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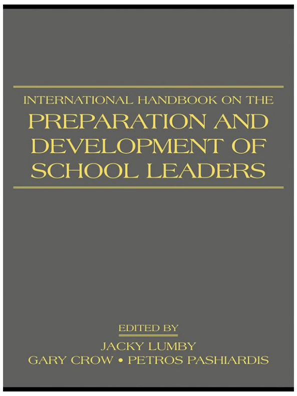
INTERNATIONAL HANDBOOK ON THE
PREPARATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL LEADERS
EDITED BY
JACKY LUMBY
GARY CROW • PETROS PASHIARDIS

# International Handbook on the Preparation and Development of School Leaders

Jacky Lumby, Gary Crow, Petros Pashiardis

# Leadership and Culture

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# Leadership and Culture

Jacky Lumby and Nick Foskett

The interrelationship of culture with leadership and its development is the focus of this chapter. The concept of culture has appeared frequently in analyses of both. However culture is often defined in broad general terms as, for example, 'the way we do things around here' (Deal & Kennedy, 1982), obscuring complex and contested conceptualizations. What we mean by the term culture is both argued to be generally understood (Lumby, Walker, Bryant, Bush & Bjork, forthcoming) and suggested not to be understood, misunderstood or so variously understood as to be verging on meaningless. Archer (1996, p. 1) contends that 'the notion of culture remains inordinately vague' to the extent that 'poverty of conceptualization' leads to culture being 'grasped' rather than 'analysed'.

Despite the difficulties of establishing the meaning of the concept of culture, it is used ubiquitously as a key variable, Janus-like, suggested both to influence and be influenced by a range of factors which impact on education. For example, culture is suggested to both shape and reflect values (Begley & Wong, 2001), philosophy (Ribbins & Zhang, 2004), gender (Celikten, 2005), religion (Sapre & Ranade, 2001), politics (Hwang, 2001), ethnicity (Bryant, 1998) and history (Wong, 2001). Culture is so rooted in all aspects of human activity that its all encompassing nature may limit its usefulness in practice to conceptualizing leadership and shaping the development of leaders. Metaphorically culture is like the air we breathe; all around us, vital, and yet difficult to discern and to change.

In relation to leader preparation and development culture has been framed largely as an issue of *diffusion,* particularly of Western values and practice applied to the development of leaders in all parts of the globe (Leithwood & Duke, 1998). The mechanics of diffusion and the appropriateness of the results have been subject to unequal research interest. The former has received very little and the latter a good deal more attention (Gronn, 2001; Heck, 1996). Consequently, although there is relatively little empirical data on which to draw, the issue of *fit* between culture and the conception, development and enactment of leadership has become a key concern. In part this reflects a revolt against the perceived global homogenization of leadership. It is also a response to the greater sensitivity brought about by the increasing diversity within many societies and the insistence that a perspective based on a single dominant culture risks sustaining a hegemonic, ineffective and excluding approach.

A primary aim of the chapter therefore is to explore how we understand culture in its infinitely variable expressions, and how it relates to the design and implementation of leadership preparation and development programs. The chapter aims to avoid becoming ensnared in the complexity of culture by confining its discussion to a sample of illustrative examples of both simple and complex conceptualizations.

The focus on culture at the macro or societal level is matched by concern with the micro or organizational level, the school level. Preparing leaders involves considering the nature and impact of culture on the crafting of their development (for example, the curriculum or mode of delivery). It involves consideration of fit to the culture of each individual school but also the necessity to equip leaders to engage with their own organization's culture, to sustain, develop or challenge it. The school leader is therefore at the fulcrum point, subject to exogenous effects of culture, refracted in part through his or her leadership development and personal cultural 'locus', and in turn engaging with endogenous culture in the school and its community. At the interface with exogenous and endogenous cultures, preparation and development reflect choices which are more than technical. Decisions to encourage acceptance or critique of the dominant culture and its effect lie at the moral heart of supporting the education of leaders. Such decisions will be founded on a concept of leadership that embraces far more than a capacity to competently manage the technical aspects of instruction. No one theory of leadership is implied. Rather, cultural competency, the ability to recognize, analyze and engage purposefully with culture at the macro and micro levels is a foundational skill, which positions educational leadership as critical contributors to shaping society and not just the school.

The chapter considers five main themes. Firstly, it examines key theoretical models and perspectives on culture. Secondly, it considers the important issue of the macro relationship of culture and globalization. Thirdly, it offers an international perspective by looking at the micro relationship of culture to the multiple identities and cultures of individuals and organizations. The fourth theme addresses a key concern for both policy and practice which is the connection between culture and leaders' preparation and development. (Throughout, the term 'development' is used to indicate both pre-appointment preparation and the post-appointment on-going development of leaders.) Finally, we identify key issues and areas for future research.

## CULTURE — CONCEPTS AND PERSPECTIVES

Despite the recognition that culture is an elusive and diverse concept, identifying some of the existing intellectual paradigms of 'culture' is an important starting point. There exists a considerable literature on culture, which provides a range of conceptualizations. None is universally applicable nor comprehensive in its utility, yet they provide a range of perspectives to assist in clarifying this miasmic concept. Here we shall consider three of these perspectives which we believe provide diverse insights — reflections on the tangible components of culture and a number of models of those components in action; consideration of the organizational scales at which culture is important in educational contexts; and a systems view of 'culture' which enables the areas of potential management influence of culture in schools to be identified

### The Components of Culture

Culture is the set of beliefs, values and behaviors, both explicit and implicit, which underpin an organization and provide the basis of action and decision making, and is neatly summarized as 'the way we do things around here'. In a strict sense we might argue that the culture of every educational institution is unique, derived from the context in which the school operates and the values of those who have led or been part of the organization over time. This unique culture will reveal itself through a number of institutional characteristics:

a. conceptually, through the ideas that are valued and promoted
b. verbally, through the language, terminology and discourses in use
c. behaviorally, through the activities, social interactions and rituals that occur
d. visually, through the designs and styles adopted by the organization in its physical and material components

While these representations are identifiable and mostly tangible, the illusiveness of the concept of culture lies in the fact that it is an holistic concept which is more than the sum of these component parts. These elements are but the tangible appearance of the underpinning set of values and beliefs, which shape the intended outcomes of the educational enterprise within a school. A number of summative frameworks for analyzing culture have therefore been developed which seek to reduce the complexity of culture to simplified 'types' which can be labeled for ease of comprehension. We present here a small number of examples in order to illustrate a range of typologies.

Sarason (1971, 1996), writing of US schools, was one of the earliest to insist that improving schools was primarily a question of changing culture. He created a series of descriptors of the culture of schooling with a particular focus on how key cultural characteristics equate to the absence of a productive learning environment. He also insisted that the complex creation of culture was the result of multiple inputs from staff, learners and the wider community. His ideas were widely influential. A second early example from the US of a description of a cultural type was 'the shopping mall school'. Powell**,** Farrar and Cohen (1985) used research from fifteen high schools to depict a culture of easy and uncritical acceptance of underachievement. In the period since the 1970s many commentators have created sometimes a single description of school culture, and sometimes typologies providing alternate descriptions. One of the best known is that applied to schools by Handy and Aitken (1986), which draws on observations across diverse organizations. Their typology distinguishes club, role, task and person cultures in organizations, and enables a simple analysis of the dominant cultural themes within a school or a team. Hargreaves (1995) developed a different typological model in which he distinguishes formal, welfarist, hothouse, and survivalist school cultures based on the educational priorities of the school in the context of external 'market' environments. Hothouse culture exists where the pressure is to high academic achievement, typically in response to government or parental pressure to deliver high quality examination results. A welfarist culture, alternatively, emphasizes the individual needs of pupils. Stoll and Fink (1996) created a typology of five types of school culture: moving (dynamic and successful determination to keep developing), cruising (rather complacent, often with privileged learners who achieve despite little school dynamism), strolling (neither particularly effective or ineffective, but long term not keeping pace with change), struggling (ineffective but trying to address issues), and finally sinking (ineffective and not improving). Their description of each provides significant detail of the culture of the type.

There have, of course, been many more attempts to categorize school cultures, each offering a particular perspective to illuminate the nature and effects of culture. Such simple categorizations provide briefly interesting analytical tools to assist school leaders in gaining an initial understanding of their school culture, but are of limited wider utility. None is universally applicable or comprehensive, but all can serve to support an educational leader's reflection on the culture of a specific school.

More helpful is the model of Schein (1990), which, in contrast, has provided a generic and analytical model of culture. Schein's model provides a greater level of sophistication by focusing on a challenging interrogation of the culture of the school and linking culture more strongly to underpinning values and beliefs. The model identifies seven dimensions of organizational context that shape resultant culture, based on a series of key questions:

1. The organization's relationship to its environment. Does it perceive itself as dominant, submissive, harmonizing or searching out a niche within its operational environment?
2. Its view of the nature of human activity — does it believe that people behave in a dominant/proactive mode or a passive/fatalistic mode?
3. Its view of the nature of truth and reality — how does it define what is true and what is not and how is truth defined in the context of the social or natural world?
4. What is the significance of time — is the organization most oriented towards the past, the present or the future?
5. Its view of human nature — is there a belief that people are essentially good, neutral or evil?
6. Its view of the nature of human relationships — are people essentially collaborative or competitive, do they function best in groups or as individuals?
7. Homogeneity or diversity — is the organization more effective when it is characterized by diversity or homogeneity?

These questions provide a helpful analytical framework, which can be applied in most educational contexts, and which seeks to identify the underlying values and beliefs within a school. As we shall demonstrate later in the chapter, it is getting to understand these values and beliefs that is a critical first step for educational leaders in developing the skills to 'manage', develop and evolve culture in their school.

## Scales and Contexts of Analysis

Cultural differences can be observed at a range of organizational scales. Prosser (1998) has shown how culture is expressed at different levels within an organization, ranging from the individual classroom, to teams of teachers, to the whole school. While there may be commonalities within a whole school, in practice each of these levels will differ in the detail of its culture. The product will be a mosaic of sub-cultures, which may reinforce the cultural objectives of the whole school or, in some cases, appear as counter cultures that challenge the organizational hegemony. The extent of this range of sub-cultures and counter-cultures and their positive or negative interactions will be a key issue for those in leadership within the school and may cause cultural management issues to be significant or insignificant within the whole management task.

Beyond the school, though, lies a range of contextual cultures extending from the community within which the school lies to regional, national and international cultural contexts. Each of these contexts has a culture that expresses itself conceptually, verbally, behaviorally and visually, and which is a product of the complex interaction of communities, socio-economic contexts and contrasts, ethnic and faith-based values and beliefs, and the history of that community as a whole and of the individuals within it. At the international scale, for example, the work of Hofstede (1991), has sought to provide a broad general analysis of national organizational cultures.

The key dimension of cultural scales is that they all exist synchronously, and they all interact upwards and downwards. Each of the cultures influences and is influenced by each of the others. The challenge for educational leaders is to recognize and conceptualize each of these cultural realms and understand how it impacts on and provides implications for their own school.

## Cultural Systems and School Leaders

In recognizing that culture has dimensions at a wide range of scales of analysis, we explicitly acknowledge that it raises challenges for school leaders in relation to each of these scales. We consider later in this chapter the implications of this for the professional development of 'leaders' within educational institutions. However, a model which merely identifies cultural elements doesn't take account of the dynamic nature of culture and it is useful therefore to consider culture in the context of a systems perspective on organizations. Systems theory enables us to conceptualize every school and educational organization as being characterized 1) by a range of inputs, 2) by the processes in operation within the school, and 3) by a set of outputs — and in each of these three elements of the system we can identify culture as a key component.

Cultural inputs have many facets — these will include the external cultural context (society, community and economy at local, regional and national scales), and the cultures brought to the school by all those engaging with it (teachers, parents, pupils, for example). At first sight these components of culture may be thought to be significantly outside the control of schools themselves. Every school, for example, has a specific geographical and social location which will strongly shape its cultural context — the inner city school serving a diverse multi-ethnic community will inherit a diversity of cultures that may be quite different to those of the suburban middle class school. However, such a perspective ignores the ability of schools to select many of the cultural inputs. Where there is any element of selectivity of pupils, whether by ability/prior achievement or by geography or by capacity to pay, then the school will be involved in processes of cultural selection. These may be through processes of exclusion or processes of inclusion, resulting in a relatively homogeneous or diverse student body, but in either case the outcome will be a pupil profile which reflects a particular set of cultural characteristics. Similarly, the selection of teaching staff provides at least an implicit and possibly an explicit mechanism of shaping a key cultural input into the school. And, of course, the selection of principals by governors, education boards or regional/national education authorities is a key mechanism through which the cultural inputs to a school will be strongly controlled

Cultural processes, the second element of a systems perspective, will be reflected in almost every dimension of the operation of the school. These are the cultural, verbal, visual and behavioral components of the school in action through which a wide range of cultural messages and aims will be delivered. From the approach adopted for teaching and learning, to the cultural values espoused in the pastoral and ethical functions of the school, to the relative value ascribed to possible destinations for pupils beyond school, the fabric of school life will be imbued by these cultural processes.

The third element of the system is the cultural output of the school. In many ways this is the summation of the school and reflects its overall purpose and aims, which have two distinct dimensions. The first relates to the ways the day-to-day operations of the school interact with the outside world. Pupils, staff and school leaders have an on-going engagement with external stakeholders, from parents, to neighbors, to employers, to the media, and every one of those interactions conveys a message about the culture of the school and its underpinning values. These can have negative or positive dimensions — the media report of the school's excellent examination results will convey a different message about the school's culture than a local reputation for rowdy behavior by the school's pupils during lunchtime breaks.

Another output lies in the cultural characteristics and values of the young people who are the product of the school once they have completed their time there. The values they espouse or eschew, the aspirations and achievements they have, and their contribution to communities (local, regional, national), whether positive or negative are the cultural product of the school. Ultimately, it is the cultural product/output of the school by which it will be judged, for it will be benchmarked against the cultural expectations that government, society and community have for "their" schools.

Conceptualizing the school's culture through such a systems approach helps clarify the challenges for school leaders in relation to culture. In terms of cultural inputs it is important that leaders within a school have the skills and knowledge to read the cultural landscape of the school, to recognize those aspects of it which can be controlled or manipulated, and decide which *should* be influenced and in what ways. In terms of cultural outputs school leaders need to understand both what the external societies expect from the school and what they wish to achieve themselves — this will require an integration of their personal and professional values, their vision of the purpose of schooling, and the visions and values of the key external stakeholders. Once the inputs are understood and the intended outputs identified, the major challenge for the school leader is then to organize and operationalize the processes within the school to enable pupils to travel from their cultural starting point to the output position the school seeks to achieve. All this is set within a strongly performative macro context in many countries. Many leaders are constrained to varying degrees by the pressing demands of accountability and competition which in themselves create a dominant cultural context. This is but one element of the interplay of competing values, priorities and hierarchies of power which influence culture. Leaders navigate cultural choices which are always constrained.

We have looked at three 'theoretical' aspects of culture here. While the analytical models described are helpful in conceptualizing the nature of culture, there are a number of key issues for leaders to recognize in reflecting on their own organizations. The first is that culture is 'neither unitary nor static' (Collard & Wang, 2005), and while change may be evolutionary rather than revolutionary, trends and developments in internal and external influences will move the culture forward. The challenge for leaders, therefore, is to manage that change in terms of speed, direction or nature to support the organization's goals.

The second is that cultural plurality is the norm in many educational systems and within most individual schools and colleges. For most leaders this provides perhaps the most challenging dimension of leadership, for it is necessary to understand what those cultures are, why they exist and what aspects of them can or cannot, or should and should not, be subject to change to achieve the school's goals. Research in such contexts is still not extensive, although Billot, Goddard and Cranston (2007) report the findings of an international study which explores how leadership in successful multi-cultural schools is exercised in three different national settings (Canada, New Zealand and Australia). The study identifies how cultural 'literacy' amongst the principals of the schools is a key element of the positive achievements they report. Training and educating principals for such cultural literacy is the focus of later sections in this chapter.

## MACRO RELATIONS: CULTURE AND GLOBALIZATION

A key influence on culture within and beyond schools has been globalization. The processes of globalization have been a significant feature of all dimensions of society and economy over the last three decades. Waters (1995) has identified three interwoven strands to globalization — political globalization, economic globalization and cultural globalization. Cultural globalization is the international transfer of values and beliefs, and while strictly it is multi-directional it is typically perceived as dominated by the spread of western, particularly American, values and symbols across the globe. In the context of education this is seen through the promotion of policies and practices around the globe that have been initially developed in the west, based often on western approaches to educational management and the key concept of economic rationalism. Bottery (1999) has described this as managerial globalization, in which the adoption of western managerialist approaches and business-based forms of accountability underpins educational reform and development. Bottery asserts that there is a risk through this that there may be emerging a perspective that 'defines what looks increasingly like a global picture of management practice'. As Foskett and Lumby (2003, p. 8) indicate:

> We must be aware that the spread of 'good practice' internationally through the educational management literature, through the actions of international organisations such as UNESCO, and through the impact of professional development programmes, all of which are dominated by the perspectives of western educational management practitioners and academics, is in danger of presenting such a global picture of 'good practice'.

There have been strong responses to the lack of critical awareness of these processes. Collard (2006), for example, contends that much of the global level educational development through programs of agencies such as UNESCO and the World Bank is based on an import model which he portrays as a tidal wave of western values, sweeping away existing cultural environments. His critique suggests that there is insufficient time given in such an approach to understanding existing cultures, both at a general level and in terms of the underpinning key components and variables, and the consequence is cultural imperialism.

An example of the cultural challenges that emerge from this has been described by Hallinger and Kantamara (2001) in the context of Thailand. The government of Thailand sought to introduce the western concept of school-based management, but found this problematic in the context of an existing societal culture, typical amongst the staff of Thai schools, in which deference to senior management and leadership made the introduction of collaborative and distributed approaches to leadership very difficult.

Two other approaches might be more desirable ethically and politically. The first is the blending of western (or, more correctly, exogenous) cultural values with existing cultures to generate a new cultural environment, a model sometimes described as the 'melting pot' perspective. The second has a similar perspective but rather than losing the identities of existing cultures in the melting pot sees the retention of plural cultures within education which can enrich and reinforce each other — what is sometimes described as the 'salad bowl' approach to cultural change.

The key issue, of course, arising from globalization is that educational leaders will be faced increasingly with challenges to manage cultural change within their institution. Cultural isolation is difficult, even in societies which seek strongly to conserve traditional cultural values within their educational systems. Preparing head teachers to respond to these challenges will be a significant challenge, therefore, and this is a focus later in the chapter.

## CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP — GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

### Cultural Contrasts and Commonalities

Following our examination of globalization and culture in the previous section, we consider here the picture of culture within educational leadership internationally. At the exogenous level, there appears to be widespread cultural homogeneity implicit in leadership development; that is, whether explicitly acknowledged or not, development is underpinned by some degree of belief in leadership as an invariable activity (Walker & Walker, 1998; Bhindi & Duignan, 1997): this despite recognition that even the word 'leader' has very different connotations in different cultures (House, 2004). A major international study, The Global Leadership and Organizational Effectiveness (GLOBE) project, aimed to establish which leadership behavior was 'universally' viewed as 'contributing to leadership effectiveness' (House, Paul, Hanges, Ruiz-Quintanilla, Dorfman & Mansour 2004, p. 3). The project established 21 common perceived effective leadership attributes and behaviors within the 57 participating nations, providing evidence of widespread assumptions about leadership. For example, being dynamic and dependable, encouraging and displaying integrity were agreed to be positive leader attributes across all the nations involved. Education researchers have also assumed such common attributes, for example, integrity (Begley, 2004; Bhindi & Duignan, 1997). However House et al. (2004) also found evidence of 35 aspects of leadership which are culturally specific, for example, the degree to which compassion, status-consciousness, autonomy and domination are perceived to contribute to effective leadership is culturally contingent. The GLOBE project was undertaken in a business context. In the absence of a similarly complex or authoritative study of the cultural factors in educational leadership, the design of much preparation and development seems to adhere to an assumed commonality and to avoid detailed engagement with the culturally contingent (Lumby et al., forthcoming), resulting in 'an international curriculum for school leadership preparation' (Bush & Jackson, 2002, pp. 420–421).

The assumed commonality in attributes and behaviors may also be evident in axiological assumptions. All leadership development has embedded cultural values. However, these may be taken-for-granted, and only apparent to those designing and delivering development when a lack of fit is pointed out by specific groups. For example, Bryant (1998), researching the leadership culture of Native Americans in the United States, suggests a number of cultural assumptions embedded in American leadership:

- leadership is vital
- every organization must have a person in charge
- a focus on instrumental ends
- acute awareness of the expenditure of time
- encouragement of individual initiative
- an obligation to accommodate other's right to participate

The result is a simultaneous requirement for a task and people orientation. Bryant (1998) suggests that as a consequence school leadership as conceived in the US is unlikely to be appropriate to Native American educational leaders whose culture and consequent conception of leadership is very different. A person in charge is not required. Rather, in leadership 'every person has a role to play' (Bryant, 1998, p. 12) undertaking a leadership act as need and personal understanding or skill require. Leadership is therefore a community property shaped by a complex interrelationship between individuals and context, rather than resulting from individual intent and competition. Similarly, Louque (2002) challenges the appropriateness of the culture embedded in the selection and development of educational leaders to Hispanic and African American Women. Rejection of the cultural assumptions in preparation and development programs abound on the grounds of gender (Brunner, 2002; Coleman, 2005; Louque, 2002; Rusch, 2004), ethnicity (Bryant, 1998; Tippeconic, 2006), national culture (Bjerke & Al-Meer, 1993; Hallinger, Walker. & Bajunid., 2005; Sapre & Ranade, 2001; Walker, 2006; Wong, 2001), and faith (Shah, 2006). The cacophony of objections highlights the failure of development programs to accommodate the diversity of culture within one geographic area as much as across widely distant locations.

## Identity and Essentialism

The notions of cultural diffusion and cultural fit assume that programs designed to take account of the cultural expectations and preferences of participants are more likely to lead to effective learning and resulting practice. The identification of the relevant culture and the group to which it is appropriate is predicated on the notion that humans can be classified, that a specific culture can be assigned to those in a particular geographic area or sharing a particular characteristic such as gender, language, ethnic background or religion.

Litvin (1997) attacks such essentialism, ascribing the taxonomy of groups to a Western Platonic purportedly scientific paradigm. She challenges whether any classification of humans is tenable in the light of increasing certainty deriving from advances in natural science that whatever taxonomy is adopted, the complexity of human beings, biologically, linguistically and culturally, cannot be placed into easily described categories:

> There are no essential, innate and immutable characteristics of race, age, gender, disability or other demographic categories. Instead there are history, context, process, interactivity, power relations and change. (Litvin, 1997, pp. 206–207)

Categorization of groups which might be assumed to hold a culture in common is therefore problematic. For example, ‘the East’ or ‘the West’ continue to be used as descriptive terms for cultural groups in the context of considering leadership. (See, for example, Buruma and Margalit’s book, *Occidentalism*: *The west in the eyes of its enemies*.) Hofstede (2003) has argued strongly that there are measurable differences between the cultures of nations. However, his analysis of national culture has been abused to support stereotypical views and crude dichotomies, such as between Western cultures and those of Asia. In fact, Hofstede’s work shows very great variation within regions. For example, ‘86% of the worldwide variance on individualism-collectivism and 70% of variance across power-distance are found in Europe’ (Sparrow & Hiltrop, 1998, p. 73).

As within continents or regions, within each nation, a common culture cannot be assumed, the differences between the culture of Native Americans, Hispanic and African American women and that of white males within the United States being an example given above. Developing the argument further, Litvin’s point is that even within an apparently homogeneous group there will be wide variation in culture related to the multiple characteristics, history and context of each individual.

The implication is that if leadership preparation and development is to aspire to cultural fit, a high degree of sophistication is required. Curricula and delivery which are founded on a set of cultural assumptions, even those which are dominant within the region or country, are likely to miss the mark for many. A more flexible and subtle shaping will be needed. Matching culture to preparation and development engages with what is perceived to be universal, what appears to be distinctive to the region or nation or group of people, and what is unique to the individual.

Lack of uniformity of culture is therefore an issue even among small, apparently homogeneous groups Distinguishing rhetoric from practice is a second challenge. Analysis of culture embedded in preparation and development programs will involve discriminating between what is rhetorical and what is evidenced. For example, North American and European development assert a cultural commitment to inclusion and equality for all. Analysis of the content of programs might suggest that such commitment is largely camouflage for neglect of such values (Lopez, 2003; Rusch, 2004). Discernment of the publicly espoused culture, the culture implicit in practice and the desired culture will inevitably comprise a kaleidoscope of differing opinions and wishes reflecting the perspectives of the individuals responsible for the design and delivery of development.

## Culture and Power

If culture embeds, among other things, power relations, then the issue of programs matching or challenging dominant cultures becomes a matter of negotiating competing notions of appropriate power relations, political and social structures.

Two distinctive views of this connection can be identified (Collard, 2006). The first is that leaders are passive ambassadors of culture. This suggests that they are prepared, appointed and developed to reflect a specific set of values and beliefs and are expected to simply transmit those imposed and inherited values to staff and to pupils within their institution. Hallinger (2001, p. 65) suggests that the primary purpose of schooling is the onward transmission of established culture and values between generations. He suggests that schools are 'bastions of conservatism, not centers of social experimentation'. Such a perspective suggests that the dominant culture, were it to be discerned with any certainty, would be embedded, unexamined and therefore unchallenged, in preparation and development programs.

A second view, though, is that of leaders as agents of cultural change, as discussed earlier in the chapter. This may be interpreted in several ways ranging from the operational to the political. The political perspective would see educational leaders as seeking to generate in their pupils and staff a critical view of society, to challenge existing orthodoxies and to become citizens able to participate in social and cultural change. At the operational scale, the leader may focus on the culture within the institution in order to facilitate the achievement of institutional improvement, with culture conceptualized as an agent of change.

Such an approach to cultural change is, of course, a key component of western approaches to educational leadership, and has been criticized for representing a fundamental misunderstanding of what culture is and can be. Essentially it makes a questionable assumption. It takes the view that culture can be unified and that 'dissent, anomaly, conflicts of interest or ambiguity are viewed…. as aberrations instead of being endemic to organizations' (Hoyle & Wallace, 2005, p. 116). If leaders believe that a dominant culture is identifiable or achievable, and that it is a single, stable and unifying phenomenon, then changing it becomes a matter of choice, but relatively straightforward and without any moral ramifications. Changing the culture becomes merely a question of technical fit, of shaping leadership development to align it to local culture. If alternatively, culture is viewed as multiple, unstable, persistently contested, reflecting the differing perspectives and power of individuals and groups, changing the culture of a school is a different kind of endeavor. The attempt to mould culture in any direction involves alignment with some and challenge to others. It will therefore involve engagement with the moral choices which lie at the heart of leadership. Choices will continue as culture evolves and the perspectives of all players mutate over time. Changing the culture of a school or of a leadership development program is therefore not a finite endeavor. Nor is it amoral.

Preparation and development programs therefore face a twofold challenge:

- Deciding which cultural assumptions to attempt to embed in the design and delivery of development, including the degree to which they will replicate or challenge dominant cultures;
- Deciding how best to equip leaders with intercultural competence, so that they in their turn can decide which cultural assumptions to attempt to embed in their school leadership, including the degree to which they will replicate or challenge dominant cultures.

In the next section we shall examine the issues of culture and leadership preparation and development.

## CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP PREPARATION

Despite the widespread acknowledgement that culture varies considerably and that leadership preparation and development could be adjusted in relation to the culturally embedded ontological, epistemological and axiological differences between cultures, the content, method of delivery and assessment of preparation and development shows relatively little variation throughout the world (Bush & Jackson, 2002). The adoption of similar sets of competences, for example, reflects to some degree airbrushing out the influence of local culture (Davis, 2001; Macpherson, Kachelhoffer & El Nemr, 2007).

This may be due in part to the fact that understanding culture and its connection to leadership in education is a poorly researched field. It is characterized by very limited research at the within school subunit scale, and by the adoption of generalized models of culture from business and management disciplines at whole-school or national/international scales of analysis.

One consequence is that there is currently no precise means of assessing dimensions variously labeled as ‘cultural distance’ or ‘degree of diversity’ (Iles & Kaur Hayers, 1997, p. 107) or diversity amount and diversity degree (Thomas, 1999; Taras & Rowney, 2007); that is the differences between the culture of one location of leader development and another, or the extent of cultural differences within a leader development group. The design of curriculum and delivery is therefore to an extent a cultural guessing game requiring those responsible for preparation and development to hold a high level of cultural fluency themselves and to support the development of cultural fluency in others.

### Designing Curriculum and Delivery

Culture can then be viewed in shorthand as:

> a set of shared values and preferred actions among members of a society that largely determines among other things, the boundaries within which leader development is possible. (Hoppe, 2004, p. 333)

However, boundaries are permeable. Inevitably therefore, design of the curriculum and its delivery will involve judgments not only about the relevant local culture and the degree of diversity, but also how far global or international cultural assumptions may be relevant. Hallinger (2001) notes the changing aims of Asian education and specifically the global standards applied to assessing the quality of education in Hong Kong. As a consequence, leaders must be equipped to work with both imported as well as indigenous culture. Dorfman and House (2004) suggest three competing propositions: that cultural congruence in development and leadership is more effective; that cultural difference can be stimulating and bring about positive change; that leadership is universal activity. Notwithstanding these different positions, knowledge of how leadership is conceptualized and enacted locally is a sine qua non of successful design.

Very many illustrations could be offered of the different expectations and practice of leadership throughout the world. Two examples will suffice to illustrate this, though. In Saudi Arabia a command system is accepted by culture and tradition and schools have, in any case, little power to take decisions. Bjerke and Al-Meer (1993, p. 31) suggest that in the Arab world:

> Subordinates expect superiors to act autocratically. Everyone expects superiors to enjoy privileges, and status symbols are very important.

Not only may there be particular cultural assumptions about the relationship between staff and principal, the principal and regional/national authorities, but underpinning ontological assumptions may be distinctive. Ali (1996, p. 7) argues that the Jabria school of Muslim thought, influential in the Arab world, might rule out systematic planning as to plan is ‘in conflict with predestination’. As a second exemplar, in China the millennia long influence of Confucianism has led to a ‘compliance culture’, the impact of this cultural norm being a tendency to see ‘change as an event rather than a process’ (Hallinger, 2001, p. 67). A more extensive discussion of the variation in culture and practice internationally is offered by Foskett & Lumby (2003) and Lumby et al. (forthcoming). For the purposes of this chapter, these two snapshots highlight issues that result from consideration of culture, such as who are the primary leaders and how might the leadership theory used in their development be shaped in response to differing ontological, epistemological and axiological assumptions? Clearly in these two instances, Western derived theories of autonomy, planning and change management are all thrown into question.

## Who Are the Leaders?

Internationally leader preparation and development tends to focus on the principal. There is relatively little attention paid to middle leaders such as department heads and teacher leaders (Bush & Jackson, 2002). In many countries the principal may indeed be key. In others, variation is considerable and the primary drive to develop teaching and learning, attainment and achievement may be located elsewhere. In China the relatively low contact hours enjoyed by teachers combined with a culture of comfort with peer critique has resulted in teacher groups working together for a considerable proportion of their time to achieve change (Bush & Qiang, 2000), while principals spend much of their time on operational administration (Washington, 1991). A similar situation is the case in Norway and in Japan (Moller, 2000). Leader and leadership development may therefore be as effectively focused on teacher leaders as on principals in these two countries. In another region of China, Hong Kong, teacher contact hours are considerably higher and leadership is more firmly placed with the principal. Research has shown the principal to be a significant factor in school effectiveness (Hallinger & Heck, 1999). However, the findings which result from research in one location may lead to indiscriminate transfer of assumptions, such as the primary location of leadership in the principal. Cultural sensitivity demands consideration of how leadership is dispersed amongst the players within schools and the regional administration in a specific context before designing national and local systems in response.

## Leaders’ Values

Those undertaking preparation for development may have differing value priorities which are culturally shaped. For example, the balance of time given to study of the legislation relevant to schooling or to the implications of a particular faith, whether Islam, Christianity, or any other, will embed values within the curriculum through the choice of priority reflected in the time allocated. Sapre and Ranade (2001, p. 379) deplore the fact that ‘there is very little in ‘modern’ Indian education that is truly rooted in the culture, tradition and genius of its people’. They suggest the spiritual values embedded in the teaching of Vivekananda, Tagore and Ghandi would provide a more culturally appropriate basis for the leadership of education than the currently ‘Western’ values which relate in part to the colonial history of the nation.

Similarly, Bajunid (1996, p. 56) argues that the richness of Islamic teaching is absent from concepts of leadership. Consequently 'mid-forged manacles of Western generated categories' hinder the development of leaders in Malaysia where Islam is deeply embedded in culture.

## Theoretical Underpinning

Much leadership theory reflects Anglophone and particularly US culture which Hoppe (2004, p. 335) suggests 'is consistently described as being individualistic, egalitarian, performance derived, comfortable with change, and action-and-data-oriented'. There is also a preference to 'face facts' whether positive or negative. The result is that most preparation and development takes egalitarian participation and transformational leadership as key (Bush & Jackson, 2002). Transactional leadership, often viewed negatively in many Anglophone countries, may be a more appropriate theoretical basis in many contexts. Hallinger (2001) also points to the ubiquitous use of theories such as Learning Organization and School Based Management, which are firmly embedded in similar cultural norms. While awareness of and reflection on hegemonic theory may be of use, its global dominance in preparation and development seems inappropriate on a number of grounds. It may be limiting, ineffective and ethically dubious, particularly in those countries with a history of previous colonization and suppression of indigenous cultures.

## Delivery of Preparation and Leadership

Culture also impacts on delivery. Lumby et al. (forthcoming) distinguish transmission models, where experts pass on theoretical knowledge (often indiscriminately, as discussed earlier), and process models which use more community based styles of learning. While the former classroom and lecture based model is widespread, they suggest that the process model of problem solving, mentoring and internship holds more hope of reflecting indigenous cultures. However, process models may not mesh with some cultures. Hoppe (2004) suggests that experiential learning proves enjoyable and effective for US leaders while French and German leaders often view this approach as time-wasting 'child's play' (p. 353). Cultures which are comfortable with hierarchy or with the co-creation of knowledge may find affinities with process modes. Hoppe asserts that US leaders find difficulty with accepting supportive relationships. By contrast Singaporean culture's emphasis on collective action and respect for seniority underpins acceptance and effective use of mentoring as an important mode of development, defined as 'a process whereby an expert or senior person guides a less experienced leader (Tin, 2001). However, Lumby et al. (forthcoming) provide a strong warning that collective cultures as well as honoring hierarchical superiority may also have an acute need to maintain self-esteem. Mentoring is therefore flavored by ease and acceptance of the views of seniors but sensitivity to negative feedback. However, Cardno (2007) argues that the dilemma created by the need to give negative feedback and to save face, for example in appraisal, often emphasized as a cultural context in Chinese societies, is in fact universal. Cultural complexity offers only multiple complications in assessing fit, not safe generalized conclusions.

## Assessment

Just as there is an interplay between culture and modes of delivery, assessment may also be rendered more or less effective by the degree of cultural fit. One dimension of fit may relate to ease with receiving positive and negative feedback and from whom. Hoppe (2004) believes US leaders have little difficulty in receiving negative feedback. Lumby et al. (forthcoming) point up the greater sensitivity within some cultures where responsibility for success is group owned and/

or where maintaining face is a high priority. Assessment is also increasingly against competences which are exported internationally (MacPherson et al., 2007). While there is extensive research on the implications of assessment modes on school learners, including the relationship of assessment to variables such as gender and ethnicity, no similar body of research informs how we understand the assessment of leaders. Educators would be extremely concerned to consider fully the implications of assessing school students against standards imported from another nation. In contrast the assessment of educational leaders often assumes that consideration of cultural fit is unnecessary in relation to standards which are uncritically accepted as ‘international’.

## Preparing Leaders for Cultural Fluency

Leaders interact with culture at the organizational level both in terms of efforts to include the multiple cultures which may be present and also to sustain, adapt or change the dominant culture. Fullan (2001) has suggested that recognizing the need for, and understanding the processes involved in, cultural change are essential tools of leadership development, for it is in establishing a culture of change in school that successful school development can occur. Such ‘reculturing’ (Fullan, 2001) is perhaps the biggest challenge to school leaders, though, for it will certainly generate conflict, contradiction and destabilization as part of the process — as DiPaola (2003, p. 153) has indicated:

> Creating this culture of change by constantly challenging the status quo is a contact sport involving hard, labor-intensive work and a lot of time.

The processes of cultural change in schools have been considered extensively in the literature (e.g. Prosser, 1998). The implications of these strategies for leadership training and development have been analyzed by DiPaola (2003) who outlines a number of key components of principal preparation programs.

In parallel, preparation and development sometimes include an element of raising awareness of cultures deemed to be ‘other’ than that of the majority or the dominant group, what Stier (2003, p. 84) refers to as ‘content-competencies’, generally targeted at increasing knowledge of minority groups within the region or nation. They may also tackle the issue of how culture can be ‘managed’. While these are different aims, they both involve intercultural fluency. Stier insists that the latter cannot be achieved by content competencies alone. ‘Processual competencies’, comprising ‘intrapersonal competencies’ and ‘cognitive competencies’ (2003, p.84), are also needed. As in the acquisition of any language, fluency can only be achieved by practice and not just by theory (Taras & Rowney, 2007). Accultured, automatic, emotional responses preclude awareness of internalized culture. Consequently, a tendency to stereotype or discount alternative cultures must be halted by conscious, persistent effort (Lumby with Coleman, 2007). The aim is to encourage leaders to address obliviousness to their own culture and challenge approaches which may inappropriately embed a single culture and/or a culture alien to some participants. Research concerning leadership in multinational corporations defines three components of cultural fluency, ‘cognitive complexity, emotional energy and psychological maturity’ (Iles & Kaur Hayers, 1997, p. 105). Cultural fluency will be predicated on more than cognitive effort (Lakomski, 2001). Lumby with Coleman (2007) identifies the emotional dimensions of rage, confusion, and anxiety in engaging with alternate cultures (DiTomaso & Hooijberg, 1996; Osler, 2004; Prasad & Mills, 1997; Rusch, 2004). Where preparation and development engage at all with culture, the current prevalence of ‘content-competencies’ (Stier, 2003, p. 84) does not begin to equip leaders with the skills needed to relate to exogenous and endogenous cultures.

## CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP — ISSUES AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Bajunid (1996, p. 52) argued over a decade ago that in Malaysia 'there is an urgent need to inspire, motivate and work with relevant and meaningful concepts that the locals are at home and familiar with' and to free educational leadership and management from the intellectual domination of 'Greco-Roman, Christian, Western intellectual traditions' (1996, p. 63). Despite some advances since that time, understanding of culture and its relationship to leadership and its development remains empirically underdeveloped. A number of research areas seem indicated as urgently required.

Understanding international differences in culture would provide a basis for planning cultural fit in preparation and development programs. Any research which attempts to map such differences in concept and practice will face severe methodological challenges. However, over a decade ago, Heck (1996) suggested that advances in statistical methods held some hope of achieving conceptual and metric equivalence in investigating theoretical models across nations and within organizations. Certainly it would be helpful to undertake an educational equivalent of the GLOBE project (House et al., 2004) and to establish the education leadership attributes and behaviors that are held in common across a large number of nations and those elements that are culturally contingent. As in the GLOBE project, subgroups within nations might be also identified for inclusion. Such a knowledge base would allow theory to be developed in a more culturally aware way.

Secondly, investigations of the cultural fit of transmission and process models of learning would support those responsible for design in making more appropriate choices. For example, Walker, Bridges and Chan (1996) provide a rare example of research into the fit of a particular learning approach, problem-based-learning, to a specific cultural context, Hong Kong. More research of this kind, exploring fit not only to the dominant culture of the nation/region, but also fit to the multiple cultures within the nation or region would provide a potentially powerful antidote to programs which are currently not culturally inclusive.

Hodgkinson (2001) argues that culture 'is always determining, subliminally and subconsciously, our value orientation and judgments'. Those attempting to loosen the bonds of dominant cultures implicit in preparation and development programs research and write within the very dominant orientations they are trying to question (Gronn, 2001). School leaders work within pressing cultures which sustain themselves by multiple conscious and unconscious mechanisms (Lumby with Coleman, 2007). The capacity of any individual or group to engineer culture is questionable (Adler, 1997; Morgan, 1986). A challenge to dominant cultures and the evolution of cultures which are seen as fitting will be achieved only by persistent efforts to increase the intercultural fluency of all involved, in part by increasing the evidence base, and in part through detailed translation of such evidence to impact the design and delivery of the development of leaders.

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