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Distributing Leadership to Make Schools Smarter: Taking the Ego Out of the System

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In this study, we inquired about patterns of leadership distribution, as well as which leadership functions were performed by whom, the characteristics of nonadministrative leaders, and the factors promoting and inhibiting the distribution of leadership functions. We consider our account of distributed leadership in this district to be a probable example of "best practice" at the present time—not perfect, but likely more mature than average by a significant degree. The most noteworthy detail to emerge from our study was the critical part played by formal school and district leaders in helping to foster apparently productive forms of distributed leadership.

INTRODUCTION

The study of leadership practices or functions has traditionally located them in individuals, usually people in roles or positions with formal authority and not infrequently people to whom "heroic" capabilities and charismatic qualities are attributed. This is "focused leadership." Nonetheless, most organizations have always relied heavily on the leadership provided by many other members of the organization to actually get work done. The current flurry of interest in distributed leadership could be interpreted as an effort to shift these sources of leadership from the informal to the formal side of the organizational chart—to explicitly acknowledge the presence of such leadership so as to better understand its contribution to organizational functioning.

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Distributed leadership is a concept very much "in vogue" with researchers, policy makers, educational reformers and leadership practitioners alike (Hammersley-Fletcher & Brundrett, 2005; Storey, 2004). While there seems to be widespread interest in the idea of "distributing leadership," there are competing and sometimes conflicting interpretations of what distributed leadership actually means. As Harris (2004) has noted, the definition and understanding of distributed leadership varies from the normative to the theoretical and, by implication, the literature supporting the concept of distributed leadership remains diverse and broad based (Bennett, Harvey, Wise, & Woods, 2003).

The concept of distributed leadership overlaps substantially with shared (Pearce & Conger, 2003), collaborative (Wallace, 1988), democratic (Gastil, 1997), and participative (Vroom & Jago, 1998) leadership concepts. Distributed leadership assumes a set of direction-setting and influence practices potentially "enacted by people at all levels rather than a set of personal characteristics and attributes located in people at the top" (Fletcher & Kaufer, 2003, p. 22). Non-person sources of influence also may be included in this concept as, for example, Jermier and Kerr's (1997) "substitutes for leadership," leading to a view of leadership as an organizationwide phenomenon (Pounder, Ogawa, & Adams, 1995). Nonetheless, with the exception of leadership distributed through formally established committees and teams, we have almost no systematic evidence about the relative contribution to the achievement of organizational goals of different patterns of distributed leadership; limited to school organizations, such evidence is virtually nonexistent.

This article reports evidence from the first stage of a two-staged, multimethods study. The first stage entails the collection of qualitative evidence in a small number of schools, followed by a second stage entirely based on quantitative data. Including both stages of the research, our study aims to provide systematic evidence in response to questions about:

- differences in patterns of leadership distribution (touched on in this stage but addressed more fully in stage 2);
- who performs which leadership functions;
- characteristics of those in nonadministrative roles performing leadership functions;
- factors which assist or inhibit the development of distributed leadership; and
- the outcomes of distributed leadership, including both organizational effects and effects on student learning (stage 2).

Unlike most distributed leadership studies to date, our perspective on these questions spans both schools and their district. Our end goal, furthermore, is to help move research on distributed leadership beyond its

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current, largely descriptive state to a state that offers more insights about the improvement of leadership practice.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This section of the article reviews evidence relevant to four of the five issues pursued in our two-stage study. The fifth issue, outcomes of distributed leadership, will be addressed when we report results of the second stage of the research. In addition to summarizing conceptual orientations and empirical evidence about each of the four issues, we also formulate a series of hypotheses warranted by those orientations and evidence that are to be tested during the course of our project as a whole. Not all of these hypotheses have been tested in this first stage, however.

PATTERNS OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

Both Gronn (2003) and Spillane (2006) have conceptualized two distinct forms of distributed leadership. Gronn labels these forms "additive" and "holistic." The additive label describes an uncoordinated pattern of leadership in which many different people may engage in leadership functions but without much, or any, effort to take account of the leadership activities of others in their organization. This would seem to be the most common meaning of the term assumed by those advocating that "everyone is a leader" (e.g., Manz & Sims, 1980).

Holistic or, in Spillane's (2006) terms, "person-plus" labels refer to consciously managed and synergistic relationships among some, many, or all sources of leadership in the organization. These forms of distributed leadership assume that: the sum of leaders' work adds up to more than the parts; there are high levels of interdependence among those providing leadership and the influence attributed to their activities emerges from dynamic, multidirectional, social processes that, at their best, lead to learning for the individuals involved as well as for their organizations (Pearce & Conger, 2003).

Based on his review of a small corpus of research conducted in an array of different organizational contexts, Gronn (2002) has suggested that holistic forms of distributed leadership may take three forms. The first of these is *spontaneous collaboration*. "From time to time," Gronn explains, "groupings of individuals with differing skills and knowledge capacities, and from across different organizational levels, coalesce to pool their expertise and regularize their conduct for duration of the task, and then disband" (p. 657). A second form of concertive distribution is referred to by Gronn as *intuitive working relations*. This form of concertive distributed leadership emerges over time "as two or more organizational members come to rely on one another

and develop close working relations" and, as Gronn argues, "Leadership is manifest in the shared role space encompassed by their relationship" (p. 657). Finally, citing committees and teams as their most obvious embodiment, Gronn's *institutionalized practice* includes such formalized structures as arising from design or through less systematic adaptation.

The extent and nature of coordination in the exercise of influence across members of the organization is a critical challenge from a holistic perspective. Interdependence between two or more organizational members may be based on role overlap or complementarity of skills and knowledge. When role overlap occurs in a coordinated fashion there can be mutual reinforcement of influence and less likelihood of making errors in decisions. When performance of complementary functions is the form of interdependence, those providing leadership have opportunities to do what they know best as well as increase their own capacities by observing their colleagues doing the same, a "huddle effect" according to Gronn (2002, p. 671).

Our conception of distributed leadership patterns builds on and extends Gronn's three holistic forms. We focus on the extent to which the performance of leadership functions is consciously aligned across the sources of leadership. In addition, we speculate about the beliefs and values which would support each of these different forms of alignment.

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Planful alignment

In this configuration, comparable to the holistic form that Gronn labels "institutionalized practice," the tasks or functions of those providing leadership have been given prior, planful thought by organizational members. Agreements have been worked out among the sources of leadership about which leadership practices or functions are best carried out by which source.

Although we assumed that alignment was a good thing for the organization, positive contributions of this configuration to productivity cannot be assumed for several reasons. Patterns of task distribution determined through planning may turn out to be suboptimal in some manner. And even if the distribution is optimal, one or more leaders may enact their agreed-on functions in an unskilled manner. But we assumed that the "prethinking," reflective, or planful processes associated with this configuration would increase the chances of a productive pattern of leadership distribution.

Shared values and beliefs that seem likely to be associated with planful alignment include:

- reflection and dialogue as the basis for good decision making;
- trust in the motives of one's leadership colleagues (see Gabarro, 1978, cited in Gronn, 2002);
- well-grounded beliefs about the capacities of one's leadership colleagues;

- commitment to shared whole-organization goals; and
- cooperation rather than competition as the best way to promote productivity within the organization.

Spontaneous alignment

In this configuration, essentially Gronn's "spontaneous collaboration" form of concertive distribution, leadership tasks and functions are distributed with little or no planning. Nevertheless, tacit and intuitive decisions about who should perform which leadership functions result in a fortuitous alignment of functions across leadership sources. There is no significant difference in the contribution to short-term organizational productivity of this "method" of alignment, as compared with planful alignment. However, the tacit nature of decisions this method entails seems likely to reduce the flexibility and adaptability of the organization's responses to future leadership challenges. Spontaneity offers few guarantees of fortuitous alignment.

Shared values and beliefs which seem likely to be associated with spontaneous alignment include:

- "gut feelings" as the basis for good decision making;
- trust in the motives of one's leadership colleagues;
- idealistic beliefs about the capacities of one's leadership colleagues;
- commitment to shared organizational goals; and
- cooperation rather than competition as the best way to promote productivity within the organization.

Spontaneous misalignment

This configuration mirrors spontaneous alignment in the manner of leadership distribution, as well as its underlying values, beliefs, and norms. Only the outcome is different or less fortuitous—misalignment (which may vary from marginal to extensive). Both short- and long-term organizational productivity suffer from this form of (mis) alignment. However, organizational members are not opposed, in principle, to either planful or spontaneous alignment, thus leaving open reasonable prospects for future productive alignment of one sort or another.

Anarchic misalignment

This configuration is characterized by active rejection, on the part of some or many organizational leaders, of influence from others about what they should be doing in their own sphere of influence. As a result, those leaders' units behave highly independently, competing with other units on such matters as organizational goals and access to resources. Active rejection of influence by

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others, however, stimulates considerable reflection about one's own position on most matters of concern.

Shared values and beliefs likely to be associated with anarchic misalignment include:

- reflection and dialogue as the basis for good decision making about one's own work and sphere of influence;
- mistrust in the motives and capacities of one's leadership colleagues;
- commitment to individual or unit, but not whole organization, goals; and
- competition rather than cooperation as the best way to promote productivity across units within the organization.

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Hypotheses

Based on this conceptualization of leadership distribution patterns, we expect evidence accumulated across the two stages of our study to demonstrate that:

1. *Planful and spontaneous patterns of alignment contribute equally to short-term organizational productivity and more than either spontaneous misalignment or anarchic misalignment.*
2. *Planful alignment contributes significantly more than other patterns of alignment to long-term organizational productivity.*
3. *Both spontaneous misalignment and anarchic misalignment have negative effects on short- and long- term organizational productivity.*
4. *Organizational members associated with both spontaneous alignment and misalignment will be more attracted to planful alignment than will organizational members associated with anarchic misalignment.*

Leadership Functions

Fundamental to the study of distributed leadership are questions about just what it is that is being spread around. Our general answer is leadership functions, actions, or "practices"; the term practices, as we use it, conforms to most dictionary definitions of the term and is more or less synonymous with leadership behaviors. It is not, we should stress, the conception of practices created by Spillane (2006) in his distributed leadership study—interactions that occur among leaders, followers, and the situations in which they work. While such interactions are obviously critical to an understanding of how leadership influence is enacted, we limit our conception of practices to the behaviors or functions of leaders during such interactions.

From our perspective, both leaders and followers engage in practices that need to be understood and the context or situation in which they interact has important influences on what both leaders and followers do in response to one another. One of the most important missions for leadership research

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(and one of the most practical) is to uncover those leadership behaviors or practices that have predictable and desirable influences on followers, especially influences that can be predicted across a significant range of contexts or situations.

Evidence from leadership studies in both school and nonschool contexts points to several broad categories of leadership functions with such predictable effects; they served as our initial conception of what is being distributed in this study and we have described them, as well as the evidence giving rise to them, quite extensively elsewhere (e.g., Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Leithwood & Riehl, 2005). These categories of leadership practices reflect a transformational approach to leadership which, Bass (1997) claims, has proven to be useful in many different cultural and organizational contexts. This claim is demonstrably the case for educational organizations, generally (e.g., Geijsel, Sleegers, Leithwood, & Jantzi, 2003; Yu, Leithwood, & Jantzi, 2002; Southworth, 1998) and, specifically, for the success of some large-scale reform efforts in schools (e.g., Day, Harris, Hadfield, Tolley, & Beresford, 2000). We consider these categories and the specific practices they encompass to be the "basics" of good leadership in most organizational contexts.

Setting direction

A critical aspect of leadership is helping a group to develop shared understandings about the organization and its activities and goals that can undergird a sense of purpose or vision (e.g., Hallinger & Heck, 2002). The most fundamental theoretical explanations for the importance of direction-setting practices on the part of leaders are goal-based theories of human motivation (e.g., Bandura, 1986; Ford, 1992; Locke, Latham, & Eraz, 1988). According to such theories, people are motivated by goals that they find personally compelling, as well challenging but achievable. Having such goals helps people make sense of their work (e.g., Thayer, 1988; Weick, 1995) and enables them to find a sense of identity for themselves within their work context (Pittman, 1998).

Often cited as helping set direction are such specific practices as:

- identifying and articulating a vision;
- fostering the acceptance of group goals;
- creating high performance expectations; and
- promoting effective communication (Bennis, 1984).

Developing people

While clear and compelling organizational directions contribute significantly to members' work-related motivations, they are not the only conditions to

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do so. Nor do such directions contribute to the capacities members often need in order to productively move in those directions. Such capacities and motivations are influenced by the direct experiences organizational members have with those in leadership roles (Lord & Maher, 1993), as well as the organizational conditions within which people work (Rowan, 1996), as we discuss below.

The ability to engage in such practices depends, in part, on leaders' knowledge of the "technical core" of schooling—what is required to improve the quality of teaching and learning—often invoked by the term "instructional leadership" (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Sheppard, 1996). But this ability also is part of what is now being referred to as leaders' emotional intelligence (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002). Recent evidence suggests that such intelligence displayed, for example, through the personal attention devoted by a leader to an employee and the use of the employee's capacities increases levels of enthusiasm and optimism, reduces frustration, transmits a sense of mission, and indirectly increases performance (McColl-Kennedy & Anderson, 2002).

More specific sets of leadership practices significantly and positively influencing these direct experiences include, for example:

- offering intellectual stimulation;
- providing individualized support (e.g. Louis, Toole, & Hargreaves, 1999); and
- modeling appropriate values and practices. (e.g. Ross, 1995; Ross, Cousins, & Gadalla, 1996).

Redesigning the organization

Successful educational leaders develop their schools as effective organizations that support and sustain the performance of teachers as well as students. This category of leadership practices has emerged from recent evidence about the nature of learning organizations and professional learning communities (Leithwood, Leonard, & Sharratt, 1998) and their contribution to staff work (e.g., Louis, Marks, & Kruse, 1996; Louis & Kruse, 1995) and student learning (Marks, Louis, & Printy, 2000; Silins, Mulford, Zarins, & Bishop, 2000). Such practices assume that the purpose behind organizational cultures and structures is to facilitate the work of organizational members and that the malleability of structures should match the changing nature of the school's improvement agenda. Specific practices typically associated with this category include strengthening school cultures (e.g. Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990), modifying organizational structures (Louis & Kruse, 1995; Roberts, 1985), and building collaborative processes (e.g. Sleegers, Geijsel, & van den Borg, 2002).

Managing the instructional program

This category acknowledges the special nature of schools and the core technology of schooling, in particular; it also recognizes the crucial

contribution that reliable standard operation procedures make to the effectiveness of almost any organization. Evidence about the nature of instructional leadership (e.g., Alig-Mielcarek & Hoy, 2005) and effective school improvement processes (Leithwood, Jantzi, & McElheron-Hopkins, 2006) narrow our focus to four subsets of tasks in this category:

- staffing the instructional program;
- monitoring the progress of students and the school's improvement strategies;
- buffering staff from unproductive external demands for attention; and
- allocating resources to foster the school's improvement efforts.

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Hypotheses

The leadership functions that have been described are typically portrayed as "core" or "basic" functions that successful leaders need to exercise in most circumstances; evidence also suggests that they are relatively comprehensive of what leaders do (Day & Leithwood, in press). So we hypothesized that:

5. *Leadership functions distributed in schools and across the district will be encompassed by the four categories of functions described above.*

Sources and Extent of Leadership Distribution

Who and how many people engage in which leadership functions appears to depend at least on which functions are to be performed, their level of complexity, and the organizational context in which they are to be carried out.

Who exercises which leadership functions?

Locke's (2003) "integrated model" of leadership includes the potential for considerable coordination in a distributed leadership environment. This model acknowledges both the reality and the virtues, in most organizations, of distributed leadership based on multiple forms of lateral influence. Also acknowledged by the model, however, is what Jaques (1989) claims to be "inevitable" sources of vertical or hierarchical leadership in virtually any successful organization. As Locke comments, "No successful, profit-making company that I know of has ever been run by a team" (2003, p. 273). Relationships involved in vertical leadership entail a two-way flow of influence that assists with the coordination problem left unresolved in conceptions of distributed leadership, which usually imply only the lateral forms of leadership in Locke's model.

Locke (2003) argues that among the range of functions and tasks associated with leadership, several should not be distributed or shared while the remainder should—at least in part. From the perspective of our core leadership functions, Locke would assign "top leaders" (his term) the job of deciding on the organization's vision (including its core values), determining an overall strategy for realizing the vision, and making sure the organizational structure supports its strategy. While top leaders are likely to engage many people in processes leading up to such decisions, top leaders have the final responsibility for them. At least partly shareable leadership tasks, according to Locke, are goal-setting in relation to the vision, intellectual stimulation, individualized support, and building a collaborative culture. These are tasks that need to be carried out at all levels if the organization is to succeed in moving toward its vision.

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Task complexity

Organizational theorists have long argued that task complexity is a key variable shaping productive leadership responses. This body of evidence argues that more directive forms of leadership (akin to what most people think of as "supervision") are productive when the tasks to be performed are relatively simple. More participatory, shared or distributed forms of leadership work best in response to relatively complex tasks (Rowan, 1996). This is the case because the collective capacities of the organization theoretically far exceed the capacities of any one organizational member. Distributing leadership is a strategy with some potential for accessing and bringing to bear the organization's collective cognitions on the achievement of complex tasks and organizational goals.

Conceptions of distributed cognition, furthermore, support "unconstrained" forms of distributed leadership. Whereas constrained forms of distributed leadership entail leadership functions carried out by one formal leader or shared among formal leaders only, "unconstrained" forms include the distribution of leadership to whomever has the expertise required for the job, rather than only those in formal leadership roles. Leadership functions may be: shared among formal leaders and one, or a few, exceptional "others" because of their unique personal expertise; widely shared among formal and informal leaders depending on their existing expertise; or widely shared among formal and informal leaders based on their existing expertise, as well as the opportunities provided by such distribution for developing additional expertise. This last form of unconstrained distribution seems the most sophisticated or preferred because it conceives of leadership distribution not only as a means of using the shared expertise in the organization but also as a means of further building that expertise.

Hypotheses

Based on this perspective about leadership distribution, we expected to find that the most effective forms of distribution:

6. *Demonstrate differentiation in the performance of functions depending on role.*
7. *Vary the numbers of people providing leadership in response to the complexity of the tasks to be performed—more in the case of complex tasks and fewer in response to simple tasks.*
8. *Reflect unconstrained forms of distribution, especially in the performance of complex leadership tasks.*

Characteristics of Nonadministrator Leaders

Our attraction to unconstrained forms of distributed leadership is based on its potential to leverage organizational expertise. But in addition to expertise, people may be viewed as leaders by their colleagues because they are perceived to be "prototype" organizational members and/or because of their personal traits.

Prototypicality

Leadership research guided by "social identity" theory suggests that one's self-identity can be located along a continuum from personal to social identity (Reicher, Haslam, & Hopkins, 2005). Personal identity includes idiosyncratic attributes such as abilities and interests, whereas a social identity encompasses salient group classifications such as gender, nationality, and organizational affiliation (e.g., I am a teacher at Carleton High School).

Organizational identity is a specific form of social identification. As people begin to identify with their organizations, they usually assume the prototypical characteristics of the organization as part of their own self-concept. They are motivated to form such identities because of a need for "self-categorization" (the need to make sense of their own place in society), and the need for "self-enhancement" (feelings of self-worth from membership in an organization). In sum, then, identification with the organization helps define self-concept and contribute to feelings of self-worth. Applied to leadership, social identity theory suggests that when people identify strongly with their group or organization, they are most likely to identify, as leaders within their group or organization, those with the most prototypical characteristics, not necessarily those with the greatest expertise (Pierro, Cicero, Bonaiuto, van Knippenberg, & Druglanski, 2005; Lumby, 2006). An ideal or prototypical person is one who is most like other members of the group and most different from those outside the group. There seems to be good evidence to suggest

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that groups often ascribe leadership to those with the most prototypical features of the group (Lipponen, Koivisto, & Olkkonen, 2005).

When informal leadership is ascribed to prototypical persons, those persons may or may not have the capacity or motivation to move their organization forward. Indeed, their motivation might be just the opposite—to preserve strongly held group norms that, nevertheless, stand in the way of the group becoming more effective. Prototypical leadership nomination, therefore, has the potential to exercise a highly conservative influence on the organization unless the existing group or organizational norms are highly supportive of change. Potentially the most effective informal leaders would seem likely to be those with high levels of relevant expertise, as well as high levels of acceptance based on their prototypicality. These leaders begin with the trust of their colleagues and are likely to be more successful in convincing their colleagues of the need for change should that be required.

Traits

Several recent reviews of evidence (Zaccaro, Kemp, & Bader, 2004; Day & Leithwood, in press) associate a bundle of cognitive and affective "traits" with successful leadership. Among the *cognitive* characteristics or traits identified in these reviews are intelligence, problem-solving capacities, and knowledge relevant to the content of the challenges facing the organization; successful leaders, the evidence suggests in brief, have higher than average amounts of these things. Among *affective* traits associated with successful leadership are aspects of personality, motivation, and social appraisal skills.

Substantial evidence associates successful leadership with a bundle of *personality* traits including: maintenance of emotional stability; extraversion or proactivity (sociable, gregarious, assertive, talkative, active); agreeableness (e.g., courteous, flexible, trusting, good natured, cooperative); and, conscientiousness (e.g., hardworking, achievement oriented, persevering). Successful leaders also are open to experience (e.g., imaginative, curious, original, broad-minded) and optimistic, and have a good deal of confidence in themselves or high levels of self-efficacy as leaders.

Evidence from nonschool contexts indicates that successful leaders have *motivational* profiles characterized by the need for dominance or power, achievement, affiliation and responsibility. Within schools, recent evidence paints successful school leaders as passionate about their work, highly committed emotionally, and highly motivated. Many of them have high energy levels likely to be motivational to others, as well as being determined, persistent, and industrious.

The final category of affective leadership traits or characteristics associated with successful leadership is *social appraisal skills*, the ability to understand the feelings, thoughts, and behaviors of oneself and others and to act appropriately upon that understanding. Capacities included in this broad

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category of traits refer to leaders' abilities to appreciate the emotional states of colleagues, to discern those states in complex social circumstances, to respond in ways that are considered helpful, and to understand and manage one's own emotions. Social appraisal skills of successful leaders identified in a broad array of evidence include self-monitoring skills, as well as both social and emotional intelligence. These social intelligence or social appraisal skills of leaders have been the object of considerable research. It seems reasonable, in addition, to assume that emotional intelligence, a concept popularized by Goleman (e.g., 1998), is part of this broad category of traits. Research specifically about the emotional intelligence of leaders is relatively new, however. Overall, this evidence indicates that social appraisal skills have strongly related to leadership success. This relationship may vary in strength depending on type of job. Wong and Law suggest, for example, "that emotional management skills would be more strongly related to performance in highly emotionally laborious jobs that in those involving less emotional labor" (quoted in Zaccaro et al., 2004, p. 116). School leadership undoubtedly qualifies as emotionally laborious.

Hypotheses

We expected that nonadministrative leaders would emerge because of their expertise, their prototypicality, as well as their traits. This evidence led us to expect that:

9. *Nonadministrative leaders identified because of their prototypicality only will be less effective than those who emerge because of their expertise or because of both their expertise and prototypicality.*
10. *Nonadministrative leaders identified as prototypical by their colleagues, as well as possessing significant expertise, will be more effective than those with expertise alone.*
11. *Attribution of leadership to those in non-administrative roles will be significantly shaped by those perceived traits also associated with attributions of leadership to those in formal administrative roles.*

Influences on the Development of Distributed Leadership

Most of what we know about factors influencing the development of distributed leadership in schools is the product of research on teacher leadership. This body of evidence suggests that the extent to which teachers take up organizational leadership functions depends on features of the school's structure and culture, opportunities for capacity building, the nature of teacher-principal relations, and active encouragement and support for distributed forms of leadership by principals (Day & Harris, 2002; Harris, 2005; Harris & Lambert, 2003; Lieberman & Miller, 2005; Leithwood, 2003;

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Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 2003; MacBeath, 2005; Murphy, 2005; Smylie, Conley, & Marks, 2002).

Hierarchical school structures diminish the likelihood of those changes in relationships between teachers and administrators needed to encourage leadership practices by teachers. Distributed leadership is greatly encouraged, in contrast, by flatter organizational structures at both school and district levels, structures that provide opportunities for collaboration among colleagues—such as common planning times—and norms that sustain collegial relationships among school staff. Talbert and McLaughlin (1993), for example, found that teachers who came together to discuss problems and solutions, to sort out curriculum issues, and to learn from one another formed professional learning communities that nurtured the exercise of leadership by them (also see Lieberman & Miller, 2005).

The likelihood of teacher leadership is also increased when teachers have access to professional development aimed at developing the skills and knowledge they will require to effectively enact leadership roles (Day & Harris, 2002; Murphy, 2005). Particularly important capacities for teachers to acquire through such professional development are: "finely honed skills in communication, group process facilitation, enquiry, conflict mediation and dialogue" (Harris & Lambert, 2003, p. 46).

Principals (and the rest of the school community, as well) can find it difficult to accept changes in power structures (Murphy, 2005; Harris & Lambert, 2003). In order to participate in distributed leadership, individual teachers and administrators need to recognize and accept new professional roles. As Harris and Lambert point out, "Changing roles grow out of changing self-perceptions; and, in turn, new roles provide 'spaces' in which individuals can redefine what it is to be a teacher, parent, pupil, administrator. New roles are accompanied by new responsibilities" (2003, p. 124).

Principals have a great deal of responsibility for making distributed leadership work in the school (e.g., Harris, 2005; Smylie, Conley, & Marks, 2002). Somewhat paradoxically, the success with which leadership is distributed to teachers depends quite crucially on administrative initiative. Principals encourage distributed forms of leadership when they create problem-solving teams to substitute for administrative leadership. Principals often have to select teachers to take on leadership responsibilities and, as some evidence suggests, it is important that principals base their selections on knowing what teachers are capable of doing but may be reluctant to tackle (MacBeath, 2005) and what kinds of professional development would benefit individual teachers (Leithwood, 2003). Principals can observe how teachers deal with leadership tasks and "as people prove their ability to exercise leadership they are given more" (MacBeath, 2005, p. 360).

Leadership distribution is influenced either positively or negatively by teachers' and principals' willingness to view their jobs differently. Good teachers are already busy and may be reluctant to take on new functions. They

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come to the job focused on working with their students rather than with other adults (MacBeath 2005) and may easily conclude that additional leadership responsibilities will only erode the time they have for their students. Similarly, some principals view the distribution of leadership as erosion of their own power.

In addition to the importance of organizational structures and training, Murphy (2005) describes several other influences that affect the distribution of leadership to teachers:

- resources (including enough time for all aspects of preparing for and participating in leadership roles);
- incentives and recognition (including monetary and nonmonetary rewards such as public acknowledgement of teacher leaders' work); and
- role clarity (including an effort to avoid creating resentment among colleagues).

In the face of traditional understandings of how schools work, the development of distributed leadership among teachers depends on changes being made at all levels of the organization. There is little or no evidence concerning the factors that might encourage members of the school community (e.g., students, support staff, parents) other than teachers to assume leadership functions.

Hypotheses

Evidence about factors influencing the emergence of distributed leadership supports two hypotheses:

12. *The likelihood of teachers exercising leadership in their schools and districts will increase as*:

    - *hierarchical school structures are replaced or supplemented with flatter structures such as teams, committees and working groups with significant decision making responsibilities;*
    - *opportunities are available for teachers to develop the capacities they need to exercise leadership effectively;*
    - *principals demonstrate their willingness to share leadership with teachers;*
    - *principals actively encourage selected teachers to assume leadership functions for which they seem especially well suited; and*
    - *principals provide resources and incentives within the school for leadership by teachers.*

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13. *Other members of the school community, in addition to teachers, will be likely to engage in leadership functions when they experience the same conditions that foster teacher leadership.*

METHODS

Context for the Study

This study was conducted in a large urban/suburban district in southern Ontario serving more than 100,000 increasingly diverse students in approximately 25 secondary and 140 elementary schools with an annual budget of almost $900 million. The elementary student population had grown almost 20% in the five years prior to our study, prompting the building of some four dozen new schools, with more to be opened in the next few years. Senior district administration included a director of education (the CEO) who reported to a fully elected board of trustees. Working as part of the senior leadership team was an associate director for business services and four superintendents responsible for different business areas reporting to the director for business services. In addition, the senior leadership team included three coordinating superintendents of education, each with substantial staffs. The district was divided into four geographical regions, each of which had two field superintendents in charge of elementary and secondary education.

An especially significant part of the context for this study was the long tenure of the director of education (14 years) who brought to the job, in addition to a provincial reputation as a curriculum leader, the explicit intention to significantly flatten a district organization noted for its hierarchy and "focused" leadership. As a consequence, the district had been working for many years prior to our study to establish norms and practices supporting shared and distributed forms of leadership at both district and school levels. The results of our study at the school level should be interpreted as the outcome of a "best case scenario" at the district level; school staffs were strongly urged to follow both the words and deeds of district leaders in so far as approaches to leadership were concerned.

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Sample

The eight schools included in Phase One of our study were selected, with help from district staff, to reflect a balance of elementary and secondary schools (four each), a two, or more, year tenure of the school principal ($M = 4$ years, but one principal had only 1 year tenure), demonstrable commitment to a shared or distributed approach to school leadership, and evidence of improvement in student achievement on provincial tests over the previous three years. One school was in a rural location, the rest were suburban.

Based on our conception of leadership as an attribution (Lord & Maher, 1993), all teachers in each of the eight schools ($N = 515$) were sent a preliminary survey requesting them to nominate nonadministrative colleagues in their schools whom they believed were providing leadership, however they defined that term. [1] Two hundred and twenty-five teachers responded to this survey (a 43.6% return rate). These respondents nominated a total of 296 nonadministrative leaders. When we narrowed our focus to the two district initiatives of highest priority to each school, 19 of these nominees qualified as leaders suitable to include in our study.

Included in the study at the district level were nine district administrators: the director (CEO), two coordinating superintendents, the board chair, two superintendents of education, two curriculum coordinators, and one consultant. These people were selected because of the central role they played in promoting distributed approaches to leadership in schools and their close knowledge of each of the district's primary initiatives for change.

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Instruments and Data Collection Procedures

Our initial contact with principals of the selected schools provided them with an explanation of the purpose of the research and requested basic demographic information about their schools and the district initiatives on which they were focused as priorities.

A total of 31 nominators and 19 nominees were interviewed. Including the principal, in each school we conducted individual interviews with an average of seven educators and one focus group interview with six students (reported separately). This article is based on interview data from a total of 67 district staff, school administrators, nonadministrative school leaders and teachers.

Four instruments were used for the collection of interview data, one for district leaders and three for school staffs (one for those nominated as leaders by their peers, one for nominators, and one for principals). In general, the questions asked about district initiatives, leaders' practices with respect to the initiatives, characteristics of nonadministrator nominated leaders, influences on the distribution of leadership, the impact of distributed leadership, and relationships between school and district leadership.

[1] Questions on the survey included, for example:

1. Who provides some form of leadership for this initiative?
2. Why have you nominated X as a leader?
3. What does each of the people you nominated as a leader do that counts in your mind, as leadership?
4. How have they come to do these things? Do you know who decided they would?
5. Can you give some examples of things that have happened as a result of their leadership?

Interviews in each school were completed by teams of two or three people over the course of one day.

Analysis

All interviews were audiotaped and extensive notes were taken during the interviews often by a second researcher not conducting the interview. The interview notes were elaborated on immediately after each set of interviews and checked for accuracy with the audio recordings. Illustrative direct quotations were taken from the audio recordings as well.

The primary coding categories were the five main themes or questions guiding this first stage of the research:

- patterns of leadership distribution;
- sources of leadership functions;
- characteristics of nonadministrative leaders;
- influences on the development of distributed leadership; and
- outcomes associated with distributed leadership.

Frequency tables were created (number of times something was mentioned and the number of people and schools in which it was mentioned). Secondary coding categories were developed from frameworks encountered in the literature review, where such frameworks existed, and in a grounded way where they did not.

Results reported in this article are based on a synthesis of results across the eight schools about each of the five themes or questions. Factors, such as school level, that appear to explain some of the differences in responses across the eight schools are identified.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Patterns of Distributed Leadership

While we have left to the next stage of our research the systematic exploration of patterns of leadership distribution and their relative effects on schools and students, data from this first stage provide some preliminary information about such patterns. Our framework proposed four distinct forms of alignment, each associated with a cluster of unique values and beliefs. We hypothesized that the most effective pattern would be “planful alignment” followed, in order of effectiveness, by “spontaneous alignment,” “spontaneous misalignment,” and (least effective) “anarchic misalignment.”

Our results uncovered many instances of planful alignment. This form of alignment was most likely to happen with the school’s highest priority initiative. The likelihood of planful alignment dropped off precipitously,

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however, as the focus shifted to lower priority initiatives. Arguably the most obvious reason for this disparity was the attention and effort of the principal. Our evidence seems to be telling us that planful and aligned forms of distributed leadership are unlikely in the absence of focused leadership on the part of the school's formal leader. Planfully aligned leadership distribution depends on the establishment of facilitating structures and this function seems to be considered by staff as the purview of the school's chief administrator:

> The principal has a good sense of vision. She is fair and also makes sure things get done—the right people get things done. There are teacher leaders to get things done.

Some of our evidence also suggested that distributing leadership to teams of teachers in a planfully aligned structure, if it is to be effective, still depends on the regular monitoring of progress by the principal and sometimes a quite active form of intervention to move the agenda forward if it is stalled. By themselves, for example, a group of teachers working together as a leadership team can find themselves going in circles with little benefit to their colleagues or students; we found several examples of this:

> In terms of the Assessment and Evaluation committee, they have not been influential at all. They just keep arguing. They have never produced anything teachers can use.

So effective forms of distributed leadership may well depend on effective forms of focused leadership—leading the leaders.

Sources of Leadership Functions

Our framework identified four broad categories of core leadership functions—setting direction, developing people, redesigning the organization, and managing the instructional program. Within each of these categories are to be found three or four more specific sets of functions. Our results allow us to identify which of these leadership functions were being performed by each of three groups of leaders—nonadministrator and informal leaders, school administrators (mostly principals), and senior district leaders. Table 1 summarizes the results and allows for a comparison of the functions performed by each of the three groups of leaders. In our interview with him, the director told us that one of his objectives for distributing leadership was to flatten the school system. Evidence summarized in this table describes a more complex reality to this point in the district's evolution. It may also suggest a more complex ideal for future aspirations. Flattening implies an undifferentiated sharing of all or most leadership functions across those in many different roles (of course, the director may well have had a more nuanced understanding of the term).

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TABLE 1 Leadership Functions of Nonadministrator School Leaders, Formal School Leaders, and District Leaders.

	Functions of Nonadminis-trator Leaders $N = 58/8$[1]	Functions of Formal School Leaders $N = 58/8$	Functions of District Leaders $N = 9$
Direction Setting			
Creating high performance expectations/Motivating others	13 / 8[2]	3 / 3	7[3]
Identifying and articulating a vision	12 / 7	26 / 8	8
Fostering acceptance of group goals	2 / 2	6 / 5	6
Promoting effective communication	3 / 2	—	1
Total[4]	**25 / 8**	**26 / 8**	
Developing People			
Contributing to professional development	16 / 7	13 / 7	8
Providing individualized support	15 / 7	5 / 2	5
Modeling appropriate values and practices	12 / 6	5 / 3	7
Mentoring	6 / 3	2 / 2	N / A
Total	**26 / 8**	**17 / 7**	
Redesigning the Organization			
Building collaborative processes / Teamwork	19 / 8	10 / 8	8
Building community in the school	11 / 6	2 / 2	N / A
Getting involved in community outside school	6 / 4	4 / 4	N / A
Developing a professional learning community	4 / 3	3 / 3	1
Strengthening school culture	2 / 2	—	N / A
Modifying organizational structures	1 / 1	3 / 3	4
Working with the board	N / A	7 / 5	N / A
Total	**26 / 8**	**13 / 8**	
Managing the Instructional Program			
Managing programs, committees, meetings	24 / 8	10 / 7	9
Sharing information	13 / 6	3 / 3	N / A
Staffing the instructional program	N / A	5 / 5	4
Monitoring students' progress and the school's improvement	9 / 7	4 / 4	N / A
Providing resources	9 / 6	9 / 7	5
Knowing what's happening / Staying up to date	7 / 6	3 / 3	4
Delegating	2 / 2	14 / 7	N / A
Total	**29 / 8**	**22 / 8**	

[1]Number of respondents includes nominated informal leaders, nominators, and principals / At all schools.
[2]Number of individuals who mentioned a particular function / Number of schools where a particular function was mentioned.
[3]Number of individuals who mentioned a particular function.
[4]Number of people who mentioned a function in this category.

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The complex reality evident in Table 1, in contrast, suggests some specialization in leadership functions depending on such factors as position, opportunity, expertise, disposition, and widely held expectations:

- With respect to the setting direction category, informal leaders had more involvement with creating high-performance expectations and motivating others than formal school leaders, while formal leaders had more to do with identifying and articulating a vision. Eight of the nine district level leaders were also focused on identifying and articulating a vision.
- In relation to developing people, nonadministrator leaders were more focused on providing individual support and modeling appropriate values and practices than were formal school leaders. Contributing to professional development was an important function for leaders in all three groups.
- Informal leaders were more involved with redesigning the organization than the formal leaders. Of particular importance were the functions of building collaborative processes/teamwork and building community in the school. Eight district leaders mentioned their commitment to building collaborative processes.
- Nonadministrator leaders were devoting more of their attention to managing programs, committees, and meetings and sharing information than were the administrator leaders, while school administrators were more often taking care of delegating. All the district leaders were fulfilling the function of managing programs, committees, and meetings.

This more complex reality includes some functions performed by those in many different official positions—but enacted differently depending on position, context and the like. It also includes some functions primarily performed only by those in one or several positions. This more complex reality mirrors our findings from an earlier study of leadership distribution across the entire country of England in the context of implementing the government's National Literacy and National Numeracy projects (Leithwood, Jantzi, Earl, Watson, Levin, & Fullan, 2004). This reality also is consistent with two claims that are part of Locke's (2003) model of distributed leadership. First, some hierarchy is unavoidable and necessary in any large organization. Second, for greatest impact some leadership functions need to be performed by those in particular positions or with special expertise, not just anyone in the organization.

These results, it should be noted, describe the reality in one school district, just as our results from England described the reality in one country. And as analytic philosophers would remind us, you cannot get directly from an "is" to an "ought"—although our discussion of these results has begun to trend in that direction. What we can do, however, is agree that the distribution of leadership practices observed in our one district and eight schools was the product of working hard to get it right over more than a decade. So, while the

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distribution of leadership functions we discovered may not be perfect, there is a very good chance that it is significantly more productive than average; it may very well represent the current state of "best practice" when it comes to distributing leadership functions.

We can further test this claim about being "best practice" by comparing the results with the three hypotheses we initially formulated from our review of prior evidence about the most effective forms of distribution.

First, we expected that effective distribution of leadership functions would encourage some degree of differentiation in the performance of functions depending on role. This is clearly what we found and what is most evident in Table 1. That said, the functions most likely to be performed by informal and nonadministrator leaders were more likely to be managerial in nature, and less likely to entail direction setting functions:

> My role is to facilitate, organize, set the agenda, make calls, remind people about meetings, get people together and then we sit and discuss. I make sure people stay on task: "Here's what we decided. Let's do it. All take responsibility and work as a team."

Although district leaders understood the value of having those in many different roles shaping the system's direction, these leadership functions largely remained the purview of senior administrator leaders. While this conforms to Locke's (2003) claims about the inevitability of hierarchy in large organizations and the specialization of leadership functions across roles, it begs the question of whether or not such distribution most effectively utilized the full capacities of the school system. This is a complex question, but one worthy of further consideration by those in the school system.

Second, our review of prior evidence led us to hypothesize that the most effective distribution of leadership functions would vary the numbers of people providing leadership in response to the complexity of the tasks to be performed—more in the case of complex tasks and fewer in response to simple tasks. There was some evidence of this variation, especially from one of our district interviewees, but it seems likely that the district and schools could refine their practices substantially more (and save a good deal of precious time) by being more sensitive to task complexity.

Finally, our review of prior evidence led us to hypothesize that effective leadership distribution would encourage unconstrained forms of distribution, especially in the performance of complex leadership tasks in order to maximize the use of existing expertise. While our data did uncover some instances of people who were perceived to be offering leadership to their colleagues without formal leadership designation, most people nominated as leaders by their colleagues had been designated leaders by the school or district. This result could well be a function of our research methods, specifically our decision to ground our data collection in district reform initiatives. Such initiatives are much more likely than "grass roots" initiatives to

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have formal leadership roles associated with them. So our data are likely to have underestimated the amount of informal leadership exercised in our case schools.

Characteristics of Non-administrative Leaders

What is it that prompts others to think of you as a leader, especially if you are not in an administrative position? We hypothesized in our review of literature that such an attribution might reflect something about you that others believe to be prototypical of the organization; it might also reflect your colleagues' positive judgements about your relative expertise. From other lines of research, we also know that the direct experience of your work and its value to the organization might lead to such an attribution, as might your match to people's preexisting leadership prototypes (Lord & Maher, 1993) and some of your basic personality traits (Zaccaro et al., 2004).

Our interview data asked about qualities, experiences and factors giving rise to the attribution of leadership among those in nonadministrative roles. As Table 2 indicates, ten categories of characteristics were identified: interpersonal skills, organizational skills, personal qualities, professional qualities, commitment to an initiative, range of undertakings, respect for others' cultures, source of good ideas, breadth of experience, and designation as formal leader.

The characteristics most frequently associated with nonadministrative leaders in our study mirror many of the results of prior research about the characteristics of formal administrative leaders. By far the most frequently

TABLE 2 Characteristics of Nominated Nonadministrator Leaders.

Characteristics	Elementary Leaders	Secondary Leaders	Total
Interpersonal Skills	4 / 4[1]	5 / 3	9 / 7
Organizational Skills	2 / 2	2 / 2	4 / 4
Personal Qualities	11 / 4	6 / 4	17 / 8
Easygoing	3 / 2	0 / 0	3 / 2
Open / Approachable	5 / 3	0 / 0	5 / 3
Caring	3 / 3	5 / 4	8 / 7
Vocal	0 / 0	2 / 2	2 / 2
Quiet	3 / 2	1 / 1	4 / 3
Professional Qualities	5 / 3	2 / 4	9 / 5
Committed to Initiative	4 / 4	7 / 4	11 / 8
Involved in a Range of Undertakings	4 / 3	1 / 1	5 / 4
Source of Good Ideas	10 / 4	1 / 1	11 / 5
Breadth of Experience	5 / 3	1 / 1	6 / 4
Shows Respect for Others' Cultures	0 / 0	1 / 1	1 / 1
Designated as a Formal Leader	2 / 2	7 / 3	5 / 9

[1]Number of individuals who mentioned a particular characteristic / Number of schools where the characteristic was mentioned.

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identified category (17 people in 8 schools) was "personal qualities." Attributions of openness, care, and extraversion are quite consistent with prior evidence, primarily about those in formal leader roles. And being "quiet but effective" is a characteristic we discovered in our earlier research on teacher leadership, in particular Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach (1999).

The second most frequently mentioned set of characteristics (11 people in all 8 schools) was commitment to whatever the initiative was. Once again, this finding is very similar to characteristics attributed to successful principals in all eight national contexts included in a recent international leadership study (Day & Leithwood, in press). In addition, the interpersonal skills category mentioned by 8 people in 7 schools reflects the growing body of evidence about the importance attributed to these skills (e.g., empathy) on the part of formal administrative leaders (Zaccaro et al., 2004).

So the largest proportion of our evidence about characteristics attributed to nonadministrator and informal leaders suggests no difference as compared with the attributes of formal administrative leaders. This seems to indicate that people's leadership prototypes do not discriminate among formal or informal roles; it suggests, in addition, that people are influenced by approximately the same types of direct experiences in forming their opinions about the leadership potential of their colleagues.

Reinforcement also can be found in these results for the claim made by many leadership theorists that leadership is an attribution and followership is a voluntary state (e.g., Lord & Maher, 1993). Our evidence, in sum, confirms one of our original expectations about leadership characteristics—attributions of leadership to those in nonadministrative roles will be significantly shaped by those perceived traits also associated with attributions of leadership to those in formal administrative roles:

> That's in part too because ... [the Principal] is so supportive. He will do whatever he can to support us. He learns right along with us.... And when he models it like that people are motivated to do it.

Our framework suggested two additional expectations about the characteristics of nonadministrator leaders. One of these was that informal leaders who emerge because of their prototypicality, only, will be less effective than those who emerge because of their expertise or because of both their expertise and prototypicality. The second expectation was that informal leaders identified as prototypical by their colleagues, as well as possessing significant expertise, will be more effective than those with expertise alone. We do not have sufficient evidence to directly test either of these expectations. But the importance attached by our interviewees to breadth of experience, being a source of good ideas, and having organizational skills does suggest that expertise figures strongly in teachers' attributions of leadership among their colleagues.

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Influences on the Development of Distributed Leadership

Distributing leadership to nonadministrators in a way that actually benefits the district or school presents some obvious challenges. For example, those to whom leadership is being distributed already have full-time jobs; how will they apportion their time to take on these additional functions? We cannot assume much opportunity for nonadministrative leaders to become skillful in the exercise of those leadership functions which they assume or are expected to take on; how will they develop the new capacities they need? Some administrators may value the power they have over decisions in their organizations and be reluctant to share that power with others; how can these concerns be addressed?

Interviewees identified significant numbers of positive and negative influences on the development of distributed patterns of leadership: school-based staffs spoke about some five positive and four negative influences while district interviewees identified eight positive and five negative influences; there was considerable overlap among the influences identified by both groups. These results, as a whole, indicate that distributed patterns of leadership are nurtured when collaborative structures are established, when the numbers of people collaborating on an initiative is kept manageable, and when influence is exercised through expert rather than positional power:

> [When leadership is shared] peer involvement is more influential than when there is administrative leadership only.

Distributed patterns of leadership are nurtured, as well, by an organizational culture which is open, encourages strong staff commitment to students and is free of favoritism and internal dissent:

> Not just one person goes to workshops. Administration sends a wide range of people depending on people's interests.

Staff will be motivated to participate more fully in distributed approaches to leadership with visible support and tone-setting from their formal leaders, when those leaders provide full explanations (exemplifying an open culture) for their decisions and when they go out of their way to ensure staff are aware of new directions and activities. Finally, distributed leadership is more likely to develop when there are opportunities for staff to acquire the capacities they need to participate effectively, along with the autonomy and time to act in accord with their professional beliefs and values:

> The board provided a lot of professional development last year because it was the first year for the Literacy Teacher.

> The principal asked me, and then left it to me what I thought was best to do.

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These results are entirely consistent with our initial hypothesis about conditions giving rise to increased teacher leadership. We have no evidence from this stage of the study to test our hypothesis that these same conditions will foster leadership on the part of others in the school community (e.g., students, parents).

CONCLUSION

This first stage of our two-stage study inquired about patterns of leadership distribution, which leadership functions were performed by whom, characteristics of nonadministrative leaders, and factors promoting and inhibiting the distribution of leadership functions. We inquired about these issues in eight elementary and secondary schools located in one large school district that had been encouraging distributed forms of leadership for well over a decade. As the district's CEO (director of education) told us, his purpose for such encouragement had been to "take the ego out of the system"—to create forms of collaborative work that would make the most of staff members' collective capacities, encourage the development of new capacities, and reduce unproductive knowledge hoarding and competition practices that had been common across the district.

We consider our account of distributed leadership in this district to be a probable example of "best practice" at the present time—not perfect, but likely more mature than average by a significant degree. So this best-practice evidence assists our broader purpose of moving the study of distributed leadership beyond its largely descriptive character. If, as is typically argued, organizational learning (Marquardt, 1996) and systems thinking (Senge, 1990) are paths to organizational effectiveness, some patterns of distributed leadership should be, as well. Each of these three ways of thinking and acting promise to enlist and productively apply organizational members' collective skills and knowledge beyond what is likely in their absence.

The "devil," as usual, is in the details, however. And the most noteworthy detail to emerge from this first stage of our study was the critical part played by formal school and district leaders in helping to foster apparently productive forms of distributed leadership. First, coordinated patterns of distributed leadership were common to initiatives given high priority and attention by principals but quite uncommon among other initiatives. Second, the structures, cultural norms, and opportunities for staffs to build their leadership capacities depended heavily on the intentional work of principals. Third, staffs attributed leadership to those of their peers who shared traits and dispositions typically associated with formal administrative leaders such as principals and superintendents. Fourth, reflecting some earlier theorizing on the matter (Locke, 2003), it fell to principals to enact those critical direction-setting leadership functions associated with

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our multidimensional conception of successful leadership. Finally, central office leaders created a district culture that modeled distributed leadership in many different ways, from the requirements they established for how district initiatives were to be implemented in schools through the active forms of engagement of teachers and school administrators in district decision making.

Our evidence as a whole indicates that distributing leadership to others does not seem to result in less demand for leadership from those in formal leadership positions. However, it does produce greater demand: to coordinate who performs which leadership functions, to build leadership capacities in others, and to monitor the leadership work of those others, providing constructive feedback to them about their efforts. These results are remarkably similar to much earlier evidence about the consequences of school-based management for the work of central office administrators (e.g., Murphy, 1994); their work changed but did not diminish. Perhaps we should not be surprised since school-based management represents the most determined, explicit, and widespread effort to date to planfully distribute leadership functions among districts and their schools as a strategy for school improvement.

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