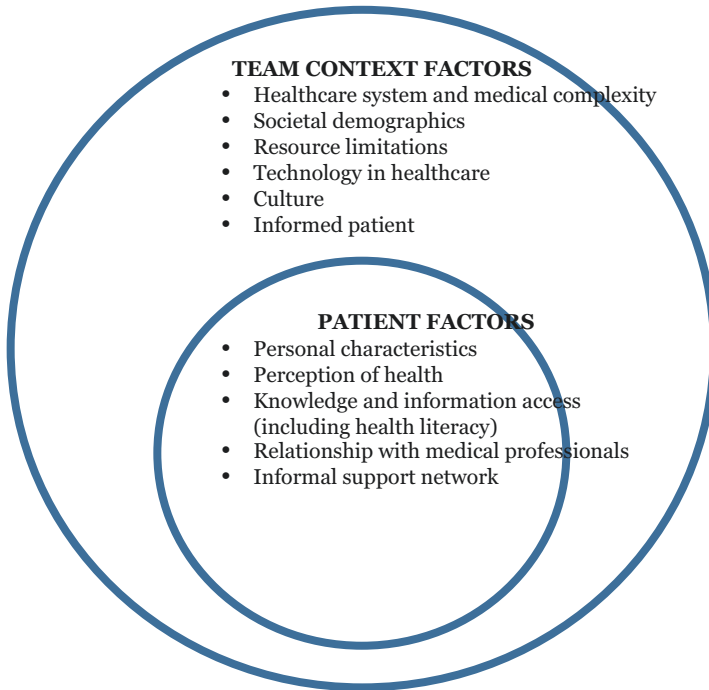


Fig. 4.1 Factors influencing patient role on the healthcare team

in the team context—around and within teams—and at the patient level that influence the role of the patient on the healthcare team, as a follower or in sharing leadership.

Team-Context Factors

Healthcare System and Medical Complexity Medical advances have created opportunities for patients that are both encouraging and complex, and that relate to an aging population with increased need for healthcare. The mortality of some diseases has fallen sharply, such as a 40% drop in deaths from heart attacks and strokes in the UK over the most recent ten-year period, an acceleration of a longer trend (Spencer, 2016). There are healthcare advances in areas such

as targeted antibodies, medical pharmaceuticals, gene therapy, and numerous other medical fields (Gottlieb, 2015); while serving to keep patients alive, this also may mean patients require extended periods of treatment. This extension of treatment and diminishing mortality rate also increases the likelihood of multimorbidity in patients (Koné Pefoyo et al., 2015), while the multiple advances themselves further decrease the likelihood of a medical practitioner being acquainted with developments outside (or even sometimes within) his or her own limited specialty. Together, these often lead to a patient being treated across several separate specialists or medical units, with potential for them to serve as a locus of coordination (Lee et al., 2016).

Societal Demographics Our global societies, particularly but not confined to the Western world, have increasing life expectancy, education, relative wealth, and access to healthcare services (Kena et al., 2016; United Nations, 2015). The medical advances outlined are, naturally, associated with an increase in life expectancy and extended healthy life. This expectancy is part of a general worldwide aging population trend, where both a greater number and proportion of the population are older than in the past. Further, this trend includes a number of the “oldest-old” (i.e., people aged 80 years or older) that is increasing at a rate greater even than the overall trend (United Nations, 2015). This results in more people in need of medical care and connected to healthcare systems. At the same time, societal education levels have generally increased, including country ranges of up to 60% post-secondary degrees in Europe and the Americas (UNESCO, 2016). An educated populace, paired with the increased access to information available in our world, creates both opportunities for and threats to established healthcare practice (Neuberger, 2000; Stokken, 2009).

Resource Limitations The World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that the world will be 12.9 million healthcare workers short by 2035, due to factors such as an aging workforce that is challenging to replace and retain (Campbell et al., 2013). The issues discussed—an aging population and workforce, medical complexity, medical possibilities, and multimorbidity—are among the many factors which converge to limit the

availability of financial, human, and other resources within a healthcare system. Financial resources are, by nature, finite and must be distributed, to some degree, among the increased needs of a growing patient population with multiple disease states. Such resources are used to build and operate facilities, supply medical equipment, pharmaceuticals, and more mundane paraphernalia, as well as to employ the large contingent of medical professionals and support staff that serve patient needs. Beyond the financial influence on staffing, there is also the availability of talent as a limited resource. Whether due to the number of persons in a given geographic area, their proclivity for the prerequisite academic study, or their skill in applying their knowledge, there are typically fewer medical staffers than a patient population could ideally utilize. Those professionals in the system must therefore have their time budgeted and schedules carefully planned to minimize financial impact.

Technology in Healthcare The use of technology impacts multiple points throughout the healthcare system. Increasing sophistication of medical devices abounds, such as electronic health records, e-prescribing, decision support systems, electronic management of chronic disease, bar coding of drugs and biological products, robotic surgical arms for precise pediatric surgery, tailored 3-D printing of replacement body parts, and more. Employing such technology in healthcare has been shown to be beneficial in terms of both cost efficiency and process effectiveness (Anderson, 2007). Technology that moves information is pervasive in healthcare. Increased access and speed of sharing information enables healthcare systems to more easily track patient data in real time as well as to aggregate patient trends. Patients themselves use information technology to access medical information, whether their own specific case notes or more generally acquiring knowledge about their disease and navigating the healthcare system.

Culture Such factors may influence a changing sense of the normative practices accepted in healthcare, whether by medical professionals and support staff or by the patients themselves. As a contextual factor, culture can be a powerful guiding force that outlines key values while prescribing acceptable actions and behaviors. This influence can effect expectations

of who is consulted on issues of medical treatment options, how closely follow-up care must be monitored, and related issues. Culture can vary from organization to organization, as well as from unit to unit within a single organization—such as when hospitals adopt differing norms and practices within departments—and also at societal or national levels. One such example that could affect the patient role on a healthcare team would be the cultural value of power difference, the degree to which status distance is accepted, as popularized by Hofstede (2001). Cultures which expect a high power distance between medical professionals and others may have a more difficult time accepting shared leadership of patients. A further example affecting the patient's role within healthcare is the feeling (by healthcare workers and patients) that it is safe to speak up and voice concerns. Hesitancy to speak up may be strongly influenced by beliefs about team member similarity and status (Goldberg, Clark, & Henley, 2011), and is seen as an important factor with regard to communication errors and safety issues (Okuyama, Wagner, Bijnen, 2014).

Informed Patient These factors create opportunities for patients to become informed about the healthcare system, including about their own medical condition and associated care options. Patients who are thus informed may be more capable, and more likely, to assert themselves. However, both the willingness to become informed and the act of stepping up to share leadership in the healthcare team vary with the particular patient. We believe, based on current research and our own experience with patient populations, that the factors that influence the patient's role can be understood and ultimately influenced, as detailed in the section “[Patient Factors](#).”

Patient Factors

There is a growing body of research that considers factors affecting the role of the patient in healthcare contexts (e.g., Street, Gordon, Ward, Krupat, Kravitz, 2005), which can, in turn, be bolstered by a larger collection of work in the social sciences that can offer insights in areas of leadership, teamwork, design thinking, and process factors related to coordination

(Weaver, Dy, & Rosen, 2014). Through this lens, we can learn about factors specific to patients and their roles, gaining insight into moderators of patient engagement with their healthcare team through patient personal characteristics, knowledge and information access, and relationship with the medical team members. These factors, in turn, contribute to the greater context of teams and organizations, crossing levels to build our understanding of effective teams, organizations, and healthcare systems.

Personal Characteristics There is some evidence that personal characteristics associated with lower patient participation in healthcare discussions include patient minority ethnic status, lower age, lower educational level, and lower socioeconomic or societal status (Cegala, 2011; Longtin et al., 2010; Street et al., 2005). However, these studies have not determined whether a match between the patient and members of the healthcare team influences participation; for example, whether it matters if both the physician and the patient were of similar ethnicity. Neither was gender found to be predictive of participation on its own, although there was some suggestion of more likelihood of female physicians engaging in communication practices which encouraged patient participation. There is growing recognition that the social-psychological aspects of the interaction between the patient and medical teams impact on the overall quality of care (Schillinger, Bindman, Wang, Stewart, Piette, 2004). There is also evidence for personal variation in the patient's preferred involvement in decisions about their medical treatment (Degner & Sloan, 1992), regardless of other personal characteristics. For future research and field practice, it may also be useful to identify and test a specific set of personality attributes associated with participation, such as assertiveness, extroversion, cognitive flexibility, and agreeableness, among others.

Perception of Health The relationship between perceived health and health outcomes has also been shown to make a difference to the patient experience in the healthcare process (Idler & Benyamini, 1997). In addition to general perceptions of health, many related factors influence health outcomes, such as mobility, self-care ability, pain and discomfort, anxiety and depression, as well as brain function, including memory, thought, and level of attention. These characteristics may

be mediated through other patient factors, such as active health management, ability to engage healthcare workers, and skill in navigating through the healthcare system.

Knowledge and Information Access, Including Health Literacy There are a number of studies reporting that patient participation in healthcare, such as through discussions and for decisions, is influenced by the access of the patient to appropriate knowledge resources (e.g., Davis, Jacklin, Sevdalis, & Vincent, 2007; Fraenkel & McGraw, 2007). One manner of representing this knowledge is through the concept of “health literacy.” Defined as “the cognitive and social skills which determine the motivation and ability of individuals to gain access to, understand and use information in ways which promote and maintain good health” (World Health Organization, 1998, p. 10), it is seen as an important factor influencing patient participation. Osborne, Batterham, Elsworth, Hawkins, and Buchbinder (2013) summarized a series of studies demonstrating that low health literacy among people with chronic disease states is associated with increased mortality, hospitalization, lower use of preventive healthcare services, poor adherence to prescribed medications, difficulty communicating with health professionals, and poorer knowledge about disease processes and self-management skills.

Thus, health literacy includes the capability of the patient to understand, engage with, and use health information and health services. This includes sufficient information to manage health, actively managing health, social support for health, appraisal of health information, navigating the healthcare system, the ability to find good health information, and understanding health information well enough to know what to do. This information includes not only knowledge of the disease state but also information about members of the medical team and their preferences, as well as specific knowledge of operational steps (Davis et al., 2007). Other significant factors have included the time available and knowledge of patient rights in the healthcare context (Cegala, 2011; Fraenkel & McGraw, 2007). Overall, it is suggested that patients are more likely to be involved, or accepted for involvement, on the basis of their literacy in the content and procedure of medical matters.

Relationship with Medical Team Members and Allied Professionals Several studies have reinforced the notion that patients will have a greater likelihood of participating in treatment discussions if they have a good relationship with the medical professionals on their team and are able to communicate effectively (e.g., Davis et al., 2007; Street, Gordon, & Haidet, 2007; Street et al., 2005). It should be noted that these studies tend to uphold the perspective of the physician or medical team. In other words, if the medical professional believes that he or she has a good relationship with the patient, for instance, because the patient is pleasant, non-contentious, and educated (Street et al., 2007), the professional will encourage involvement of the patient in treatment and related discussions. This and similar evidence (e.g., Cegala, 2011; Longtin et al., 2010; Street et al., 2005) also suggest that the communication style and preferences of the medical professional have a strong influence on whether they encourage or allow patient participation. The implicit beliefs about the patient—whether the medical staff believe the patient to be capable of growth versus simply having limited capacity for understanding (Dweck, Chiu, & Hong, 1995)—can therefore influence factors such as the amount of time and knowledge shared with the patient, and thus affect the likelihood of patient participation, whether as follower or shared leader. This phenomenon may also manifest through interactions with allied professionals in the medical setting, such as financial agents and social workers, who support the patient experience and enact a variable level of knowledge and process sharing with the patient. Similarly, patients' perceptions of the attitudes of the formal caregiver's attitude (beliefs, attitude, knowledge about patient involvement, encouragement for patient participation, appreciation of the patient's responsibility/rights to play an active role in decision-making) may be related to their willingness to share leadership or otherwise be involved in healthcare team decisions.

Informal Support Network A patient will often rely on others outside of the formal healthcare setting to support their experience. These others may be family members, friends, community allies through a church or support group, or others who provide assistance and succor. As with roles of other healthcare team members, the structure and operation of

informal caregiver network may change over time as patient needs and desires emerge and evolve.

The contextual and individual factors outlined, while generally supported by extant research, do not comprise a definitive and exhaustive set of influences on patient involvement in healthcare teams and processes. Further research is needed to understand how such factors work, separately or together over time, to impact not only participation but also outcomes for patient well-being and healthcare system viability.

Conclusion and Directions

Over time, Carol discovered that working toward a healthy experience for herself required not only a more active approach to using the healthcare system resources, but also realizing that she was more capable than she expected in her ability to organize and understand her conditions and the treatment options available. As she engaged more with her own healthcare experience, she found that medical staff members were more likely to help her with more valuable information about her treatment, and that her own family and friends could use her increased knowledge to better support her. By asserting herself as a capable member of the healthcare team, Carol improved her own patient experience.

Allowing patients to have a voice on their healthcare team—letting them create their preferred path between followership and shared leadership—is a needed and valuable response to changes in the medical field, including information access, resource availability, and cultural expectations across the many layers of our society and its institutions. A vitalization of follower's roles can lead to multiple viable paths, each embodying shared leadership in different ways. In this chapter we explored and illustrated some aspects of the patient role in healthcare teams, with the purpose of extending our understanding of followership and shared leadership to provide the insight needed to empower healthcare actors to best work together for optimal outcomes at the patient, team, and organizational levels.

Our discussion has included factors that influence the role of the patient with and within the healthcare team, relating to team composition, followership, shared leadership, team context, and the patient him or herself. Patient participation depends on a “complex interplay of personal, physician, and contextual factors” (Street et al., 2005, p. 961), and at this point it is not entirely clear which factors are most important for particular patient types, settings, and situations. Some situation-specific factors have been supported as strong predictors of patient participation, such as the medical setting and the physician’s communication style. Similarly, some specific patient characteristics are associated with more active participation in healthcare teams, such as a higher level of education and status in a majority ethnic group. Further research is needed.

By outlining the changing role of patients as they follow and lead within healthcare teams, we also must call for continued and evolving research approaches to investigate the phenomenon. Importantly, further research must go beyond medical staff and other healthcare professionals to include direct measures and perceptions of patients and their support network. Researchers should investigate the individual-level factors of a patient which influence their willingness and ability to share leadership and to be good followers. Additionally, increased research attention should be given to the multiple context levels—dyadic relationships, teams, departments, institutions, and networks—that surround the patient and shape their experience.

Orienting toward these outcomes, and understanding how the roles can build toward them, is critical for sustaining the healthcare system. Patients must gain perceptible benefit from their increased investment when engaging the healthcare system. Healthcare teams, including medical staff, need to discern how their evolving role as facilitators and perhaps as health educators allow them to fulfill their professional ethics without overly complicating or interfering with the best quality of healthcare delivery. Organizations must realize practical and financial benchmarks in order to continue their operations. Together, these environmental features will craft the role and interaction of the patient with the medical team. By exploring these theories, stories, and evidence, we hope to contribute to the paradigm shift needed to achieve an appropriate level of followership and shared leadership in healthcare, moving

from traditional approaches that socialize healthcare providers as hierarchical superiors (Anderson & Funnell, 2010), while providing insight into the effects of distributed leadership (DL) at multiple organizational levels (Dinh et al., 2014), with the ultimate goal of improving patient well-being within a sustainable healthcare system.

Note

1. Pseudonyms are used for the patients and caregivers mentioned in this chapter; they were voluntary participants in a confidential interview-based study. Participant release forms are in possession of the first author.

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5

Investigating Team Performance in Generation Y in Delhi (India)

Shalini Sahni

Introduction

Effective leadership and leadership style is a pivotal issue in organizations, and the extant literature available on leadership (O'Toole, 1999; O'Toole, Galbraith, & Lawler, 2003; Pearce, 2004) points towards the changing relationship between the leader and the followers, questioning vertical leadership in teams. Although leadership is considered as an individual trait, scholars have challenged the phenomenon of individual leaders (Yukl, 2002) and proposed the concept of shared leadership within the group.¹ The idea of shared leadership is not new and was first proposed by Follett (1924), who emphasized that individuals should not necessarily follow a formal leader, but rather should follow the individual with most requisite knowledge of the particular situation. His idea was largely ignored, but it was again articulated by Gibb et al. in 1954. Overlooked initially, the notion has started gaining attention in recent

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years (Pearce & Conger, 2002) so that today many scholars have gradually begun to accept that leadership does not emerge from just a single individual (Burns, 1978; Vroom & Yetton, 1973). Shared leadership emerges when individuals in a team other than the team leader exert influence on team members to accomplish goals. This implies that other team members can also be trusted to handle responsibility. Greenleaf (1977) named this concept “servant leadership,” which involves the understanding of team mates and their desires; his work was further taken up by Burns (1978) and Bass (1985) in developing the concept of transformational leadership. The work of these scholars has highlighted the importance of followers in a group, and this emerging view of leadership is now known as shared (Pearce & Conger, 2002) or distributed leadership (DL; Gronn, 2005). These developments have forced the individual to think again about traditional styles of leadership as Generation Y is replacing the baby boomers. As the current workforce in organizations is diverse in terms of age and gender, organizations do need to understand and recognize differences between generations (Arsenault, 2004). Such differences involve variance in attitude, behaviors and work-related values (Salahuddin, 2010).

The present workforce more often faces problems related to leadership because of age and gender diversity, issues which were not there previously. Age diversity is considered the more important, as the workforce now comprises four generations (Kyles, 2005), Generation Y being the youngest. Differences of opinion are expected due to huge age gaps, and organizations need to understand those differences (Arsenault, 2004; Sujansky, 2004) and accordingly need to identify the preferred leadership style required by Generation Y. Eisner (2005) further elaborates on the need of the right kind of environment for the growth of individuals.

In particular, many questions remained unanswered while addressing issues related to shared leadership. However, researchers have consistently mentioned that shared team leadership is significantly and positively related to team functioning and that organizational structure is an important variable affecting team performance. The shift from a vertical structure to a flat structure, from autocratic to social leaders brings in questions about leadership roles and styles. So, what is it that encourages

team members to perform? What has made this shift happen? Does the answer lie in the behavior or attitude of the younger generation? A long-standing approach to such questions has focused on leaders, their leadership styles, personality, and team dynamics. With the decrease in the size of the pyramid and the pervasive existence of self-managing teams, there is now an emphasis on self-emerging leaders within teams. This further suggests that there is an evolutionary shift from the traditional method of leadership to shared leadership, where leadership and power is shared among team members (Gibb, 1954; Katz & Kahn, 1978). Scholars also acknowledge that as organizations are progressively moving toward global growth, we can no longer follow the control-based model or top-down leadership approach. Hence, this study evaluates the power of the shared leadership model in Generation Y as a predictor of performance within the team. The study is inclined toward Generation Y or “millennials,” who may have been formally appointed as team leaders or are self-emerging team leaders and who engage in citizenship, collaboration, conflicts, team dynamics, and so on. To extend the credibility of the current study, data is collected from individuals born between 1980 and 1994. The teams under study are drawn from different organizations in Delhi, and situational variables are controlled through age and city.

In this regard, this study is built upon the work of Pearce, Yoo, and Alavi (2004), who found shared leadership to be a more useful predictor of team outcomes than vertical leadership—in change management and virtual teams, respectively. This chapter attempts to extend the theoretical work on shared leadership at the organizational level of analysis by providing a rationale for what makes Generation Y work and perform better as teams; this field-based study adds to the sparse empirical evidence on the topic. The first section of this chapter will explore a few insights into the study of shared leadership in Generation Y teams, followed by a section on the hypothesis development suggesting that “better shared leadership leads to increase team performance in Generation Y.” The study also aims to identify the antecedents for shared leadership in successful teams which would have implications for managers. The last section will summarize the results and the chapter concludes with a discussion of what matters most to Generation Y; the results reveal a fascinating insight into their behavior as compared with that of Generation X.

Generation Y and Shared Leadership

Generation Y is described as the most recent generation to enter the labor force. Generation Y is generally denotes individuals whose birth years fall between 1980 and 1994 (McCrindle, 2006). Usually, different birth dates are used to define different generations and each varies in terms of its form, attitudes, and behaviors. Baby boomers and millennials have their own preferred ways of managing and leading a team, while the latter's approach of shared leadership supports the inclusive, self-confident, and generational characteristics of Generation Y, who typically value work-life balance, flexibility, and diversity of experiences. Generation Y like to get involved, innovate, and contribute, and many of these attributes are associated with a shared leadership model. Therefore, it is significant to find out what makes Generation Y different from other generational cohorts in terms of organizational needs and how this new generation can be best managed. Although past research has explored the organizational needs of Generation Y in terms of their behavior toward different leadership styles, questions regarding their preference of leadership style and several measurement issues of shared leadership remain unaddressed. Therefore, the following research questions guide the current study:

1. Is shared leadership the preferred style of leadership in Generation Y?
2. Which attributes of shared leadership lead to better performance in Generation Y?

It is unfair to say that studies have not been conducted in this area but most of the research related to Generation Y is available for developed economies and cannot be implemented for developing economies such as India. A global statistical overview of generations reports that by 2020 India will have the world's youngest working population, with one third of the workforce thirty years of age or below. India is at inflection point, with a population of 1.2 billion, of which 0.8 billion people are working. By 2026, almost 64.8% of India's population will be working and their ages will range from fifteen to sixty-four years.² This clearly indicates demographic shift and each generation is bound to bring distinct sets of values and perceptions to the workplace. Generation Y have already made their presence felt in organizations and this is going to get stron-

ger with each passing year. Members of Generation Y are going to be in abundance, sending out waves of business and societal transformations, and so the greater challenge is to meet the changes in their attitudes. They are different from other generations and understanding what distinguishes Generation Y is important for developing current and future leaders (Arsenault, 2004). Therefore, managers need to mend their ways to lead Generation Y to engage, retain and perform (Salahuddin, 2010); hence, leadership becomes a critical issue which needs to be addressed in organizations. Generation Y entered the workforce almost five years ago and their existence has become stronger and its impact felt in all sectors. However, it is difficult to generalize Generation Y characteristics across the globe as the influencing factors that nurture these characteristics are crucial to deciphering the attitudes and behaviors that help employees perform better.

Hypothesis Development and Measures

Advancement in shared team leadership theory is studied through Pearce and Sims' (2000) model, which depicts task, group, and environmental characteristics as the three main antecedents of shared leadership affecting team performance. Other available models (Perry, Pearce, & Sims, 1999) address contextual functions such as new product development (Cox, Pearce, & Perry, 2003) and top management teams (Ensley, Pearson, & Pearce, 2003). In the past, scholars and organizations often relied on "traditional" leadership models when discussing the role of team leadership (Burke et al., 2006). Scholars agree that a leader needs to comprehend the rationale through which responsibilities are distributed to achieve organizational goals. As Zaccaro, Heinen, and Shuffler (2009: 84) note, traditional leadership models tend "not to make the distinction between *Leader-Subordinate* interactions and *Leader-Team* interactions." But as the number of millennials is growing in organizations, Generation Y does not accept traditional leadership roles and rather believes in shared or distributed leadership. There are significant gaps between various team members and processes which need to be understood (Zaccaro, Rittman, & Marks, 2002) from the viewpoint of millennials. Bales (1958) and Bales & Slater (1955) believed that leadership is often distributed within

a team. Manz & Sims (1984) further confirm that high-performing groups do not have formal leadership structures and leadership within such teams is distributed. Thus, this research is conducted with the purpose of exploring and identifying the factors that influence Generation Y performance, particularly at the workplace, due to shared leadership. Hence, the study attempts to identify the dimensions for shared leadership in Generation Y and the proposed hypotheses provide some specific directions for this research.

The current study is an extension to the old models and tries to explore leadership dimensions that are of importance to Generation Y. The dimensions considered for the study are potential correlates (Chatman & Flynn, 2001), empowerment (Kirkman, Rosen, Tesluk, & Gibson, 2004), self-management (Campion, Medsker, & Higgs, 1993), climate for initiative (Baer & Frese, 2003), ability (Edmondson, 1999; Faraj & Sproull, 2000), and interdependence (Van Der Vegt, Emans, & Van De Vliert, 1999) and subjective performance with respect to Generation Y. In this relationship, shared leadership is taken as an independent variable and performance as a dependent variable. Antecedents of shared leadership have been selected from the literature and the study attempts to identify the common dimensions for shared leadership in Generation Y. The following hypotheses provide specific directions to this research.

H1: Potential correlates, empowerment, self-management, climate for initiative, ability, and interdependence are optimal extrapolative predictors of shared leadership.

The rationale behind this study is that in traditional leadership there is one leader who facilitates the team members and takes full responsibility for team performance, but when the followers also act as leaders they tend to participate in all the functions and share the responsibility for failure and success. This phenomenon of sharing accountability and responsibility improves team performance and this has also found support in the literature (Pearce & Sims, 2002) but there are a few scholars who have not supported this argument (Neubert, 1999). Although the evidence for this hypothesis is sparse, we tend to test the same thing. This is tested in Generation Y, who like to self-emerge as leaders within a team (Simon, 1981). As it is projected that by 2020 India will have the highest

percentage of employable workforce in the world, with each Indian town emerging as a talent center, India will be a source of 500 million trained workforce by that point. This justifies the need for studying Generation Y and their ideas about leadership. It seeks to determine whether more organizations should consider adopting a shared leadership model which would solve the problem of attrition in Gen Y, who strive for success and look forward to develop new skills and embrace new challenge. This might also result in enhanced team performance.

Going further, the second hypothesis focuses on leadership processes within a team and describes how team leadership can arise from the aforementioned dimensions. Shared leadership is significantly related to self-ratings of effectiveness (Avolio, Jung, Murry, & Sivasbramaniam, 1996). Pearce & Sims (2002) also found shared leadership to be a more useful predictor than vertical leadership of manager, customer, and team self-ratings of effectiveness. Indian organizations are facing a huge problem of attrition, with millennials who are more aware, very focused, and seek meaningful jobs and learning opportunities in the workplace (Anne Marie McEwan, 2009). This is creating unrest among employers as they invest huge time and money to retain these young people by promoting qualities and benefits that are supposed to be attractive to Generation Y, such as flexible work schedules, telecommuting, full tuition reimbursement, and online mentoring tools (Armour & Gen, 2005). Therefore, there is no reason why organizations should not try to adopt a shared leadership model which will translate into performance. So, a second hypothesis is proposed.

H2: The nature and effectiveness of the shared leadership model in an organization would lead to increased performance in Generation Y.

Measures

Shared Leadership

Shared leadership is measured using six constructs: potential correlates of team cooperation, self-management, ability of team members, empowerment, climate for self-initiative, and interdependence. Potential correlates of team cooperation are on a four-item scale which measures

cooperation, harmony, information sharing, and sacrificing self-interest for the team. Team empowerment is a seven-item construct and measures whether the task given to members is worthwhile, meaningful, and has significant impact (Kirkman & Rosen, 1997). It also measures whether employees are empowered to make their own choices and do things in their way, as there is always a possibility that a team has a strong leader and members exhibit low shared leadership. Self-managing teams have a potential to set and monitor their own goals but such designs may or may not influence shared leadership as team environment and external coaching varies within the team (Wageman, 2001). Here it has been reckoned through a three-item scale and measures whether employees are responsible for determining the methods, procedures, and work-related decisions. Climate is a six-item scale and measures climate for initiative within the organization. It refers to “documented and undocumented work practices and procedures which support a proactive, self-starting, and persistent approach towards work” (Baer & Frese, 2003, p. 48). Climate for initiative relates to shared team leadership and addresses how individuals take charge when something goes wrong or is agreed. The interdependency within teams is critical for shared leadership as well as team performance (Kozlowski & Bell, 2003). A high level of interdependence within a team increases the chance for shared team leadership to be developed (Pearce & Sims, 2000). In the current study, task interdependence has been measured on a five-item scale and predicts whether team members’ performance depends on other resources or not. It is measured through statements such as “My own performance depends on receiving information and advice from other employees” and “My job performance is strongly affected by other employees’ job performance.”

Team Performance

It is believed that when teams possess task competence they should be able to achieve leadership functions (Pearce & Conger, 2003) and greater performance. Task competence is measured on a four-item scale in the current study and evaluates whether an employee has specific knowledge and skills. The dependent variable is measured using the performance

outcomes along two dimensions: attitudinal and performance outcomes. Subjective performance is measured through quality of output, increase or decrease of output, and efficiency of a team's output, while attitudinal outcomes are measured through satisfaction and happiness of team members.

Research Framework

A descriptive research design has been used to conduct the present study and convenience sampling is used to collect the data through the survey instrument from individuals born between 1980 and 1994. The individuals under study are drawn from different organizations in Delhi and situational variables are controlled through age and city. To conduct the study, 250 questionnaires were distributed and 163 completed ones were returned. Of the 163 received questionnaires, 14 cases were removed from the survey sheet due to inappropriateness, thereby yielding a response rate of 59.6 %. Once the data were uploaded into an SPSS format, further AMOS statistical software was used to conduct a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to check the adequacy of the measurement model. Finally, structural equation modelling (SEM) was used to test the hypothesized relationships between the variables.

Results

Sample Profile

A descriptive analysis of the results reveals the general demographic information of the sample, as shown in Table 5.1. The final sample consisted of a slightly uneven gender ratio but met the age specifications. Some 22 % of the respondents were in the range of 25–30, 42.9% in the range of 31–35 years and almost 35% were between 36 and 40 years. Descriptive analyses of the key constructs indicated that in general the respondents believed in a self-initiative climate ($M = 3.4866$, Std. Dev = 0.91015), team cooperation ($M = 3.380$, Std. Dev = 0.9499), and empowerment

Table 5.1 Cronbach alpha values

Variables	Cronbach's alpha	No. of items
Climate	0.864	5
Team cooperation	0.826	4
Empowerment	0.713	5
Self-management	0.677	3
Ability of team members	0.773	4
Interdependence within teams	0.875	4
Team performance	0.864	4
<i>Overall reliability of the scale</i>	<i>0.832</i>	<i>29</i>

($M = 3.3396$, Std. Dev = 0.71987) but self-management ($M = 2.8591$, Std. Dev = .87602), ability of the team members ($M = 2.9754$, Std. Dev = 0.87602), and interdependence ($M = 3.0034$, Std. Dev = .9686) did not show strong association with shared leadership.

Hypothesis Testing

As recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988), a multistep approach has been adopted to test the fit between the theoretical model and the empirical findings and to test the predictive and interrelated nature of the six dimensions of shared leadership. The measurement model was tested on the dataset using CFA, employing SEM using AMOS. The use of CFA over exploratory factor analysis has been recommended by Byrne (2013) due to its basis on a theory explaining measurement error, and testing for a unidimensional model. Factor constructs employed in the research were based on maximum likelihood estimate (MLE) to examine the general fit of the proposed model and to test the hypothesis.

This study intends to validate the model for shared leadership by examining the predictors of shared leadership. Cronbach's values for the predictors of shared leadership were calculated for all the dependent and independent variables to check reliability. Validity of the constructs was checked through face validity by taking an expert opinion of the same field. To determine which factor's structure adjust better to shared leadership, its fit was evaluated by using AMOS 18 through the following indexes: NC (normalized chi-square or chi-square value divided by the model's degrees of freedom = $CMIN/df$), CFI (Comparative Fit Index),

and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), as recommended by Kline (2011). Second order CFA was conducted to examine the extrapolative nature of the shared leadership. CFA showed very low loadings for self-management, ability of team members, and interdependence within the teams which in turn indicates the magnitude of the problems associated with the framework in Generation Y. The results specify that of six constructs only team cooperation, empowerment, and climate showed high loadings—hence being considered for the theoretical model to be confirmed. Therefore, only these three constructs reached the last group of items and self-management (three items), ability of team members (four items), and interdependence (four items) were eliminated from the first set of 27 items. The eliminated items were tested and assimilated to original conceptual definitions of the constructs. In each case, eliminating the constructs did not exert any significant changes on the field of the construct as it was primarily conceptualized. The concluding list of items for climate (four items), team cooperation (three items), and empowerment (five items) were therefore under the influence of CFA. A completely standardized solution results from AMOS 7.0, which uses maximum probability estimation, demonstrating that remaining items are burdened extremely well in terms of their analogous factors.

The *t*-values of the loadings were high, indicating sufficient convergent validity. The resulting measurement model was first tested for extrapolative predictors of shared leadership and the measurement model and the standardized loadings together with critical ratios are demonstrated in Table 5.2. Going further with our data analysis, three constructs which did not support any close association were eliminated and only climate, empowerment, and team cooperation were further considered for CFA. The initial CFA revealed several poorly loaded items (standardized regression weights smaller than 0.4). Each of these items cross-loaded with other items in the model. As a result, four items were removed from the initial CFA. One item was removed from team cooperation, two from empowerment, and one from climate for self-initiative. After removing these items with poor loading, the CFA results revealed satisfactory goodness of fit indices ($\chi^2 = 75.765$, $df = 32$, $P = 0.000$, $N = 185$); (RMSEA = 0.086; CFI = 0.951; normed fit index (NFI) = 0.921 and CMIN/df = 2.368).

Table 5.2 Intercepts (Group number 1—default model)

Items	Estimate	S.E.	C.R	P
TL2	3.517	0.09	39.037	***
TL3	3.188	0.091	35.043	***
TL4	3.436	0.087	39.319	***
Empow 2	3.718	0.087	42.606	***
Empow 3	3.45	0.094	36.534	***
Empow 4	3.215	0.081	39.654	***
Climate 3	3.477	0.087	39.955	***
Climate 4	3.456	0.09	38.609	***
Climate 5	3.503	0.085	40.996	***
Climate 2	3.51	0.078	44.852	***

***Results achieved at 95% significance levels

The standardized regression weights of the factor loadings in the final CFA can be seen in Table 5.3. In the revised model, the standardized regression weights for the estimates were adequate. The estimates ranged from 0.624 to 0.936. While most of these estimates were above the commonly used 0.7 mark (Hair, Black, Babib, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006), some did fall below this mark scale. Table 5.3 also indicates good reliability of each construct. The results give preliminary support to our Hypothesis 1 and prove that only climate for self-initiative, team cooperation, and empowerment are indicated as extrapolative predictors of shared leadership in Generation Y. This further confirms the unidimensionality of the constructs and supplies effective experimental proof of their validity, which is shown in Fig. 5.1. CFA meets the conditions of convergent validity of the constructs as the model shows that factor reliability (α) is greater than average variance explained (AVE) as shown in Fig. 5.1.

Testing the Structural Model

Furthermore, to test our second hypothesis, which states that “The nature and effective shared leadership model in an organization would lead to increased performance in Generation Y,” SEM was used to examine the parameters of the hypothesized model, which identified shared leadership as an exogenous construct and performance as endogenous construct.

Table 5.3 Factor reliability and factor loadings

Measurement items	Factor reliability (α)	Item loadings
<i>Potential correlates of team cooperation</i>	0.826	
There is a high level of cooperation between employees here		0.82
Employees here are willing to sacrifice their self-interest for the benefit of the organization/institute		0.71
There is a high level of information sharing between employees here		0.86
<i>Empowerment</i>	0.713	
Employees here feel that their tasks are worthwhile		0.73
Employees here can select different ways to achieve worthwhile things		0.83
Together, employees here determine how things are done in the organization/institute		0.62
<i>Climate for self-initiative</i>	0.864	
Whenever something goes wrong, employees here search for a solution immediately		0.67
Whenever there is a chance to get actively involved, employees here take it		0.84
Employees here take initiative immediately		0.92
Employees here use opportunities quickly to attain goals		0.88
<i>Team performance</i>	0.864	
Employees are very satisfied with the decisions made by the organization		0.56
Team members possess the essential skills and abilities to accomplish the team objectives		0.81
Achieving our team goal is a higher priority than any individual objective		0.90

SEM analysis with maximum likelihood estimation was followed to test the causal relationship between the constructs. The hypothesis was tested using an analysis of indirect effects of shared leadership dimensions on team performance in Generation Y. In the structural model, no direct path between the dimensions of shared leadership and team performance has been specified but it has been hypothesized that shared leadership is a key to team performance. The assumed relationship was tested using AMOS which is shown in Fig. 5.2.

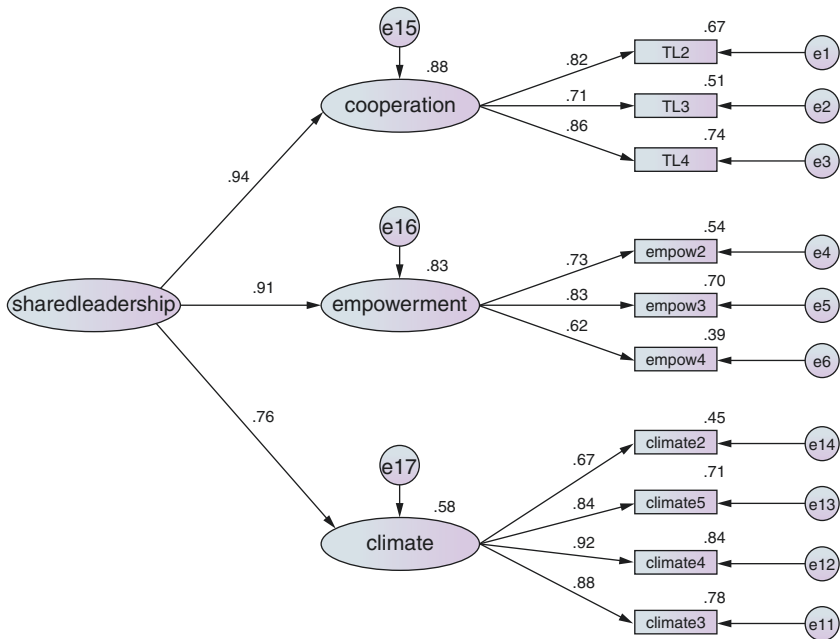


Fig. 5.1 CFA results and standard estimates (Source: Model adapted from Ziegert, 2005)

As the measurement model has already been tested, the measured variables represent the construct well. The study started with six dimensions of shared leadership which were latent and out of six, three were dropped as they were found to be insignificant, hence only three latent variables and one directly observed variable, which is team performance has been used for the measurement model. To test the structural model, one second-order and one pooled CFA were used for testing the hypothesis. Analysis of the data shows that the calculated statistics are within the recommended values (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Hair et al., 2006, p. 775) as seen in Table 5.4 and the model adopted is a good fit for Generation Y. Figure 5.2 reveals the pooled CFA and hence we accept the hypothesis that shared leadership in Generation Y leads to enhanced team performance.

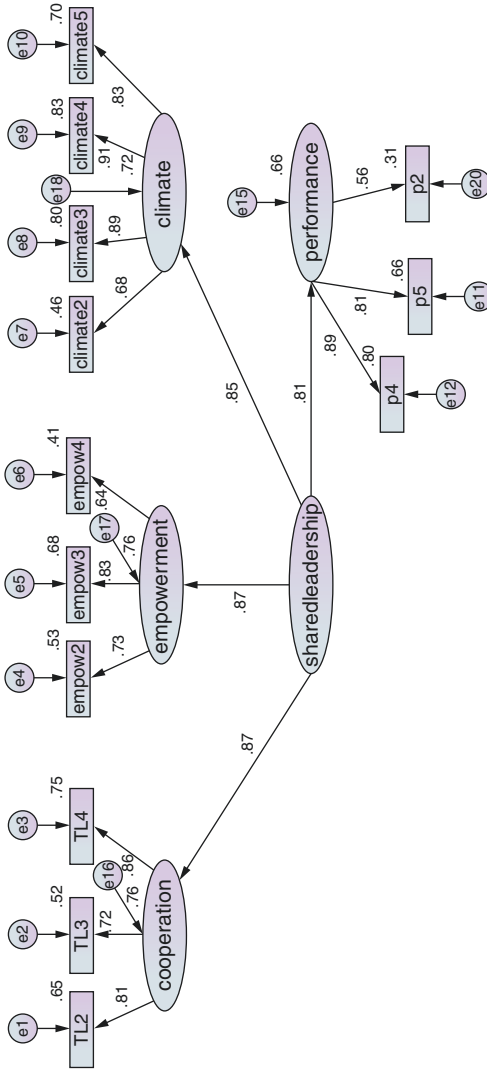


Fig. 5.2 Measurement model

Table 5.4 Measurement model

Model	Chi square(df)	Chi square	CFI	IFI	RMSEA
Second order CFA	2.368	75.765	0.951	0.953	0.086
Pooled CFA	3.133	201	0.955	0.901	0.091

Note: All values significant at level 1

Source: Primary data analysis output

Findings and Managerial Implications

In the measurement model, the fit indices as given in Table 5.4 suggest a good fit for the structural model as all the fit indices fall within the range except for incremental fit index (IFI) (.901) in the pooled CFA which is nevertheless very close to the recommended range (< 0.9). The slightly higher value of IFI can be explained on the basis of small sample size. Even though the results from the analysis are acceptable, it is also necessary to examine theoretical consistency with the reviewed literature, verifying whether the scale's items are coherent with the theoretical concepts used to support it or not. Kerlinger and Lee (2000) claim only those factors should be held which have relevance in literature and it is not appropriate to hold a factor that has only a mathematic meaning. Few dimensions, such as ability of team members, interdependence between team members, and self-management, which do not exhibit appropriate mathematical properties but have relevance in the literature, are excluded as the results do not support those dimensions. Retrospectively, this does not seem to be surprising when looking at the characteristics outlined for Generation Y. Millennials are labelled confident and creative, hence are not dependent on other team members and are self-sufficient. However, more research is needed to determine the reasons for this poor convergent validity of the constructs which have been dropped from the model and it can be concluded for this particular study that only climate, team cooperation, and empowerment are the predictors of shared leadership in Generation Y.

Although the current study draws upon the traditional leadership model, it proposes a different one for Generation Y. The literature on shared leadership reveals it as a composite of six dimensions of potential correlates (Chatman & Flynn, 2001), empowerment (Kirkman et al., 2004), self-management (Campion et al., 1993) climate for initiative

(Baer & Frese, 2003), ability (Edmondson, 1999; Faraj & Sproull, 2000), and interdependence (Van Der Vegt et al., 1999) but our structural model does not support the traditional leadership model in Generation Y and the measurement model also validates the structural model in Generation Y. This indicates that team cooperation, empowerment, and climate are crucial for a team, as an individual can be a team member in one team and leader in another (Horsfall, 2001). This further gives an evidence indicating that all these constructs are equally important for followership, which also holds lot of significance for both academicians and practitioners as followership complements leadership and embodies important character traits for any person who aspires to lead others (Agho, 2009: 160). The present state of business is changing, becoming more volatile and unpredictable, demanding changes in leadership style (Quinn & Norton, 2004), but at the same time this demands for understanding of followership mechanisms. Thus, followership has been understudied (Alcorn, 1992) or has been limited to a focus on followers' attributions of unique qualities to leaders. The t values in the structural model are significant for all the items except for one, "I am very satisfied with the decisions made by the organization" of performance, which shows an estimate of 0.56 and item loading of just 0.31 but has still been included in the model because by eliminating that item RMSEA increases to 0.108, which does not fall in the proposed limits. This seems to be important for Generation Y to perform. However, this item may not have major effect on baby boomers. For the millennials to perform in a team, empowerment and climate for self-initiative play very major roles due to their observed characteristics of age diversity (Kyles, 2005). Andrew Lee, managing director of Deloitte Consulting states that "It's a fact that four in 10 of our workforce are Generation Y and that number will grow each year." Therefore, it is imperative that employers should understand the factors which affect the psychological needs of Generation Y. The research also brings some interesting insights into the behavior of Generation Y who value team cooperation ($r^2 = 0.76$) and empowerment ($r^2 = 0.76$) at equal levels, followed by climate for self-initiative ($r^2 = 0.72$). The overall structural model explains the 66% variation.

From the above discussion, it is difficult to say that shared leadership is the preferred leadership style for Generation Y, however shared leadership is crucial to team performance. For example, in a study by

Katzenbach and Smith (1993) it was established that high-performing teams are actively engaged in shared leadership much more than other teams. Furthermore, a study of undergraduates done by Avolio et al. (1996) found that shared leadership is significantly related to effectiveness. It was also confirmed by Pearce & Sims (2002), in a study of change management teams, that shared leadership is a stronger predictor than vertical leadership in case of customers', managers', and team self-ratings for effectiveness. It was also ascertained by Hooker and Csikszentmihalyi (2003) in qualitative studies in research and development laboratories that shared leadership is significantly associated with team effectiveness. Thus, the current literature also supports this to some extent and confers that shared leadership is better than vertical leadership and is the preferred style of leadership for all generations. The literature does not specifically conclude the same for Generation Y; therefore, more studies should be conducted to establish the exact relationship. Moreover, the literature scrutinizes the current strategies employed by organizations and leaders, whereas it fails to investigate perceptions of the ideal leader for Generation Y. This study reveals that ideal leader, right environment, and team cooperation in an organization would lead to increased team performance in the Generation Y cohort of the workforce. However, this cannot be generalized for Generation Y and this study calls for research into attributes which would help in increasing shared leadership among teams. The results of the study suggest that leaders/managers should adapt those attributes which may help them in leading those in the Generation Y cohort. Simultaneously, it also indicates the need to broaden the behavioral patterns of leaders to be followed by followers. It may also help in limiting certain behaviors for followers, as also suggested by Cox, Pearce, and Sims (2003). Although the study does not clearly indicate the interdependence of leadership and followership, constructs such as team cooperation and empowerment indicate that followership is an integral part of shared leadership process. Furthermore, it clearly highlights a need to broaden the behavioral range of leadership development. To achieve new levels of performance, leaders should be developed with a complete range of behavioral options and it is recommended to go beyond the traditional transactional or transformational leadership style and adapt new emerging styles of leadership. Consequently, this

research validates a powerful role for shared leadership in Generation Y and among followers which is consistent with literature on shared or distributive leadership (e.g., Gronn, 2002; Pearce & Sims, 2002; Pearce et al., 2004). Thus, the findings reveal the need of including followership in the leadership process. This reflects the positive signs that Generation Y are willing to take on responsibility for the decisions made by them and want to take over from the present leaders.

The proposed framework represents a complete model that tries to contribute to the literature through exploring the connections and relationships among dimensions of shared leadership and performance. We know that baby boomers have been retiring in large numbers since 2008, taking their knowledge and experience with them (Appendix I—World Population, 2009). It seems difficult to replace their expertise, knowledge, and experience but the coming generation has to replace the baby boomers. Hence, leading managers should also be aware of the characteristics of Generation Y with respect to leadership. This shift from the traits and characteristics of baby boomers to the those of millennials indicates that the Generation Y workforce wants to be managed in an inclusive and participatory way; for example, the results of the study indicate that empowerment is the most desirable trait in Generation Y, and these individuals want to set their own rules for deciding the worthiness a the job and want to have their own ways of working. Although Generation Y place a high premium on job security, they apparently hop between jobs quickly. Generation Y are value driven and money hungry and they are conservative and nonconformist (Islam, Cheong, Yusuf, & Desa, 2011). They want to cooperate with the team but not at the cost of making personal sacrifices. It was noticed by Vicere in 2005 that Generation Y want to make an impact by participating in decision-making. The results of the current study suggest that organizations should be thoughtful about the potential for teams to share leadership, indicating equal importance of followership and followers. Although followers in the leadership are influenced by leaders (Bass, 2008), how they relate to leadership and what kind of leadership style they approve of become significant for the organization. Therefore, it can be concluded that organizations should not only pay attention to the designated leader but to the followers and team

members, and facilitate and look for ways to increase the phenomenon of shared leadership, for instance, through organizational efforts to reward, support, and encourage team members to perform leadership functions to enhance shared team leadership.

Limitations and Future Directions

Like all research, this study has some limitations. First, the sample size is small, which reduces the generalizability of the results. Moreover, the data have been collected from different companies and each industry is diverse in terms of age, skills, culture, technology, attitude, and so on. Hence, the characteristics of Generation Y may also vary. Therefore, industry-specific research should be conducted keeping in mind the young talent of India. At the same time, the characteristics of the respondents may also have limited the extent to which shared team leadership occurred in their respective organizational settings.

While I have highlighted a few opportunities for future research above, several more warrant discussion. First, there is a need to examine the construct of shared leadership longitudinally. In addition to clarifying the causal relationships linking shared team leadership and team outcomes, a longitudinal design would allow for an examination of how shared team leadership develops and changes over time. More research is needed to examine the other factors that help in shared team leadership (Pearce & Conger, 2003). For example, how does a vertical leader augment or diminish the emergence and level of shared team leadership in Generation Y? How does the structure of an organization affect shared team leadership in Generation Y? Do the team members have a bearing on the level of shared team leadership? While the current study illustrates that a climate for self-initiative, empowerment, and potential of team cooperation is related to shared team leadership, there may be a variety of other potential antecedents and facilitators of the construct which demand inquiry. Overall, both teams and leadership are multifaceted phenomena, and hence researchers should be familiar with potential interactions of shared team leadership.

Notes

1. Shared leadership and distributed leadership are used interchangeably in this article and have the same meaning.
2. This information has been retrieved from BCG group analysis report: <https://www.peoplesmatters.in/article/strategic-hr/whats-different-about-the-indian-millennial-13231> [accessed on May 11, 2016].

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6

Fostering Creative Engagement Through the Use of Collaborative Visual Mapping

Regina Rowland

Creative Engagement: A Method for Curating Distributed Leadership in Diverse Groups

In this chapter, creative engagement in culturally diverse groups plays a role in fostering shared, collective, or distributed leadership (DL)—defined by Pearce (2004) as a “simultaneous, ongoing, mutual influence process ... characterized by ‘serial emergence’ of official as well as unofficial leaders” (p. 48). An argument is made for self-organized collaborative visual mapping as a vehicle for exposing individual and culturally engrained assumptions, beliefs, and values—and as a foundation for self-organizing DL relationships in diverse groups. Collaborative visual mapping not only makes the cultural fabric in the group visible through graphically represented perspectives that express group members’ worldviews but also paints a picture of the

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group dynamics at play, for all to see and reflect upon in formal and informal ways. Cultural expression and the cultivation of creativity can lead or contribute to the emergence of DL by exposing not only underpinning assumptions and behaviors in response to those assumptions but also self-chosen roles for leading and following in the process of coconstructing meaning, as observed in a case study involving a highly diverse population meeting at a higher educational institution in San Francisco, California.

Studying Creative Engagement

In 2007, I conducted a transdisciplinary case study in a visual literacy class in San Francisco to investigate the coconstruction of meaning by use of collaborative visual mapping in highly diverse small group environments (Rowland, 2009). In a workshop format, two small groups of five diverse participants were asked to collaborate, independent from each other, on developing a large-scale visual map (four × eight feet, attached to the wall) depicting a mutually agreed story of a common experience, and then present their maps to each other. The cultural fabric of the two groups is summarized in the self-identified demographic data in Table 6.1 for Group A and Table 6.2 for Group 1.

Collaborative visual mapping was selected for this case study as a natural bridge to begin a conversation between the fields of intercultural communication and visual communication; the first holds the position of subjective reality and the latter objective reality, together providing a larger piece of the whole than either lens could offer by itself. Each discipline shone light on the blind spot inherent in the other and closed the gap between objective and subjective realities—both were vital to investigating the question of how meaning is collaboratively created in diverse groups through visual mapping. Observations were made about sociofacts (behavior) and artifacts (collaboratively constructed products), about the interplay between leadership and followership, and about the emerging group dynamics—all of which may be examined as indicators for fostering DL capacity.

Table 6.1 Self-identified demographic data for Group A participants

Demographic	Aiden (PA)	Bella (PB)	Carolina (PC)	Dianne (PD)	Eugene (PE)
Age (years)	46	18	55	22	40
Gender	Male	Female	Female	Female	Male
Nationality ^a	Irish, US	US	US ^b	Filipina American	Korean
Cultural identity ^a	<i>Iris@h</i> , ^b European, Western, US	Hispanic, US	<i>Latina</i> ^b Female, professional, family, teacher	American, Japanese pop culture	Socialist, green, democrat
Ethnic background ^a	<i>White</i> ^b	Hispanic	<i>Caucasian</i> ^b	<i>Filipina American</i> ^b	<i>Korean American</i> ^b
Countries lived in (no. of years) ^c	Ireland (19^d) , Germany (2), USA (25)	USA (3.3), El Salvador (14.7)	USA (55)	USA (22)	Korea (2 ^d), Argentina (7), Spain (1), USA (30)
Formative years	Western Europe	Central America	North America	North America	South America
Years in the Bay Area	7	1.3	22	0.5	16
Language(s) ^e	English, Irish, Spanish	Spanish, English	English	English, Tagalog	Korean, English, Spanish, Italian, Russian
Education	College graduate	High school graduate	Some college	College graduate	Master's degree

^aIn participants' own words

^bParentetical background designation used in discussion, shown here in italics

^cCountry of origin is listed first in bold

^dNumber not specified by participant, but deduced from other figures given

^eNative language(s) are shown in bold

Table 6.2 Self-identified demographic data for Group 1 participants

Demographic	Michelle (P1)	Nick (P2)	Olive (P3)	Paige (P4)	Rusena (P5)
Age (years)	33	25	33	26	25
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Female	Female
Nationality ^a	American	US ^b	Vietnamese/Chinese American	American	Ukrainian
Cultural identity ^a	American, African American, female	Male, college graduate, returning student, professional, Buddhist, sober, gay	Vietnamese American, heterosexual	American, ^b female, heterosexual, white, blond/redhead	Eastern European, post-Soviet Union
Ethnic background ^a	<i>African American</i> ^b	<i>Caucasian</i> ^b	<i>Vietnamese/Chinese/American</i> ^b	<i>White</i> ^b	<i>Russian-speaking Ukrainian</i> ^b
Countries lived in (no. of years) ^c	USA (28) , Japan (5)	USA (25)	Vietnam (6) , USA (27)	USA (26)	Moldova^b (24.75) , USA (0.25)
Formative years in the Bay Area	North America	North America	North America	North America	Eastern Europe
Language(s) ^d	English , Spanish, Italian, Japanese	English , Spanish	Vietnamese , English	English	Russian , English, Ukrainian, Romanian
Education	College graduate	College graduate	College graduate	College graduate	College graduate

^aIn participants' own words

^bParentetical background designation used in discussion, shown here in italics

^cCountry of origin is listed first in bold

^dNative language(s) are shown in bold

Shifting Paradigms as a Foundation for the Emergence of DL

In DL, hierarchies are transcended in groups that are diverse, for instance, in culture, generation, discipline, and organizational functions and levels. *Intercultural communication* is largely concerned with providing theories and models for practitioners to advise, teach, and train for or facilitate communication across cultures (Bennett, 2003), focusing on cultural difference and resulting in the assumption that cultures function as autonomous units within the dominant culture. Intercultural communication theories and practices were originally constructed within the concept of multiculturalism and thus were part of sensitizing the world to paying attention to cultural differences. The practice of cultural dominance was largely still upheld in multiculturalism, and ethnic groups (renamed to “cultures”) were acknowledged as autonomous, given resources, and, over time, no longer asked to assimilate to the dominant culture.

Polyculturalism engages the challenges of integrating cultural differences with the experience of a metaconsciousness that nurtures the human bond across cultures (Kelley, 1999; Kureishi, 2005; Prashad, as interviewed by Frontlist, n.d.). Polyculturalism implies a social structure in which cultures are considered interrelated and therefore cannot be compartmentalized, yet also are not flattened and simplified into one universal culture. A polycultural environment represents a system that strives for equality across a diverse population and fosters the authenticity of cultural hybrids with shifting identities—individuals who carry multiple cultural frames inside themselves, “porous, fuzzy-edged, indeterminate, intrinsically inconsistent, never quite identical with themselves, [with] their boundaries continually modulating into horizons” (Eagleton, 2000, p. 96). Polyculturalism is concerned with the welfare of all—creating an environment that erases, by default, concepts of cultural dominance and without focus on a particular region or group of people.

Transculturalism is the sense of transcending cultural differences by not holding on to frames that do not fit the concurrent circumstances and by freely integrating those aspects of various cultures to which one has access (virtually or face-to-face) that either match the current lifestyle or create a new desired style (Tseng, 2003). Transculturalism refers to the reality of

merging ethnicities in cosmopolitan areas where the dominant culture is diminishing greatly, and where transcultural youth (post-baby-boomers or echo-boomers) are conscious of diversity but do not perceive it as a challenge (Tseng, 2003). In this context, the presence of transculturalism can be seen as a transformative opportunity that carries potential and flexibility (Lewis, 2002).

At the time of the 2007 study, findings demonstrated that both concepts, polyculturalism and transculturalism, represented a potential paradigm shift away from multiculturalism, changing how people perceived culture to be established and nourished. Almost a decade later, *vis-à-vis* the realization of seemingly inevitable environmental challenges at the beginning of a new epoch coined the Anthropocene (Crutzen & Stoermer, 2000), the attention is moving again, from human-made social structures to learning from nature as a model, mentor, and measure (Baumeister, 2013; Benyus, 1997) because she has already solved the problems humanity is facing in terms of survival and fitness within the operating conditions of planet Earth. The diversity present in the genius of nature has become a new model for the kind of social structures and hierarchies recognized to generate thriving in human systems (Ehrenfeld & Hoffman, 2013; Russell, 2013)—representing yet another shift in consciousness from nurture (learning through exposure to culture as in human-centered design) to nature (learning from bio-inspired designs fit for the operating conditions on Earth). Such is the underpinning social soup from which new leadership constructs are concurrently emerging.

The emergence of DL would not be possible without the aforementioned shift toward flexible hierarchies. Traditional power dynamics were based on origin (interculturalism) but dynamics are now increasingly understood as being collaboratively constructed flexible hierarchies based on the need for diversity in all layers in a system (polyculturalism and transculturalism, and ecosystems in nature). The case study discussed in this chapter suggests that the social constructs of polyculturalism and transculturalism may be a good start for designing structures and practices in support of the emergence of DL. Knowing how meaning (understood as constructed and shifting agreements about how the world works) is collaboratively created in such constructs is useful when designing for the success of distributed leadership dynamics. Meaning

can be made visible, literally, through creative engagement methods, such as collaborative visual mapping.

Meaning-Making Through the Visual Sense

Perception and meaning-making are inextricably linked. Visual intelligence facilitates the interpretation of direct recordings from the environment into internal representations called “images,” which remain available for later recall when they merge with new information in a process called “learning.” What humans perceive is thus an interaction between new and old information, where personal experience and cultural conditioning meet in constructing social worlds (Barry, 1997). When people find images personally relevant, they differentiate finer details that influence their worldviews, which, in turn, determine their behavior. “In this way, whatever we see will be measured, remembered, and interpreted against the background of self-image and worldview” (Barry, 1997, p. 102). The combination of cognitive distortions and this type of perception leads to inner logic, which intercultural communication correlates to the construction of worldviews (Bennett, 1986b), basic assumptions (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998), and mental programming (Hofstede, 2001). The patterns perceived—a pulling together of parts into meaningful wholes—determine both perception and abstract thinking.

Visual language facilitates cross-cultural communication because of its ability to expose underlying assumptions that otherwise would not be expressed (Horn, 1998)—an important aspect in cross-cultural understanding as well as in DL practices where the role of leadership is shared and exchanged to optimize the success of the task at hand. Visual language is a full integration of words, symbols, and images into a single communication unit that forms a gestalt, follows a defined syntax (grammar), and invites the building of semantic relationships (meaning-making). Its combined elements and flexible structures provide opportunities for different context-dependent interpretations—the potential for subjective realities to coexist as they do in DL practices.

Dominant, historical Western approaches to visual communication offer a parallel to traditional understandings of leadership. *Visual communication*

is an umbrella term for a variety of practices that convey ideas, generic information, and targeted messages in visual formats. The field has traditionally lacked not only cultural information but also formal academic discourse; design was considered a craft to be taught by mentors rather than a discipline taught at the academy. Because there is little quality research in the field itself, areas that apply directly (e.g., the meaning-making process) are therefore borrowed from a creative but eclectic pastiche of often-outdated information or information with a heavy focus on the Western frame (Rowland, 2009). These limitations in available resources translate into a limited perspective through the lens of visual communication theory. For instance, designers in the Western world are familiar with the Gestalt principle (the whole is greater than the sum of the parts) but nonetheless tend to focus on individual elements such as positive space (Nisbett, 2003). If figure-ground relationships are discussed, they are usually understood as the negative space merely defining the positive space (giving dominance to objects sitting in negative space). This focus on the dominant positive (black) space versus the all-present negative (white) space can be seen as equivalent to the traditional understanding of leadership—a position exclusively held by a dominant entity and defined by those subordinate elements surrounding it.

Two main schools of thought discuss perception in terms of holistic and analytical approaches; Western cultures tend to favor analytical perception, but DL relies on more holistic perceptions. Based on gestalt theory, the holistic strand describes perception as an interpretation of the environment with an emphasis on relationship. The analytical strand describes meaning as built from separate pieces of information directly received from the environment (Barry, 1997). Perception is probably all these theories combined and possibly more, but cultural focus on one way over another may have influenced the West in solidifying the belief that analytic perception is a “more truthful” way. One challenge for contemporary society may be to close the gap between these two modes of perception, thereby directing more resources to face current global challenges and increasing the possibility for DL to engage in more holistic collaborative problem solving. An interesting aspect to address, then, may be how groups can move from analytical to holistic understandings which may also shed light on the strategies for moving from traditional to DL (or from individual to group orientation).

Case Study: Creative Engagement in Diverse Groups

Research Design

In the 2007 workshop, each of two groups of five participants was given a total of 40 minutes to complete the assigned creative task of delivering a collaborative visual map addressing a topic familiar to them all, their experience of studying at the San Francisco Community College. Participants were students in a visual literacy class taught by the researcher and knew each other to some extent, although not in this particular combination. They were to self-organize to reach the set goal, including deciding the storyline to represent the given topic, and were provided with an image set (VisualsSpeak, 2006), paper, and drawing materials. Groups worked consecutively and could not observe each other's processes. The study was driven by the main research question, "How did these two polycultural groups of five students each enrolled in a beginning college-level visual literacy class coconstruct meaning when given the task of collaborating on telling a story and representing it visually by assembling a visual map of their own choosing?"

At the end of the mapping activities, both groups participated in a *gallery walk*: each group presented their map to the other group members, who could ask questions and make comments. The gallery walk was intended to facilitate sharing between the two groups regarding their different working and presentation methods.

The final activity was a structured debrief that included all ten participants and elicited reflection on participants' experiences during the various activity steps.

Finally, a member check was conducted several months after data collection day. During the member check, the preliminary results of the study were shared with all participants to test and reflect upon preliminary findings.

Data Collection, Data Processing, Data Analysis

Much of the data were collected on April 14, 2007 (data collection day). There were three phases of data collection: the process of the cocreation,

the gallery walk, and the class debrief. The researcher functioned as the designer and facilitator of the activities, during which observations were recorded via direct observation, video, and audio recording. The first phase was designed as an opportunity to expose personal beliefs and values. The gallery walk was intended to facilitate sharing between the two groups regarding their different working and presentation methods. The class debrief frame was selected to bring beliefs and values onto the table and elicit useful discussions around these issues. Additionally, strategically chosen individuals from each group were invited for a *personal interview* about the process and their experience—to fill potential gaps from the class debrief. Four individuals were chosen for a personal interview because they were quieter than others during the class debrief; two others were chosen because they were directly involved in a critical incident (stereotyping) during the class debrief.

The primary sources of data were collected through observing each group's process as well as the class debrief. Primary data sources, including the visual maps, video- and audiotapes, and transcriptions, were thoroughly analyzed. Secondary sources of data comprised formally and informally administered instruments (to provide background information on the individual participants), personal interviews (to validate the initial findings), and a member check conducted a few months after data collection in which preliminary results were presented to the entire group of participants for feedback. Table 6.3 provides a complete list of data sources, processing tool, and analysis tools.

The formally and informally administered instruments informed different aspects of the study and were intended to contribute to the thick profiles for each participant with the goal of accounting for the confounding variables. Both types of instruments were administered before data collection day. Participants' perceived stage of team development was measured via the Team Performance Indicator (TPI; Forrester & Drexler, 2005) based on the Team Performance Model (TPM; Drexler & Sibbet, 2004). It was also useful to have participants self-identify their repertoires for various communication styles, and this was measured through the Peterson Cultural Style Indicator™ (PCSI; Peterson, 2004),

Table 6.3 Data sources, processing tool, and analysis tools

Description	Organization of participants
Primary data sources	
Group process ^a	
Group profile	Group A, Group 1
Group analysis	
Episodes	Group A, Group 1
Gallery walk ^b	Group A, Group 1
Visual map	Group A, Group 1
Class debrief ^a	Entire class
Visual map	Group A, Group 1
Secondary data sources	
Participant profiles	Individual
Formally administered ^c	
Intercultural development inventory, version 2	Individual
Forrester/Drexler team performance indicator	Individual
Peterson Cultural Style Indicator™	Individual
Informally administered	
Kolb's learning styles	Individual
Gardner's multiple intelligences	Individual
Personal interviews ^d	Individual
Member check ^e	Entire class
Processing tool	
VisualsSpeak™ image set	–
Analysis tools	
CMM concepts	Individual, Group A, Group 1, entire class
Coordination	
Management of meaning (coherence and mystery)	
Deontic logic	
CMM stories lived, unknown stories, untold stories, unheard stories, stories told, and storytelling (LUUUTT) model	Group A, Group 1
CMM's serpentine model	Group A, Group 1

CMM Coordinated management of meaning

^aVideotaped and transcribed

^bPresentation of the group's visual map

^cTaken at different times

^dSix of the ten participants were interviewed separately; interviews were audiotaped and transcribed

^eGroup meeting after the first phase of data analysis

based on scales of basic cultural dimensions and orientations (Hofstede, 2001; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). Cultural profiles of the participants were constructed through the Intercultural Developmental Inventory, version two (IDI-2; Hammer & Bennett, 2002) which is based on the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS; Bennett, 1986a, 1993, 2003, 2004). While the TPI measured participants' perceived stage of team development of their teams, the PCSI indicated individual self-identified cultural styles, and the IDI-2 provided information about individuals' capacity for and development of intercultural sensitivity (the "capability to shift cultural perspective and adapt behavior to cultural context," M. Hammer, personal communication, April 6, 2008). Kolb's learning styles (LS; Kolb, 1984) and Gardner's multiple intelligences (MI; Gardner, 1999) were self-administered informally to complement the results of the other three instruments as LS and various intelligences as defined by Kolb and Gardner encompass both innate and cultural preferences.

In training or educational situations, and to begin a conversation about cultural dimensions/development and team performance, it is useful to create profiles for individuals and the relevant cluster of participants working together. Both individual and group profiles were completed for this study and compared with the live observations during group interaction.

Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) models (Pearce, 1999) were used to graphically sequence the collaborative mapping process for each group, providing clarity and a better understanding of the different modes between the two groups. Two CMM analysis tools (the serpentine model and the LUUUTT model) and two CMM frameworks (deontic logic and the key concepts for mastering CMM: coordination; and the management of meaning; coherence and mystery) were applied in the data analysis. CMM provides flexible tools that can be combined with other forms of analysis. Its analytical power lies in its diagrammatic form, which allows for meaning to emerge that may not make itself known in other, more linear methods. When analyzing the visual maps themselves, VisualsSpeak™ (2006) images chosen from each category by the participants were analyzed by Christine Martell, the developer of the VisualsSpeak set.

Validity

With regard to the discipline of intercultural communication, validity was enhanced through the selection of a variety of instruments and tools (the IDI-2, PCSI, LS, MI, CMM LUUUTT model, and CMM coordination of meaning concepts), and through the collection of a thick record for the individual participants and the group interaction (personal interviews, class debrief, member check, videography of event, and transcripts) to investigate each intercultural communication category and approach defined by Gudykunst, Lee, Nishida, and Ogawa (2005).

This inquiry took the objectivist approach to intercultural communication research through observation and documentation of the event in the space of shared reality, assuming that the communication acts emerged from the context and could be further clarified through delivery of an explanation for cause and effect. This explanation was delivered through (1) comparing personal actions to scores on various instruments (the IDI-2, TPI, PCSI, LS, and MI), (2) investigating actions contextually to each other, (3) investigating each group's products for significance in pattern, (4) focusing on group dynamics, (5) using the CMM processing tool of the serpentine model for sequencing acts, (6) using the CMM processing tool of the LUUUTT model for including excluded stories, (7) using CMM's key concepts to identify moments of mastering the coordination and management of meaning, (8) using the CMM concept of deontic logic to uncover intergroup basic assumptions, and (9) making predictions about human behavior.

The subjectivist approach to intercultural communication research (Gudykunst et al., 2005) was pursued through the collection of information from the personal viewpoints of participants (e.g., the class debrief, member check, and personal interviews). Constructivist theories were represented through CMM theory (Pearce, 2005) and some of its processing tools, DMIS theory (Bennett, 1986a, 1993, 2004), and the IDI-2 (Bennett & Hammer, 2002). Theories of cultural difference were represented by consideration of a number of theories of cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 2001; House, Hanges, Mansour, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004; Peterson, 2004; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998).

Additional second-category theories and tools include the PCSI, theories of variances in meaning-making (learning) as outlined by Kolb (1984) and Gardner (1999), the LS and MI, and the VisualsSpeak image set.

The focus of the study was on observing interaction patterns and relationships between interacting participants among themselves and the group mind, and thus occupied was the third category—communication patterns and communication networks (Gudykunst et al., 2005). In addition, the TPM and TPI also fall into the third category. Because this transdisciplinary study is also a qualitative study with the assumption that the results and findings must include the experience of the participants, the design included opportunities for individual interviews, a class debrief, and a member check, all of which contributed to the many layers of information gathering. The nature of transdisciplinary methods is based on transclusion and assures that various touch points connect to various parts of the participating disciplines, thereby confirming their validity through triangulation.

Results

The leadership dynamics, in both groups, evoked the famous line, “History is written by the winners” (Orwell, 1944). Both leads in the 2007 case study established leadership, spontaneously and early on, by use of taking control of the marker. As soon as one member stepped up and started mapping an outline of the group’s conversation, they became the vessel for the story for the whole—a role that was accepted by the group and then guided the creation of the larger maps for the remainder of the session.

The graphic facilitation procedure became interactive at times, as the leads made direct attempts to actively engage the other participants in the construction and recording of their story. The lead in Group A invited the rest of the group, verbally and by gestures, to participate in creating the sketch, both through their input and through their drawing onto the map. In Group 1, the lead consolidated the information given by the group (i.e., found the commonalities among opinions expressed) in verbal notes that served the same function as the sketch in Group A. Both leads directed the visual map collaboration at times, especially in the beginning.

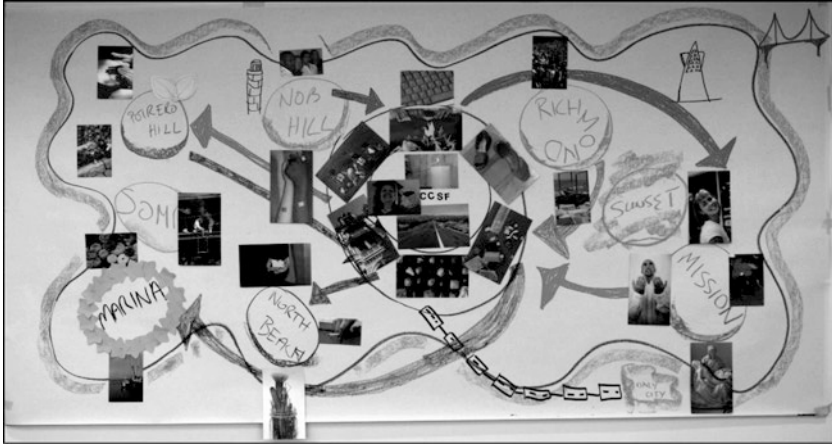


Fig. 6.1 Group A visual map (Photograph by Author)

Group A created a nonlinear but structured and very colorful organic map that placed the institution at the center of all events (see Fig. 6.1). The map represented San Francisco, with its various neighborhoods identified by images and drawn elements. There was little contrast in this rather harmonious piece. Elements of positive space (drawn items and pictures) and negative space (white spatial elements) were mostly the same size and evenly spaced as well as grouped. There was no linear alignment but the pieces seemed well connected through a natural flow; the work as a whole had a rhythmic quality to it, moving in and out of the center. The story was told with very few words. Many colors were included and some embellishments were used, such as sticky notes shaped into stars and leaves.

In contrast, Group 1 created a linear map that clearly showed its progression through time from left to right across the graphic panel (see Fig. 6.2) but that also demonstrated vertical up and down movement. The map represented the story of an older student moving through his experiences at the institution. These experiences—good and bad, challenging and rewarding—occasionally diverted the protagonist from the direct path before bringing him back on track as he completed his goal of graduating from the program. Visually speaking, the last part of the story

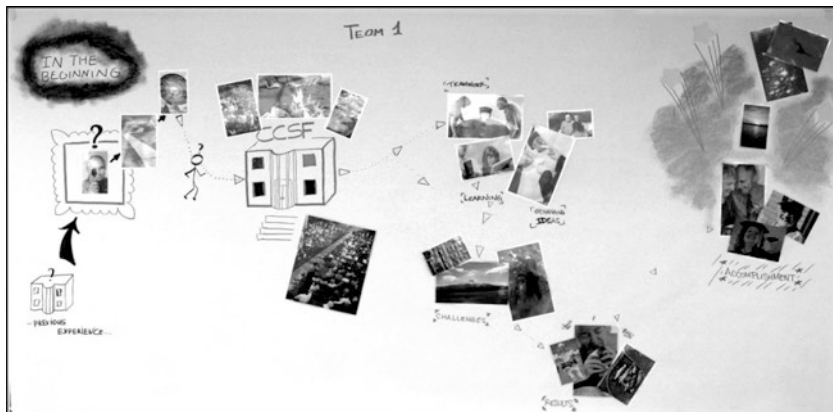


Fig. 6.2 Group 1 visual map (Photograph by Author)

(the graduation) became a focal point because of the use of color, and the brightness of graduation was partially balanced by the black cloud depicting the beginning of the story when the character was still confused about his future. The character's isolated moments of experience were separated by white space that extended beyond the border of the paper into infinite space and represented the biggest contrast in this composition. There was little or no interaction with the negative space. In addition to images, the map included illustrations of the character in motion, buildings, embellishments such as fireworks, and shapes. Words were used to label the moments. Color was used sparingly but was intense wherever it was applied, and provided depth to the map (which was otherwise flat).

Each group's visual map told the story of the participants' creative engagement experience in its gestalt. The area of emphasis in Group A's visual map of San Francisco neighborhoods was the underlying structure that told the story of people coming in and out of the college, a story reflective of group members' personal experiences and of the aspect of community to which all group members could relate. Group A started with their own lived experience, and the shared parts of their story and observations built the context and basic structure for telling their story in the form of a visual map. They first established a sketch that clearly outlined the structure and movement in and out of the center. They began

their visual map in the center, defined the landscape around the center, and then added visual elements. Group A worked visually and nonlinearly with shapes, filled those shapes with words, and then added images, colors, and embellishments.

Group 1 categorized their images into the events that made up the storyline for their visual map. The images were composed over an underlying invisible grid that structured a flow from left to right across the graphic panel. This grid was visualized and communicated by all participants except for one (termed “the outsider” during analysis) who kept intervening and asking for a different composition but never communicated what her alternate vision was. The composing of the images took significant negotiation back and forth between the outsider and the rest of the group. At times, the outsider placed images without consulting the lead; participants other than the lead took on the task of monitoring the outsider to prevent such placements. Group 1 created a linear visual map that flowed from left to right, up and down, and from black and white to color, and which was not contained (had no outer border).

The Gallery Walk

In Group A, the presenter was the group lead, who told the story of the group’s mapping. The copresenter was one of the members who had played the role of supporter during the mapping process, and he played Vanna White (the actress who became famous in her facilitator role in the *Wheel of Fortune* TV series) and pointed to various parts of the map. They pointed to various parts of the map, but could not describe their strategies very well—for instance, they called their visual map a stream of consciousness piece that was completed intuitively (flow state experience). They had no rationale for the use of colors and they were not very conscious of their choices of images other than their own interpretations of what would best represent the neighborhoods depicted.

Group 1’s lead and colead presented their group’s visual map of a student’s journey to graduation in the same straightforward manner as it was created. They described their process and the elements on the visual map literally, following the logic of the story. They had picked images

very carefully for their metaphoric qualities and had been meticulous in representing the parts of the agreed-upon story. They had applied color rationally to emphasize the emotions of each moment. They emphasized that group consensus was important when describing their process of choosing images, implying that consensus was the desired group norm.

Class Debrief

In the class debrief, the participants chose their own seats—and the groups ended up exactly mirroring their roles to each other as though the chairs had been labeled for that purpose. Figure 6.3 demonstrates this occurrence visually.

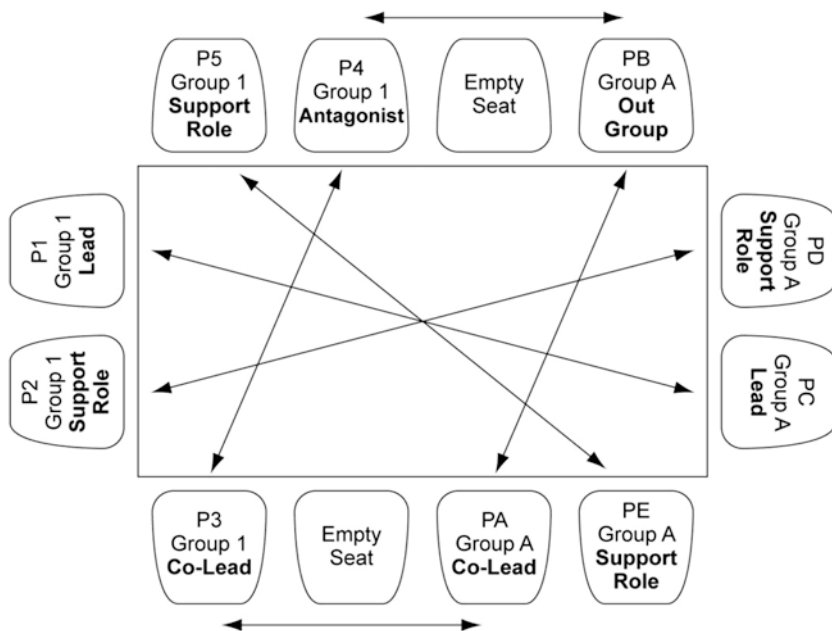


Fig. 6.3 Class debrief seating arrangement (Snapshot 2), with *arrows* showing the reflection of roles between the groups (PA Aiden, PB Bella, PC Carolina, PD Dianne, PE Eugene, P1 Michelle, P2 Nick, P3 Olive, P4 Paige, P5 Rusena. Author’s Image)

The leads sat at the head of the table on either end, opposing each other diagonally. To their left and right sat their third-level supporters (relationship-builders), and the coleads sat one seat further from the leads. Opposite the colead sat the group's outsider member. The outsider members sat next to each other with an empty chair between them, and so did the coleads. This arrangement is significant considering that the two groups worked independently from each other and did not experience or observe each other's process; thus, they could not have known what hierarchy had emerged during the process in the other group. This circumstance was accepted and noted in the research documentation, but not further analyzed in terms of finding the origin of such seemingly magical occurrences, as such analysis would have been worthy of a new research project with a new research question and would have needed evidence of repeated occurrence.

Group A said they were satisfied with their process and their product, and that their visual map would have represented a good start if this had been a client project. They mentioned that it was fun to work together this way and that they probably would have approached the project differently had they worked individually. They also expressed that they would have tried to do it more linearly (like Group 1) if this had been a real client assignment, but their interpretation of the task was also to have fun and do it in the fashion of a free-for-all because the work was not evaluated academically.

The tensions experienced in Group 1 during the cocreation of the map were aired and dealt with openly during the class debrief. Group 1 members confirmed that consensus was their desired norm. The outsider stated that she had been trying to help that norm. During the gallery walk, she reported that she had not been able to make herself heard during the creation process, and that she had sacrificed her personal preference to allow the group to proceed.

Member Check

At the member check several months after data collection day, participants were largely in agreement with the results. Participants expressed

amazement at what the self-chosen seating arrangement during the class debrief had revealed and confirmed about group dynamics. Group members acknowledged that they were aware who the leads were, but they did not recognize the coleads (who themselves did not notice they had played that role). Those identified as supporters (relationship-builders) acknowledged that they were aware of their supporting tasks, which they identified as relationship-building. While the dominant leaders were working onstage, the supporters were consciously working in the background to make sure everyone was included and consensus was reached. Supporters in both groups stated that leadership had been shared between the active/visible lead and colead, and those in supporting roles. They mentioned that they, too, had demonstrated leadership in their supporting roles and alluded to the concept of expanding the meaning of leadership to include relationship-builders.

Findings Relevant to DL

Findings relevant to DL fall into five main areas: role development, group flow, groupthink, cultural indications, and map reflections.

Role Development

The two groups in this case study demonstrated during the creative activities how they shared leadership and passed it back and forth between each other naturally, thus practicing a form of DL. By ignoring the leader in favor of paying attention to the behavior of other participants, groups reached intersubjectivity—a space of coconstructed shared meaning that fosters playful interpretations through interconnectivity (Sawyer, 2006). The distributed action theory of leadership (Johnson & Johnson, 2005) of group dynamics is in alignment with this idea, stating that “each group member provides leadership by having the diagnostic skills to be aware that a given function is needed in the immediate situation in order for the group to function most effectively” (p. 191). Task leads focus on direct-

ing, synthesizing, and providing insights and ideas, while social–emotional leads focus on relationship-building and balancing the harmony of the group (Johnson & Johnson, 2005). Task mastering results in telling other people what to do, and relationship-building results in delegating and negotiating. Which style is most effective depends on the level of power or authority held by the leader, on the leader’s relationship with the other participants, on the type of task at hand (whether it is highly structured or not or more ambiguous), and on the maturity level of the group (Hersey & Blanchard, as discussed in Johnson & Johnson, 2005).

In Group A and Group 1, roles were established in the first round of brainstorming, and the patterns of interaction within those roles appeared immediately. In both groups of five highly diverse participants, the participant who first picked up a marker became the lead, and each lead had a colead. Both groups fell into a calm rhythm at the same time—30 minutes into the process—exactly the time when the structure of the visual map was firmly established on the map itself. After the groups fell into a rhythm, both groups had two people working independently without speaking much while the next tier participants (two in each group) were bonding in their task and self-directing, as the lead and colead had relaxed and no longer made decisions for the group. Both groups had one outsider who held a more defensive frame than the other participants (according to the DMIS; Bennett, 1993). In Group A, the outsider did not speak after she told her initial story and did not actively participate but rather observed (possibly a flight response). In Group 1, the outsider is better described as the antagonist who interfered with the group norm process, trying to deposit her ideas—verbally and visually—without success (possibly a fight response). Neither group accepted the outgroup members as equal partners in the cocreation, with the exception of some relationship-builders (support roles).

If leadership is described as the synergy between task-masters and relationship-builders, as in distributed-action and interaction-process theories of leadership (Johnson & Johnson, 2005), both groups had shared leadership—a fact of which the relationship-builders in each group (the supporter roles) were well aware. As graphic facilitators, the leads solicited information, summarized and consolidated the contribu-

tions offered by the group, structured and directed the group's efforts, provided the energy to motivate their peers, and thus coordinated the cocreation of meaning for the group. In return, the supporters listened, took turns more or less respectfully, assessed and worked with each other's emotional states, built relationship, engaged in the conversation, and offered improvements to the product, and thus assisted in achieving the group's goals through providing leadership of a different kind. Task leaders in both groups gave up power once the structure of the visual map was laid out and agreed upon, although the groups continued the established power relationships by checking in with the task leaders periodically to make sure they were still on track with the agreed-upon plan.

While the task-oriented leads and coleads in both groups were largely unaware of the complementary supporters who focused on relationship-building, the supporters themselves were not only aware of their leadership role but also made a conscious effort to build relationships in the background to assure the group's success. In Group A, this effort extended beyond taking care of the group to reaching out specifically to the out-group participant to pull her into the project. In Group 1, supporters stepped in and functioned as healers: often, when the other participants burst into dissonance, the healers waited for a silent moment and then stepped in with a calmness, excellent word choices, and good timing that helped the others find their center again. This masterful coordination added a calming element to the group process that was accepted by the other participants every time it was offered—and was a demonstration of leadership capacity beyond the scores in their assessment profiles. In addition, the Group 1 colead was also a supporter—she directed from the back as colead and a thought stimulator while also watching the group dynamic and building relationship.

Group Flow

The calm rhythm experienced by both groups toward the end of the cocreation process can be understood as the *flow state* (Sawyer, 2006), an energetic state entered into by participants in a creative activity when intersubjectivity and creative flow is reached (Purser & Montuori, 1994;

Sawyer, 2006). In such moments, the group does not need to speak to make decisions, but everyone just knows what to do. This flow state results in participants performing at their individual best and requires simultaneously paying attention to one's own tasks and to what others in the group are doing, and responding to each other in synchronicity. While diversity is an important element of group creativity, it is also necessary to have a common ground of "cultural knowledge and practices" (p. 156) so that group flow can occur. Groups in flow state have described their experience as "a timeless feeling [that] seemed to take over We were more at ease and patient with each other. People really seemed to be listening" (Purser & Montuori, 1994, p. 27). While in the flow state, group members are not conscious of passing time.

Despite the similarities in role development, the two groups had different energies that were reflected in their communication patterns. Group A had an easier time reaching and sustaining the flow state, their energy was calm and composed with spaces between their conversation acts, and they did not report experiencing any time pressure. Group 1's flow state was harder to establish and maintain, as it was often interrupted by the outsider who acted as an antagonist, and participants were very aware of time pressure. During the mapping process, Group 1 expressed emotionally charged communication patterns with overlapping communication that escalated into dissonance at times but never erupted into direct conflict.

Groupthink

The organizational group dynamics concept of *groupthink* (Johnson & Johnson, 2005) offers a different frame for the state in which group members agree. A groupthink mentality "is promoted when the group is highly cohesive, when it is insulated from outside criticism, when the leader is directive and dynamic, and when the group does not search for and critically evaluate alternatives" (Johnson & Johnson, 2005, p. 296). In groupthink, group members can be highly motivated to agree and therefore tend to inhibit discussion, emphasize agreement, and avoid disagreement or argument. While conflict can play a vital role in group

processes for effective decision-making utilizing the resources and varied positions in a group, *controversy* is defined as “conflict that arises when one person’s ideas, information, conclusions, theories, and opinion are incompatible with those of another person and the two seek to reach an agreement” (Johnson & Johnson, 2005, p. 326). Many factors may contribute to groups avoiding controversy in favor of concurrence, including “group norms [that] may block group members from engaging in intellectual conflicts” (p. 330). Those who dissent may experience “direct pressure ... to conform” (Johnson & Johnson, 2005, p. 297), and each group may have *mind guards* who “try to prevent dissenters from raising objections” (p. 297). These tactics may create the illusion of unanimity, in which “the silence of other members implies consent and agreement” (Johnson & Johnson, 2005, p. 297) and members may self-censor.

In this case study, groupthink played a strong role. Both groups had strong leaders and demonstrated a cohesive group mind apart from the outsider in each group. Groupthink analysis showed that the opinions of some members were either not heard or were suppressed to maintain the status quo, and both groups avoided controversy in favor of concurrence.

Group A had a much stronger instance of groupthink, which may have contributed to the group’s seemingly docile and compatible nature in comparison to Group 1. Group A described themselves as harmonious and experiencing what amounted to a flow state, working together without needing to speak. The group’s illusion of unanimity (Johnson & Johnson, 2005) was reflected in many statements made by Group A participants. All Group A members enthusiastically described the flow state—with the exception of the outsider, who was silent for most of Group A’s process. The other members of Group A talked about how they were all on the same page; however, it was the outsider’s silence and the group’s assumption that silence indicated agreement that allowed this illusion of unanimity to prevail. When asked whether the process of creating the stories and maps was agreeable to everyone or not, the supporting members of Group A became mind guards. They also alluded to aspects of self-censorship by suggesting that during the cocreation process, Group A may have been afraid to cross boundaries. Although Group A did not experience open conflict, controversy was avoided and unheard via self-censorship (Johnson & Johnson, 2005), particularly with the outsider in the group.

Group 1 did not have as many instances of groupthink as Group A, which may have been a factor in their experience of conflict in the group. However, Group 1 also emphasized in their gallery walk and the class debrief that group consensus was important when describing their process of choosing images. The conflict in Group 1 centered around the outsider's lack of conformation to the group norm, and participants demonstrated several dynamics of groupthink in response to the conflict, including "direct pressure on dissenters" (Johnson & Johnson, 2005, p. 297). Mind guards worked to silence objections when members of the group other than the lead took on the task of monitoring the outsider's participation in placing images onto the graphic panel. Rationalization (Johnson & Johnson, 2005) occurred when the outsider's image choice was removed from the graphic panel because it did not align with the groupthink. The outsider's occasional defense of Group 1's work during the debrief also demonstrated groupthink.

Cultural Indications

This study investigated cultural styles and intercultural sensitivity vis-à-vis cultural difference. With regard to cultural dimensions, Hofstede (2001) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) have studied, researched, and defined a variety of cultural dimensions that are defined and measured on polarized continua with two opposing orientations. The score received is one point on any of these continua where an individual/culture supposedly resides. All kinds of diagrammatic representations can be drawn from scores on different cultural dimensions to arrive at the profile of an individual/culture, which then can be compared with the profiles of other individuals/cultures.

Significantly, the behavior demonstrated in this study confirmed as many cultural scores as it denied them. The data suggested that participants, in general, may have had a wide range of possibilities in their cultural styles, and that their styles might change widely with different tasks and in different contexts.

Group A dynamics both supported and violated cultural stereotypes. Group A had a female lead from the dominant class (self-identified as US

Caucasian) who happened to be the most senior participant and a male colead from the dominant class (self-identified as white Irish); both demonstrated task orientation as a preference during the event. The other three members were people of color, two of whom were supporters and focused on relationship-building. Other Group A dynamics were not predictable based on cultural patterns. The two leaders from the dominant culture led in a completely nonlinear and intuitive style, and this group's visual map exposed this way of processing information holistically and unfolding it organically. Generally speaking, this way of working does not match the usual stereotype of Western culture as predominantly linear and focused on clock time. The fifth member of the group was an outgroup participant, female with Latin roots (stereotypically verbally active); her quietness and non-participation could not be fully explained by her cultural conditioning. Her cultural background as measured by Hofstede (n.d.) would indicate that she would not challenge the group or the leader and that she might lean toward going with the flow of the group.

The dynamic created by Group 1 fell outside stereotypical cultural frames, and their way of working was not characteristic of their cultural heritage as described by traditional theory generalizing cultures (e.g., Diller & Moule, 2005; Gay, 2000). Group 1 had a female, self-identified as African American, more task-oriented lead with a female, self-identified as Vietnamese/Chinese American, colead who simultaneously played a support role in relationship-building together with the only male in the group (who identified as a US Caucasian sober gay). The self-identified Russian-speaking Ukrainian Moldovan female participant from the former Soviet Union, who was also new to the United States, accepted the leaders easily and supported the group norm, but worked mainly individually. Group 1's outgroup antagonist self-identified as a white American female. All participants in Group 1 fell somewhat in the middle between task- and relationship orientation, and individual- and group orientation—implying some flexibility but more group- and relationship orientation than the average US score. The leads worked completely linearly and literally, and the group's map expressed this form of information processing. The only Caucasian male in Group 1 did not lead, and the only woman from the dominant class in Group 1 could not establish any authority, in contradiction of cultural stereotyping. The conflict between

the antagonist and the rest of the group, which was constantly on the verge of breaking out but mostly suppressed, may have been influenced by this—culturally speaking—nontraditional group hierarchy.

Group 1's members matched each other somewhat closely in group- and relationship-building, which indicated possibilities for harmony; however, conflict was experienced in this group. Both leads were in conflict with the antagonist—and were more oriented toward hierarchy than the antagonist, who was closer to equality. All three matched each other in a more direct communication style, which could explain their verbal communication pattern that seemed aggressive at times. The leads occupied the acceptance and adaptation stages (on Bennett's DMIS), which would indicate more flexibility regarding cultural difference than they demonstrated at times. One group member who occupied the DMIS stage of denial was the only one who did not notice any conflict in Group 1, or did not code the interaction pattern as conflictual. While it is easy to make a comment in defense of the outsider-antagonist by noting that she was marginalized (an ethnocentric move) by the rest of the group in response to her unique behavior, such characterization oversimplifies the reciprocal dynamic between the antagonist and the group. Both parties acted from ethnocentric positions, and neither party chose an ethnorelative response (e.g., voicing the problem or modifying behavior to better join with the other side).

However, overall, participants demonstrated a high degree of flexibility, were strongly cognizant of their own cultural complexity, and were genuinely interested in other cultures. Some even demonstrated an astonishing level of metacognition of their own awareness and of multiple perspectives as well as cultural complexity not described in the intercultural communication theories and models upon which this study was based (Bennett, 1986b; Hofstede, 2001; Peterson, 2004; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). Participants considered cultures as autonomous and also saw themselves as part of the larger community in their groups, the class, the institution, the city, and even as world citizens. As one member expressed, "I am part of society. I give back what I can. I take back. I am part of this world I believe that this world is worth saving and so I am going to contribute anything I can" (personal interview, p. 45).

Given the diversity of these participants, who each occupied multiple cultures (where cultures are described as fitting within boundaries), they can be described as *cultural hybrids*. Their behavior confirmed some scores and denied others, which suggests that cultural hybrids may be able to shift positions, behavior, and even identities at will, demonstrating behaviors in a range outside the traditional charts. This type of flexibility might be described as multipositionality, and the data also indicated that this flexible behavior may be contextually dependent. For instance, both groups had cultural hybrids in their composition with similar capacities and characteristics and established a similar intragroup hierarchy formed within the same system (institution), so their differences in behavior, group dynamics, and visual maps pointed toward the capacity to contextualize their identities and structure their behavior to the emerging group pattern.

Map Reflections

The groups' interaction patterns were projected into the artifacts they created (the visual maps)—and in which they were also reflected. Like a photograph, each visual map captured the group dynamics in a static visual representation. The groups cocreated meaning through their interaction pattern, not by who they were individually—the groups' communication patterns were projected into the gestalt of the visual maps, and the coconstruction of meaning was not found in the individuals' personal frames but in the communication pattern between them. The participants themselves were aware of and named the difference between the styles of the two groups; however, while Group 1 was aware that their linear visual map matched their communication pattern, Group A was surprised to hear that their stream of consciousness visual map reflected their interaction style as well.

Group A's visual map fully demonstrated their process as well as their attitudes and beliefs about the purpose of the activity. Their discussions flowed easily and they worked around each other as if they were performing a dance. Both the visual map and their process were completely void of tension, were harmonious, and expressed integration between foreground and background—the composition was even contained in

an organic border. Group A's visual map was easily accessed and held the attention of an audience by encouraging the eye to keep wandering through the visual landscape as if one were exploring a garden. The lead is ambidextrous, the colead is a very talented musician and songwriter, and the two supporters were fully focused on establishing and maintaining harmony in the group—all of which was noticeable in the visual map by its harmonious flow and balance, rhythmic qualities, and overall cohesive expression. In spite of not contributing directly and leaving little to no trace on the visual map itself, the outgroup member also participated in establishing and maintaining group harmony.

Overall, Group 1 worked literally in their representation of their experience, as well as methodically with the execution of the visual map, and their visual map also exposed their process, attitudes, and beliefs about the purpose of the activity. They were serious about the task, were trying to apply what they had learned in class about design principles, and paid close attention to details. The tension experienced by the participants (in their heated discussions followed by moments of silence) could clearly be felt when looking at their artifact. There were highs and lows in the otherwise horizontal movement from left to right, intense contrast between foreground and background, intense contrast between the white background and the intense colors, and sharp boundaries between the groupings.

In sum, the essence of the group process was completely and fully mirrored back to the groups in their visual maps. This essence demonstrated not only the patterns of interaction but also the information exchange and its modalities between participants, and thus represented the meaning of their process. This meaning is found not in the individual parts or even in the summation of the parts but in the gestalt of the entire map which is the same as the gestalt of the group's communication act.

Implications for DL

The findings of this case study support the potential multipositionality and contextuality of cultural hybrids and suggest that creative engagement methods—in particular, collaborative visual mapping—can be a

vehicle for designing DL opportunities. The below listed recommendations may be helpful to practitioners of DL.

1. Use creative engagement to reveal the capacities of all group members

The process of collaborative visual mapping can be helpful in assuring authentic representation for all members of a diverse group, as collaborative visual mapping is a dynamic, self-directed group visualization process unfolding in real time. The parallel to designing the conditions for DL structures to emerge is exactly in this point: the equal opportunity for participation for representatives from all functions and levels in the system, so that the group's optimal hierarchy structure emerges from self-organized creative action. This creative engagement allows participants to demonstrate and observe not only the various cultural frames present but also the associated capacity levels for leading and following available in the group through the process of visual mapping. The visual map itself depicts the group's shared reality and allows for different subjective interpretations of the cocreated meaning. The mapping process facilitates the coconstruction of meaning as well as the sharing of responsibility for leading and following in this collaborative dance. An argument can thus be made for the inclusion of creative engagement and collaborative meaning-making when designing conditions for the emergence of DL.

2. Engage group members creatively to stimulate flow state

The process of creative engagement in self-organizing groups holds the potential for flow state to emerge. Because this state has been described by participants in this study as "being lost in time, not needing to speak, and just knowing what to do," it may be helpful to amplify these aspects in the design of DL approaches, such as by asking members to work on their creative activity without speaking, leaving the time for completion flexible, and encouraging intuitive knowing through introductory activities that stimulate altered states (for instance, a short meditation).

3. Expanding from binary to multipositional models of leadership and followership

In this study, participants' capacities for cultural sensitivity were measured by several instruments, none of which could really capture the lived experience as observed in this context. The existing instruments were designed for measuring individuals in isolation, not interacting in live context—nor were they designed for diverse individuals with a high level of complexity interacting in polycultural environments. The learning here for fostering DL lies in the fact that measuring and predicting behavior is extremely challenging in fluid environments with cultural hybrids who occupy multiple positions of capacity and preferences simultaneously. The existing instruments for measuring individually and/or culturally determined preferences or styles may not be helpful; in fact, using them may limit group members' thinking and expectations.

These findings support the idea that the current events on the planet through globalization are changing how we need to study and represent cultural frames, so as to accommodate the experience of cultural hybrids who communicate virtually and face-to-face across the world. We do not yet know (or have researched) how individuals and cultures will behave in this new global dynamic upon contact, how their behavior changes in the context of ingroup situations and outgroup experiences, or what relationships cultural dimensions build to each other under various circumstances. The ten cultural hybrids in this study demonstrated multipositionality on the (usually binary) continua, and their positions may be fluid depending on the context and participants in creative activities (contextuality). Researching hybrid cultures interacting with each other simultaneously may be necessary in this dynamic. The resulting data might then reflect the reality of today's challenges and begin to solve the issues of emerging polyculturalism and transculturalism.

Similar to outdated understandings of cultural identity, the positions of leadership and followership should not be seen as binary (two opposite positions at the endpoints on binary continua). If this study is an indicator that static positions are artificial in terms of cultural

styles, the same multipositionality may be true for other styles, preferences, or capacities in the global context, such as leadership and followership positions. With regard to identity as leader and follower, those fostering DL would be well advised to embrace the opportunity for multipositionality (moving in and out of various positions as needed by the whole) and contextuality (taking different positions as needed by a shifting context, sometimes simultaneously).

4. Optimize group diversity to support DL

The results of this study suggest that diversity is key to DL. The cultural hybrids demonstrated flexibility in their identities and constructed their identities to support group success even as they helped coconstruct the emerging patterns on the visual maps—and leadership was demonstrated by all members in different ways. These observations suggest that groups practicing this type of leadership will require people with flexible cultural frames, flexible identities, and a high dose of self-awareness, who can expand and contract their own complexity as needed by the group task at hand and as useful for group composition. The lesson for fostering DL is to compose teams with as much diversity as possible so that this type of contextual multipositionality can guide the shifting of leadership, and so that participants move easily between leadership and followership.

5. Encourage the celebration of diverse perspectives

Because this study demonstrated that groupthink lead to the omission or suppression of potentially dissenting voices and the avoidance of controversy in favor of concurrence, it is recommended to encourage the expression of diverse perspectives to support healthy forms of DL. Diverse perspectives are easily accepted by the group when invited through activities that lead to critical evaluation of the group work, such as simple question frames, “what we might be missing ...” or “how we might be wrong ...” or in a more structured activity such as the tried method of de Bono’s (1985) *Six thinking hats*.

6. Expose the patterns of emerging interrelationships among group members through visual mapping

When creating conditions for DL, it is important to make group members' perceptions and abstract thinking patterns visible. Making internal representations visible outside the self allows a deeper understanding of the intentions and offerings of individuals, so that hierarchies and roles within the group can be negotiated authentically and transparently for the optimal desired outcome. While reading and analyzing the dynamics exposed through artifacts such as a collaboratively created visual map would require knowledge and skills in decoding embedded messages, people naturally perceive these dynamics through multiple senses. Seeing the group artifacts helps group members know themselves and their members better, allowing for their actions to be guided by these realizations—taking and exchanging leadership and followership not only when it fits their own personal preferences but also when their choices best contribute to the whole.

Facilitating a session for group members to self-organize a creative action can thus help members know and/or literally negotiate the roles needed in a successful team task, and allowing them to practice those roles as they desire. Group members should be invited to contribute and visually track and see their ideas coming to life on a life-size working wall, which allows the entire group to easily step in and out of the working space. There should be adequate space on the wall and in front of the wall for all group members to stand back and gaze into their landscape, so that they can experience themselves in it. As a diverse group practices this creative act and their capacity for flexibility, passing roles back and forth becomes more natural and group resources can be shared more easily.

When fostering DL, the focus should be on learning from the information gained through observing the emerging interrelationships between members (not the people themselves) and the interrelationships between the chosen roles (not the roles themselves). In DL groups, hierarchies in leadership and followership are constructed and dismantled, shared and exchanged, and guided by the shifting dynamics (the whole gestalt), not by individual actors (as would be the case in traditional leadership

practice). These emerging interrelationships can be seen in the gestalt of their artifacts, confirming that creative engagement can serve as a vehicle for both surfacing the underpinning individual and/or cultural assumptions, beliefs, and values, and seeing them played out in the visual depiction of the group dynamics.

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7

A Methodology for Enabling Collaboration Inspired by Enrique Pichon-Rivière

Martín Echavarría

Introduction

The current age of global interdependence in social, economic, and environmental terms, and the opportunity it brings, profoundly changes the way companies and organizations do their work. Because of today's global complexity, which is driven by digital disruption, industry convergence, and hyper-competition, we can no longer expect to form successful organizations “on the backs of individuals” alone but must also factor in group collaboration. Individual leadership coaching programs will not suffice without methods that support collaboration across teams, cross-functional groups, and entire business ecosystems. A critical component of building resilient and agile organizations is the ability of groups to learn by actively creating and innovating in this multifaceted business climate. To do this, we must grow our collaborative leadership capability

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while applying ourselves individually to contribute to its emergence so as to be successful in addressing the more complex challenges faced and opportunities afforded us. The purpose of this chapter is to describe a powerful facilitation methodology, inspired by the work of Enrique Pichon-Rivière, for guiding groups to develop collaborative leadership capability to work productively as cocreators and contributors to a more prosperous future.

Collaboration is about having a disciplined approach to decision-making and an emergent leadership capability which can be used in specific contexts and circumstances where there is greater complexity involved, occurring through many connections of actors within an organizational system, within an industry, or across multi-stakeholder groups. For example, when decision-making affects many people, their lives, jobs, wellbeing, and the environment. Collaboration is also useful when possible solutions are varied, emergent, and are cocreated as a direct result of the interactions, accommodations, dialogue, negotiations, and discussions from the actors that are causing the problems in the first place. It is also useful when there is a need for continued group work over a longer period of time that requires collective thought, increased input, adaptive intelligence such as in organizational partnerships, and alliances operating across industry, domains, geography, and culture. Finally, internally in organizations where dysfunctional self-sufficiency is causing organizational complexity, over-burdened structures reduce cooperation and collaboration horizontally across an organization or system. In all these instances, a group collaborative approach is the way forward.

Collaborative or distributive leadership,¹ a posteriori to any organizational alliance or organizational structure, conceives group leadership irrespective of individual leadership capabilities. Indeed, collaboration emerges only when individuals come together to work on tasks that they find important and through their collaboration work to actively resolve problems they collectively face and cocreate future opportunities together. In this respect, the group becomes the leader and through its interactions is able to actively respond to the challenges placed on it, irrespective of individual authority or power. From this perspective,

interactions emanate from the collective relational space cocreated in part explicitly and part implicitly by groups through inter- and intrasubjective communication. Founded on group theory, biology, cybernetics, systems thinking, social psychology, and practice, the approach described herein is a powerful way to enable group collaboration.

The Work of Enrique Pichon-Rivière

Enrique Pichon-Rivière is a world-renowned Argentinian psychoanalyst, social and group psychology theorist, recognized for his ground-breaking work and applied research in operative group processes, and a key contributor to thought on group collaborative leadership. Combining the theoretical frameworks of Lewin, Moreno, and Bion, Pichon-Rivière developed a methodology (*operative groups*) that can be applied to all kinds of group interactions. His work on operative groups focused first on therapeutic purposes. He then extended its application to all groups interested in achieving an outcome, based on their working together regardless of the domain of activity—for example, business, government, or social programs.

Like Foulkes, Pichon-Rivière embarked on serious experimental research on how groups interact and through his studies conceived a “theoretical, methodological and technical” (Adamson, [n.d.-a](#), p. 4) framework applicable to all kinds of group collaborations. His methodology helps map the intersubjective journey that groups must undertake to arrive at states of productive collaboration and partnership. It also helps them understand the challenges that groups face while providing a method to quantify group operability toward true collaboration. His approach is employed through a specific facilitative method and stance taken by a *partnership coach/integrator* to unravel patterns that block learning and communication and which hinder cooperation, change, and collaboration.²

The “Operative Partnership Methodology” (Echavarría, [2015](#), pp. 57–130) describes walking the journey toward *collaborative leadership* using the method and technique of Pichon-Rivière for addressing

the implicit and unconscious challenges faced by groups. Accordingly, “human beings are linguistic, social, emotional animals that co-invent a world through language” (Fisher, 2009) and thus their relationships respond actively to challenges.³ As such, the *group facilitator* employs this praxis for the group to identify, understand, and overcome the obstacles, relationship traps, and challenges that arise when several individuals try to work together (Tubert-Oklander & Hernández de Tubert, 2004, pp. 37–38). Methodological facilitation supports group acts of communication and commitment-making that lead to cooperative action and collaboration.

A Methodology for Enabling Group Collaborative Leadership

Pichon-Rivière used the term *conceptual referential operative schema* (CROS) (or *esquema conceptual referencial operativo*, ECRO) to frame the use of his methodology. The concept of a CROS refers to the entire system of knowledge (*cognitive and systemic*) and attitudes of groups (*relational and emotional*) derived from real-life experience. It is both an individual and a shared phenomenon. However, used within the context of the methodology, it is mainly referred to as a precondition of group operability which exists when a group understands itself well and can manage productively the complexities of collaboration. In this sense, it is also a process that groups undergo to arrive at place of operability—the group’s capability to take decisions, action, and actively learn through experience (Salvo, 2007, p. 5).

Peter Senge (1994, pp. 245–246) uses the Ladder of Inference to demonstrate how the minds of individuals work in breaking up experiences into parts and then move up the ladder, creating inferences and conclusions based on small slivers of experience. These slivers are broken down by individuals as they interact with reality and are used to make decisions and act in the environment. James Flaherty uses the term “structure of interpretation” (2010, p. 8) to define a related phenomenon as it concerns integral coaching and the concepts and ideas that individuals make about

the world around them. The structure of interpretation is that which moves individuals up the ladder of inference and organizes that to which they choose to pay attention. Pichon-Rivière would attribute the pattern and process of moving up the ladder of inference and the structure of interpretation as the CROS. The patterns of concepts and references that support our human operating “system” are made up of what the group perceives, thinks, feels, and does and constitute a fabric of human functioning. All these are similar concepts, although Pichon-Rivière’s methodology considers the CROS working both at the individual and group level. When groups come together, they must create and contain a common *Group-CROS* to become operative in the tasks they set for themselves. The coach/integrator uses both the concept of a CROS in the application of the *operative partnership methodology* and the Group-CROS that is woven throughout the journey toward collaboration.

Using Pichon-Rivière’s concept of the CROS with reference to any kind of collaboration, the *X-CROS* is made up of the following interrelated ideas that refer to any domain of work “X”:

The first term *conceptual* is concerned with the definitions or relations of the concepts of some field of enquiry rather than items of fact and allows for the wide generalization of ideas that occur in a particular industry or field applied to understand reality. In this case, and from the broadest point of view, we are talking about relationships and the shared context in which groups collaborate through their affiliation that also have a shared context. Individuals, groups, companies, and organizations collaborate based on specific objectives and based on their embeddedness within greater and greater fields of relationship. Conceptually, these different fields of relationship make up interdependence; through their interdependence they have an opportunity to collaborate. This refers to the super-structural aspects of any given domain and the concepts the facilitator uses in their application of the methodology. In addition, because the operative partnership methodology is a way of guiding facilitation and coaching, it is also made up of infra-structural aspects. These relate to the experiences and modes of approaching reality of

the coach/integrator, their way of being, stage of development, and of the group as they take on the process (Tubert-Oklander & Hernández de Tubert, 2004, pp. 50–51).

The second term *referential* relates to the act of referring to something, a certain part of reality. This means the act of referring to the activities pertaining to the field of activity in which the collaboration rests. In this respect, the *CROS* related to the operative partnership methodology is always referring to concrete experience which is being used as a guide for action. This means that it is always being tested with the group and modified based on its concrete experience and learning as it addresses its group activities. When the learning concords with the referential aspects of the *CROS*, the group and coach/integrator ratify the results and continue working and, in instances where learning discords, they rectify and shift their approach. In this sense, it is a process of theorizing experience and letting experience correct the theory, in a continued cycle of perception-reflection-action-new perception-praxis (Tubert-Oklander & Hernández de Tubert, 2004, pp. 51–52).

The third term *operative* involves the acts of ensuring that the concepts and references made are actually applicable to what is taking place with the group throughout the process. Here, operative refers to the acts of checking with reality that what is made explicit is supporting the group to become successful in meeting its objectives effectively. What makes the process operative is the methodology and the tools used. In this way, the method is applied across a series of meetings which allow for consistent facilitative adjustment based on what groups are facing and experiencing (The Oxford English Dictionary, Second Edition 1996, Oxford University Press, Edited by Judy Pearsall and Bill Trumble).

Finally, the term *Schema*, according to the Oxford Dictionary, is a conception of what is common to all members of a class; in this case, leadership development coaches, integrators, facilitators, and conveners guiding teams toward collaborative leadership.

CROS is a shared understanding and operative structure used to support groups through the process of convening them to work together. In this sense, it is a body or system of related doctrines and theories that serve to orient perception, thinking, and action in the formation of collaborative partnerships (Tubert-Oklander & Hernández de Tubert,

2004, p. 48). CROS is a reflective process of adaptation to the real world as the concepts and ideas are tested by groups and supported through facilitation. This includes aligning concepts for the eventual possible structure being developed with the focus toward developing a common understanding of approach and with the goal of developing an *operative partnership group*. The latter is a group that is able to work operatively and productively in partnership to establish a self-sustaining and self-generating collaboration. As such, the methodology is also a referential inquiry for the coach/integrator to help guide their own thoughts on how to support the group through specific facilitative interventions.

In beginning the task of facilitation and coaching, the coach/integrator approaches the work with their own personal CROS, that is, how the facilitator understands and approaches groups. Over time, the coach/integrator's own CROS is reflected upon and continuously reevaluated so that the acts of facilitation support the continual emergence of the particular Group-CROS that is critical for the group to become an operative partnership group. By critically reviewing and reflecting on meetings and employing the methodology, the coach/integrator works with their original CROS but also modifies it as they learn throughout the process. It is a reflective and inclusive process where the facilitation work is part of the group's development as well as being separate from it.

Operative Partnership Methodology

The operative partnership methodology is an applied expertise built around a technique that in itself is reflected upon during the process of building collaborative groups. An operative partnership group is essentially a living entity with the capacities to colearn, react actively to the challenges of reality, and enter a state of productive functioning. The technique that supports groups to adapt to reality and change accordingly through the partnership journey is employed as “know-how” to build operative partnership groups, not as “know what,” and requires specialized training and development on the part of the coach/integrator.

As such, this know-how involves understanding and discerning the moment-to-moment challenges that teams experience as they walk through the partnership journey. According to Pichon-Rivière, when

groups are formed, the participants desire to be part of the group while simultaneously maintaining their individuality. They want to contribute to the group but not be engulfed by it. These internal and unrecognized desires play a role in the ability of the group to come together. For participants to work successfully as an operative partnership group, they must share their personal as well as organizational interests and needs, so that they may be able to support each other and the group to be successful in building their collaboration. The process of braiding individual needs and wants into the work allows the teams coming together as a group to further motivate and mobilize together. The “needs” considered here are the desire to be heard, to be respected, and included as important contributing members. The “wants” relate to the career and professional aspirations members hold for themselves as the collaboration is created.

Consequently, as teams become consolidated groups, the change that they experience and in many respects cocreate supports them to grow as a group and individually as well. As such, the group exists concretely as a result of its relationships and capacities for greater levels of relatedness. Operative groups, according to Pichon-Rivière, are those that work on the activities they assign themselves, while also proactively traversing interrelational challenges inherent beneath the surface. These challenges are intersubjective relationship obstacles that are experienced as anxieties shared by the group. For the group to become operative, it must accommodate its members to each other and grow internally for tasks to be completed.

The process of arriving at an operative partnership group has additional challenges. This process is one of accommodation and dynamic creative acculturation as the group develops its own norms and forms of cooperating and working together. It becomes a group that will result in a partnership that will eventually become self-correcting and self-generating. Additional challenges also involve the fact that the group itself can be in a state of flux. On one hand, the group represents the interests of larger groups while also slowly becoming part of a unique partnership group that itself needs to function. It is therefore the work of the group to be able to openly address the inherent challenges of facing potentially competing interests of their respective points of view, companies, or organizations. The group also needs to be able to address them productively together,

thus becoming an operative partnership group. In seeing challenges as something shared rather than concrete obstacles that split teams, the group can learn to tackle them effectively. However, resistance to change and the emotionality experienced as the group comes together never truly goes away. By becoming better at dealing with change and accommodating to the continued challenges faced as a group, the partnership over time becomes a self-correcting and self-generating entity.

Basic Concepts of the Methodology

To apply the methodology, there are basic concepts that the coach/integrator needs to consider: the *interactions* between participants in the group, the *learning* they must engage in together, the *relating* that occurs as the group interacts and learns, the *cohesion* that begins to happen as teams produce, and what finally *emerges* as a result (Ritterstein, 2008, p. 2).

Interactions are the behavioral communication that occurs in the group, both verbal and nonverbal. Nonverbal communication may include rolling the eyes, looking angry, using posture, and such like. In verbal communication, the words, concepts, and tone, are taken into consideration. Interactions involve a patterned set of communications and even the silence that may occur from time to time. Frequently, needs are not communicated through verbal exchange but through nonverbal means, in either conscious interactions or unconscious exchanges, all of which provide valuable insights into what is actually occurring in the relational field.

Learning is a process elaborated throughout the journey. According to Pichon-Rivière, learning involves an internal integration that occurs in the group over time. The learning either occurs within each person and/or within the group as they confront the real challenges in building partnerships and learning what can and cannot be done. Communication is the road to learning. In certain respects, it is the rails that allow partnerships to travel forward through learning. The process of learning also relies heavily on the contact that is made in the group, stimulating them to ask relevant questions and elaborate together on possible solutions.

It is up to the group to be able to reflect on experiences and share interpretations and ideas openly to build the right structure for their collaboration. Through relating, the group is able, as a whole, to find creative and innovative solutions to opportunities in the external environment where collaboration is needed.

Relating refers to the bond established in the group through the repeated interactions and deepening relationships created as the group learns to work together. It is a much stronger connection than the simple interactions that occur from time to time between individuals. This deeper relating involves a real commitment to each other and the group, directed toward a common goal to build something together. In the relating, each participant's individuality is not lost in the group; instead, the personal strengths and attributes of each individual remain theirs and are leveraged toward a unique and shared process of colearning and cocreation.

Cohesion happens when individuals shift their focus from themselves to others, decentering their focus toward the group, recognizing the subjectivity of others' perspectives and their respective needs. The capacities to recognize people as legitimate others, removing stereotyping, allows for greater levels of relatedness to develop and, as a result, greater abilities of the group to work productively together. Through cohesion, it can shift interpretations of reality and as such mobilize capacities to create more innovative solutions.

Emergence refers to what is happening in the moment, arising from the group, based on interactions from moment to moment. Emergence relates to both what is going on and what is just about to happen. The coach/integrator supports the group process to move from one state of relatedness to another, considering what emerges during the group's interactions. This provides the coach/integrator with input into what is occurring in the relational field and which interventions may be appropriate.

The operative partnership methodology applies techniques that allow the coach/integrator to discern the emergent elements when groups interact. What is emergent is analyzed through the CROS, where specific tools are applied to help the coach/integrator understand the conditions of resistance that groups undergo throughout the journey and in every meeting, thus supporting the group's cohesion over time. The technique is employed with the understanding of oscillating living systems. Progress is

not always discernable but the coach/integrator knows that something is always happening and this provides insights for facilitation to support the positive and reinforce elements that allow for successful collaboration. To do this, the coach/integrator first orients the work toward the moments of relatedness that occur in every meeting throughout the journey.

Pre-task, Task, and Project Phases of Group Relatedness

Social scientists have tried over the years to map the evolving pattern of relatedness that teams undergo to better understand how to support them to be successful when they tackle tasks set before them. These patterns in certain respects are discernable and yet unpredictable in that they can change from moment to moment. Several thinkers (Isaacs, 1999; Lewin, 1948; Tuckman, 2001; and others) have used a variety of tools and approaches to help situate themselves during group meetings and discern the patterned progression of social movements that teams go through at every meeting. Pichon-Rivière adopted the conception of *pre-task phase*, *task phase*, and *project phase*. Each has particular discernable activities and communication patterns that emerge in a dynamic way every time a group meets, and in fact every time individuals meet for any purpose (Fig. 7.1).

The beginning, pre-task phase involves a kind of splitting of thinking, acting, and sensing. Culturally conditioned, in the United States it can be perceived as speaking about the weather or other such topics. Bill Isaacs refers to this as politeness and shared monologs and will include what he also refers to as conflict (1999, p. 261). For our purposes, these monologs are perceived as talking about something, pontificating about strategies, and testing who has more power and control, but not really getting to work on the task at hand. In its productive form, this can be experienced as arriving and joining, taking time to connect through the facilitated



Fig. 7.1 Pre-task, task, and project phases

check-in process and establishing a clear understanding of the challenges and goals of the meeting. In its less productive aspects, it can last forever, where no work is accomplished and no efforts are made to consider the purpose and goals of meeting. From a group perspective, no risk is taken to authentically engage. Systemically, the conversation appears to be disjointed, not flowing, with little to no give-and-take of ideas and even less relating. Cognitively, it is characterized by an atmosphere of “not knowing what will happen” and emotionally it reflects the unease that results from not-knowing.

Pichon-Rivière stated that the unease shows itself in two basic forms, fear of losing something, particularly a social and relational structure, and fear of being attacked, for whatever reason, perhaps by others in the group. Additionally, for groups that enter the pre-task phase and do not know each other, the resistance to the task and to connecting in the pre-task phase contains a higher level of anxiety and may also show itself as patterned conversations of fear and control (which is perceived as the “perfect” remedy to relieve the basic unease felt by the group but, in fact, is yet another obstacle to overcome).

These patterned conversations of fear and control produce the sensation of things being tied in a knot. Oftentimes this knot is created by the emotional and systemic interplay between the group’s challenge to deal with its fears and insecurities in having to reveal interests and intentions, and the perceived challenges that may result from doing so. Here there is a tension between the desire to collaborate and the fears of approaching another person whom you do not fully know or understand, knowing still that they are fundamental to the process and its overall success. Due to these challenges, many groups resort to various defense routines which restrict the team from entering the actual task phase. For the coach/integrator, these stereotypical fears of the pre-task phase are simply defensive routines of the group which need facilitative support through the application of several possible interventions. They occur in all groups and throughout the process, and become most acute when groups enter a learning phase.

When the group enters the task phase, participants confront the realities of working together and begin to operationalize as a group to achieve the goals of the meeting and approach the work at hand. In the task phase,

they begin to bond. Conversations develop where positions and ideas emerge simultaneously, at times creating constructive and nonconstructive conflict. From a relational point of view, the “others” in the group become real people and the group begins to integrate ideas and have shared conversations. Still, there exists a kind of rehearsal of roles and conditions that can be limited and which results in low levels of real productivity vis-à-vis the challenges of building a successful collaboration. No longer are there shared monologs where there is essentially no subjective other, but instead a give-and-take of information sharing, the beginnings of collaboration between individuals who are actively working together.

According to Pichon-Rivière, the final stage is the project phase. Here the “new” emerges. This is where change is produced by the group through its abilities to learn together. Change can come in the way the group conceptualizes the challenges at hand, produces new approaches and new ideas that help resolve the pressures of relating, and actually creates together. Here, without losing the individualities of each member, it comes into relationship as a cohesive unit. Learning takes place in a dynamic interplay of communication and creation. It is not that there is no conflict of ideas in the field, but rather there exists greater capability to tackle such challenges, inquire into them, and find solutions together. The project phase implies a kind of break from past relational norms and patterns, which can still become stuck and stereotyped. The reason for this is the production and collaboration implicit in the project phase, which requires that individuals contribute with their full selves. This implies that they engage authentically and contribute to the group their knowledge, experiences, and expertise. Through the collective contributions of each member, in the project phase they have the potential really to make a qualitative leap in terms of productive change and relational depth. Whatever potential there is here is founded on the group’s ability to access all their capacities as well as play the roles assigned to them as participants.

Assigned Roles of the Methodology

There exist three roles in the application of the methodology, the *partnership coach/integrator*, the *observer*, and the *participants*. The first two

roles work to employ the operative partnership methodology and help the coach reflect on the X-CROS. The partnership coach/integrator role is to assist the group to become operative through facilitation and coaching. The coach/integrator works on the group to set the conditions for successful relating and helps it establish appropriate boundaries of interaction. By working on the group, the coach/integrator guides the conversation and interaction by applying the methodology and tools. The second support role is that of a nonparticipant. The observer works with the coach/integrator by chronicling the interactions and conversations of the group and reporting on them at the end of meetings. This information is used by the coach/integrator as well as by the group to examine and reflect on interactions and operability. The coach/integrator uses the information derived from the meeting chronicles taken by the observer to build future facilitated interactions that help the group face relational challenges it could be avoiding and supporting the group to address and proactively work with emergence by introducing the group to its own functioning.

The third role is that of the participants. Their role is to actively work within the frame established by the facilitation and to focus on the tasks at hand. From a functional perspective, in certain meetings you may have subject matter experts while in other meetings there could be various knowledgeable individuals. Their functional roles are of course important but only in as far as the need to have particular expertise to do the work set out for the meeting exists. The focus of the operative partnership methodology is that the group works well together and becomes able to catalyze the contributions of everyone, regardless of function. In fact, if overly emphasized in the relating, titles and even functional roles can have a negative effect because they presuppose patterns of communication and even decision-making that may not help the team to enter the task and project phases.

Nevertheless, there will be moments in the collaboration process where functional roles are needed, titles are respected, and reporting structures are taken into consideration. These ultimately help structure and operationalize collaboration. This is all necessary. Yet again, in as far as the operative partnership methodology is concerned, the focus of the facilitation is to support the optimal functioning of the whole group from

a social-relational perspective. Teams function effectively as they tackle challenges and find solutions to obstacles. In this respect, effective means that communication lines are open and not stuck in dynamics of relating that either sabotage progress or curtail learning.

Consequently, there is something implicit here in the operative partnership methodology: the democratization of all individuals in the group as equal contributors to the task. As far as facilitation is concerned, all participants are equal and are treated equally. The coach/integrator does not favor the opinions of one person over another or help support the group versus an individual. The coach/integrator's role is to use the tools of the methodology to help transition from one phase to another across the partnership journey. The focus is on the social-dynamic roles that emerge when individuals begin to establish group norms by working together in developing a partnership.

Unassigned Social-Dynamic Roles

Although the individuals of the group have their assigned roles as participants, when they start to work together they begin to play out unassigned roles which occur unconsciously and are either assumed or not by the participants. These unassigned roles were discovered by Pichon-Rivière through his years of study with groups. They are the architectural construction by which individuals either coalesce into an operative group or not. The roles emerge from the network of interactions within the group and are actually natural occurrences as the group itself begins to function from its fears and anxieties, trying to resolve the dynamics of inter- and intrarelate. As its anxieties and fears are resolved, the team begins to function better and has greater capacity to face changes and challenges. From the third-person point of view of the group facilitator, they are simply patterns of communication and relationship that the group expresses as it begins to work together. They are expressed from moment to moment as the group accommodates itself and faces the challenges inherent in cooperating and cocreating. These unassigned social-dynamic roles are the following:

The spokesperson

This is the role of the person in the group that voices the implicit challenges it faces in an explicit way and brings awareness to the obstacles the group is facing and having difficulty resolving. This person elucidates what is occurring in the group, the fantasies the group could be experiencing, and the anxieties and needs of the group as a whole.

The scapegoat

This role occurs when the group does not accept what is said by the spokesperson and converts that individual into the scapegoat, rather than addressing the issue at hand. At the moment it happens, the person will be attributed the negative and unprocessed concepts that the group is rejecting. The activity of scapegoating an individual is an emotional relief valve on the part of the group that expresses the emerging mechanisms of segregation against that member.

The leader

In counterbalance to the scapegoat, the leader is the person on whom the members of the group deposit only positive aspects. At times, this occurs due to the person's title or position of power in the group but not always.

Change leader

This role emerges when the group accepts what the spokesperson says, converting this person into a member that expresses what the group feels and, from this role, contributes and promotes group work.

The saboteur

This is the role assumed by a member who makes change difficult by sabotaging the work. Here the person attempts to assume leadership in order to resist change.

In order for the group to be successful in tackling the challenges of alliance-making, or any other collaborative endeavor, the unassigned roles need to be mobile and flexible. When an individual consistently assumes the *leader role* or any other of the unassigned roles, they structure and solidify group interactions and restrict group flexibility. These roles need to rotate among the group as they communicate, interact, and relate together. A group is never fully formed and as such is not a static entity. Rather, it is a phenomenon of constant change and movement that involves a process of structuring, change, and restructuring. Consequently, what supports this process

is the group's ability to work through its own contradictions and to resolve those contradictions through a dialectic process of holding tensions of conflict and disagreement that help the group arrive at states of flow (the project phase) and collective collaboration. The group's capacities to address deeper and deeper levels of contradictions through continued conscious and authentic relating allow states of collective flow to emerge more often.

Conscious and authentic engagement is needed because relational tensions tend to function below the surface as a result of unaddressed potential contradictions. This was conceptualized by Pichon-Rivière as the *implicit*, which, through the use of the methodology, is brought to the surface and made *explicit*. The tensions are not about the competition between opposing strategies but rather, at a deeper level, made of the internal relational contradictions that are consistently faced by members subjectively relating with one another. These contradictions can involve the dialectic and oppositional forces of individual needs versus group needs, the old versus the new, change versus keeping things as they are, and many other factors experienced by the group. They are always partially elaborated because they are emergent and are part of the dynamics of living systems. Operating "in a permanent mutually transforming relationship with the world. His "implacable interplay" implies an inevitable transformation of the world, fundamentally binding and social, for the achievement of his desires and purposes, achievement that in turn will have effects of transformation of the subject" (Adamson, G. (n.d.-b), 2017, p.2). As such, the process of partnering is never complete and always in a state of partial disequilibrium and change (Adamson, G. (n.d.-b), 2017, p.1).

However, should roles become fixed, the group can enter a state of dysfunction. This is evidenced by the leader always being the same person, and the one who sabotages always becoming someone that everyone considers to be the naysayer. In these circumstances, ineffective patterns of relating become solidified and the group loses its ability to self-correct and self-generate ideas that lead the work forward. Pichon-Rivière (2011) mentions that to avoid structured dysfunction, groups should bring their heterogeneity into the open. Individuals may have similar ethnic and cultural backgrounds but different life experiences, parents, education, and come from varied social-economic realities, and so on. While heterogeneity supports operative group functioning, homogeneity sabotages productive work. The role of the coach/integrator is to help the participants

express their heterogeneity and unlock the dynamics of homogeneity that often stifle group progress and operability.

If not addressed appropriately, dysfunctional and solidified patterns of relating become unprocessed dynamics that leak into the greater system of relationships and can cause eventual failure. Ultimately, it is the conscious process of supporting productive functioning that helps teams to establish a successful collaborative structure based on a strong partnership and the abilities to respond to the continued challenges of human systems. To do so, the coach/integrator uses the *inverted cone* tool to understand the group's progression toward operability and its ability to put into practice the relational dynamics of a successful alliance.

Inverted Cone to Evaluate Group Progression

To facilitate collaborative partnerships, it is important to know what is going on from meeting to meeting and to determine whether there is progression in terms of the group's operability, that is, the directionality of group relatedness. The inverted cone is a tool made up of explicit and implicit vectors (Fig. 7.4) that helps the coach/integrator understand such group progression in a way that can be discerned over time.

The explicit (Fig. 7.2) involves all that can be discerned and understood in the context of the alliance group and experienced directly by the coach/integrator and others; in other words, what is manifest in the group. The implicit involves that which is implied, unexplored, and lies beneath the surface, that which is affecting the team's operative functioning; that is, what is latent in the group (Fig. 7.5).

The *inverted partnership cone* is a visual tool used by the coach/integrator to understand group progression over time toward operability and partnership. The progression is qualified from meeting to meeting by the coach/integrator and observer (Fig. 7.2).

Affiliation and membership is the first step groups must take to begin their journey toward operability and partnership. Here, the members of the group become associated with one another by a shared interest in performing a given task. As the affiliation grows, the participants feel a sense of membership as one would expect from a group that begins to commit

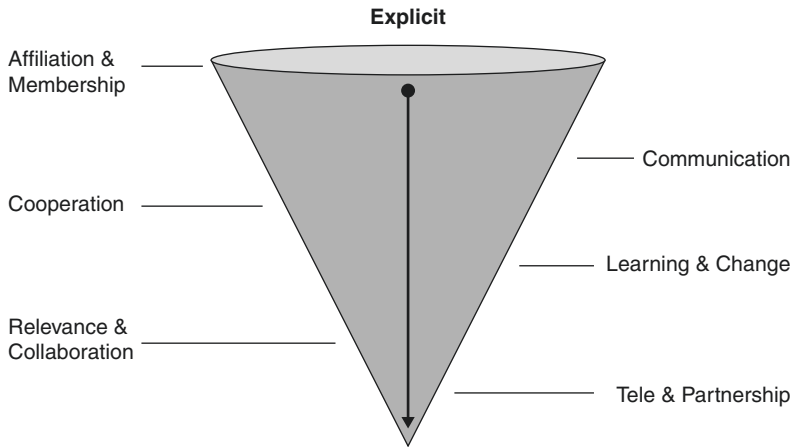


Fig. 7.2 The explicit—inverted partnership cone

toward a particular desired outcome or goal. Through their shared affiliation and membership, the groups begin to communicate actively. It is through the rails of the groups *communication* that they cooperate together (Iñón, 1997, p. 2). Interestingly enough, in biological terms, emotions are corporal dispositions that determine actions which are expressed through language and communication (Maturana & Verden-Zoller, 1996, p. 6). According to Maturana, communication in all its forms is fundamentally emotional to the individual and the social sphere of relating. As such, interactions by and between people are always emotional interactions that are conveyed through language where limbic resonance is taking place. This means that self-affecting inter- and intrarelate emerge from group emotional cohesion and dynamism. Thus, body disposition and movements speak louder than words. If there is any doubt as to the clarity of communication, the body is the place to look. It operates under the radar of human consciousness in the human nervous system.

Through their *cooperation*, the group begins slowly to address the new and develop the capacities to learn together and traverse change. Through their *learning*, they begin to discern what is important and relevant to their collaboration, discarding ideas that do not work and accommodating each other's needs and wants. However, optimizing group capacity for learning demands that emotions flow. As gateways to learning, emotions need to

circulate in the group and be openly communicated. Allowing them to be expressed enables productive intersubjective work to occur. Through language and emoting, real and authentic conversations take place. Anger, frustration, happiness, joy: all emotions are always the right emotions to have. No emotion is fundamentally “negative” or “positive.” It is in the leaking or acting out of those emotions in the form of mixed messaging, verbal attacks, hyper-happiness, and other unproductive ways that the group reduces its power to mobilize real learning and adaptive change. Ambition, competitiveness, anger, envy, aggression, and fear reduce group intelligence and restrict the domain of openness in consensual conversation (Maturana & Verden-Zoller, 1996, p. 6). However, no group can change and learn if “negative” emotions are just bottled up or put under the table, or monitored or policed by rigid policies of engagement introduced by the facilitation. Groups cannot mobilize if “positive” emotions are held back either. All emotions are needed for real and true learning to emerge, through consensual conversations focused on cocreation and problem-solving (Maturana & Verden-Zoller, 1996, pp. 1–8). Consequently, the group establishes a field of relationship that has a certain emotional depth and amplitude created by emoting together. The result for the group is an opportunity for learning and becoming together as they work through different domains of reality in their interactions with others, explicitly or implicitly, according to the flow of their emoting (Maturana, 1988, p. 22).

Through their shared state of *relevance*, they slowly incorporate *Tele* (pronounced /telé/), the members’ positive or negative desire and emotionality to continue to work well together. According to J. L. Moreno, the *Tele* may be the potential that arises when individuals truly come together (Fox, 2008, p. 27) and form a partnership. It may never become active unless individuals are brought into proximity, each with a degree of sensitivity to the same *Tele*, from total indifference to a maximum of positive response (Fox, 2008, p. 27). *Tele* refers to a kind of disposition that one has toward another and which resonates with past experiences and/or reactions (Iñón, 1997, p. 8). Positive *Tele* means people would say they enjoy working with other members of the team and would choose to do so. Should there be a negative *Tele*, people not wanting to work together because of some triggered response to others would result in a

very different kind of operative partnership group. This is not to say that they would not be able to function productively, but that the relating of the group would be markedly different. Furthermore, negative *Tele* could become an obstacle for the group and the alliance that needs to be worked through. Of course, a positive *Tele* results in a greater capacity for learning and a better overall climate. The group acquires a special structure, a unique operative disposition for the task (Pichon-Rivière, 1985, 2011 pp. 231–232).

The implicit vectors relate to the unseen and undiscovered elements of the group that operate underneath the explicit and yet are ever-present (Fig. 7.3). When undisclosed, they restrict the altitudinal development of the group from spiraling productively down to deeper levels of relatedness (Fig. 7.3). These implicit forces include the *unspoken conflicts* of strategy and ideas that result from *fixed ideas and unexplored assumptions* about how to develop the alliance. Fixed ideas and unexplored assumptions are not disclosed because they inevitably mask potentially *undisclosed intentions* and *individual needs*. Deeper down the implicit cone lie *value systems and cultural norms* that come from the group's *historical perspectives* and also play a role in how the *Tele* is ultimately expressed.

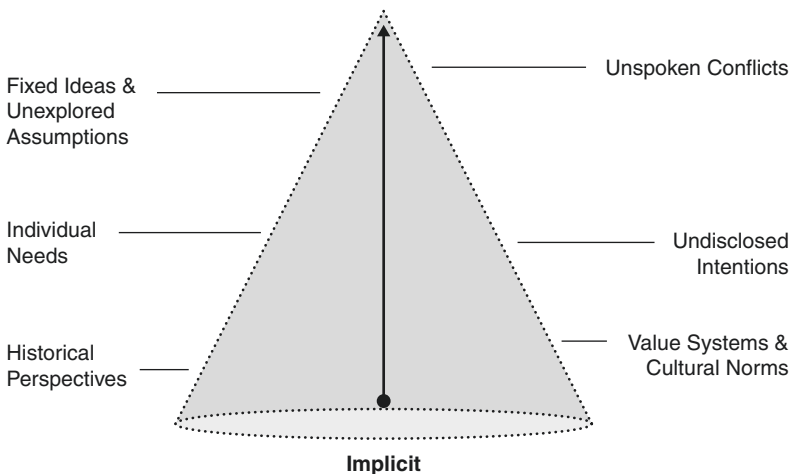


Fig. 7.3 The implicit—inverted partnership cone

Consequently, through active and reflective facilitation, the group makes explicit what is implicit (Fig. 7.4). In so doing, it reveals to the group the hidden elements that allow it to coalesce through transparency and trust into a cooperative and then collaborative partnership. Still, tension does not go away simply because of the united vectors. As relationships deepen, the group’s capabilities and capacities to deal with challenges and opportunities become greatly enhanced, and greater amplitude in each explicit vector builds greater capability for collaborative decision-making and collective action.

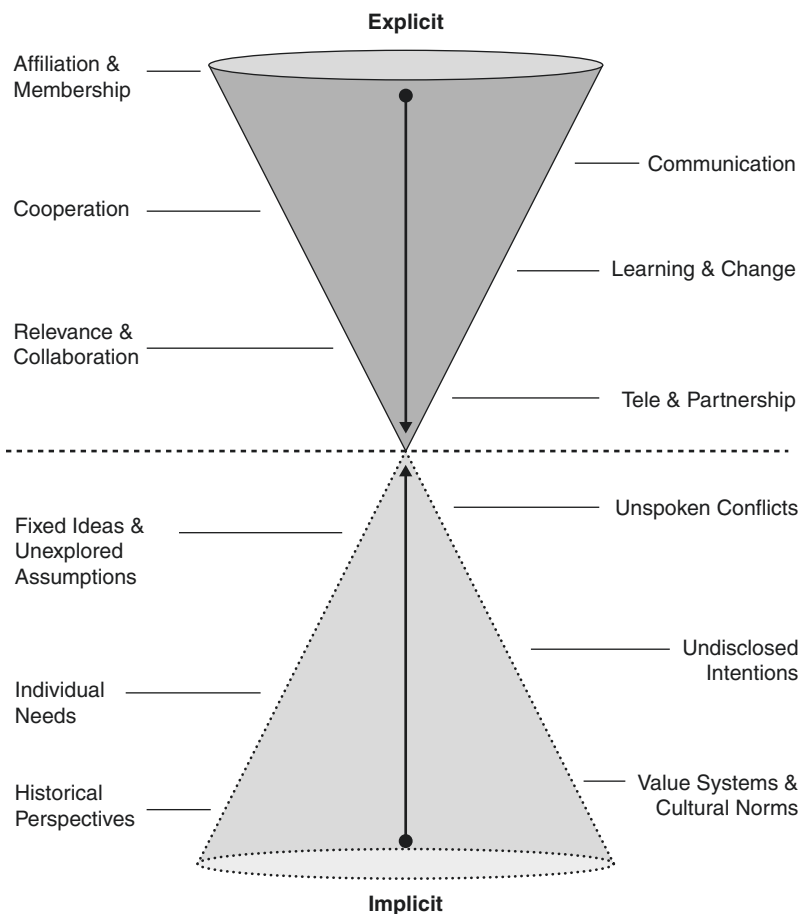


Fig. 7.4 Inverted partnership cone

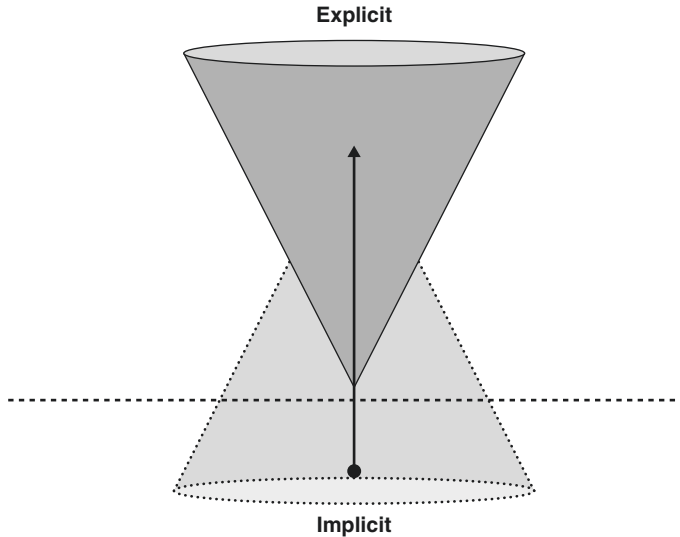


Fig. 7.5 Inverted partnership cone—implicit becoming explicit

The coach/integrator making the explicit implicit helps solidify a partnership that has the capability to establish a self-correcting and self-generating structure (Fig. 7.5). As the group makes the implicit more explicit, it is able to resolve obstacles operating under the surface that curtail group operability.

Process Used in Applying the Method

After each working session, the partnership coach/integrator conducts a conscious and structured reflection process incorporating the operative partnership methodology and working through their personal inquiry. To do this, the coach/integrator reflects on what happened in the meeting, including any important personal thoughts and feelings that arose during the facilitation, then chronicles the most significant issues to enter into a deeper inquiry into what happened. The coach/integrator reflects on what they were trying to do for the group, how it responded, and what facilitative or coaching strategy was implemented. As the coach/integrator reflects deeper on their own operability, they also inquire into why they felt the way they did and what informed them to take certain

decisions, as well as what they could have done to improve the situation. Both action inquiry and action reflection open a level of personal understanding into the X-CROS so that they may grow in capacity to enable group operability.

As part of their task, the partnership coach/integrator analyzes group operability by chronicling each meeting and mapping the group's progression through the inverted cone. They review the emergent roles and determine the group's progression through the task, pre-task, and project phases. In doing so, the partnership coach/integrator asks themselves questions that support this process, such as whether the group is truly progressing or simply delaying the more difficult conversations. Is the group resolving differences or glossing over them? What else could be occurring within the group? What is a potential obstacle to success? This information is then used to prepare for follow-up meetings to ensure continuity and determine the best structure for future facilitations. In a continuous spiraling circle, the group becomes more productive and, over time, establishes its own operability as a result of these strategies.

Meeting chronicles, prepared by the partnership coach/facilitator or the observer, if there is one, serve a double purpose. The first is to recount group occurrences from previous meetings to help the group reflect on progress and coordinate activities. For the partnership coach/integrator, they are a key tool for analyzing, as well as for recounting the activities and work done, along with the framework and observations of the group that include communication, points of contention, disagreements, positions, and emotions. The partnership coach/integrator uses the vectors of the inverted cone as a guide to writing the chronicle of the meeting.

Conclusion: The Creation of a Group-CROS

It is through active facilitation that the particular Group-CROS of the collective is woven over the course of the journey toward collaborative leadership. Once set in place, it is put into practice as a working social-relational structure that has the capacity to evolve over time and to expand. Like a social tapestry woven by the interaction of the group, it sets up the potential for establishing continued collaborations that will

succeed over time and can achieve further development and evolution well after an initial collaborative structure is established. In this way, the group has experienced the operative partnership methodology and develops the behaviors and capabilities to actively distribute decision-making and leadership so that the group itself becomes the leader, able to take productive collective action based on individual, group, and organizational goals.

Final Thoughts on Using the Methodology

Because Pichon-Rivière's work is centered around an applied methodology, any broad range of techniques and interventions can be used with the method to guide groups toward a state of collaboration and partnership. In this respect, the operative partnership methodology can be applied to any group. However, the decision to do so should be based on certain basic characteristics, especially when there is complexity in the system and the solutions are not readily known; when the need to collaborate is more important, relevant, and obvious than the need to simply transact through simple and straightforward cooperation or self-sufficiency; when teams, cross-functional groups, or business partners work over longer periods of time and must meet goals whose attainment has several possible options and require innovative emergent responses.

Finally, enabling such collaborative capability rests on the ontological development of the coach/integrator. They must be committed to a life of personal development and reflection, and understand personal triggers to effectively support teams to operationalize without being affected by the group's affinities or dislikes. The operative partnership methodology asks that they be emotionally aware and able to sustain the difficult conversations they elicit, in order to discern the implicit and thereby tackle group challenges below the surface. In this way, the coach/integrator is instrumental in enabling the capability and behaviors necessary to innovate by eliciting interactions that lead to better decision-making and the capacity to colearn and cocreate.

Acknowledgments Thank you to LID Publishing for granting the right of use.

Notes

1. Collaborative leadership is defined as the capability of a group to enter states of learning where they can distinguish collectively between actions that should or should not be taken. In this respect, leadership is distributed across group members so that the group itself becomes the leader.
2. The term “integrator” comes from the work of Yves Morieux and Peter Tollman of Boston Consulting Group. The use of integrators as the second simple rule involves a person that works horizontally in an organization, supporting group work integration and managing organizational complexity (Morieux & Tollman, 2014, pp. 55–84).
3. Pichon-Rivière’s Operative Group method involves working with groups over a series of work-related facilitated sessions. Throughout the sessions, a facilitator and passive observer chronicle the interactions of each session and read their interpretations to the group before each meeting. These interpretations, using the tools described herein, provide a powerful way for groups to come face to face with their functioning so they may shift and change into a more productive way of collaborating.

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8

Human Developmental Processes as Key to Creating Impactful Leadership

Graham Boyd and Otto Laske

Introduction

The extant literature assumes that distributed leadership, shared leadership, and self-governance (whatever it is labeled) are solely a matter of organization design. Adopting a *constructivist* viewpoint, here we also consider them from the perspective of adult developmental stages and phases. In such a perspective, two shared leadership circles using the same organizational design differ in effectiveness since they are composed of individuals of different stages of maturity and phases of cognitive development in terms of how they internally construct the “real world.”

Adult stages of development determine behavior based on individuals’ “frame of reference” (FoR, i.e., the way the world is constructed

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by individuals). They holistically determine how effective a particular circle can be, both in terms of personal bonding (personal process) and complexity handling (task process). The developmental aspect helpfully differentiates the notion of “shared” leadership, making the duality of leader and follower at once more realistic and strategic. It also opens up issues of required transformation far beyond organization design and transcends the fixation on the Task House where circles’ goals and competences reside. The Task House refers to all of the activities in an organisation that are purely related to work tasks; and distinct to the activities related to collaboration between people, and the activities of each individual to maintain and develop themselves. See below for more.

A constructivist viewpoint also introduces the opportunity to value developmental conflicts as natural tensions arising from a human drive toward ever-greater maturity, which entails giving up a less developed self-concept for a more developed one. Hence, work must be viewed more broadly than just tasks; work equally comprises making sense of the organizational surround of work (Organization House) and paying attention to one’s own self-development, or Size of Person (SoP) relative to one’s Size of Role (SoR), upon which work delivery is ultimately based (Self House).

In a conventional management hierarchy, one needs relatively few people to have a fully developed capacity (SoP) for leadership, namely, just enough to fill the more senior leadership positions. The organization then has an effective base, providing that such leadership roles are filled only by staff members who have reached a self-authoring stage of meaning-making and an advanced phase of cognitive development commensurate with their level of accountability (SoR).

The situation is different in a shared leadership environment where circle membership may be obtained without any developmental differentiation. The common implicit assumption is that all circle members are developmentally equal, undifferentiated in the nature of their developmental capacity for collaboration (leading and following), executing of tasks, and handling complexity. This assumption leads to the misapprehension that removing harmful aspects of ego-hierarchies equates to no hierarchy whatsoever. (The dysfunctional hierarchies sometimes attached

to individuals, found in conventional organizations, are distinct from the functional hierarchy in meaning-making and decision complexity that ought to naturally emerge in self-organizing organizations.)

While the assumptions named are sometimes fulfilled, in most cases circles are (for roles and for role-fillers) adult-developmentally *stratified* and thus *mixed* (hybrid), meaning that when circles are developmentally listened to and assessed their members show considerable differences in terms of their emotional and cognitive stages of maturity (Laske, 2005, 2008). When taken seriously, therefore, the notion of “shared leadership” often seen in the literature runs counter to empirical evidence about adult development. Shared leadership entails requirements far surpassing a typical circle’s behavioral resources, which entails the notion of shared leadership risks becoming unachievable.

We assume readers have some familiarity with the concepts around shared leadership, self-organization, Holacracy, Sociocracy, and so on (see Robertson, 2015).¹

A recent book, *An Everyone Culture* (Kegan & Lahey, 2016), presents this viewpoint in a way accessible to business leaders and makes the case for all businesses to become *deliberately* developmental, not only in their mission statement. The authors ask business leaders to deliberately (with awareness and intent) develop individuals toward their full human potential *as an integral part of work delivery*. This full potential is specific to each individual and includes social-emotional and cognitive development, which the organization does not have any control over. Such deliberate development is an even bigger imperative in a shared leadership organization than in conventional environments. This imperative emerges because all those sharing leadership ought to be at a SoP sufficient for the size of the circle’s overall purpose and drivers (circle SoR). If this is not the case, circle members run the risk of failing to grasp the full meaning and/or complexity of a tension being processed, leading ultimately to a risk of business failure.

Whilst the self-governing processes enable each circle member to change the roles in the circle, there are two limitations worth keeping in mind. First, one cannot effectively process tasks or tensions that have aspects or root causes beyond one’s awareness. Secondly, some tasks have a complexity that cannot be sub-divided and a time-span that cannot

be shortened to fit a role-holder's SoP (see section “[Understanding and Respecting Degrees of Developmental Readiness of Circle Members](#)”).

In our experience (Bouraoui, 2016; Boyd, 2015, 2016), Holacracy encourages individuals to develop. The governance processes confront one with one's self. However, as shown by Boyd (2016) and here, adding systemic organizational developmental processes aids both self-development and task productivity. This further intimates how to address the imperative to change the role of business, which is a major issue in our modern social systems (Boyd, 2013) and our impact on planetary ecosystems.

Hypothesis Tested

We tested a hypothesis in a business we recently transformed, namely that the psychological effect of removing the management accountability hierarchy of an organization by implementing Holacracy could be addressed by first introducing deliberately developmental processes, which this would improve business results and reduce the casualties sometimes seen with Holacracy. To first create a deliberately developmental organization allows each to maximally use the work tensions to grow their own SoP to match increasing SoR and use the self-organizing power of Holacracy to deliver positive business results at the same time.

In particular, we test one way of enabling the change demanded by sharing or distributing leadership in the relationship between a role-filler's self-identity or FoR on the one hand, and their ability on the other hand to deliver results in an organization where followership and leadership are associated with the immediate role context rather than the individual and where the role context can continuously allow leading and following to be swapped between two people. In other words, where “I am a follower/leader” becomes an invalid statement.

The task we posed ourselves was to transform a company from a non-profit recruiting company to a for-profit company. The business imperative was to create the business lifeblood – that is, healthy cashflow. This was achievable only via inventing new world products and services (ultralow cost HR products and services). Holacracy was deemed the

most enabling organization design to do this. However, previous implementations of Holacracy that we have led failed to survive. We predicted that similar issues would be seen in this company.

By implementing DDP in parallel with Holacracy (and beginning earlier with DDP), we were able to deal with threats to creating a profitable business. Here are three illustrative examples:

1. Some individuals (call them all Jane) asked repeatedly “yes, but what do *you* really want from me?” in response to our request that they make full use of shared leadership Holacratic methods. What emerged as an underlying FoR was that the boss is the person, not the role. The meaning made of Holacracy was that it is another way of making employees compliant with the person’s (hidden) agenda.
2. Some (call them all Terry) asked variations of the theme “Is it safe for me to do this? Will I still be a member of the group if I do this?”
3. Some pairs (call them Jane and Sam) had tasks in the Holacratic structure where one of Jane’s roles acted in support of one of Sam’s roles. In other roles the relationship was reversed. Previously, Sam had been reporting to Jane in the hierarchy. Jane continued seeking ways to act as Sam’s boss. She acted in a subtle “helping you learn” way, whilst giving the semblance of allowing Sam to lead her in situations where Sam’s role was formally a leading one.

In this organization transformation, we added a number of developmental processes to the implementation of Holacracy. We began using these prior to slowly introducing Holacracy in just-in-time steps. The developmental processes included those described in Kegan & Lahey (2001), as well as Requisite Organization SoP to SoR matching in the role allocation (Jaques, 1989, 1994).

The business is now active as a for-profit, which we believe is in no small part due to the DDP deployed.

(We intend to broaden the canonical perspective on creating successful organizations, but we do not suggest that the DDP with Holacracy is complete and sufficient in all cases. Organizations are complex, requiring the use of multiple methodologies.)

Adult-Developmental Perspective

The most fundamental distinction we propose to adopt for discussions of shared leadership is that between “learning” and “development” (Laske, 1999), as shown in Fig. 8.1.

This distinction between competences on the left and maturity stage on the right is best expressed as the question “*at what stage of maturity do circle members put their competences to work?*” The implication is that one and the same competence, however defined, can be realized at many different stages of emotional and cognitive maturity, and that what ultimately matters is not the competence in isolation but the stage at which the competence is realized. That stage determines what results are obtained, and it is these results that are relevant for the business. Thus, it is clear that the results delivered by someone filling a shared leadership role are a consequence of the maturity stage, not just the competences and the organization design put in place.

When delving deeper into the intersections between work and life, learning and development, we find that circle members encounter a developmental ceiling which actually sets limits to their learning and use of competences, as shown in Table 8.1.

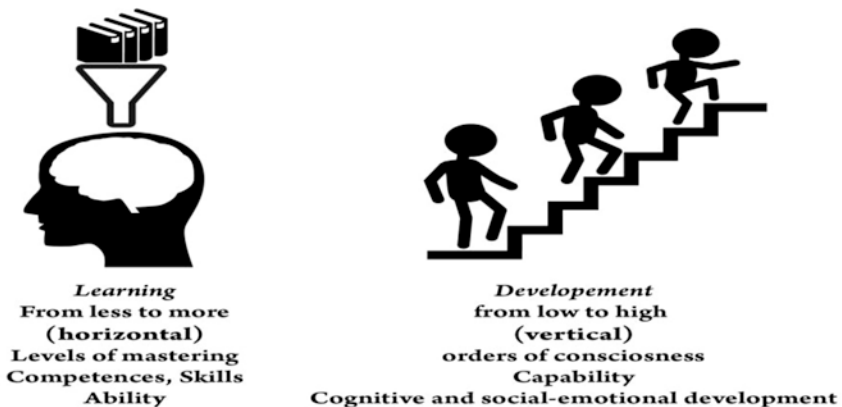


Fig. 8.1 Horizontal learning vs. vertical adult development (Reprinted with permission from Professor Jan De Visch)

Table 8.1 indicates how the social-emotional maturity of circle members, and hence the overall circle, can differentiate otherwise identical circles. With a developmental range from below S3 (other-dependence) through S4 (self-authoring) and up to S5 (self-aware), the key differences lie in both work capability and ways of collaborating with others. This we describe in more detail in the section “Of Different Minds: Stages, Zones and Tasks,” developmental stages, phases, and zones.

Following Kegan (1982), Cook-Greuter (1999), and Laske (2005) we find that 55% of individuals never reach the self-authoring stage required for a managerial role/professional work. They remain “other-dependent” in the sense that they define themselves by expectations of others (S3). In many organizations there are individuals between maturity stages S2 and S3. So in many organisations the number of circle members functioning above maturity stage S4 is relatively small. This starkly contradicts the developmental equality presently assumed by some theories and practices of shared leadership, which lead to predictable failure modes. In particular, note the scarcity of stage four upward; as described below, this is the earliest stage with the self-authoring capability needed for the unsupported self-leadership required to engage in shared leadership (and hence shared followership), let alone drive a change to shared leadership.

Shared leadership, and especially a transformation to shared leadership, requires one to answer the question “*what stage of maturity is showing up in this circle? What stage is required by the circle’s purpose? And, what stage is required by each role’s accountabilities for leading and following?*”

Developmentally distinct from (but statistically correlated with) the socio-emotional stage of personal maturity is an individual’s effortlessly

Table 8.1 Percentage of attainment of emotional maturity stages in Western societies

Name	Suitable role	Stage	Developmental ceiling (%)
Self-aware	Leader	S5	<8
Self-authoring	Manager	S4	25
Socialized mind	Group contributor	S3	55
Instrumental	Individualist	S2	>10

Note: There are four transition stages between each stable stage that can be empirically assessed

Source: Cook-Greuter (1999)

available (readily accessible) set of cognitive tools for handling the actual complexity of their roles. Empirical results regarding individuals' complexity handling ability are best elucidated in terms of four phases of development beyond mere logical systems thinking, as shown in Fig. 8.2 (Laske, 2008).

- Phase 1: Logical thinking focused on the real world as a static configuration, emphasizing expectable and probable outcomes (55–65% of the adult population, depending on the prevailing system of education).
- Phase 2: Beginning to think about notions of conflict, absence (what is not yet there), unceasing change, the potential of reversal (25%).

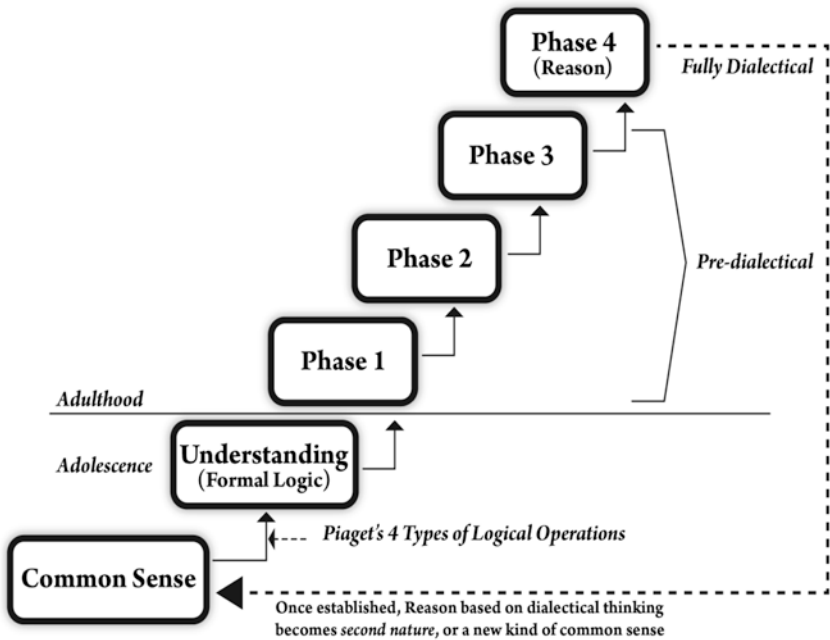


Fig. 8.2 Steps from logical to fluid holistic thinking (We thank Otto Laske for his contribution of figures and tables)

- Phase 3: Beginning to think about notions of intrinsic relationship and critical awareness of reductive thinking as practiced in logical systems thinking (10%).
- Phase 4: Thinking about notions of transformation, disequilibrium, fragility of complex systems, and developmental conflict, as a result of synthesizing the outcomes of the previous three phases (5%) in the form of “deep” thinking.

Most adults think about the social and physical world in terms of Phase 1 of complex thinking shown in Fig. 8.2. In this, their “world” appears as a static configuration far removed from the actual vicissitudes brought about by unceasing change (Phase 2); holistic causality [natural necessity] (Phase 3); and the transformational disequilibrium (Phase 4) of the reality they and their thinking are embedded in (Bhaskar, 1993; Laske, 1999, 2008, 2015, 2016).

As a consequence, when we size up circle members’ actual developmental profile as determined by both their socio-emotional maturity stage and their cognitive maturity phase, we often encounter a large spread: a circle of people differentiated rather than interchangeable; a circle of peaks and valleys rather than a flatland.

Any shared leadership organization circle is therefore quite likely to be *developmentally spread*. Developmentally spread means that circle members’ developmental FoRs dramatically differ, with important consequences for how they are able to work together. (This is in addition to the many other types of difference, such as, culture, personality, native language, etc.)

For instance, a circle member retaining elements of S2 meaning-making might interpret Holacracy as a subtle, covert attempt at manipulation. Or, if a more developed individual acting as change agent driving Holacracy is unable to go beyond their identification with their concept of what Holacracy means, they will too rigidly identify themselves with their ideal of shared leadership, and may prevent the organisation from succeeding. (Typical for someone having just achieved stage S4.)

Early organizations adopting shared leadership were relatively small and homogeneous, both developmentally and in values. That begs a second question: *given that a typical company, larger and developmentally*

heterogeneous, will have circles that are developmentally spread, what are the practical implications of this spread for a shared leadership circle?

We illustrate implications of this question by presenting Laske’s three Houses (Laske, 1999), showing three complementary domains of work delivery called *Task House*, *Organizational House*, and *Self House*. By implication, Fig. 8.3 illustrates the need to adopt a broader view of “organization” than the common, nearly exclusive, focus on the Task House where tasks and competences are attended to.

A broader view is one that gives attention both to the organizational context of the work a circle member is doing and to the whole individual, his/her values, and developmental potential, aspects that are independent of the organization design employed but define the person’s SoP.

When we consider the shared leadership literature in terms of Fig. 8.3, what stands out is the one-sidedness of focusing primarily on the Task House. Although the circle’s purpose, tasks, procedural options, decisions, and governance lie in that House, many other elements of work delivery need to be considered.

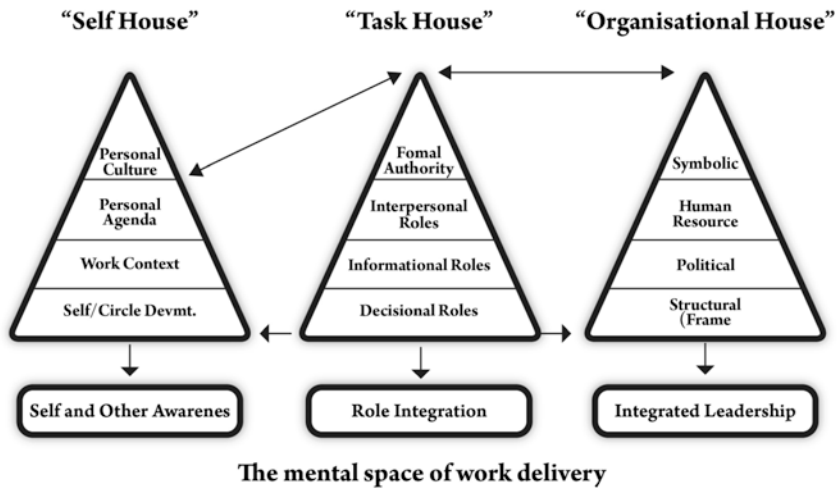


Fig. 8.3 Three domains (“Houses”) of making sense of work and work delivery (We thank Otto Laske for his contribution of figures and tables)

As shown, circle members' FoR extends beyond the Task House into the outer left and right Houses. The left-most Self House contains the individual's and circle's own development and relationship with other circles. The right-most Organizational House contains the four different perspectives that need to be taken of the circle's organizational surround.

- A. The *Organization House* (Bolman & Deal, 1991) can be made sense of by four different but related perspectives. Each circle member's FoR will determine how many of, and in what relationship, these four different perspectives impact their actions.
- (a) A view of their environment in terms of division of labor, whether in terms of accountability stage or vertical divisions of the environment.
 - (b) A focus on political divisions in their environment having to do with the existence of political groups vying for power.
 - (c) Different perspectives as to the relationship of different echelons in their environment.
 - (d) Different ways of understanding the daily rituals that hold their circle's and the organization's culture together.

Most often, differences in understanding the circle's Organizational House stem from differences in circle members' stage of socio-emotional development and ability to handle complexity (between cognitive phases 1 and 4.)

- B. The Self House helps one make distinctions emerging from a circle's adult-developmental stage in: (a) the circle's professional agenda; (b) the culture of the circle; (c) the network of circles in which a particular circle is embedded; and (d) the adult development of the circle over its life span. Each individual's FoR will determine how many of these topics team members are aware of, are open and able to discuss to improve their work together.
- (a) Circle members each follow a professional agenda that differs from member to member according to their maturity and cognitive acuity.

- (b) Circle members have different notions of what is the unified or conflicted culture of their circle.
- (c) Circle members have different perceptions of how they are embedded in surrounding, higher, or lower level circles.
- (d) Circle members view differently their past and future development of maturity as a precondition or outcome of their work in the circle.

These differences indicate circle members' developmental profile, both social-emotional and cognitive.

Discussions of shared leadership (or any other organization design paradigm) that pay insufficient attention to the Organizational House and the Self House neglect crucial aspects of work complexity. Hence, the shared leadership question to be addressed is less "*Does shared leadership work/does a specific shared leadership methodology work,*" but rather "*How does shared leadership work, in which House, with which developmental (social-emotional and cognitive), competence, psychological, etc., profiles in the roles and members?*"

In this chapter, we consider both social-emotional and cognitive aspects. We suggest that shared leadership is a matter of all three Houses. As a consequence, we suggest there is a need to bring in developmental scaffolding far beyond Task House issues in order to support each circle member's distinct developmental stage and journey. The hypothesis tested in this chapter indicates further that some of the criticism recently directed at, for example Holacracy, may rather have to do with the fact that deliberately developmental processes in all three Houses are needed to process Self House tensions.

Of Different Minds: Stages, Zones, and Tasks

The following section bridges the theory above with our practice. We begin by expanding on the developmental stages referred to in Table 8.1. We stress at this point that every stage is good and has a useful role to play. Later stages are not "better" than earlier stages in absolute terms; rather, each stage is better suited than other stages to specific roles.

Stage S2: The Instrumentalist Mind

S2 is individualistic in meaning-making, and hence sees the organization as a tool to get their own needs met. S2 needs a safe domain they have control over, where others can be relied upon. S2 then uses the organization as a tool to control others. However, in Holacracy, such control is contrary to holacratic principles. Thus, Holacracy will be perceived as inherently threatening to one's identity. This is especially acute if Holacracy is not yet effectively and consistently used by all, and hence alternate sources of safety are yet to be established.

Few individuals will remain at S2, but under stress anyone with residual S2 aspects will find Holacracy unworkable at a self-identity level. Without requisite organization approaches to role allocation and developmental support they are likely to cause disruption to the adoption and effective use of Holacracy and/or end up an early casualty themselves.

Stage S3: The Socialized or Other-Dependent Mind

Many people in a typical organization are at or just beyond the S3 socialized mind. The Socialized/Other-Dependent Mind sees the world as something that can be brought under control by adopting the worldview of others. This mind uses logical thinking to create safety to bring the world under control. It relies on often narrow and hard-to-change thought and meaning-making structures.

The socialized mind complies with the norms and values of the group it is identified with. This stance entails the view that, with the right preparation and advice from experts, volatility in the world can be minimized and coped with.

Hence, for the socialized mind, an organization becomes a source of self-identity. The organization must deliver shared norms and values because the socialized mind stage is not yet ready to self-author them. In particular, norms of behavior, of collaboration on tasks, and a sense of belonging to a community behaving compliant to those norms must be delivered by the organization.

Holacratic organizations need to provide these aspects to those members still at or close to the socialized mind stage. This implies that

Holacracy in general, and especially the transition to Holacracy, can be fraught with identity-level stressors for the socialized mind stage. In the easy case, the individual joins an established, mature holacratic organization with stable norms and values. Then the perspectives, norms, and values of Holacracy, along with those of any role-model individuals, just need to be internalized and identified with.

The hard case occurs when the organization is beginning a transition to Holacracy, when the new norms and values are still work in progress, and when some members are still acting in compliance with the old norms. This is a threatening environment for the socialized mind.

The S3 socialized mind stage is likely to react by defending the old norms. This may be incorrectly judged as resistance to Holacracy. But there is no resistance to Holacracy. There is only resistance to losing oneself; to being in a self-identity vacuum, or worse, an identity paradox.

The socialized mind entails an unavoidable need for others (either physical or internalized others) to give permission. Holacracy shifts this permission source from physical others to the Task House as a whole. Once identified with, this norm enables the socialized mind to act as if from a self-authoring stance and hence to step toward self-authoring provided their tasks are in Zones 1 and 2, or 3 with scaffolding.

Stage S4: The Authoring Mind

In contrast, the S4 self-authoring mind stage is based on its own self-constructed value system. A value system and norms that are experienced as different from those of others, not only in terms of what is thought but also in terms of how to think.

This mind tends to see the world in terms of patterns that thinking can influence but not control. Such a mind makes itself independent of others' opinions and is comfortable with not knowing. It is therefore readily able to deal with complexity and unforeseen circumstances. This mind is aware of the great complexity of the world and the fact that it is in constant change. In order to transcend ambiguity and volatility, this mind tests hypotheses and derives guidance from thought forms able to

deal with change, uncertainty, relatedness, transformation, breakdown, and reversal.

Acting from a self-authoring position entails being able to accept and work with another whose values and worldviews are contradictory to one's own, whilst feeling neither a need to change oneself nor the other. The organization becomes a tool to multiply one's values and norms, make a bigger difference to the world, and develop oneself.

The fully self-authoring individual is more able to make any adjustments to his/her self-identity required for shared leadership, even if limited or no scaffolding is provided. Self-authoring minds have already developed the internal scaffolding needed to self-author their identity, to change themselves at an identity level, and hence to self-manage, self-govern, and share leadership fluidly.

While a self-authoring mind comes closer to understanding the world as it truly is, such a mind finds it difficult to see the limitations of its own value system. This can cause stress for others. Such minds may, for example, identify so strongly with their concept of shared leadership that it is part of their identity, and hence they are unable to recognize any limitations in their own concept of shared leadership.

Holacracy and other shared leadership organization designs systematize the Task House work, to support individuals acting as if they are self-authoring. But if those pioneering the change do not align in their S4 values, or some are still developing toward S4, there will be issues in the introduction phase. This will exacerbate difficulties for those of an S3 nature, let alone those of an S2 nature (see above). In this case, systemic developmental scaffolding is essential to enable the change agents first to deal with their own Self House.

Stages S5 and Beyond: The Self-Aware Mind

The limitation of being exclusively identified with the self-authored self-identity is removed only in S5, associated with a self-aware FoR. Stage S5 self-aware circle members add significant value in leading the change to a fully self-governing, fully deliberately developmental organization. These are the most effective change agents driving toward shared leadership.

Understanding and Respecting Degrees of Developmental Readiness of Circle Members

When an existing company is changing from a traditional hierarchical design to any shared leadership design, individuals at each maturity level will have their self-identity challenged. *Each level will experience a different challenge and will react in different ways, driven by members' level-specific FoR, further differentiated below in terms of Zones of proximal development.* (Of course, in addition there will be differences arising from personality profile, culture, and more.)

For this reason, a persistent issue in attempting to realize new organization designs is the question of what systemic organizational and educational supports are needed, versus those available, to bring human resources along. When this issue is viewed from an adult-developmental perspective, it is important to also consider circle members' own inner motivational and FoR resources with respect to the levels of adult development they are presently acting from.

Changing the nature of work by implementing new organization designs (whether self-organizing or any other form) puts organization members' self-concept at risk. In this regard, it is useful to distinguish what Kegan and Lahey (2016) refer to as *Job 1 and Job 2* as part of a *deliberately developmental organization* (DDO).

Job 1 comprises a circle member's execution of role(s), while Job 2 consists of the "work" each individual invests in maintaining, or defending, his/her self-identity. The effort invested in Job 2 diminishes the effort available for Job 1, reducing both productivity and well-being. Every member always uses the organization as a tool to help them do Job 2. This makes clear the bi-directional nature of an employment contract. The company hires the individual to do Job 1, and the individual hires the company to do Job 2. Each individual will use the company as a tool to do Job 2 in a stage-specific way.

A deliberately developmental organization is thus one that supports all aspects of development, including allocating roles in ways that match the SoR to circle members' SoP or Requisite Organization designs. Such

an organization can successfully implement any new organization design (such as, Holacracy) since it deploys systemic processes that enable Job 2 to be performed with minimum losses to Job 1. Holacracy is a methodology that is designed to distinguish Jobs 1 and 2, and then exclusively address Job 1. To then deliver a successful self-organizing organization with people at all stages of development, additional support processes that stabilize members' SoP are required.

Two developmentally different kinds of maturity need to be considered: social-emotional *stages* (ED) and complexity handling ability, or cognitive flexibility *phases* (CD).

Each of these requires different kinds of support:

- ED: Social-emotional internal resources are essentially non-extendable in the sense that their extension can take years and is not under the influence of the organization but the individual. Such resources are available only when the right time has come for a particular individual. External supports based on empirical evidence about the present level(s) of circle members' meaning-making, such as, coaching or mentoring, will be experienced as *support* (rather than constraint or threat).
- CD: Cognitive resources are "extendable" in the sense that they can be influenced by *learning* (which ED cannot). Therefore, supports that challenge circle members' present ways of constructing the world conceptually, either individually through coaching or communally through "thought games" among members, will be experienced as support. Such cognitive supports comprise attention to the structure of thinking, or *meta-thinking*, not primarily its content (Laske, 2015, 2016).

Consequently, these two distinct aspects of adult development are best supported by two distinct sets of *deliberately developmental* processes (Kegan & Lahey, 2016; Laske, 2015).

The ED aspect is summarized in Table 8.2; both ED and CD are expanded in the text below. Table 8.2 pairs stages and Zones of proximal (potentially possible) development (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986) where the Zone expresses degrees of circle members' internal change potential.

Table 8.2 Guidelines for social-emotional interventions

Zones and social-emotional stages (in terms of reaching common goals via social bonding) ^a	
Level of maturity	Increasingly diminished inner resources relative to tasks, organizational surround, and professional agenda
Stage	<p>Zone 1 (firm center of gravity)</p> <p>Zone 2 (can self-support under favorable circumstances)</p> <p>Zone 3 (needs adult developmental support)</p> <p>Zone 4 (beyond support; organizationally dysfunctional) No tasks to be in Zone 4</p>
S2 (my needs and desires come first)	<p>Lacks a grasp of broader organizational issues</p> <p>Lacks own resources to self-motivate</p> <p>Needs massive personal incentives</p> <p>Does not realize support is needed; is beyond support</p>
DDP	<p>Common processes supporting safety in collaboration</p> <p>Model and instill sense of collaborative loyalty</p> <p>Redefine role and accountability</p>
S3 (good citizen of community)	<p>Is defined by expectations of others; needs feedback from physical others</p> <p>Can self-motivate with support from others</p> <p>Can be coached to find own inner resources</p> <p>Overtaxed if unsupported by more developed others</p>
DDP	<p>Connection with colleagues, personal bonding of group/circle by using common interaction processes, shared goals and expectations, shared governance</p> <p>Use the elements to the left in Zone 1 to appeal to common ground with others; and thrill of shared success</p> <p>Systemic developmental processes and/or Individual developmental coaching based on a professional social-emotional assessment of the coachee</p> <p>Redefine role and accountability</p>

(continued)

Table 8.2 (continued)

Zones and social-emotional stages (in terms of reaching common goals via social bonding) ^a	
Level of maturity	Increasingly diminished inner resources relative to tasks, organizational surround, and professional agenda
Stage	<p>Zone 1 (firm center of gravity)</p> <p>Zone 2 (can self-support under favorable circumstances)</p> <p>Zone 3 (needs adult developmental support)</p> <p>Zone 4 (beyond support; organizationally dysfunctional) No tasks to be in Zone 4</p>
S4 (self-authored integrity)	<p><i>Acts as a leader and sometimes a role model</i></p> <p><i>Will rise to occasion</i></p> <p><i>Needs peer group to correct own value system</i></p> <p><i>Overtaxed but can become aware of own limitations; in search for common ground with others</i></p> <p>Create a culture of completely transparent frankness and self-critical thinking</p>
DDP	<p>Connect to peers, form peer group</p> <p>Maintain shared clarity of the “big picture” at the largest scale; foster exchange of ideas</p> <p>Peer to peer developmental processes and mentoring</p>
S5 (self-aware humility)	<p><i>Has self-reliance informed by regard for, and listening to, others</i></p> <p><i>Gives as much as receives from others</i></p> <p><i>Appreciates critique; practices humility</i></p> <p><i>Overtaxed and aware, open to others’ developmental support</i></p>
DDP	<p>Adds significant value in roles allowing modeling for others</p> <p>Best supported by roles allowing constant learning</p> <p>Peer to peer developmental processes and mentoring</p> <p>Create a culture of completely transparent frankness and self-critical thinking</p>

^aStages point to a person’s present hidden (from oneself, or beyond-awareness) way of making meaning of self and others, in other words, their positioning toward the social world. Zones further differentiate stages by specifying the degree of individual identity risk and need for support required. Each zone has specific strategic recommendations

The meaning of the Zones, relative to tasks (i.e., competences), is as follows:

- Tasks are in Zone 1 when they require from the role holder a stage of maturity firmly within the Centre of Gravity of the individual's range, and a phase of complexity handling that they are fully fluid in using. For an individual to perform at an optimal level, a large percentage of tasks should be in Zone 1.
- Tasks are in Zone 2 when they require a stage of maturity just above the individual's stable Centre of Gravity, and/or a phase of complexity handling they have become somewhat able to access. In either case, the individual can self-support. A good guideline for optimal productivity is to have over 80% of tasks in Zones 1 and 2.
- Tasks are in Zone 3 when an individual can no longer self-support, needing scaffolding (personal and/or organizational) to stretch their maturity and ability of complexity handling to the upper limit of their current phase.
- Tasks in Zone 4 are those where the individual is dysfunctional even with the best support. The individual will execute the best they can, but they cannot fully grasp what the task requires of them, so their output will not be what the business requires. They may well lack the capacity to be aware of this (Dunning & Kruger, 1999). Thus, no tasks ought to lie in Zone 4.

Two guidelines emerge as a consequence:

1. If there is neither developmental awareness nor a developmental support system in the organization, individuals are likely to have a number of tasks and accountabilities in their personal Zones 3, or even their Zone 4. Individuals in such an organization, during a high stress period, such as when changing to a holacratic operating system, will spend much of their time dysfunctionally in Zones 3 or 4. They will focus on Job 1, diverting valuable effort away from producing business results toward resistance and self-defense.
2. However, if there is a developmental process providing scaffolding, then the developmental Zone 3 tasks will still fall within the individual's

grasp. If there is also developmental awareness in allocating roles and accountabilities, no individual will choose, or be allocated tasks in, Zone 4. All potential effort will be directed toward business success.

There is a subtle difference between the social-emotional and cognitive developmental aspects from the point of view of circle members' *internal and hidden* dimension.

The hidden internal *cognitive* resources can be pinpointed and boosted by available cognitive tools, while this is not the case for social-emotional resource (that requires long-term efforts). For instance, the use of dialectical thought forms provided by the Dialectical Thought Form Framework (DTF; Laske, 2015, 2016) can serve not only to assess individuals' cognitive profile but can be used boost that profile given experienced dialectical-thinking consultants working an entire circle.

Thus, while learning is unable to accelerate social-emotional development, it can become an instrument of cognitive development (Fig. 8.1). This difference is of strategic importance for changing the nature of organizational work.

Discussion of Table 8.2

Table 8.2 is formulated from the point of view of an objective evaluation of a circle's *personal process*, which is considerably by us as social-emotional. This is in contrast to its *task process*, which is predominantly cognitive (Schein, 1999), a topic we comment on in a less detailed way below.

Table 8.2 links the four hidden, or beyond-awareness, stages of meaning-making ("stages") with the four degrees of need for organizational support ("zones") to maximize productivity, and to foster each individual's developmental choices. On the row labeled "DDP" (deliberately developmental processes), one finds an indication of the shape a concrete intervention might take, different for each maturity level.

This differentiation of each ED stage by zones (Vygotsky, 1978, 1986) leads to more clarity on what actionable support looks like for the full spectrum of people found in a typical organization. It makes clearer that a single, one size fits all, approach is unlikely to enable everyone, in all contexts, to find their place and be productive and fulfilled. The judgment

about the zone into which the tasks of each member lies requires sufficient expertise in evaluating social-emotional development. The spread of developmental levels within a single circle will also indicate the quality of its collaborative intelligence.

How much social-emotional support is needed, and in what form, depends on the zones that circle members find themselves in. Tasks falling into either Zone 1 or 4 are not dependent on support. (Recall, Zone 4 no support can be enough, in Zone 1 no support is needed to deliver.)

Good support is important in Zone 2 and even more in Zone 3, for all stages. Individuals in Zone 2, while able under favorable circumstances to self-support, will nevertheless benefit from DDO processes, especially those boosting their personal bonding with others. Clearly, the support is most applicable to Zone 3 where circle members will fail if they do not recognize the risk of failure, the developmental nature of that risk, and deal with it accordingly using appropriate self and systemic peer processes. These may include coaching and mentoring, internal or external.

The table shows two things: *first*, that organizational support is mandatory in Zone 3, for all stages; and *second*, all circle members can benefit from empirical awareness of each other's present meaning-making level. Where sufficiently accurate empirical evidence is lacking, interventions are more likely to fail since they are not precisely enough directed to the level of meaning-making that needs fostering.

Zones and Phases* of Cognitive Development (in terms of level of self-reflection and "deep thinking").

* Phases represent four different vantage points from which an individual presently constructs the real world conceptually. Zones differentiate phases further, specifying the degree of risk and need for cognitive support a circle or circle member is in need of. They also comprise strategic recommendations. DTF = Laske's *Dialectical Thought Form Framework*.

A comparable table can be formulated from the vantage point of how circle members "view the world cognitively." The table illustrates the distinction between four different vantage points—called *moments of dialectic*—from which the real world can be viewed. Each of them is seen as characterized by the increasing integration of the four moments of

dialectic, in a way that gradually moves circle members from formal logical toward systemic and holistic thinking using dialectical thought forms (Laske, 2016).

Following Laske (2008, 2015) the four moments of dialectic entail seeing the world in four different ways:

- as static (C; Context; Phase 1)
- as in unceasing motion (P; Process; Phase 2)
- as composed of massively interrelated components (R; Relationship; Phase 3)
- as in constant transformation due to intrinsic the linkage between C, P, and R (T; Transformation; Phase 4)

The world can be seen fully realistically only when all four moments are involved and integrated.

All four phases can be assessed by looking at the *structure* of circle members' thinking, not its content. Such structure becomes graspable in the form of "thought forms" that, alone and in combination, define the degree of complexity and fluidity of thinking an individual or circle can engage in. The cognitive interventions under DDP are all built upon the use of dialectical thought forms thought to boost complexity handling.

The collaborative intelligence of a circle is measured in terms of the phase the circle members' cognitive development is presently in. When cognitive development is spread over more than a single phase, or when it is stuck in Phase 1, collaborative intelligence will be hard to achieve, with direct consequences for the shape a circle's task process takes (Schein, 1999).

Much of what was said about Table 8.2 also applies to the cognitive aspects of circle functioning. The decisive difference lies in the fact that in the cognitive case, *learning* can be engaged (which, as said, is not the case in the social-emotional domain). This is of high importance since cognitive support strategies appear to have a beneficial effect on boosting circle members' social-emotional development. (Up to this point, cognitive boosting has never been practiced within shared leadership, which is a significant hindrance to business success.)

The Need for Deliberately Developmental Organizations

As the reader may have noticed, the DDP proposed regard work from the perspective of the Organization House and Self House, in contrast to the perspective of the Task House more commonly used. Such DDP become part of the day-to-day processes used by all with each other as peers.

Three elements are necessary in creating effective developmental peer-to-peer processes in shared leadership organizations:

- Each circle member has insight into the frame of reference (a.k.a. theory of self, big assumptions) behind any action. There are sufficient shared language and processes for these insights to be unambiguously and safely shared with colleagues.
- There is a clean distinction in dialogue between objective facts, the interpretation each individual makes of those facts, and the social-emotional and cognitive structure of the interpretation.
- There is a clean distinction between individuals. A recognition that each has a distinct internal meaning-making and sense-making process. Whilst always in part hidden, even to the individual, these can be assessed and shared through internal processes or by external practitioners.

Having such processes available for all to use, and all having sufficient expertise in using them with each other in and between circles, increases the effectiveness of any shared leadership organization. It can also accelerate progress through the developmental stages and phases. Work, and work tensions, drive both the circle's governance and individuals' adult development.

Some criticism currently directed toward Holacracy needs to be addressed outside the scope of Holacracy. It is a Job 2 which Holacracy leaves alone by design.

The weaker the DDO culture and processes, the greater the likelihood—even in a self-organizing, self-governed Holacracy where each has the power to redefine the roles and accountabilities each person fills—that stressors shift tasks in an individual's Task House into Zone 3 or 4.

Some systemic sources of such stress:

- A speed of adoption of Holacracy faster than the individual's self-identity (rather than only their behavior) can change.
- Tasks are self-selected or allocated without realization that the individual is developmentally dysfunctional for that task given how s(he) internally constructs the organization in the Three Houses.
- Insufficient developmental scaffolding (in addition to all other kinds of support that may be needed) for the full range of circle activities.
- The paucity of such shared leadership beyond any individual organization, say in acquaintances, suppliers, or clients.

An ideal deliberately developmental organization is thus one that supports all aspects of development, including allocating roles in full awareness of adult developmental maturity stages, and has organization-wide systems and processes enabling Job 2 to be performed with minimum losses in Job 1. Since Holacracy is intended for Job 1 (by design neglecting Job 2) only issues purely in Job 1—the Task House—can be used to point at potential underlying flaws in Holacracy. This paper suggests that examples currently used to point at flaws in Holacracy itself (for example, Culen, 2016) may simply point at not complementing Holacracy with appropriate developmental processes for Job 2.

Testing the Hypothesis: Outcomes in the Organization

Consider the examples 1, 2, and 3 described in the section “[Hypothesis Tested](#).” By implementing DDP together with the structural and process changes of Holacracy in the organization we were able to recognize that Terry (recall, each name is a catch-all for more than one individual with the example) was beginning to let go of her socialized stage and move toward self-authoring. She needed clearer developmental support on her journey toward becoming developmentally able to lead herself. This support needed to come both from a person as well as from the peer-to-peer

developmental processes of the Self House. By contrast, Jane was still too far from self-authoring, and too much in Zone 4 with her Task House to lead from a shared leadership model.

Our hypothesis, and the DDP we implemented, reduced the business risk from the transformation to Holacracy. It led us to step back from a strict adherence to Holacracy for a few months. We provided some direct personal support (“giving permission”) to use Holacracy. In other words, until the new norms had been internalized, people identified with the individuals they saw as role models. As circle members reshaped their S3 selves, identifying with the new norms and values, we steadily decreased this personal support.

Terry, after a while, accepted that the new norm was to take all actions she deemed appropriate for her role; she understood that she should act without first seeking permission, consensus, or waiting for direct orders. In five months, she transformed from someone overwhelmed by sharing leadership into a fully capable leader in the anchor circle. She developed socio-emotionally, taking a big step toward self-authoring.

Jane, however, proved unable to step beyond her FoR. She continued seeking both a real boss and real subordinates to meet her needs. There was little improvement in her performance, and she remained well below what she had been delivering in the traditional hierarchy.

This led to mixed messages as to whether the norm was truly shared leadership or a covert person-hierarchy. Jane was saying to Sam that the norm is to still seek approval from an authority *person* (her) before taking action—in effect, that the accountability of Sam’s roles was only an abstract paper exercise; real accountability remained in the person of Jane.

The driver here is Sam, who was developmentally ready to take on self-authoring shared leadership, but her former line manager was developmentally not ready to take on the concomitant followership roles.

As a result, neither was able to deliver their accountabilities well. Both were under high stress, leading to missed targets and threatening the entire business financial. Neither was able to take the independent action necessary to truly lead and follow from their different roles.

It was only after our developmental processes had enabled Sam to see clearly her own FoR, to see how it was biasing her perception of what

was happening, that she was able to internalize and act according to a new FoR. At that point she began a transformation of her self-identity, gaining distance from Jane. She developed toward a firmly self-authoring stance, and delivered outstanding results from then on, which were pivotal to the successful end-stage of the business.

The final outcome has been a successful transformation to financially viable businesses, addressing unmet needs in the small business sector of developing markets. This is due in no small part to the leadership capacity each individual developed through growing their FoR to more complex stages of development.

Interpretation

At the beginning of our implementation of developmental scaffolding with Holacracy, some individuals were well below their former productivity. They were in Zones 3 and 4. For example, Terry was constantly asking for reassurance that it was acceptable behavior according to the new norms for her to take her own decisions—because it had been somewhat unacceptable in the old norms. Initially we needed to deliver that message in person. This is expected for someone primarily at the S3 stage of meaning-making.

Once the developmental processes began working well, and hence both they and Holacracy became accepted as the new norm for interactivity and relationships in the circle, most equaled or exceeded their former productivity. They had tasks now mainly in Zones 1 and 2, a few in Zone 3, with trusted developmental scaffolding in place.

This outcome supports the thesis that if a circle is developmentally spread across a broad range, from above S4 to below S3, S4 individuals will need at first to lead and be led with some of the interpersonal aspects of traditional organizations until the norms of shared leadership are firmly established as group norms. (There can only be superficial shared leadership rather than true shared leadership in the early stages.)

The relativity of roles—the switching in social relationship with colleagues from following to leading and back again based on an abstract role/task context—requires a sufficiently mature person. Even with

developmental scaffolding, each must have an element of self-authoring (S4) in their high range. They must have begun developing the capacity to move beyond identifying themselves with the role(s) they fill (S3), and thus also with the people on which they thought they depended on.

Actions of individuals at a pre-S3 stage hold back progress to a shared leadership operation if they are transitioned too fast into Holacracy. Jane's FoR made it an identity struggle for her to effectively lead and follow the same individual, and thus put at risk the financial success of a holacratic business.

This case illustrates the issues present when staff still have elements of S2 in their developmental profile. This is highly relevant if there are no well-developed developmental processes to provide scaffolding before beginning the change to Holacracy.

Consequences for Initiators of Shared Leadership

Shared leadership today is often initiated by individuals close to or at the self-authoring level (S4). However, any fervor of committing to implement pure shared leadership from the start only in order to avoid person-based hierarchical leadership in any way is unrealistic and likely to misfire. The best way to avoid harm to the organization and its members is therefore to phase in holacratic organization design processes after DDP, as is made possible, for example, by the *Constructive Developmental Framework* methodology (CDF; Laske, 2005, 2008, 2015, 2016), taught at the Interdevelopmental Institute (www.interdevelopmentals.org) and evolutesix.

Like any other organization design, Holacracy embodies an implicit (and incomplete) model of social interaction and relationship. It aims to provide scaffolding to support a certain type of social bonding and interactivity, emphasizing a clean separation between role and person. By design, neglecting to inquire into the requisite relationship between individuals' SoP and SoR, Holacracy forces the central question for each individual: "*what is happening to me, and what will this change mean for my own standing in the company?*" The answer and consequent response lie in circle members' present world view—that is, their emotional as well as cognitive FoR.

Thus, the requirement to become a “deliberately developmental organization” is central to effectively implementing Holacracy or any other shared leadership approach, if more than a fashionable organization design is intended. The nature of social bonding, and the role it plays in developing and maintaining the self-concept at the socialized mind stage (S3), requires a *physical* “other” (not separate yet from an individual’s *internalized* others) as the source of legitimacy and self-assurance. Only at S4 does legitimacy “move inside.”

Since most circle members’ (other than S2 and S5 individuals) remain unknowingly identified with their role, Holacracy, which splits person from role, often comes as an internal shock, despite what people think or say. Holacracy represents the demand of society to act from a self-authored value system, and this is, for the 65% of people (or more) at or yet to reach S3, at least stressful, and for some even impossible. To handle the split between person and role maturely presupposes a step toward and even beyond S4 (which maximally 25% of adults actually take).

Paying attention to social-emotional development alone will improve any organization’s productivity and the satisfaction of members’ personal needs. Simultaneous attention to the cognitive development of circle members will achieve even more (Laske, 2015).

As a result, in a typical developmentally spread organization, one cannot, in changing to shared leadership, be too purist during the transition. Only once Holacracy has been fully implemented and has become the social bonding norm are all organization members capable of internalizing the way Holacracy commands them to act— that is, *as if* they were self-authoring.² However, this is centered on the Task House and is therefore insufficient. It cannot work for all if developmental supports are absent, and especially not for any circle members with tasks falling into Zone 4 (where no support will matter).

We have found that the strategies needed to secure the success of shared leadership and self-managing organization designs depend on harnessing the latest understanding of the adult-developmental landscape in which an organization functions, that is, the *developmental spread* the organization relies on for work delivery. Self-governing needs deliberately developmental processes for Job 2 even more than traditional management hierarchies.

Needless to say, this requires, on the part of the initiators, sufficient understanding of and ability to apply the social-emotional stratification from S2 to S5. Additional understanding and application of the four phases of cognitive development increases the probability of success.

Recommendations:

1. Insure that the main change agents driving the transition to Holacracy are all at or beyond S4. The topmost or leadership circle best comprises primarily individuals anchored at S4. (To the extent that there is anybody in the circle with a profile lower than S3, most of the circle's tasks will lie in their dysfunctional zone.)
2. Insure each person with a change agent role is aware of developmental stages, is able to recognize the signs for each key stage (S2, S3, and S4), and is aware of the different scaffolding each stage needs to be functional in Zone 3 tasks. With developmental awareness and tools embedded as an integral part of the organization, there is a high probability that the developmental struggle of circle members will be recognized and honored, and that the organization will be able to provide scaffolding appropriate to each individual's developmental point, at least for any tasks in each member's personal Zone 3 (see Table 8.2).
3. Apply Requisite Organization design thinking to match accountabilities to individuals, allocating accountabilities "requisitely," in accordance with individuals' social-emotional stage and cognitive phase of development. Without this the business is more likely to fail because there is a high risk of burnout in individuals and a failed transformation to shared leadership, due to individuals having many (and likely mission-critical) tasks in their Zone 4.
4. Deploy deliberately developmental processes, so that every task can be used for Self House socio-emotional development. It is best if these include cognitive development as well. (In addition, we have found Appreciative Inquiry, Non-Violent Communication, the use of structures such as Liberating Structures ([Lipmanowicz & McCandless, 2013] and Art of Participatory Leadership to be beneficial.)

5. Get alignment among the (preferably S4) change agents on the core norms to transition to, before beginning broader changes.

Paying Attention to S3 Individuals

Individuals at stage S3, long safely employed by conventional organizations, must be prepared for a holacratic organization as they will have tasks falling into Zones 2 and 3. For this to work, change agents must expand their “managerial” capabilities in the following ways:

1. Learn to appreciate that the loss of one’s present self-identity—which is a natural ingredient of adult development—when exacerbated by organization design, is a very real threat to individuals who are at intermediate stages between other-dependence (S3) and self-authoring (S4) a journey that typically takes five–seven years or more. It is therefore a very real threat to business success.
2. Implement DDP and Holacracy in order to foster a *holding environment* to address the need to feel belonging. Gradually split person from role, working especially beyond the Task House (Fig. 8.3).
3. Think about ways in which a lack of self-authoring can be accepted and compensated for by fostering an adult-developmentally transparent culture beyond the Task House (Fig. 8.3).
4. Think about how circle members experience the organizational environment into which they output and which may either overtax them or set limits to their actual work capability.
5. Use adult-developmental data (whether from iterative internal peer processes or external expert assessment) to test whether particular tasks fall into Zone 3 or 4 for each circle member, and configure tasks accordingly.
6. During the transition phase have an individual holding a role of “permission-giver.”
7. Insure that every person deemed a role model is consistently acting according to the new norms.

Paying Attention to S2 Individuals

In addition, specifically for those with a residual stage S2 profile:

1. Create a task domain in roles filled by specific individuals that are personally seen by S2 individuals as those that can be relied upon to meet their safety and stability of self-identity needs.
2. Make sure that all individuals the S2 person might deem to be role models are consistent in their functioning and as mentors, in order to accelerate development to stable S3.

Conclusions

Referring to practices deriving from adult-developmental research we have spelled out the nature of *deliberately developmental processes* used for the purpose of transitioning to Holacracy. We have shown that the social nature of organizations stratifies according to different socio-emotional stages and phases of cognitive complexity handling, and that processes predominantly effective in the Task House (where goals and competences reside) may be of no benefit, or even harmful, for the equally relevant work in the Self and Organization Houses, at least for circle members at earlier stages of adult development.

In so doing, we have made it clear that the transition to Holacracy is likely to be a transition of stress and anxiety for individuals who are not at the highest developmental stage (S5). The stressors are different for each stage, and require stage-appropriate remediation. This is challenging, especially for developmentally widely spread circles. The results obtained in the organization described here (vs those of other organizations we have led or been involved with), suggest the validity of the hypothesis. Whilst further research is needed before the need for DDP in organizations can be deemed conclusively proven, there is sufficient evidence to make it worth considering.

Since we contend that shared leadership/self-managed/self-governed organizations are an essential next step for organizations to step up to the global challenges humanity is facing, the following three insights from our work gain in urgency.

First, introducing shared leadership, or indeed any other organizational paradigm, is not just a shift in organization design. Rather, it triggers maturity-specific issues and failure modes. Hence it requires a fundamental transformation across everything that constitutes an organization, from transforming the individuals in an organization, transforming the organization itself, and transforming ecosystems or groups of organizations. (We are calling for a pluralistic approach, one where DDP are part of creating successful organizations, not the only aspect.)

Secondly, this makes visible the common ground between society and organizations. Shared leadership cannot be achieved in one organization, in isolation from other organizations and the community it is embedded in, and from which its members are drawn. Shared leadership really gains its full power when other organizations—suppliers, customers, members of the ecosystem—are also operating from an effective, fully fledged shared leadership approach sustaining the self-identities needed.

Finally, inadequacies attributed to such organization designs seem to be, at least in part, adult-developmental issues. Further studies are needed to clarify to what extent shared leadership organization designs are flawed per se versus the extent to which they merely require complementary, deliberately developmental, processes.

Food for Thought

Tools deriving from adult-developmental research, available, for instance, in the form of the *Constructive Developmental Framework* (CDF) methodology (Laske, 1999, 2005, 2008, 2015, 2016) form a practical toolkit aiding the introduction of, and subsequent mature operation of, organizations using Holacracy and similar methodologies.

By adding processes in the Self and Organization Houses that facilitate adult development (FoR development), an objective awareness of social-emotional and cognitive stratification of organizations can be grown (Basseches, 1984; De Visch, 2010, 2014; Jacques', 1989, 1994; Kegan, 1982, 1994); Kegan & Lahey (2001) and Kegan & Lahey (2016). Since no one can act from a FoR s(he) does not possess, FoR development ought to be part of all organizations, especially those transitioning to shared lead-

ership. A pluralistic approach including adult developmental processes is more effective than any approach to organization design and leadership solely rooted in a structural, a behavioral, or a psychological mindset.

In line with these observations, the heavy weighting of attention typical today on what we have called the *Task House* (where competences and goals reside) and its associated competency models is frequently dysfunctional. It amounts to neglecting or minimizing how circle members make meaning (socio-emotionally) as well as sense (cognitively) of their organizational surround (Organization House) and of themselves. This decreases their opportunity to be fully productive from all they are and have, as well as for self-development (Self House). If we can give equitable weighting of attention across all three Houses, the attrition rate experienced during the transformation—say to Holacracy—ought to be significantly reduced.

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Notes

1. We define shared leadership as encompassing any situation where leadership is shared across a group, rather than attached to an individual. This encompasses a wide range of next-generation and second-tier organizations (Laloux, 2014). One central signal is when two individuals are seen to be both leading and following each other. Thus, each must be able to distinguish between their self-identity and their role of leading or following. In many shared leadership approaches, individuals or their roles own a part of the organization design as well, i.e., they are self-organizing. Sociocracy is one of the oldest approaches to this, dating back to the philosopher August Comte and before. Holacracy is a well-known development of Sociocracy; and Sociocracy 3.0 is the most recent evolution. These are organization designs enabling everyone in the organization to lead, manage, and govern any part of the organization that impacts their

roles. Distributed leadership (leadership accountability is distributed across the organization at all levels), self-management (each individual owns completely managing themselves in their domain), and self-governing (each can adjust the organization design and governance) are all part of the scope.

2. We remind the reader that we use Holacracy to include other approaches to shared leadership, such as Sociocracy (3.0), etc.

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9

Following Nature's Lead

Domenica Devine

Following Nature's Lead

Since Plato's time, scholars, educators, and business mavens have been analyzing leadership and, more recently, followership paradigms. The stakeholders may hold different visions, but all appear to be in search of best theory and practices. As such, there are multiple approaches to the examination. There has been robust debate, and the relevant leadership literature has been systematically reviewed (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009; King, Johnson, & Van Vugt, 2009; Wang, Waldman, & Zhang, 2014). Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, and Carsten (2014), recognizing that "followers and followership are essential to leadership" (p. 83), have provided a thorough review of the followership literature.

The literature also links biological and social sciences as applied to both leadership and followership as seen through the lens of evolutionary behavior, behavioral genetics, and evolutionary psychology (Alznauer,

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2015; Colarelli & Arvey, 2015). Others are looking at leadership across mammalian societies (Boonstra, 2014; Boos, Kolbe, Kappeler, & Ellwart, 2011; Smith et al., 2016). Other, more superficial analyses, tend to anthropomorphize animals citing leaders as lions or queen bees and followers as sheep or lemmings.

Physicist Fritjof Capra (1996) defines a paradigm as “a constellation of concepts, values, perceptions, and practices shared by a community, which forms a particular vision of reality that is the basis of the way the community organizes itself” (p. 6). Researchers Wielkiewicz and Stelzner (2005) suggest, “The traditional industrial paradigm in leadership research and practice are not healthy” (p. 326). They further suggest that, in part, that leadership should involve “temporary resolutions of a tension between the traditional industrial approach and the neglected ecological approach” (p. 326). Because of the social, political, and environmental challenges before us, I propose to mitigate some of that neglect and join Wielkiewicz and Stelzner and others in an examination of the distributed leadership paradigm through an ecological filter. We are looking at a future fraught with uncertainty. We are facing the challenges of a changing climate, a widening economic chasm, the depletion of natural resources, and the sixth global mass extinction. It is time for a different way of being. It is time for leaders and followers alike to take responsibility in the shaping of our environment and our culture. As systems scientist Peter Senge (2008) tells us, “It is folly to think that the changes needed in the coming years will not involve fundamental shifts in the way institutions function, individually and collectively” (p. 9). In this light, perhaps it is time to take nature’s lead.

Because paradigms are inherently shaped by a shallow ecology, with an anthropocentric focus, what I propose is to put the shared leadership paradigm through a different lens—that of deep ecology set within a natural ecosystem. Using the philosophy of deep ecology can provide a more esoteric lens on those interactions which depend on “seeing the world as an integrated whole rather than a dissociated collection of parts” (Capra, 1996, p. 6). With this in mind, it seems that rather than disconnect the ideas of leadership and followership, such concepts have to be viewed as an integrated whole, what biologists call “an emergent property,” being a whole greater than the sum of its parts. We can consider that both parties

can exhibit “the independent properties of wholes and the dependent properties of parts” (Capra & Luisi, 2014), which still allows for individual autonomy even while being part of a team.

This chapter employs ecological metaphors that allow a new understanding of leadership and the ontology of followership in organizations. There are some clear parallels to be found. In moving away from the model of the “preeminence of leaders and the machine-like qualities of organizations” (Wielkiewicz & Stelzner, 2005, p. 326), this chapter centers on four ecological principles: webs, boundaries, stability, and synergy. While distinct ideas, we will find that one cannot be discussed without bumping into the others. First, both biology and social systems exhibit intricate webs with both linear and non-linear pathways of connectivity, evolving over time to exhibit multileveled networks of organization. Second, both are open systems with diffuse boundaries allowing for interconnections and for the movement of materials, energy, and organisms. Third, healthy ecological and social systems tend to maintain relative stability. Both systems employ diversity as means to stability, a property that is dynamic rather than static and is supported by the properties of resilience and resistance. Fourth, both systems capitalize on synergy or emergent properties to succeed. In the following pages, we will expand upon each of these foundational ideas and see that change is a prevalent feature of them all.

There are of course limitations to this approach. First, we are human, and as such, that is our frame of reference. We have a tendency to anthropomorphize. This predisposition makes taking ourselves out of the imagining of ecosystems difficult, at best. Janine Benyus (2014) rightfully suggests we try to quiet our human cleverness. She wants us to get out of our own way and let nature show us what 3.5 billion years of evolution has to teach us—a seemingly simple idea, but difficult in practice. Second, the metaphors and analogies between systems can be inadequate. Leadership and followership are cultural constructs. How do we talk about these concepts without those constructs taking over? Absent, too, in ecosystems are “the cumulated effects of transitory processes, such as emotions, thoughts, reactions, and embodied cognitions which fundamentally alter leader development and behavioral outcomes” (Dinh et al., 2014, p. 37). By extension, the absence of those transitory human processes alters the ontology of followership.

It is not all bad, though. Nature, while often blamed for being “red in tooth and claw,” is in truth more complex. While predators abound in nature, there are many examples of altruism as well.

Much of this chapter is a story of discovery. Understanding how organizations shape leaders and how leaders are shaped by organization is an unfolding awareness. “Joseph Rost, a professor of leadership studies at the University of San Diego ... found that writers on leadership had defined it in more than two hundred ways” (Rothman, 2016, para. 8). It seems that the definition of leadership shape-shifts depending on personal and cultural context. So this is not an attempt to be all-inclusive—there are many far too many nuances in nature and human nature to be explored in these short pages. But as philosopher Michel Serres (1995) so joyfully tells us, “the philosopher is a gardener ... he safeguards the vastness of the old-growth forest The function of the philosopher, the care and the passion of the philosopher, is the negentropic ringing-of-the-changes of the possible” (p. 23). So to see what negentropic ringings are possible, we can start by going wide.

World Wide Web

Ecosystems are dynamic interactions of living and nonliving elements. To help understand the dynamics, we will engage what philosopher Arne Næss (2005) called “deep ecology.” Though he eschewed formal definitions of the term, even inviting others to render their own descriptions and understandings, his vision was one of long range and deep questioning of our values in relationship to the natural world. The nature he so cherished included human and non-human living beings as well as the abiotic rivers and rocks, wind, and watersheds. Næss (2005) held that deep ecology involves “principles of diversity, complexity, autonomy, decentralization, symbiosis, egalitarianism, and classlessness” (p. 3). Næss’ fundamentals of deep ecology are entwined in the intersections of both natural and social systems.

Ecosystems are a complex web of plant, animal, and microorganism communities interacting with their nonliving environment. No part, no node, of this system is autonomous. Sometimes reduced to a food chain

or simply energy flow, it is really a set of complex interactions that start with a reliance on species (plants and some algae) that can collect solar energy and organize it into chemical energy. Ho and Ulanowicz (2005) describe the flow as “energy capture and storage Energy flow is of no consequence unless the energy can be trapped and stored within the system, where it is mobilized to give it a self-maintaining, self-reproducing life cycle coupled to the energy flow” (p. 41). That trapped and stored chemical energy is displayed beautifully as among other things, flowers, fruits, and trees. Those plants then are reliant on other species (animals, fungi, bacteria) to redistribute those nutrients, and often to distribute their genetics by carrying seeds to distant locations, sometimes even supplying the fertilizer. The nutrient recycling, done by both predators and decomposers, results in energy or resources being transferred through the system.

Ecosystems require constant energy flows and energy transformations to respond to both natural disturbances (fires, floods, hurricanes, volcanic activity, variations in climate, and the tilt of the earth) and human activity (excessive CO₂ production, deforestation, and oil and mineral extraction). The accumulation of “natural capital” acts as a buffer against which the system draws down in times of need. As with financial capital, if we spend too much, bankruptcy can result, or an inability to respond to disturbances.

In nature, the flow of energy always starts with the sun, which provides the initial input of energy. Sometimes, the flow of energy through an ecosystem is put into hierarchical terms, often with predators at the top. But in ecological terms, plants and other photosynthetic organisms could theoretically be placed at the top, because without photosynthesis there would be no animals. Each food or energy chain is merely representational of what might happen, but there are multiple paths that each chain could take, presenting us with a network of possibilities, rather than linear paths. In other words, the hierarchy is a false model.

As Capra (1996) tells us, “the web of life consists of networks within networks. At each scale ... the nodes of the network reveal themselves as smaller networks. We tend to arrange these systems ... in a hierarchical scheme by placing larger systems above the smaller ones in pyramid fashion. But this is a human projection. In nature there is no ‘above’ or

‘below’ and there are no hierarchies. There are only networks nesting within other networks” (p. 35). The placement of either predators or plants at the top of the hierarchy is a human projection.

Deep ecology enhances our understanding of these networks of interactions and interdependencies, exchanging the hierarchy for a network of systems. We know that mountains move in response to water, wind, and time. Rivers carve canyons and shape estuaries. Elephants, otters, rhinos, whales, and wolves shape whole ecosystems. And even birds change their song in response to urban intrusions (Slabbekoorn & den Boer-Visser, 2006).

To examine inherent interdependency we can use the interconnections represented in the kelp ecosystem as a model. Kelp is a photosynthetic alga, collecting energy from the sun. Sea urchins eat the kelp (a redistribution of energy), otters eat sea urchins (another redistribution), and kelp provides predator protection for the otters. The absence of otters allows the urchins to overfeed on the kelp beds, leaving “urchin barrens” in their place. Again, this is one possible path. And it goes far beyond those three species. Kelp forests are important in that they sequester CO₂, which, of course, is important in light of climate change issues. The kelp also supports the extraordinary biodiversity of marine life including scud, prawn, snails, sea stars, and many species of rock fish that are not only important to a variety of seagulls, terns, herons, and cormorants but also are commercially important. Gray whales feed on abundant invertebrates and crustaceans found in kelp forests. Kelp provides a home to flies, maggots, and small crustaceans that in turn are food for crows, warblers, and sparrows. And lest we forget, it is also populated with bacteria, fungi, and viruses, while microscopic, outnumber all else combined.

Yet, in our role as super predator, we drew down on our natural capital, hunting the otter to near extinction during the turn of the last century. Over 100 years later the kelp ecosystems on the western coast of the United States are still in recovery, with otter populations still not reaching the ecological carrying capacity. The human intentions in this case negated the principles of diversity and complexity, by not even recognizing an ecosystem existed. We negated the deep idea of decentralization, so valued in deep ecology, by putting our wants as the central feature of our economic system.

We no longer hunt otters, but we are in a similar battle over blue-fin tuna. One fish recently sold for \$116,000. It is valued as meat, not part of an ecosystem, and is quickly being fished to extinction. As David Suzuki (2014) puts it, "The degradation of natural systems has become inevitable because our economic system is fatally flawed by species chauvinism" (Suzuki, McKibben, & David Suzuki Foundation, p. 79). Financial capital has come to be valued over natural, social, or human capital.

This degradation of natural systems is apparent as we battle over the extraction energy and climate change. In the clashes over logging, oil pipelines, and the continuing reliance on coal, we bemoan the short-term loss of jobs or economic viability even as we ignore the larger long-term costs of CO₂ emissions, habitat loss or degradation, delayed toxic cleanups, and health implications of each of the extraction methods. It is not only devastating in terms of the loss of diversity but also it impacts human populations as ecosystems lose productivity and resilience, resulting in floods, droughts, and desertification. Problematic too is that while we share the same chemical make-up of other living organisms, we often ignore the laws of thermodynamics. We attempt to thwart physics by pushing entropy offshore, mining more coal, exploiting nuclear energy, all at a cost that will be inherited by our descendants. We are not seeing the forest, but this time it is because we have cut down the trees.

So how does this help us understand leadership and followership in organizations? We could begin by looking at the whole of the system. Laszlo (2009) reminds us that, "the society toward which we are heading is an interconnected socioeconomic system created by the growing impact of information, the globalization of business and government, and the ever greater demands on an increasingly over-burdened and fragile terrome" (p. 207). Both social and biological systems have interconnected and interdependent components, each relying on and influencing each other. Leadership and followership also share this enmeshed inter-reliance. The distributed leadership model appears to recognize this; valuing human interactions and recognizing those relationships contribute to the overall health of an organization.

It also might be useful to pivot our thinking from the anthropocentric to a more balanced relationship within our planet's terrome. We could rebalance our position and recall our interrelationships with nature by

remembering that humans are nature, not separate from, not superior nor subservient. We can look to ecosystems and their inherent flexibility for ideas with which to create a more harmonious and creative space. As Küpers (2007) tells us, “Effective and sustainable leadership and followership (and their interrelationships) need to attend to all these various dimensions and interrelationships for ensuring consistency, compatibility, and creativity of organizational activities” (p. 198).

To do this, leaders and followers might want to go deep and envision ways of accounting for all forms of capital involved in an organization, the human, natural, social, as well as financial components. Leaders and followers might want to use a perspective that values all components equally, taking into account the future of the company and the future impact on all stakeholders. “While the accumulated capital is sequestered in the growing, maturing ecosystem, it also represents a gradual increase in the potential for other kinds of ecosystems and futures. For an economic or social system, the accumulating potential could as well be from the skills, networks of human relationships, and mutual trust that are incrementally developed and tested” (Gunderson & Holling, 2002, p. 35). Leaders and followers might want to celebrate the capital gained from human relationships and trust that can only evolve over time under pressure. What new paradigms might be formed in light of this broadening perspective?

Boundaries, Just Go with the Flow

Ecosystems vary in size, from small ponds to an entire ocean. Distinct geographic features (e.g. shorelines, tree lines, or lines of specific dominant vegetation) often structurally and visually define them. Using this simple visual delineation has three major weaknesses. First, it does not go deep. It does not take into account the hydrology, soil composition, or biogeochemistry. Second, it does not go wide. Nor does it acknowledge the dissipative nature of systems, defined by connections that extend through time and space. The delineation ignores the change in ecological succession as different plant and animal species outcompete, evolve, and replace the previous ones. And third, the geographic distinction does not

recognize the interconnections of either of those already discussed in the section above, and neither does it acknowledge the effect of interconnecting neighboring ecosystems. These adjacent systems experience flows of organisms, materials, and energy across their shared and highly permeable boundary.

Ecosystems are open systems and do not have closed boundaries. Instead, they have ecotones, transition zones, through which organisms, materials, and energy flow. Prigogine, Stengers, and Prigogine (1984) chose the term “dissipative structures,” to describe an open system that is far from equilibrium but maintaining a state of order. The term highlights the balance of change and permeability while acknowledging the organizing structures. So these ecotones exist as gradients of change, which can be quite gradual or quite abrupt. Ecotones are areas of high diversity, where “new states of matter may originate, states that reflect the interaction of a given system with its surroundings” (p. 12). These are areas of change, niche adaptation, growth, and ultimately evolution. Ecologist Florence Krall (1994) says, “To an ecologist, the ‘edge effect’ carries the connotation of the complex interplay of life forces where plant communities, and the creatures they support, intermingle in mosaics or change abruptly” (p. 4). It is not a space of isolation, but of rich diversity and fecundity. The constraints and demands of the environment shape evolution of organisms, and as they evolve, those organisms help shape their environment.

Like natural ecosystems, work/play/learn environments are also open systems without defined boundaries. Leaders in these communities could think like an ecosystem and go deep to look through time and space. While not a precise corollary, we could imagine the emergence of followership simultaneously framed not only by the perceived leadership in place but also the history of an organization, the founders' intentions, the layers of experience of various management, and employees and their personal development in the evolution of their work life. We can imagine leadership evolving in response to the shifts in the ecosystem around them, visioning workers and peers existing within the same environment, feeling the same pressures, and coevolving.

Ecosystems, cells, and cities exist *only* because they are open. “They feed on the flux of matter and energy coming to them from the outside

world. We can isolate a crystal, but cities and cells die when cut off from their environment” (Prigogine et al., 1984). Organizations are also open and dissipative structures, feeding on the flux—expanding and contracting as necessary based on growth or growth opportunities, material flows, politics, and/or economics. This is equivalent to ecological succession, which adds vitality, diversity, the emergence of new niches, and, with that, opportunities to thrive. Thinking about these things in the abstract can prepare groups to expect dynamism, and to use it as a creative tool. Alexander Laszlo (2015) artfully challenges us, “to interpret the flow of events through which we consciously participate in the shaping of our futures and those of all things with which we interact, and then to learn to intentionally align our actions with evolutionary purpose” (p. 169). The flow of events over time, the evolution of an organization, is an oft-neglected dimension. Local ecosystems (work, school, church, government, and localized cultures) affect each other over time through various feedback loops. “There are cyclical paths of energy moving in and out of the system at all times. The systems in which leadership operates are composed of social groupings, and therefore, are a type of living system” (Allen, Stelzner, & Wielkiewicz, 1998, p. 62). And, just as in natural systems, changes in any one of these systems causes shifts in other systems.

As in ecotones, there is a constant flow of materials, workers, and energy through an organization. That flow “is not always smooth and even, but often proceeds in pulses, jolts, and floods” (Capra, 1996, p. 179). Being conscious of the flow and the relational aspects can lead to the understanding that change and disorder is normal and necessary to a healthy living ecosystem or organization. As conscious participants in the functioning of these interconnected living systems, we can work with intentionality and move to (re)cognize our evolutionary purpose. This is the deep ecology of recognizing that whether we acknowledge our neighbors as like-minded or as oppositional forces, both still require engagement. We are interconnected.

So what does the concept of flows through ecotones bring to bear on our understanding of leadership? “On the one hand we are witnessing global flows of information, energy, trade, and technology swept up in massive economic reforms and political reorientations. On the other, and in no small measure due to the magnitude and intensity of these flows, we

are experiencing climatological and ecological maelstroms that are altering the physical essence of our planet” (Laszlo, 2008, p. 2). If we hold that leadership is an emergent property, then in this ecological light, an organization might be viewed as a part of this ecotone, with the pressures of time and changing dynamics that help organisms and organizations to evolve. “An ecological perspective encourages positional leaders to assist in the emergence of leadership rather than creating change through executive orders and decisions” (Wielkiewicz & Stelzner, 2005, p. 331). We have seen how leaders shape businesses, our lives, our culture—but what ideas and influence will help shape the leaders we want in this dynamic century?

Ho and Ulanowicz (2005) describe a healthy economic system as “organized heterogeneity, local autonomy and sufficiency at appropriate levels, reciprocity and equality of exchange, and most of all, balancing the exploitation of natural resources—real input into the system—against the ability of the ecosystem to regenerate itself. (p. 39)” And for that we need stability.

Stability

Stability in nature is an important component of sustainability. Stability does not mean that nothing changes; stability requires a dynamic equilibrium. Perhaps we might imagine it as a high-wire performance. Balancing on the restricted bounds of a wire, we must dance back and forth and shift side to side to maintain balance. Stability requires constant change.

Healthy ecosystems, likewise, are in a steady state of dynamic equilibrium. While various aspects of an ecosystem change from day to day or season to season, those changes are usually small and occur within limits.

There are several key features that are hallmarks of stability. As mentioned earlier, disturbance happens. With either a human related or a natural occurrence, the ability of an ecosystem to maintain stability, to survive, and even thrive under these challenges depends on several factors. Among these are resilience, resistance, and redundancy, all of which are linked to diversity.

High species diversity is both stable and complex. High species diversity provides stability by offering multiple pathways through the food web. If a disturbance occurs, there are still alternative pathways to food,

making survival and continuation of the species more probable. Which in turn makes the ecosystem as a whole less vulnerable to disruption (Allison & Martiny, 2008; Dunne, Williams, & Martinez, 2002).

Resilience

Ecosystem resilience is supported by diversity. Resilience is the ability of an ecosystem to remain stable while shifting to a different steady state or cyclic state after a disturbance. Resilience in nature is reliant on overlapping feedback loops amplifying (positive) or stabilizing (negative) that help maintain homeostasis, or dynamic equilibrium, as referenced earlier. In humans, a classic example of a stabilizing feedback loop is that of thermoregulation. When we are hot, we perspire, which provides evaporative cooling; when we are cold, we shiver, which raises our body temperature by expending energy. There are in fact five different physiological mechanisms that operate to keep internal temperature of all warm-blooded animals within relatively stable and narrow range.

The second type is the positive feedback loop, which has an amplifying effect with two interacting components changing in the same direction. The designation “positive” can be misleading, because the amplification can occur in two ways. For example, when the availability of water supports plant growth, the plant growth increases leaf litter, allowing the soil to hold onto the water. More water, more potential for growth. Alternatively, two things can move in a destabilizing direction, as is witnessed in the melting of the polar ice caps. Their surface reflects a great deal of sunlight back into the atmosphere, limiting the amount of heat put into the system. With less surface area, more heat is absorbed by the system. More heat, more melting, resulting in deadly warming spiral for those species not equipped for the change in climate.

Resilience, simply put, is an attribute of a complex interconnected and layered system of *communications* about *change*. Such an organic system, of multilayered feedback communications, could allow organizations, individuals, both leaders and followers, to have greater behavioral adaptability in response to varying situations, both good and bad. Ideally, this is how distributed leadership works. It is an emergent property—a result

of communication between participants—Pearce and Conger (as cited in Avolio et al., 2009) call it,

A dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both. This influence process often involves peer, or lateral influence and at other times involves upward or downward hierarchical influence. (p. 431)

Leadership should respond to the interactive influence and adapt depending on needs, competence, and purpose. Feedback mechanisms for planning, coordinating, conflict management, group contributions, and individual input would benefit both the external and internal stakeholders.

The idea of feedback loops in organizations is not new. Currently, we find that most loops in business are built on consumerism, with only the bottom line as the signal for change. “The whole philosophy of consumerism is built on the need to generate and amplify positive feedbacks. It is a ‘throughput system’ in which costs to the producer are reduced through economies of scale. Costs unrelated to production (e.g., ecological impacts) are externalized from the system, which tends to remain closed to nonconsumer feedbacks” (Chapin & Whiteman, 1998, para. 19). Here, we see the idea of capital through a narrow lens. The ecosystem of human, social, and natural capital is not recognized.

In business, positive loops generally mean that part of the output feeds back to the input or are idealized as success feeding success. We see the positive loop reflected in our on-demand economy, in which a need appears (I need a ride), triggering a response (a car appears). This model is reliant on being highly responsive to our needs, using readily available resources. Some of these companies use the promise of shared leadership, by setting up the framework, and then assuring workers they would be their own bosses. But on-demand companies require constant growth (constant flow of energy) to generate profit. However, unlike ecosystems that rely on an open system to maintain homeostasis, this basic tenet appears to be neglected. In Uber’s case, once the organization reached “carrying capacity” (maximized profit), leaders showed the workers who

was really the boss and demanded workers do more for less (mandatory fare cuts), closing the system and choking off the potential flow of energy.

It is unclear how this model will play out in the long term, “but accompanied by and perhaps precipitated by America’s rising wealth inequality, these companies have thrown 20th-century notions of work, employment, and income into disarray What workers might gain in freedom and flexibility is balanced against a lack of job security and myriad unknowns about taxes, health care, retirement, and unemployment” (“How will an on-demand economy work,” 2016, para. 5). And rather than a stabilizing loop, we might find ourselves engaged in an amplifying destabilizing spiral.

But it is not all bad news. Many organizations are remembering and recognizing themselves as part of the community in which they function, and in so doing adding to the bottom line. According to Forbes, social responsibility is increasingly important to consumers’ decisions on which companies to support. Some organizations incorporate social responsibility into their business plans and consider it their duty to provide environmentally friendly products and services.

Peter Senge (2008) reminds us of several companies that are leading the way—“planting the seeds for new ways of living and working together Pressures for change are building rapidly, and solutions and opportunities—and news of what works and out to build on it—are spreading equally rapidly” (p. 9). He cites Xerox as championing zero waste in 2008. The concept of zero waste comes directly from nature, where every molecule is recycled multiple times. He described how Nike hired consultants to help them realize the goals of delivering sustainable products with the “long-range goals of ‘zero waste, zero toxins, 100 percent closed-loop products’” (p. 242). Nike also made recent headlines “by announcing that a majority of its U.S. workforce is now made up of racial and ethnic minorities. Workers who identify as non-white comprise just over 50% of Nike’s 32,000 U.S. employees. The company also disclosed that women represent 48% of its global workforce” (Frauenheim, 2016, para. 4). And Whole Foods Market’s co-CEO Walter Robb recently described his entrance into the food industry. “We never set out to make money. We set out to do something good in the world” (Ames, 2016, p. 3A). The company is worth nearly \$14 billion.

Senge calls it the necessary revolution. Senge champions the idea of changing the way business is done in light of the social and environmental challenges before us. In addition to World Wildlife Fund, Coca-Cola,

Google, and Seventh Generation businesses are looking for innovative way to move toward a sustainable future. And seeds of change are sprouting new growth, with Walmart (the favorite whipping post for corporate irresponsibility) looking at sustainability and advancing corporate responsibility.

Resistance

Resistance, too, adds to the stability in an ecosystem. Resistance is the inertia of an ecosystem in response to change. While it can get a bad rap (and usually rightly so) when Bob in accounting says, “we have always done it this way,” but when looked at through an ecological lens, it is an imperative in evolution. Here too, diversity plays a critical role. Consider natural populations in prairie grassland, where minor genetic variations in a single species can confer resistance to pathogens. As the rest of the population succumbs to the parasite or disease, a new resistant population will thrive and fill the empty niche.

In organizations, a paradox exists around this concept. A 2015 McKinsey article cited research that found “that companies in the top quartile for gender or racial and ethnic diversity are more likely to have financial returns above their national industry medians” (Hunt, Layton, & Prince, 2015, para. 2). In nature, we know that diversity provides resistance to disturbances and ultimately produces better results. And apparently the same appears true for business. And many smart companies appreciate that diversifying their workforce can lead to more independence, innovation, and good governance while maximizing their company's performance. So why then are companies resistant to the idea of diversity? How could this contradiction inform leadership paradigms?

Redundance

Resilient ecosystems, which are resistant to change, often have high functional redundancy. We tend to think of redundancy as wasteful, but nature has found it beneficial to have multiple redundancies in the system. Research into coral communities, soil microbes, and beetles have shown

that duplication of roles within a community is such that some species may be lost without any loss in ecosystem performance. Redundancy provides ecosystems with insurance, because while there is duplication of functional roles, different microbes or beetles will respond differently to different stressors, preserving the integrity of the ecosystem as a whole. By not coming up with one universally employed method, it is necessary to implement many different solutions and use them in different ways. This strategy is seen among smaller organisms in an ecosystem, but in larger animals redundancy is rare.

It is therefore no surprise that the loss of large species can give rise to substantial functional change in ecosystems. While redundancy may be the rule in smaller creatures, the functional uniqueness of larger ones could imply that they are often the Achilles heel for ecological functioning. (Scheffer et al., 2015)

Here, the metaphor becomes a bit tenuous. Scheffer and colleagues point to the lack of redundancy as an Achilles heel in an ecosystem, but in the business community redundancy has the opposite connotation. Organizations tend to eliminate redundant positions rather than embrace them as a necessary component to organizational health. Perhaps we can acknowledge that a healthy ecosystem that embodies dynamic equilibrium with its concomitant incorporation of diversity, resilience, resistance, and redundancy is inherently stable. We then have a novel model to examine the modulating homeostatic context in which companies or classrooms with distributed leadership communities can function. We all want to get rid of Bob, who has done it the same way for 40 years, but rather than resist his resistance (a synergistic spiral for sure), how might we take that knowledge and explore how his ideas might help our evolutionary thinking? How might this shift in perception toward a more ecological paradigm inform the distributed leadership ontology?

Perhaps we can think of redundancy in its function as a learning tool. Bateson (2000) reminds us, “The physical environment contains internal patterning or redundancy, *i.e.*, the perception of certain events or objects makes other events or objects predictable” (p. 421). Redundancy can act as a tool for correcting errors. By facilitating predictability of

information, the recipient of communication can use the repetition as a means to fill in blanks, repairing or replacing faulty assumptions. More importantly, “redundancy enables the communication parties to build up *communication structures*. Pragmatically, this is a further step in communication. Actually, repetition and redundancy enable the communication partners to identify the most relevant issues in communication” (Oliver-Lalana, 2001, p. 147). Most organizations have communication structures already in place, even if only in a nascent form. These structures could be layered with additional medium (digital media, open forums, presentations by various stakeholders) to ensure that different perspectives are shared and discussed. Oliver-Lalana writes about redundancy with respect to the opacity of the law and to negate the inevitability of incomprehension by laypersons. But in truth, all organizations have certain levels of opacity, with the stakeholders in varying states of comprehension.

As humans, we have sensory redundancies to help us evaluate our environment: visual, auditory, olfactory, touch, and even insight. Return to the web, where we find everything inextricably interconnected. If we are to understand redundancy as a learning and communications tool, then communication structures should be built to extend horizontally as well as laterally through the complex web of people and resources in any organization. With effective communication structures in place, both the quality and maintenance of good working relationships would be fostered. Successful and constructive leadership–followership relationships then foster enhanced communication, creating a positive feedback loop.

Synergy

Synergy and symbiosis are often used interchangeably, but are functionally different. While symbiosis is a form of synergy, not all synergy is the result of symbiosis. I use the term synergy here because it “focuses our attention on the functional effects produced by cooperative interactions of *all* kinds (emphasis added), including symbiosis” (Corning, 2003, p. 82).

In the context of this discussion, ultimately both terms point to the idea of emergent properties. Emergent properties occur when the whole

is greater than the sum of its parts. “According to the systems view, the essential properties of an organism, or living system, are properties of the whole, which none of the parts have. They arise from the interaction and relationships between the parts” (Capra & Luisi, 2014, p. 65).

To better understand this, we can start small, say, with the atoms oxygen and hydrogen. Taken individually, these atoms perform brilliantly as wholes or parts of other complex molecules in our universe. Because of their molecular structure, they are attracted to each other and, fortunately for us, redefined as water, a liquid with properties completely different from its gaseous components. The interactions between these atoms become emergent as water—a sensuous, rippling, sparkle of fluid that is fundamental to life on earth.

Systems scientist Peter Corning (2003) once described the synergy of a lemon pie. Looking at the commonplace items of eggs, lemon, sugar, salt, and flour, he mused at the possible mismanagement of ingredients and mourned the loss of that synergistic and majestic combination of flavors and textures—smooth, creamy, tart, and sweet.

But we cannot just leave synergy to the cooks and chemists. Synergy is one of the key components of evolution. Long ago, in the primordial soup, in a process known as endosymbiosis, two distinct bacterial species merged to create a viable third organism capable of reproducing. The history of one of those mergers is still present as the color green (chloroplasts) in all modern-day plants, including the lemon tree we used for pie. It is evident in each of our cells as energy-producing mitochondria. Having advanced the theory of serial endosymbiosis, scientists Lynn Margulis and Sagan (1991) described it thus, “Life had moved another step, beyond the networking of free genetic transfer to the synergy of symbiosis. Separate organisms blended together, creating new wholes that were greater than the sum of their parts” (p. 119). There is a power and elegance in combining two things to create something unique.

Margulis’ endosymbiosis hypothesis posits that these two events are not isolated, but essential to all evolution. In fact, we see evidence of synergy everywhere in nature. Synergy in nature includes characteristics altruism, reciprocity, functional interdependence, mutualism, and even parasitism.

At the microscopic level, biofilms are formed by synergic alliances of multiple species. Strategically, these biofilms are better suited to growth (obtaining nutrients and multiplying) than are biofilms of singular species (Ren, Madsen, Sorensen, & Burmolle, 2015). Our immune system, too, is a marvel of synergy, coordinating several systems (micro and macroscopic) at once to ward off daily assaults to our well-being.

At a macroscopic level, we witness ants collectively foraging, killing, and carrying prey that would otherwise be unattainable. We witness the mutualistic synergy of the clown fish and the sea anemone. Each provides a service to the other, the clown fish aerates the water, flushing away waste and providing fresh nutrients. The anemone provides the clownfish with protection, stinging would-be predators with their tentacles. Some favorite displays of synergy are those of fungus. Fungi have evolved reciprocal relationships with several different species in forested habitats. Certain species of ants “farm” fungus, cutting up specific leaves to provide nutrients to the fungus. In return, the fungus has evolved a unique structure that provides ants with carbohydrates, enzymes, and amino acids (De Fine Licht, Boomsma, & Tunlid, 2014). Other fungi form mutualistic relationships with the roots of trees. Forest trees and root fungi share resources, communicating, and transporting chemical signals over miles of layered underground mycelium networks. Trees under attack by a beetle warn other trees within the network, which then release various chemicals that can ward off the attack. In fact, scientists Suzanne Simard and Durall (2004) discovered that some dying trees send their nutrients to other trees, often to different species, via this primarily underground network, in an act of perceived altruism.

We see the synergy in different ecosystems as discussed earlier. The interplay and interdependence between local and holistic forces generate a dynamic stable, complex whole greater than the sum of its parts.

What does this mean in terms of organizations? What can we learn from these ideas? It has long been recognized that diversity is an important attribute in the business community. Again, here we must remember that synergies occur as a result of “cooperative interactions of all kinds.” The interrelationships in a distributed leadership model are ideal for recognizing the synergies that exist. Most organizations understand this concept. In business, we see new forms of working together—networked

structures that come together to achieve specific goals. What might be overlooked is that synergies are not always a win-win. Synergies include characteristics that we, as humans, may not value, such as parasitism. “The reciprocal interdependence of leadership and followership have been underestimated” (Küpers, 2007, p. 194). Interdependencies involve not only how people perceive themselves but also how they perceive others. Those perceptions affect their interactions, creating an infinite feedback loop, for good or ill.

Conclusion

Physicist Frank Oppenheimer once said, “If one has a new way of thinking, why not apply it wherever one’s thought leads to? It is certainly entertaining to let oneself do so, but it is also often very illuminating and capable of leading to new and deep insight” (as cited in Cole, 1985, p. 2).

How can looking to the natural world for inspiration and a different perspective lead us to innovations that will improve organizational systems? Perhaps removing the focus from the people in charge, and the machine-like qualities of an organization, we can find more organic and inclusive ways of doing business. In this chapter, natural systems and the functions therein are used as model, measure, and mentor to help challenge our tendency to hegemonic thinking.

To that end, we looked to the organic web interactions and interconnections in a kelp forest. We ventured into the borderlands of ecotones to visualize the movement of materials, organisms, and energy and ideas. We danced for a moment on a high-wire and examined stability and the concomitant ideas of diversity, resilience, resistance, and redundancy. Finally, we looked at the ideas of synergy, a concept with great promise and an element of menace. All to broaden our understanding of what it means to be in the world, of the world, part of a community, an organization, or a family. Using each of these parallels found in natural systems and organizational systems, new meanings can be extracted and interpreted as the need or want suits. While the sections were presented separately, they are inextricably interconnected and interwoven as a whole. What is woven throughout is the element of change, adaptation, and evolution.

By using ecosystems to model leadership and followership paradigms we shed the burden of assigning human attributes. By quieting our human cleverness we can gain flexibility in our thinking. Can we play with the interactions of ideas using ecosystems that do not depend on human interventions to extract ideas that can move us to novel pathways to defining success?

Biologist Steven Rose (2003) tells us, "Reductionism ... freezes life at a moment in time. In attempting to capture its being, it loses its becoming" (p. 306). Becoming is at the forefront. The concepts embedded within the distributed leadership communities are not and should not be static, captured in the moment of being. "The challenge is to learn how to work with change, to cope with uncertainty, to dance with evolution" (Laszlo, 2009, p. 213). We need to think about leadership as an act of becoming. We need to go wide and see the flow of materials, energy, and organisms. We need to go deeper into the ideas of time and space. We need to delve even further into the inextricable interconnectedness. We need to get used to the idea that change is constant, inevitable, and transformational.

There remain difficulties in using a deep ecology framework to examine this paradigm. In nature, there is no thoughtfulness, no morality, no studied reflections, and nature precisely ignores these human principles. But there are elements of altruism, reciprocity, and shared existence that can be borrowed. We are ultimately responsible for bringing in those transitory emotions and human insights to the ecosystems of our varied organizations.

This chapter does not offer prescriptive models or recipes to emulate. First, as in nature, there is not "one size" that suits us all. What works in one situation may not work in another. Imposing models designed for one system will overlook the materials, energy, and organisms that exist in another. I simply provide a lens through which to look and what you see will be your own. I gain my inspiration from nature, finding connections, insight, and inspirations throughout. I am surprised daily by the inventiveness of nature and the natural world of which we are part. Nature does not plan, predict, nor does evolution lead to perfection. Living creatures simply adapt themselves to be good enough to solve problems.

I think we can follow nature's lead and find new ways to consider leadership with inventiveness and find it within ourselves to be good enough to solve problems. And in so doing we might also consider Gregory Bateson's (2000) provocative question, "How do ideas interact?"

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