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**Distributed forms of school leadership:
A critical and sociological analysis**

A thesis
submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy
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by
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Abstract

Distributed leadership is a free-floating concept that has come to prominence in the education field. Policy-makers, researchers and practitioners alike tout it as the mode of leadership suitable for twenty-first century schools. The quantity of commentary, related typologies, research and recognition in education policy gives the impression that distributed leadership is a mature concept. Most writers appear to assume that distributed leadership is beyond controversy, contributes to official legitimised school improvement and so is in no need of any re-theorising. The thesis in this study provides an alternative view. It argues that it is time to reject the grand narrative of distributed leadership and replace it with a critical and sociological re-theorising of distributed forms of leadership that reveal how authority and symbolic power co-exist in hybrid configurations of day-to-day leadership practice. In other words, the conceptual development of distributed leadership is at a pivotal point.

Two forms of analysis led to this rejection and re-theorising. One was in the broader school and generic leadership fields, while the other was on research in schools. The discussion in the first part of this study reveals that existent theorising and research of distributed leadership is predominantly silent around power, micropolitics, and the performative policies that have created environments conducive to distributed leadership being recommended as a ‘vehicle’ for reform. Most of the research to date can be categorised as either descriptive, with a tendency to be apolitical, or normative, with a tendency to oversimplify complexity. However, a critical analysis of related typologies and research suggests that there is a recent acknowledgment that distributed leadership exists in differing forms and is more complex than originally thought.

The school-based research in part two of this study was a commitment to understand day-to-day leadership practice *in situ* over 20 months, in two New Zealand suburban secondary schools. This investigation confirmed that existing conceptualisations, normative research and commentary of distributed leadership tended to be over-simplified. The distributed forms of leadership that emerged in each school were unique, due to the different educative, social, political and historical contexts that shaped and re-shaped the differing forms over time. There was no one preferred way of understanding how leadership existed in distributed

forms. Analysis of the case studies led to the development of an analytical framework that can help understand the complexity of distributed forms of leadership that schools rely on.

The third and final part focuses on the thesis of this study. It rejects the distributed leadership grand narrative and argues for a critical and sociological re-theorising, that incorporates symbolic capital, symbolic power and authority. The re-theorising illustrates how authoritative capital co-exists with human, cultural and social forms of capital to form organisational and emergent distributed forms of leadership in hybrid configurations. This leads to a satisfactory theorising of distributed forms of leadership that builds on the complexity recently acknowledged in the field and reflects the reality of day-to-day school leadership practice.

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Abbreviations

| | |
|------|---|
| AP | Associate Principal |
| BOT | Board of Trustees |
| CLS | Critical leadership studies |
| CMT | Curriculum Management Team |
| DP | Deputy Principal |
| EMS | Educational management studies |
| ERO | Education Review Office |
| HOD | Head of Department |
| HOL | Head of Learning |
| MMT | Middle Management Team |
| MoE | Ministry of Education |
| NCEA | National Certificate of Educational Achievement |
| NCSL | National College of School Leadership |
| NPM | New Public Management |
| NZQA | New Zealand Qualifications Authority |
| NZTC | New Zealand Teachers' Council |
| RP | Restorative Practice |
| SCT | Specialist Classroom Teacher |
| SLT | Senior Learning Team |
| SMS | Student management system |
| SMT | Senior Management Team |
| TQM | Total Quality Management |
| V | Co-efficient of variation |

CHAPTER ONE - Introduction

Distributed leadership has come to prominence in the education field over the last decade. Ushered in as the preferred leadership for 21st century schools, particularly by the National College of School Leadership (NCSL) in England, distributed leadership had become commonplace in education policy and research when I first started scoping the ideas for this study in 2005. A taken for granted view of the efficacy of distributed leadership as essential for school improvement has emerged as a grand narrative, parallel to research and conceptual development. The thesis of this study argues for the rejection of this grand narrative based on the critique of distributed leadership typologies, research and case study research in two schools. As an alternative, distributed leadership is re-theorised as distributed forms of leadership that exist in hybrid configurations where authority and symbolic power co-exist. This new theory provides a more realistic understanding of how leadership distribution occurs in schools.

The significance and timing of this study

Leadership is a problematic and complex concept. It encompasses a multitude of conceptualisations, a romanticism associated with heroism, and a tendency to narrow as a vehicle for reform. It also suffers from adjectivalism (Day, Gronn, & Salas, 2004), where any quest for an overall understanding becomes entangled in a ‘sea of adjectives’ that precede the term *leadership*. Leadership theory predominantly aligns to a centralised individual leader-centric view, where leadership equates to an individual leader. After decades of reviewing the vast literature and research on leadership and drawing on approximately 9000 references, Bass (2008) acknowledged that the search for a single definition of leadership is fruitless, though his reviews over several decades have been limited to mainly North American and leader-centric empirical studies (House & Aditya, 1997). An evolutionary view of leadership theory reveals attempts to counterbalance what previous theories reveal and reify. Recent examples of this are the ‘New Leadership’ theories, such as charismatic leadership and transformational leadership that came to prominence in the 1980s and brought with them a focus, not just on the leader, but on followers as well. As a counterbalance to these ‘New Leadership’ theories, distributed leadership and shared leadership have become the current fashion as the leadership field adjusts from a centralised individual leader and multiple

followers focus, to encompass a more decentralised focus with multiple sources of leadership (Grint, 2011).

The field of education with its focus on learning and teaching has experienced differing degrees of association with the development of the leadership field. The steady establishment of education's own leadership related field has influenced this association. Education's field of leadership is under the nomenclature of educational administration, educational management, educational leadership or any combination of these terms. There has also been a tendency to focus more on the school context, rather than the contexts of higher education and particularly early year's pre-school education. In North America the education field was initially captured by and limited to the Scientific Management approach pioneered by Frederick Taylor and it was not until the 1960s that the field of educational management started to emerge in the United Kingdom (Bush, 2011; Gunter & Fitzgerald, 2008). Since the 1960s and 1970s, the education field has become increasingly enamoured of leadership, management, and their purported benefit to educational organisations and more recently to student achievement.

The shifts and counterbalances associated with leadership in the education field have generally shadowed those of the wider leadership literature, though not as result of close associations between the two fields. Educational organisations, and in particular schools, which are the context of this study, have become self-managing in developed nations over the last three decades due to government policy. The principal¹ has been cast into a role that is aligned to transformational leadership theory (Gronn, 2003b; Gunter, 2005). The management associated with self-managing schools has over this period been downplayed by many as leadership has become equated with the quest to focus on exceptional leaders who bring about change (Gronn, 2003a). The focus on transformational leadership in education has therefore been more of a result of its good fit to policy reform with the reification of principalship, rather than as a means of advancing the understanding and practice of leadership in schools (Youngs, 2011).

The self-managing school era has been part of wider reforms associated with New Public Management (NPM) where governments have focused on efficiency, performance and

¹ The New Zealand equivalent of a Headteacher

accountability agendas, albeit at times mixed with agendas of social concern. The impact on schools has been an intensification of work where principals are the connection between external reforms and the classroom. Consequently, particularly during the last fifteen years, where self-managing schools became firmly embedded alongside growing accountability measures, there has been greater consideration of how school leadership should be understood and normalised to meet pre-defined expected outcomes. In a manner similar to the leadership field, the focus of school leadership has shifted to encompass a more decentralised view of leadership where multiple leaders are now required to cope with the intensification of work labelled as leadership. In parallel to this shift, there has been a growing acknowledgment in the field of education of the dominant assumption that leadership practice was situated with individual leaders in roles of authority with multiple followers, has limited the understanding and theorising of day-to-day school leadership practice (Foster, 1989; Grace, 1995; Gronn, 2000; Gunter, 2001; Harris, 2004; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004; Woods, 2005). This shift and acknowledgment have contributed to the popularisation of the term distributed leadership, particularly in relation to school leadership where it has become “a mantra for reshaping leadership practice” (Louis, Mayrowetz, Smiley, & Murphy, 2009, p.157), likening it to the characteristic of a grand narrative.

It is in the midst of this shift that this study is situated. It has an overall purpose of contributing towards a re-theorising and understanding of distributed leadership practice in schools. For how long distributed leadership remains ‘a mantra for reshaping leadership practice’ is a matter of debate. On the one hand, I show how distributed leadership is a tool for education reform and could fade away if it does not serve the reforms that have yet to emerge. On the other hand, I draw on two New Zealand secondary school case studies, referred to as the Auckland cases, to illustrate how the shift to encompass a distributed focus of leadership can assist our understanding and problematising of day-to-day leadership practice. The analysis has not been a straightforward one. Distributed leadership is a slippery and elastic concept, loosely used by many in the education field (Hartley, 2007; Torrance, 2009). Moreover, “simply invoking the term distributed leadership is meaningless, given the many different patterns distributed leadership can take” (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010, p.64). In 2006, I initially set out using the term, distributed leadership. However, because of it becoming such a free-floating concept associated with school leadership and related education policy, I needed to step back from its broad use.

Consequently, I shifted to using the term, *distributed forms of leadership* as the thesis of this study developed.

Situating myself in the field

The terminology that makes up the title of this study *Distributed forms of school leadership: A critical and sociological analysis* is an intentional choice. The latter aspect identifies the position taken so I could step back from the uncritical position where most distributed leadership research and commentary is located. My position crystallised in response to the proliferation of distributed leadership research that occurred between my first review of the literature during 2006 and 2007 and a subsequent review I undertook in 2011.

For my first literature review I articulated my position by drawing on how the field was understood by Grace (1995) and Gunter (2001). Grace (1995) separated the field in two; Educational Management Studies (EMS) and Critical Leadership Studies (CLS). He positioned EMS as the dominant messenger in the field due to it having State legitimisation as the means of “achieving organisational effectiveness” (1995, p.192). The alternative and more critical stance, CLS takes a place in the field that is aligned to a more democratic, humane and less functional view of leadership in education, where distributed leadership activity can arise from any individual irrespective of role. An EMS perspective of distributed leadership aligns to a normative argument that assumes a greater distribution of leadership would produce more schools meeting legitimised State goals for education.

The theorising of the field undertaken by Grace (1995) is echoed in the three positions espoused by Gunter (2001). She makes a clear distinction between Critical Studies and the two alternatives, Educational Management, and School Effectiveness and Improvement. Critical Studies “are concerned with enduring power structures and the impact these have on the lives and work of educationalists and communities” (Gunter, 2001, p.40). Educational Management focuses on the practice and theory of management, albeit by sometimes taking an uncritical and accepting stance towards the wider policy environment, so that it can be difficult to separate it from the managerial and functional approaches that are associated with NPM. The third alternative, School Effectiveness and School Improvement, is also positioned as uncritical at the national or local government level because it is usually enmeshed with policy and reform initiatives, which are unquestioned. School Effectiveness relies on an

approach to research, where what is valued is reduced to measurable outcomes, such as test scores (Wrigley, 2003). School Improvement does move beyond this reductionism to include pedagogical and sociological aspects of schooling, though it nevertheless still “claims to provide a universally applicable approach to change management”, where improvement is reduced “to a value and content free technical issue” (Wrigley, 2008, p.130). Distributed leadership, from this view, is positioned as a taken for granted grand narrative that can be applied across all schools with little attention afforded to current and historical school context.

My position in the field is one that is aligned to CLS (Grace, 1995) and Critical Studies (Gunter, 2001). By the end of 2011, my position had crystallised by drawing on Gunter and Ribbins’ (2003) six ‘knowledge provinces’ and Collinson’s (2011) definition of CLS for the wider leadership field. Gunter and Ribbins (2003) position the ‘knowledge provinces’ along a continuum: ‘Conceptual’; ‘Descriptive’; ‘Humanistic’; ‘Critical’; ‘Evaluative’; and, ‘Instrumental’. At the end of the continuum that starts with ‘Conceptual’, more emphasis is placed “on understanding doing” (p. 133), whereas those at the opposite end, such as ‘Instrumental’, “are more concerned with particular types of doing” (p. 134). Gunter and Ribbins (2003) show how these ‘knowledge provinces’ could be used to locate where the emphasis of an educational concept is located in terms of research and associated literature. As an example, they scrutinise work on distributed leadership and teachers as leaders, and argue that most of this work is located in the ‘Evaluative’ and ‘Instrumental provinces’. These two ‘provinces’ are respectively concerned with measuring the impact of distributed leadership and providing leaders with strategies to deliver school and system level goals. Over eight years later, the distributed research studies in my literature review reveal that these two ‘provinces’ still have a prominent place. Such approaches to distributed leadership research have become increasingly known and labelled as normative studies.

Another ‘knowledge province’ defined by Gunter and Ribbins (2003) captures a different approach to the research of distributed leadership that is not labelled normative. The ‘Descriptive knowledge province’ locates research that applies a distributed perspective of leadership practice. James Spillane and colleagues have championed most of this United States based research. The distributed perspective has its recent roots in the ‘Conceptual knowledge province’ of Gunter’s and Ribbins’ continuum, where distributed leadership literature acknowledges Peter Gronn and James Spillane are the main theorists. Gronn and

Spillane's independent theorising of a distributed perspective of leadership contributed to drawing attention away from privileging the centralised individual leader and multiple followers focus that dominated the education field through the 1980s and 1990s (Youngs, 2009). It is in the 'Critical knowledge province' where there has been little development of distributed leadership theorising. The questions listed under 'Critical' by Gunter and Ribbins in relation to teacher leadership, reflect the analysis of the conceptualisations and research in the distributed leadership literature, observations of leadership practice in the two Auckland cases, and the re-theorising into distributed forms of leadership that make up the three parts of this study:

Who or what enables teachers to lead?

How is the critical analysis of teacher leadership informed by a theory of power?

Does teacher leadership maintain existing power relations or seek to restructure them?

Does teacher leadership enhance or limit the involvement of others in leadership?

(Gunter & Ribbins, 2003, p.135)

If 'teacher leadership' is replaced with 'distributed leadership', the modified questions reflect the areas overlooked in most distributed leadership research (Bolden, 2011; Hartley, 2010; Hatcher, 2005). Distributed leadership research located in the 'Descriptive', 'Evaluative' and 'Instrumental provinces' tend to reflect Collinson's (2011) observation of mainstream leadership literature. He argues that:

... hegemonic perspectives in the mainstream literature ... tend both to underestimate the complexity of leadership dynamics and to take for granted that leaders are the people in charge who make decisions, and that followers are those who merely carry out orders from 'above'. (p.181)

To counter these hegemonic assumptions, acknowledging questions such as those listed above, the CLS position taken in this study is strengthened. Studies aligned to this position assume that power and leadership is just not associated with those in organisational roles based in authority, and emphasise that leadership dynamics emerge across dispersed relationships that can include dissent and resistance (Collinson, 2011).

Pivotal times

Distributed leadership has had a high uptake in the education field and is positioned by a majority of researchers and education policy makers as a solution for enhancing student learning (Gronn, 2009a, 2011). This positioning is however, a matter of debate due to such claims preceding empirical evidence. Distributed leadership could merely be a managerial outcome of school modernisation reforms (Fitzgerald, 2007; Hartley, 2007). The regularity of such claims associating distributed leadership with improved student achievement can give the illusion that distributed leadership has been critiqued often enough to be both empirically and theoretically robust. The proliferation and liberality with which the term, distributed leadership, is used, has left it vulnerable to uncritical acceptance within the ‘knowledge provinces’ where the research is dominantly placed. Terms such as teacher leadership, distributive leadership, democratic leadership, parallel leadership, shared leadership, collaborative leadership and distributed leadership have become commonplace and interchangeable descriptors in the field of educational leadership. Irrespective of what term is used, there has been little uptake of Gronn’s (2003a) challenge to the field to critique and research leadership practice with respect to authority, influence and power.

A lack of critique

There has generally been a lack of critique of distributed leadership’s prominence, as well as the research at both a macro and micro level. At the macro level, there is on the whole an unquestioned approval of the education policy and political environments that have to some degree contributed to the status of distributed leadership (Hatcher, 2005). The reforms in education across much of the developed world over the last 25 years have created conditions where a greater distribution of work labelled as leadership had to occur (Youngs, 2009). The education field to some extent had no choice and this raises questions as to whether distributed leadership is part of enhancing the understanding of leadership practice, or is it also a by-product of reform that limits understanding to particular forms of leadership that are well suited to reform agendas.

There has also been an overwhelming silence on micropolitics, power and distributed leadership at a local school level (Flessa, 2009; Hartley, 2009). For the last five years or so, the research on distributed leadership has been labelled and categorised as either, descriptive or normative. Both forms have contributed towards the silence on micropolitics. A significant

amount of descriptive research aligns to Spillane's distributed framework for understanding school leadership practice. However, micropolitics have been positioned outside of this frame which has an emphasis on leaders, followers and their situation, hence overlooking the politics associated with how leadership is distributed and for what purpose (Flessa, 2009; Maxcy & Nguyen, 2006). Normative studies of distributed leadership usually advocate or test for an increased distribution of leadership as a means of school improvement or attempt to establish associations between differing patterns of distribution and any effect on improving student achievement. These studies tend to be large-scale and reliant on bivariate and multivariate quantitative analysis so that the practice of leadership is less likely to be problematised as it can be with qualitative analysis (Bryman, 2004). The aim of these quantitative studies is to determine norms and test to what degree there are associations between leadership distribution and student achievement. Underpinning this normative approach is the quest for improvement, where leadership is about progress and micropolitics is positioned as a barrier, so existing power structures are less likely to be critiqued (Flessa, 2009; Gunter, 2001).

Conceptual development

Distributed leadership is therefore at a pivotal point in relation to its conceptual development. Leithwood et al. (2009a) claim that due to the education field having a "more nuanced appreciation of distributed leadership it is ... now in a position to consider questions of impact" (p.281). Robinson (2009) also argues that the focus of these questions must be connected to the benefits for students, rather than staff relations. I fully support any efforts to focus on the benefits to students and their learning, though there is a danger here. Despite the focus on benefits to students, any critique of the policy environment in which distributed leadership is located will still be unlikely because the normative position tends to gloss over political contexts. Any moving on will tend to be uncritical, so will hinder our understanding of the complexities and tensions surrounding leadership practice. My other concern is that normative studies tend to reduce student learning down to measures such as test scores where aggregated student achievement data can end up being positioned as more important than the individual student (Youngs, 2011). There also appears to be some privileging of the 'Evaluative' and 'Instrumental knowledge provinces' from advocates located within them, where the 'Descriptive knowledge province' is seen as a means to serve the normative research of distributed leadership (Leithwood et al., 2009a; Timperley, 2008). This privileging does highlight some shortcomings of descriptive distributed leadership research

studies. However, normative distributed leadership studies also need to allow critique from other ‘knowledge provinces’ to speak back into them before the field gets ahead of itself, especially as distributed leadership is uncritically entrenched in current education policy (Gronn, 2009a).

The conceptual development of distributed leadership also exists beyond the education field in the wider leadership field. One way of critiquing conceptual development is through drawing on Reichers’ and Schneider’s (1990) Evolution of Constructs model. A new concept is initially developed through an introduction/elaboration stage where attempts to legitimise the concept are made with preliminary data collected as further evidential support. Reichers and Schneider (1990) claim if the concept survives, theorists will then progress it to an evaluation/augmentation stage that is distinguished by controversy, critique and possible reconceptualisation. They argue that a third and final consolidation/accommodation stage moves beyond the controversies of the second stage as the concept reaches a stage of clarity and integrated by theorists into general models. Hunt and Dodge (2000) in their critique of leadership theory development drew on this model because it provided for them a possible explanatory pathway of how a new or re-invented concept could be developed by theorists and eventually be accepted in mainstream academic literature. However, it is debatable if theorists can ever move a concept beyond controversy to a point of finality. Theorists continually redefine meanings as contexts change over time, and this study is an argument against distributed leadership reaching a point of conceptual finality.

At the turn of the millennium, Hunt and Dodge (2000) located distributed leadership at an introductory stage of construct development, though its roots can be located in early contemporary leadership theory. Since the time of Hunt’s and Dodge’s article there has been much activity in the education field that indicates distributed leadership is now beyond the introduction elaboration stage and is in the evaluation and augmentation stage, or an ‘adolescent’ stage within the field of education (Leithwood et al., 2009a). The key issue is whether it is time for the construct development of distributed leadership to move beyond evaluation and augmentation to a consolidation and accommodation stage. The volume of conceptualisations, typologies and research studies in distributed leadership literature can give the appearance that it is time to move on. However, an analysis of this literature, in parallel with the Auckland cases that make up the first two parts of this study, indicates that it is not time to move on, despite claims in recent distributed leadership books to the contrary

(e.g. Harris, 2009c; Leithwood, Mascal, & Strauss, 2009b). This study shows how distributed leadership is still distinguished by much controversy and establishes a thesis for the reconceptualisation of distributed leadership. Therefore, in terms of construct development, distributed leadership as a taken for granted grand narrative, has not achieved the clarity required consolidating it as a construct of leadership, a clarity that is probably unattainable.

The research design and context

There is a way forward. While advocates of normative distributed leadership research studies claim the concept is ready to move on, Kenneth Leithwood, one of the proponents of this claim, also urges a note of caution. There is an acknowledgement that distributed leadership is now far more complex than originally thought (Leithwood et al., 2009a). This study is designed in such a way so that complexity is revealed as an argument against the taken for granted grand narrative that distributed leadership as a single construct is useful for understanding day-to-day school leadership practice.

In Part One, the evolution of distributed leadership typologies and the analysis of published research studies reveal how the variety of understandings cannot be contained as a single construct. In Part Two, the day-to-day practice of school leadership and views of school leaders and teachers, add further to this complexity by highlighting the importance of historical, socio-cultural and political contexts. The analysis of the Auckland cases reveals how distributed leadership can be reconceptualised critically and sociologically as a means of addressing the lack of theorisation with power in distributed leadership literature. Being *in situ* for nearly 20 months in the Auckland case schools enabled me to capture the complexity of leadership practice that is not always evident or necessarily sought after in other published research studies. The weaving together of Parts One and Two results in a re-theorisation in Part Three, showing how symbolic power and authority co-exist in hybrid configurations of leadership. This results in a reconceptualisation away from a taken for granted acceptance of distributed leadership, to more complex distributed forms of leadership that exist across organisational and emergent leadership.

The New Zealand context

The Auckland cases were situated in the New Zealand policy environment and it is important for the reader to recognise this in order to ascertain the degree of transferability of the Part Two findings. The policy reforms in New Zealand have generally reflected the broader shifts that have occurred across the United States, Canada, England, Wales and Australia, in relation to neo-liberal policy agendas that have generally privileged economic purposes of education above social ones (Bottery & Wright, 2000). Along with this has been the promotion of self-managing schools in parallel with a quasi-marketisation of education (Smyth, 2011). Leaders in New Zealand schools have more autonomy in comparison to school leaders of most other countries (Organisation for Economic and Cooperative Development, 2007) and have a considerable management and administrative role that complements and yet can overshadow the leadership of learning role in day-to-day practice (Hodgen & Wylie, 2005). The management and administrative role of New Zealand school leaders has increased over the past 15 years due to external accountability measures and expectations that have accumulated both in relation to school-level reporting and teacher-level performance management. Consequently, this has contributed to conditions conducive to a greater distribution of leadership across staff.

The onset of self-managing schools in 1989 came on the back of a growing culture of mistrust from the New Zealand Treasury towards schools throughout the 1980s, issues pertaining to a burgeoning centralised bureaucracy, and concerns raised by the Scott Committee related to a supposed lack of openness between schools and their communities (Openshaw, 2009). The reform of New Zealand education outlined in *Tomorrow's schools: The reform of educational administration in New Zealand schools* (Minister of Education, 1988) where schools were expected to be self-managing and governed by parent representatives, became entrenched as a key turning point in the State's managing of schools through the Education Act 1989 (New Zealand Government, 1989).

The switch to the self-managing school model was soon followed with the establishment of the Education Review Office (ERO), the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) and the Teacher Registration Board (TRB), which later became the New Zealand Teachers' Council (NZTC). The formation of these agencies meant there was still steerage from centralised government throughout the 1990s so that schools operated in an environment of centralised decentralisation where teachers were expected to be managed (Codd, 2005; Court

& O'Neill, 2011; Fitzgerald, 2007). Even though the New Zealand Government throughout the 1999-2008 period pulled education back from a possible full market model based on open competition between schools for student enrolments and the acquisition of staff, it still placed greater emphasis on measuring outputs (Fitzgerald, 2007) and “remained animated by economic objectives” (Thrupp & Irwin, 2010, p.xxii).

The presence of ERO as the external quality assurance body of schools shaped a prescriptive and one-size-fits-all approach to school review and evaluation, though schools have had a greater say in what should be reviewed since the Education Amendment Act of 2000 (New Zealand Government, 2000). There was a deliberate shift from an audit and compliance approach from ERO to one of assessment and assistance, though this shift was accompanied by a change of policy that placed greater emphasis on measurable outcomes (O'Neill, 2010) through the Education Standards Act 2001 (New Zealand Government, 2001). Parallel to the influence of ERO has been the role of NZQA with secondary schools. Quality assurance was mandated by NZQA where secondary schools in the mid-1990s were required to develop and submit substantive quality assurance documentation for approval so that they could deliver national qualifications at their local sites. In 2001, a new national qualification system was introduced over three years to replace norm-based examinations for secondary students in years eleven to thirteen, where year thirteen is normally the last year students attend school prior to starting post-school undergraduate qualifications. The new system, the National Certificate of Education Achievement (NCEA) was, and still is, a standards-based model, where secondary schools are increasingly exposed to a performative environment, due to the media producing unofficial league tables so schools can be compared against each other.

These policy shifts provide a backdrop for the Auckland cases that are the focus of the middle part of this study. At my time of entry into the schools, the revised national *New Zealand Curriculum* was about to be implemented, affording schools opportunity to have their own school-based curriculum. This was expected to be tailored to meet their students' learning needs and the expectations of their school communities (Ministry of Education, 2007). Also at this time, a sample of 43 secondary schools indicated that just over half were reviewing their current curriculum, whereas the rest were underway with implementing changes (Education Review Office, 2009). One of the Auckland cases, known by the pseudonym Esteran College, was reviewing and redesigning its current curriculum throughout 2008,

whereas the other case, Penthom High School, did not start its review and redesigning until the start of 2009.

The schools

Esteran College and Penthom High School are situated in the wider Auckland region of New Zealand. Both are co-educational State funded secondary schools covering years nine to thirteen and years seven to thirteen respectively. Throughout most of 2008 and 2009, I was able to situate myself in each school collecting data through, non-participant observation, interviews, focus groups, a staff questionnaire and in response to requests from each school, a student questionnaire. Parallel to the review, redesign and implementation of their school-based curriculum, each school chose its own initiative as a context for my research and this created the conditions for me to build a possible reciprocal relationship with each school. Moving each relationship beyond one merely based on gaining and maintaining access, to one also based on cooperation was a challenge. There was a delicate balance between needing to stand back as a non-participant observer and needing to be proactive. Relationships of trust still needed development while keeping my possible influence to a minimum in each school. Gaining access from gatekeepers also did not assume that cooperation was assumed from other staff members (Wanat, 2008). For this reason the fieldwork was organised over three phases so that in between each phase, access, cooperation and relationships were reviewed. The three phases also provided opportunity to develop and adjust data collecting tools in between each phase. Consequently, three submissions for ethics approval occurred throughout my time in each school.

Both schools were similar in relation to: the socio-economic characteristics of their local communities; the ethnicity of students; their organisational structure in terms of roles and meetings; the continuity of senior management staff from 2006 to 2009; their low profile in national media; their perception that each school's image in the local community was tarnished through historical events that were no longer aligned to their present culture; the redesign and development of each school site during the period of research through Ministry of Education funded building programmes; offering the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) as the only recognised qualification option for students; the channelling of their efforts to raise student achievement above national mean scores for schools that existed in similar socio-economic settings; and, the acknowledgement in public Education Review Office reports that both schools were putting in place strategies that were

conducive to raising student achievement. Senior leaders at both schools viewed leadership distributed across all levels as a possible means to help raise student achievement.

The schools were structured into subject-based departments, with a head of department managing a team of teachers. Across each student year level, one or two deans working with the year level form teachers, were responsible for pastoral care, attendance and some behavioural management processes. The delegated areas of management to other staff in the school were spread across these two areas, student services (pastoral care) and curriculum (subject-based departments). Both schools aimed to implement school-based initiatives that sat across these two areas. This went beyond the more traditional trickle down approach of secondary school change through subject departments, where heads of departments and their teams have traditionally been seen as crucial to implementing change across a school due to their shared “subject loyalty and expertise as well as micropolitical interests” (M. Brown, Rutherford, & Boyle, 2000, p.242).

The schools differed with respect to the length of their history as secondary schools. Esteran College was in its fourth decade, whereas, Penthom High School was less than a decade old. Rolls had been rising at both schools, but for different reasons. Penthom was just emerging out of its building phase when I entered, where each previous year had seen a new year level of students added to the school population. Esteran had experienced a falling roll in its third decade, though this trend reversed in recent years and the roll was continuing to increase due to the school becoming the preferred option for more of the local community.

Throughout 2008 and 2009, Esteran College prioritised the implementation of the revised *New Zealand Curriculum* as a key strategic initiative. This meant that its school-based initiative, Academic Counselling, through the Year level deans and form teachers, tended to be less visible in 2008. During 2009, once the review and redesign of the curriculum was completed, Academic Counselling became more prominent. The aim of the Academic Counselling initiative was to help students set targets, particularly in relation to NCEA, and to monitor their progress across all subjects rather than just one subject.

Penthom High School, on the other hand, prioritised its own student mentoring initiative as a form of academic counselling above that of the revised *New Zealand Curriculum* throughout the second half of 2008. Penthom did not start reviewing and redesigning its curriculum until

2009. In July 2008 approximately a dozen staff were ‘shoulder-tapped’ and volunteered to act as mentors along with the senior leadership team, including the principal, for students across year eleven as a means of helping student motivation, organisation and goal setting. During 2009, the initiative expanded to include year twelve and thirteen students, with the total number of mentors rising to just over 40. For the staff mentors, they had an additional role in the school, whereas at Esteran College, with their Academic Counselling initiative, the form teachers took on an additional task within an existing role they already had. In both schools the Deans, form teachers and mentors were also classroom teachers.

The aims, research questions and structure of this study

The overall objective of this study is to contribute to a re-theorising and changed understanding of forms of distributed leadership practice. Three research aims and subsequent research questions provided the framework for achieving this objective, and are linked in a primary (P) or secondary (S) manner to the research design.

Table 1.1 – *Research aims, questions and design matrix*

| Research aim | Research question | Part | | |
|--|---|------|-----|-------|
| | | One | Two | Three |
| To critically analyse why particular conceptualisations of distributed leadership have emerged and how distributed leadership is conceptualised in the literature. | How can the prominence of particular conceptualisations of distributed leadership be interpreted? | P | | S |
| | From a critical standpoint, how is “distributed leadership” conceptualised in the literature? | P | | S |
| To interpret from multiple perspectives, understandings of situations where distributed leadership was espoused and/or practiced in two New Zealand secondary schools. | To what extent is distributed leadership evident in day-to-day practice as seen from multiple perspectives? | | P | S |
| | Why do particular people hold the views they do in relation to distributed leadership? | | P | S |
| To develop a satisfactory re-theorising of distributed leadership. | To what extent do two case studies of distributed leadership contribute to a satisfactory re-theorising? | | S | P |
| | How could “distributed leadership” be critically re-theorised? | | | P |

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| PART ONE: <i>The policy environment and the literature</i> | ← | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ |
| PART TWO: <i>The school case studies</i> | ← | | ↓ | |
| PART THREE: <i>Re-theorising distributed leadership</i> | ← | | | ↓ |

Though I was mindful of all the research questions throughout the research process, the matrix illustrates the main links between the research aims, questions and the structure of this study across three parts. The three parts that follow this chapter have been designed so that the rejection of distributed leadership as a taken for granted grand narrative and its re-theorisation into distributed forms of leadership with symbolic power and authority in Part Three, is supported by two kinds of analysis. The first is the critique of the literature in Part One and the second is derived from the findings of the Auckland cases in Part Two. Both lead into Part Three, the thesis of this study.

Part One starts with Chapter Two, in which the political, historical and theoretical setting for this study is provided. Four concerns are raised in relation to the construct development of distributed leadership and provide the foundation to justify why current distributed leadership theory and research is inadequate. This inadequacy is related to a lack of critique of education policy environments that have contributed to the “official legitimisation” (Gronn, 2009a, p.201) of distributed leadership, the lack of acknowledgement beyond the education field of conceptual roots evident in historical and current leadership theory, and little critical theorising of distributed leadership in relation to power and micropolitics.

The remaining two chapters in Part One are a critique of distributed leadership literature. Chapter Three focuses on the conceptualisations and typologies of distributed leadership. The typologies of distributed leadership that follow Gronn’s and Spillane’s non-normative conceptualisations of a distributed perspective of leadership, are compared in chronological order to demonstrate how typologies over time reflect a growing acknowledgement of complexity with distributed leadership. This complexity is also evident, particularly in the case studies and mixed methods designs evident in some of the distributed leadership research studies grouped into five categories in the chapter that follows. Further to the established categories of descriptive and normative studies that have tended to dominate distributed leadership research, three other categories, blended, alternative and political, are identified and point to shifts in the field that support a re-theorising.

Part Two encompasses the second aim that is related to interpreting school staff understandings of situations where distributed leadership has been espoused and practiced and so is directly linked to data collected and analysed for this research. The Auckland cases provide a practice-based perspective of leadership to complement the critique of the literature

in Part One. The methodology and methods employed for the research are discussed in Chapter Five. The challenging process of collecting data over an eighteen-month period is documented alongside an account of how these challenges were managed, so that the integrity of the case studies could be maintained in terms of ethics, validity, reliability and the subsequent analytical generalisation that informed the re-theorising in Part Three. The findings from each case study in Chapters Six and Seven, contributed significantly to the replacement of distributed leadership with distributed forms of leadership as the study progressed over a six-year period. The histories of each school, the staff and their relations provided a comprehensive understanding of the distributed forms of leadership identified *in situ*. The critical and sociological analysis of these forms in Chapter Eight, led to the development of a four-level analytical framework that can be applied in any context to understand distributed forms of leadership.

The third and final Part comprises two chapters that synthesise the findings of the Auckland cases and the proposed analytical framework, with the findings from Part One. Chapter Nine focuses on the re-theorising of distributed leadership to distributed forms of leadership. The re-theorising shows how authority and symbolic power co-exist, so that organisational and emergent forms of leadership are better understood as hybrid configurations of leadership practice. In the tenth chapter, the resultant importance of current and historical, educative, social, cultural, and political contexts of an individual school renders any grand narrative of distributed leadership of little use to researchers, practitioners and policy-makers. The resultant thesis lays down a challenge to the field of school leadership. It is time to move on from distributed leadership as a single construct to the more complex state of distributed forms of leadership that exist in hybrid configurations.

PART ONE – THE WIDER ENVIRONMENT AND THE LITERATURE

Part One of this study serves as a critical account of distributed leadership as it is portrayed in the literature. The three chapters each build on the one before it. The intent of the first one, *Chapter Two: Four key concerns* provides a political and theoretical backdrop that informs the critique in *Chapter Three: The conceptualisations and typologies of distributed leadership in schools* and *Chapter Four: The research on distributed leadership in schools*.

CHAPTER TWO – Four key concerns

An introduction to four key concerns about distributed leadership²

A critical interpretation of distributed leadership has yet to fully emerge, so it is at a pivotal point in terms of conceptual development. The establishment of distributed leadership in the school leadership field just over a decade ago has been characterised with a prominence that has generally preceded its conceptual and empirical development. Leithwood et al. (2009a) argue that distributed leadership is maturing as a concept, and has the conceptual clarity required “to consider questions of impact” (p.281) on outcomes. In spite of this optimism, in this chapter I raise four key concerns with respect to the conceptual development and research related to distributed leadership. Though there continues to be much research activity through descriptive and normative studies, there are signs that distributed leadership is heading towards an uncritical position in the field of school leadership.

First, there has been very little critique of how education policy has contributed to the inevitability of distributed leadership due to the intensification of leadership work without any increase to resourcing. The lack of policy critique is an intentional or unintentional oversight that is often evident in the literature of educational leadership (Grace, 1995; Gunter & Ribbins, 2003; Thrupp & Willmott, 2003). Distributed leadership may merely be a managerial outcome of school modernisation reforms (Fitzgerald, 2007), though Harris (2008) appears to reject this claim and suggests that these ‘dangers’ are not emerging based on the evidence she has seen. However, the mere use of the word ‘danger’ here reveals the need for critical analysis of wider educational policy forces, an analysis I undertake in the first section of this chapter.

A second problem is that distributed leadership, in relation to the field of school leadership, has to a degree become distant from related theorising and research outside of the education field due to it being a possible solution to work intensification and its good fit to education reforms. To what extent its emergence could also be part of a paradigmatic development in the wider leadership field towards a more holistic and encompassing understanding of leadership is usually overlooked.

² Much of this chapter is based on a previously published article: Youngs, H. (2009). (Un)Critical times? Situating distributed leadership in the field. *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, 41(4), 377-389.

The third problem is that only a small number of authors, particularly Peter Gronn, look back to the theoretical historical roots of distributed leadership and where it is currently located in relation to paradigmatic development (Bolden, 2011). These concerns inform the second and third sections of this chapter and draw on literature that is located in the broader leadership field rather than school leadership.

My fourth concern is related to the silence regarding micropolitics and power relations that pervade much of the typologies and research of distributed leadership; a silence that is also evident in most school leadership literature (Flessa, 2009; McGregor, 2007). Power remains uncritically hidden within distributed leadership (Hartley, 2010; Hatcher, 2005) and because schools are a hybrid of hierarchical and heterarchical structures, attention must be drawn to forms of leadership that exist across and within both of these structures (Gronn, 2009b). The multiple sources of possible authority and expertise within this hybrid state thus make distributed leadership an inherently political concept (Maxcy & Nguyen, 2006).

The influence of political forces and education reform

Education over the last 30 or so years reformed through neo-liberal policy agendas that have privileged the economic purpose of education above the social purposes of democracy and collective identity. This has led to major transformation of state education systems, especially throughout Australia, Canada, England and Wales, New Zealand, and the United States of America (Bottery & Wright, 2000; Gewirtz, 2002), countries from which the majority of research and theorising about educational leadership originate. Common to this transformation has been the dual emergence of the self-managing school and mandated accountability back to local and national forms of government (Smyth, 2011). The resultant increase of accountability measures has transformed school and teacher work within a wider policy environment that has emphasised performativity, standardisation and managerialism. There has been an intensification of tasks and a subsequent wider distribution of work and leadership responsibility across professional educators in schools.

Economic globalisation

Economic globalisation has contributed to the emergence of two seemingly opposing forces, organisational level responsiveness and national level performativity through measurable education outcomes. In a global economy, organisations of developed nations have

increasingly needed to develop flexible and fluid leadership practices, where the creativity and innovativeness of the skilled and highly waged professional are positioned as a responsive competitive tool against the low cost and mass production labour environments of developing nations. Knowledge and skill are distributed across an organisation rather than concentrated amongst those in formal leadership roles (Schein, 2010). Consequently, leadership studies since the 1990s have shifted beyond just focusing on top-level leadership roles (Bass, 2008). Organisational leadership structures are more likely to be flatter rather than hierarchical, fluid in terms of role rather than bureaucratic, and trusting of the professional rather than controlling (Bottery, 2004). Leaders are positioned more as ‘leaders amongst equals’ in terms of power, and leadership practice is assumed to take on a more informal distributed form.

On the other hand, economic globalisation has also positioned developed nations in a competitive environment where it is deemed profitable by governments to perform ahead of each other in relation to education. Education is positioned as a central mechanism in developing a nation’s knowledge society that is expected to be competitive in a global economy (Fergusson, 2000; Hargreaves, 2003). Consequently, governments argue that it is in their nation’s best interest to use measurable, yet narrow, educational outcomes as a means of striving to improve their ranking on international ‘league tables’ as a form of educational and economic capital. Education is then positioned as the espoused route to a productive economy and justifies a State’s increased stake in education (N. Wright, 2001). This preoccupation with measurement and performativity has filtered through to local schools, resulting in a further intensification of teacher work through the increased assessment of students, increased assessment of teachers through performance management systems, and the increased assessment of schools through quality assurance compliance mechanisms. Even though schools exist within a global economy, the forces that are contributing to the flattening and informalising of leadership in organisations elsewhere could be less likely to influence schools due to the performative and outcomes based environment that shapes educational practice. It is unknown to what extent distributed leadership in this performative environment is likely to undergo a “managerial colonisation” (Thrupp & Willmott, 2003, p.144) through the increase in accountability measures that are now a distinguishable feature of education systems.

NPM, standardisation, performativity and accountability

During the 1980s there was “daily exposure to educational aerosol terms like ... quality” (Smyth & Shacklock, 1998, p.21). Positioned behind this exposure and questioning of school and teacher quality were three pillars of NPM, effectiveness, efficiency, and economy, where economy in this context was doing more with less (Sachs, 2003). As an example, in New Zealand, centralised bureaucratic structures were consequently deemed to be inefficient, cumbersome, and an unnecessary burden on government expenditure of the tax-payer dollar. In the context of these times in the 1980s, self-managed schools were ushered in with the carefully crafted image that communities would be in control (Smyth, 2011). However, the locus of power in relation to education policy was still situated with the Minister of Education. Schools could develop their own policies but these needed to ‘sit’ within national education goals and administrative guidelines that also act as frameworks for external review procedures. In New Zealand and other nations, NPM could continue at a distance providing a means to: standardise schools as low-trust organisations (Bottery, 2004; Thrupp & Willmott, 2003); shape and control teachers’ work as managed professionals (Codd, 2005; Smyth, 2001; N. Wright, 2001); emphasise line management (Thrupp & Willmott, 2003); and, reduce leadership to a rational and technical form (Bottery & Wright, 2000). It is in this environment that distributed leadership has emerged as a prominent and espoused form of ‘official’ school leadership. Trends towards standardisation and prescriptive practice, performativity and accountability, and the subsequent intensification of principal and teacher work, are key forces that have contributed to the prominence of distributed leadership as a functional and rational means to enhance school effectiveness and improvement.

The prescription of how schools and teachers should review and give an account of their practices within a NPM environment has also contributed to how leadership and leaders in schools are shaped and understood. Leadership and the work of leaders becomes increasingly managerial, tied to prescribed organisational activities (Ozga, 2000) and structured as a hierarchical responsibility that emphasises lines of accountability (Codd & Scrivens, 2005). Consequently, in some cases “bureaucratic managerialism has been used to construct a seemingly irresistible top-down juggernaut of reform that largely excludes the possibility, or desirability, of local agency” (Johnson, 2004, p.284). Perspectives of leadership in education are coupled to shifts in education policy and as with distributed leadership, the advent of teacher leadership has also tended to be associated with school reform efforts (Camburn,

2009). Little's (2003) review of how teacher leadership has been reconstructed through three periods of reform over 25 years illustrate this as a shift from:

... localised and rather idiosyncratic activity, very much rooted in individual initiative and small-scale collaboration to more systemic efforts by school and district officials to mobilise teacher leadership in the service of institutional agendas and external accountability ... In each of the studies there is a widespread pattern of 'leadership' that could readily be described as little more than a division of institutional labour, especially managerial labour. (p.404)

The Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) programmes in the United States are a recent example of how reform models "distribute school leadership across structures, roles and routines" (Rutherford, 2009, p.62). These reforms attempt to foster an increase of collaborative practices within schools and between schools and their external stakeholders. In New Zealand, the shift to promote distributed leadership has perhaps been more subtle and a result of other reforms rather than an explicit expectation that leadership should be distributed. This could be because leadership has perhaps always been distributed in many areas of education in New Zealand.

Throughout the 1990s, schools in New Zealand adjusted to a 'Principal as CEO' model, where the principal is positioned as the professional leader and manager of the school as well as being a member of the school's Board of Trustees (BOT)³. Principals have had to compensate for gaps in Board expertise and knowledge (Youngs, Cardno, Smith, & France, 2007) and during the last ten years report formally to the Ministry of Education (MoE). They have done this through giving an annual account of their planning and review by respectively setting goals and measuring student learning outcomes. Principals also need to attest personally, or through delegated authority, that all teaching staff meet the professional standards set in place by the MoE and the Registered Teacher Criteria that are overseen by the NZTC. New Zealand schools and in particular, principals, work in an environment that Ball (2004) describes as a performative education system, where authentic social relations can be superseded by judgmental relations on schools, teachers and students. In New Zealand, as elsewhere, this environment multiplies through the public comparison of student outcomes through general media. The increase in accountability measures and the focus on performativity have resulted in the intensification of tasks for principals. Despite this,

³ The equivalent of a board of governors that are democratically elected from a school's community.

principals in New Zealand tend to try and prevent mandatory managerial tasks from diminishing their focus on the leadership of learning and teaching (Hodgen & Wylie, 2005). However, the mandatory tasks still must be completed, thus creating an environment in New Zealand secondary schools that, according to both principals and teachers, is conducive to work overload and excessive paperwork (Ingvarson et al., 2005; Kane & Mallon, 2006).

Pressure is also placed on principals due to the apparent growing significance of their role internationally (Gewirtz, 2002; Gronn, 2003a; Gunter, 2005). In a performative environment, their individual performance equate to the performance of the school. They can be expected to play a heroic role in transforming schools through articulating clear vision and achieving organisational goals; a role that is closely linked to transformational and charismatic leadership, two forms of leadership that have been over-exposed in the wider leadership field (Parry & Bryman, 2006). This view is strengthened by stories of principals turning around ‘failing’ schools and research into school leadership that unquestioningly assumes that leadership is concentrated around those with official organisational roles, with particular attention given to the principal (MacBeath, 2007). A principal is susceptible to “being publicly vilified if their school does not achieve targets and central government reforms” (James, Mann, & Creasy, 2007, p. 86). An issue of exceptionality has arisen that reifies an individual and transformational role for the principal that can contribute to a further intensification of his or her work and subsequent impression management (Gronn, 2003a; Thrupp & Willmott, 2003). A self-perpetuating and seductive false assumption can then emerge where school improvement becomes synonymous with heroic principals over and above the influence of teachers, students and the local school community, albeit at a time when distributed leadership is also promoted.

The leader-follower construct common to the transformational, transactional and charismatic theories that have permeated the analysis of leadership practice, have also been reinforced through education policy over the last 30 years. Therefore, the theorising of distributed leadership in schools is more likely to gravitate towards a formal delegated form, rather than informal forms that emerge through social activity irrespective of role. Distributed leadership exists within hierarchical structures thus making it an inherently political concept (Hartley, 2010; Maxcy & Nguyen, 2006).

The environment in which schools operate has been ripe to distribute leadership work down to teachers through traditional hierarchical structures by those in senior leadership positions (Fitzgerald, Gunter, & Eaton, 2006; Hatcher, 2005). With economic pressures working against any significant increase of staffing, schools have had only one way to go, distribute leadership tasks or experience principal and senior management role overload. The prominence of distributed leadership and its ‘cousins’ such as teacher leadership, shared leadership, collective leadership and collaborative leadership in education was inevitable. Distributed leadership is a ‘sign of the times’ and a good fit for the education policy environments of New Zealand and other developed nations.

If the education policy environment is used as the sole point of reference, then it could be concluded that distributed leadership is a relatively new conceptualisation of leadership mainly confined to the field of education. However, distributed leadership has its roots in the wider field of leadership theory and if attention is not given to this wider leadership field then the conceptualisation of distributed leadership in education is at risk of being disconnected, first, from historical precedents, and secondly, from parallel developments in the wider leadership field. These concerns are the focus of the following two sections.

Historical precedents of distributed leadership

If distributed leadership is going to mature into a theoretically sound concept then it needs to be grounded in associated current and historical leadership theory and findings of leadership research. This is so the policy forces discussed in the previous section do not become the central determinant of school distributed leadership research, where distributed leadership is reduced to a technical and managerial form. Furthermore, an academic discipline that becomes ignorant of its past may miss previous mistakes, make premature conclusions and overlook refutation of current myths that can arise through popularisation (Carson & Carson, 1998). The field of leadership has not been immune to this, where there has been an over-indulgence of proclaiming new theories that at times are merely a rehash of existing ones (Bass, 2008).

I have found that a wider perspective of distributed leadership needs to establish its historical links, many of which are evident in the theorising and researching of shared leadership. Shared leadership relates to distributed leadership but is a group or team level construct.

Distributed leadership on the other hand, as well as incorporating groups or teams, is a whole organisation construct (Day et al., 2004; Ensley, Hmieleski, & Pearce, 2006; Seibert, Sparrowe, & Liden, 2003).

A distributed or shared perspective of leadership is not new (Ogawa & Bossert, 1995). The roots of distributed and shared leadership can be traced back to the works of Mary Parker Follett in the 1920s and 1930s, and loosely to one aspect of Chester Barnard's work from both the 1930s and 1960s. Follett argued that leadership is a diffused property that can emerge from anywhere irrespective of position and can exist in places beyond the obvious (Graham, 1995). Chester Barnard developed as one aspect of his work, the notion of the informal organisation that exists beyond formal structures. Even though he didn't specifically discuss leadership as a distributed concept, he nevertheless argued that our gaze should go beyond the formal organisation because a formal organisation requires the informal organisation to operate (Barnard, 1938). Barnard's argument is a reminder that the more informal, less structured activities of schools should not be overlooked. These historical roots are evident in the shared leadership literature, yet are largely absent from the school distributed leadership literature.

Gronn's (2000) theorisation of distributed leadership is one conceptualisation that has its roots in earlier research of shared leadership. He draws on the work of Gibb (1954, cited in Gronn, 2000) who argued that leadership was more suited to definition as a group quality rather than a focused individual quality, and proposed two forms of leadership distribution: accumulative and systemic. The form of accumulation is a numerical and simplistic interpretation of distribution where the totality of leadership acts is the sum of each individual leadership act. The alternative systemic form of distribution is more holistic, where Gibb argued against the mutual exclusiveness of leader and followers. In his research of groups Gibb showed that leadership could pass from one individual to another depending on the situation irrespective of whether they had a formal leadership role or not. According to Gronn (2000), Gibb's work was not picked up again until Brown's and Hosking's (1986) research into social order in organisations which found that social activities can be interpreted as a holistic form of distributed leadership. Though Gronn clearly has developed his theorisation from Gibb's classification of distribution, researchers and commentators in the education field of distributed leadership have largely failed to pick up on the group context of Gibb's work.

As far as I can tell by accumulating what others in the field have identified, and supporting this with my own archival search, since the 1920s and 1930s there have been few conceptualisations of leadership that are directly related to shared and distributed leadership due to the leader-centric focus of the leadership field. As well as the work of Gibbs that Gronn draws upon, Bales (1954) recognised the role of a social leader in group settings. Bowers and Seashore (1966) argued that leadership existed beyond formal roles in the form of mutual peer leadership, and Kerr and Jermier (1978) argued that power and influence existed outside formal hierarchical leadership and could be a substitute for organisational leadership. The term ‘distributed leadership’ did not appear until Brown’s and Hosking’s (1986) study of social organisation where they drew on the work of Gibb. ‘Distributed leadership’ was later categorised by House and Aditya (1997) as either, delegated leadership, co-leadership, or peer leadership. Barry (1991) also drew on the term to describe emergent social leadership and boundary spanning leadership in self-managing teams, the latter being replicated by Sheard’s and Kakabadse’s (2002) research of team development. The example provided here is an indication of how leadership can be understood across two levels, one being organisation wide, whereas the other is confined to a group or team context. An early example of bringing together the theorisation of groups and organisations is evident in some subsequent work of Hosking (1988) who was influenced by Greenfield’s (1975) questioning of the organisation as an entity in itself. Hosking argued that using the term organisation as a verb, rather than as a noun, opened up the concept of leadership as an act of organising to those beyond officially appointed leaders.

One of the first research studies of school leadership that highlighted the term ‘distributed leadership’ brought together organisational wide leadership and group level leadership. Polite’s (1993) case study of a major change process at a Missouri middle school resulted in her developing a typology to describe how leaders were distributed through the school. Five types of leaders were identified: leaders of influence who had followers of their ideas; leaders of curriculum who shared their expertise with others; leaders of groups who used their positional authority to enact change; leaders of direction who provided focus and direction; and, resistance leaders who emerged in relation to conflicting vision discussions. Individuals wielded “more than one type of leadership influence in the school over the course of time, depending on the issue and the context” (p.15 of 25). This is an early example of what Gronn (2011) has labelled as hybrid practice, where permeable leadership spaces and identities exist in a mix of orchestrated and emergent leadership.

If the research and conceptualisation of distributed leadership are to draw on the foundations of the past, then attention should be given to the organisational level construct of distributed leadership as well as incorporate the shared leadership construct that focuses on team or group level practices of leadership as illustrated in the Auckland cases. This provides opportunity for a finer grained analysis of day-to-day activity. However, care must be taken not to use the distributed and shared terms interchangeably due to their differing focus (Fitzsimons, James, & Denyer, 2011). Based on the discussion in the previous policy section, distributed leadership in schools is more likely to take an official form restricted to those in formal leadership positions who distribute leadership to others. In contexts conducive to work intensification, this appears to be an obvious way of categorising distributed leadership. However, this historical section sits largely outside the education policy context and with acknowledgement to Mary Parker Follett, the challenge is to look beyond what is obvious.

Wider leadership field development

The wider field of leadership has started to move beyond its last major paradigmatic shift, New Leadership, that incorporated transformational, transactional and charismatic theories that privileged the voice of formal leaders over followers (Gordon, 2011). At the turn of the millennium, Hunt and Dodge (2000) had argued that although the field of leadership was mature, it was not moving on and suffered from a sense of *déjà vu* due to organisations seeking a quick fix to issues and researchers of leadership seeking quick publications. Their concerns back then are perhaps just as relevant today for distributed leadership research in the educational field. In a performative policy environment, schools are more susceptible to putting in place apparent quick fixes to implement a continuous flow of reform programmes, and researchers can be prone to publish multiple, yet similar publications as a means of bolstering publication rates that are linked to performance management and funding.

During the two periods of reviewing literature for this study, I read and then discounted many publications due to their replication of what the author or authors had already published. My overwhelming impression at times was one of *déjà vu*. The calls, particularly from those associated with normative distributed leadership studies to move on from any possible early associations between leadership distribution and student achievement are premature. Due to the rapid development and the growing size of the educational leadership and management field, there could be a temptation to start assuming that there is enough theoretical and

research capacity to further develop the conceptualisation of distributed leadership without looking beyond the school effectiveness and improvement studies, and further still, into the wider leadership field. I am not arguing here against the uniqueness of the education field, nor am I advocating for direct transference of leadership and management theory into education as tools for subsequent 'businessisation' under the guise of NPM. What is at issue, is that if distributed leadership in the education field is to encapsulate a wider set of social, theoretical and political concerns, as well as retain a crucial focus on learning, then conceptual developments that occur in the wider leadership field also need to be considered. As far as I can ascertain the works of Peter Gronn, and to a lesser extent Kenneth Leithwood and Alma Harris from the education field, incorporate links to the wider leadership field. The generic leadership journal, *Leadership Quarterly*, on the other hand, only tends to highlight Gronn's theorising of distributed leadership and recently his theorising of hybrid configurations. Any links between the education and leadership fields appear thin, a finding replicated in Fitzsimons et al.'s (2011) comparative review of distributed leadership and shared leadership. Strengthening the links between the two fields could further develop our understanding of school distributed leadership beyond it being used as a tool suited for education reform.

Emerging relevant constructs

As part of their review of the wider leadership field, Hunt and Dodge (2000) found that leadership distribution had a profile at the forefront of leadership theory development at the time. This profile appears to have been sustained and strengthened over the last decade as reflected in Grint's (2011) very recent analysis of leadership model evolution, that positions 'distributed leadership' at the forefront of current development in the leadership field. There is also a call for a new and integrative ontology of leadership. Drath et al. (2008) argue that, direction, alignment, and commitment should replace the current ontology of, leaders, followers and shared goals. They consider the latter too narrow to support how the leadership field is developing across a range of differing areas, particularly in relation to multi-level analysis, complexity leadership theory, shared leadership, hybrid configurations and critical leadership studies.

Of particular interest to the educational leadership field is that in the wider leadership field, both distributed leadership at the organisation-wide level and shared leadership at the group level within organisations are used to understand and critique leadership irrespective of its

source. For a while there has been agreement that leadership can be understood at an organisational, team or group, and individual level (Yukl, 2002) and studies have tended to focus on one of these contexts. There is now acknowledgement that the leadership field has recently shifted to also focus on the interaction between these levels (Parry, 2011). A literature review of associated research highlighted the interwovenness of levels and that the different leadership processes within them were inherently complex and a mixture of top-down and bottom-up leadership (DeChurch, Hiller, Murase, Doty, & Salas, 2010). A criticism of the multi-level approach however, is that it is based on a model of how organisations are formally structured. The quite young area of complexity leadership theory seeks to move beyond these structured constraints by focusing on interactive dynamics and leadership emergence, where alternative levels of analysis are needed to reveal “how phenomena emerge from the complex and non-linear interplay between heterogeneous agents and complexity dynamics” (Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2011, p.473). Uhl-Bien and Marion (2011) go on to argue that complexity theory suggests that a distributed and shared view is required to understand leadership practice in organisations and groups respectively.

Shared leadership is a relatively new phenomenon in leadership studies, even though its roots can be traced back to Gibb and others as discussed in the previous section. Its re-emergence, particularly within literature on teams, starts to recognise the complexity within organisational groups and the interdependent relationships associated with many group tasks (Burke, 2011; Mayo, Meindl, & Pastor, 2003). Studies of shared leadership show that it is dependent on trust (Bligh, Pearce, & Kohles, 2006), it recognises that leadership can emerge from anywhere in a group (Avolio, Sivasubramaniam, Murry, Jung, & Garger, 2003; Cox, Pearce, & Perry, 2003), and is dependent on open honest dialogue within the group (Fletcher & Kaufer, 2003; Yukl, 2002). Groups, whether in the form of a fixed term project team or a permanent team embedded into an organisation’s structure, make up the formal sub-units within a school. These are prolific across schools in New Zealand (Cardno, 1998) where subject based departments in secondary schools are likely to be seen by teachers as the main units of professional community (Ingvarson et al., 2005). Therefore, research into distributed leadership in schools could draw on the emerging literature of shared leadership, so group level analysis, as well as organisational level analysis, is utilised.

The blending of organisational and group analysis requires a framework that incorporates vertical, horizontal, within group, and between group units of analysis. The horizontal

heterarchical structures across an organisation are intermingled within organisational hierarchies that distribute leadership 'down the line' from senior leaders at the top to others further down (Gronn, 2009a). "A heterarchical division of labour co-exists with a hierarchical division of rights and authority" (Woods & Gronn, 2009, p.440). This intermingling has led Gronn to critique how distributed leadership has erroneously become positioned as a 'post-heroic' alternative to individual leadership. He argues that there are shortcomings in existing distributed leadership schema, that the complexities of organisations are not fully understood, and evidence in distributed leadership data points to hybrid forms of practice rather than solely distributed ones (Gronn, 2011). He argues that hybridity has rarely figured in leadership research and his questioning of distributed leadership is an indication that the concept is at a pivotal point in its conceptual development. This is significant when many position Gronn as one of the two pioneering education theorists, who along with Spillane, argued for a distributed unit of analysis for understanding leadership practice.

Any shift towards a more hybrid form of analysis will need to be coupled to related critical developments in the leadership field. This should ensure that the "power structures that emphasise a leader-follower dichotomy and authority, power and influence with individual organisational role" (Gunter, 2001, p.69) are not privileged over more emergent, expertise-based, and democratic forms of leadership that are not solely dependent on role-based authority. Collinson (2011) argues that Critical Leadership Studies (CLS) is an emerging aspect of the leadership field that has the potential to broaden and deepen understanding of leadership dynamics beyond those associated with formal authority. CLS challenges perspectives of leadership "that tend to both underestimate the complexity of leadership dynamics and to take for granted that leaders are the people in charge who make decisions, and that followers are those who merely carry out orders from 'above'" (Collinson, 2011, p.181). This challenge has been echoed by Flessa (2009) in the educational field, where he argues that there has been a separation of the complexity of leadership dynamics in relation to micropolitics with the conceptualisation and research of distributed leadership, where micropolitical analysis has largely been ignored due to distributed leadership being limited to a managerial form.

The study of micropolitics and other critical forms of leadership studies, when positioned alongside new paradigmatic developments, such as hybrid forms of leadership, shared leadership, complexity leadership theory, and multi-level analysis of leadership, illustrate that

there is a wealth of conceptual development occurring in the leadership field. This development is relevant to the continued development of distributed leadership in the educational leadership field, though the education literature on distributed leadership appears disconnected from these wider developments. Leadership is a social phenomenon as well as an organisational one and is more complex in practice than the rhetoric of mainstream leadership implies (Fletcher & Kaufer, 2003; Ogawa & Bossert, 1995; Scribner, Sawyer, Watson, & Myers, 2007). It is therefore important, in light of the apparent disconnection that distributed leadership studies in education do not drift into this form of rhetoric. As well as strengthening the connection to the wider leadership field, where there is an underlying theme of complexity, another way of guarding against any further disconnection, is to focus on micropolitics and power relations. This is particularly important as power currently remains hidden from distributed leadership literature in the education field (Hartley, 2010).

The silence around micropolitics and power relations

The performative environment in which schools exist has contributed to much of the educational leadership literature equating leadership to organisational progress with a particular focus on achieving goals and little engagement with power (Flessa, 2009; L. Wright, 2008). Robinson (2009) argues that, “leadership is attributed to those who contribute in sufficient degree to the achievement of group goals” (p.228). Here, the implication is that leadership narrows to a form that is complicit with achieving certain outcomes, and decision-making reduces to a rational process where forms of individual and collective influence not aligned to achieving the goals do not equate with leadership. The likely consequence of this rational, goal oriented view is that distributed leadership is then limited to achieving goals set by officials through instrumental tasks (Hartley, 2010) and studying patterns of leadership distribution associated with such processes. This rational approach, when combined with the issue of work intensification where leadership work is distributed from the few to the many, has led to official forms of distributed leadership, most of which are devoid of macropolitical and micropolitical critique. The issue of limiting any form of school leadership to a functional and managerial concept is one that has been evident in the field for a number of decades. The words of Thomas Greenfield (1975), where the state of educational administration is cast in a narrow technical, operational and measurable mould, still echo true today when applied to distributed leadership. He argued for a social interpretive perspective of organisations, an argument not well received at the time, but has received more attention

since then. If a social interpretive perspective, albeit a critical one, is to be developed further as part of the construct development of distributed leadership, then theory and analytical frameworks embedded in sociology, with attention given to micropolitics need to be drawn on. This approach is utilised later in this study as it is then likely to reveal latent and emergent forms of distributed leadership that exist beyond rational and managerial ones. Sitting beneath this is a fundamental question; to what extent is leadership in an already distributed state?

Distributed leadership and power

If distributed leadership is limited to a rational act on behalf of official leaders giving ‘leadership’ out to others to achieve organisational goals, then this act of distribution implies that those who are to receive the ‘leadership’ do not have what is required in the first place. Leadership is viewed then as a vehicle of power and power is thus limited to what Lukes (2005) describes as an “exercise fallacy” (p.70), where it is assumed to be bound within the exercise, in this case distributing ‘leadership’. Lukes (2005) argues to the contrary. Power may be seen as a capacity and so attention needs to be given to leadership activity that exists beyond official forms. My argument here is not to do away with distributing leadership responsibility to others when it is a mutually agreed activity, but that leadership must *also* be viewed in its more holistic and emergent form as something that already exists across people in a school, either in a latent or active, resistant or mutually agreed state. Positioning leadership as a concept that is already distributed is quite distinct from the position that argues distributed leadership is only restricted to leadership being distributed by the few to others (Mayrowetz, 2008).

Power as capacity is another argument that contributes towards a more critical conceptualisation of distributed leadership, where consideration should be given to whether power has been accessed, as well as what leadership is distributed (Fitzgerald & Gunter, 2008; Hatcher, 2005). Any assumption that equates the distribution of leadership with the distribution and access to power leads to a fundamental question about power. Can power be delegated and distributed out, and/or can it emerge irrespective of formal authority? This issue is not a new one and is echoed in the writings of the late Mary Parker Follett, who for many was decades ahead of her time. In a paper addressed to the Bureau of Personnel Administration in January 1925, she argued:

I do not think that power can be delegated because I believe that genuine power is capacity. To confer power on the workers may be an empty gesture. The main problem of the workers is by no means how much control they can wrest from capital or management, often we hear that stated; that would be a merely nominal authority and would slip quickly from their grasp. Their problem is how much power they can themselves grow. The matter of workers' control which is so often thought of as a matter of how much the managers will be willing to give up, is really as much a matter for the workers, how much will they be able to assume; where the managers come in is that they should give the workers a chance to grow capacity or power for themselves. (cited in Graham, 1995, p.111)

When leadership activity emerges irrespective of official role authority, then the power as capacity argument opens the opportunity to explore distributed leadership beyond its official state and critique how official forms are experienced within schools. Consequently, multiple sources of expertise are more likely to be acknowledged, as well as analysing where loci of power are situated, and whose interests are being served or minimised. Schools are complex political arenas with multiple configurations of authority and influence that are enacted through overt and covert processes (Ball, 1987; Blase & Anderson, 1995; Hoyle, 1986, 1999; Malen, 1994). Ball (1987) describes how at times schools can be participative and democratic and at other times bureaucratic and oligarchic. He adds that boundaries of control are continually redrawn. Fields of control "are subject to negotiation, renegotiation and dispute" (p.10) and boundaries are often a struggle between principals and their staff, Heads of Departments (HODs) and their team, pastoral care specialists and curriculum specialists. These struggles emerge "from the confrontations and interactions between individuals and groups in the organisation" (p. 10).

Considerations for a critical perspective

To move beyond the rational, technical and managerial form of leadership in schools, requires a critical position that incorporates a micropolitical perspective where priority is given to social actors over the reification of organisational structure and formal leaders of a school (Ball, 1987; Busher, 2006; Flessa, 2009). This would entail consideration of conflict rather than consensus, goal diversity rather than coherence, disputational ideology rather than neutral ideology, coalitions rather than departments, political activity rather than rational decision-making, and control rather than consent, for analysis so that alternative perspectives of practice beyond official distributed leadership are brought to the surface (Ball, 1987;

Hoyle, 1986). However, a micropolitical perspective does come with some degree of tempering. Ball (1987) cautions against not seeing conflict everywhere, as school life is also dominated by immediate needs, and that conflict is not always destructive. Though not referring specifically to micropolitics, Robinson (2009) also argues that for distributed leadership to be useful there needs to be a connection to benefiting students rather than a focus on staff relations. I agree with any focus that may be of benefit to students and their learning but would caution that any removal of a staff relations focus, particularly one that encompasses a micropolitical perspective, would fail to capture the socio-cultural environments in which both staff and students co-exist. The two cannot be separated because professional community is strongly associated with student achievement (Louis et al., 2010).

The socio-cultural environments of schools in which principals, other leaders, teachers, support staff and students co-exist, are ones that are not just played out in the present, but are also shaped by the past. It is here where a time dimension can be added to a micropolitical perspective, and social theory can be drawn upon to provide a deeper critical analysis of day-to-day practice and how it is possibly shaped by past staff relations. One such theorist whose theorising has been applied to education, with some particular focus on school leadership is Pierre Bourdieu (for examples see, Gunter, 2001; Hallett, 2007a; Lingard, Hayes, Mills, & Christie, 2003; Spillane, Hallett, & Diamond, 2003). Bourdieu (1990) brings together habitus, fields (or social space), and capital. He makes a link to the past by describing how:

The habitus which, at every moment, structures new experiences in accordance with the structures produced by past experiences ... Early experiences have particular weight because the habitus tends to ensure its own constancy and its defence against change through the selection it makes within new information by rejecting information capable of calling into question its accumulated information if exposed to it accidentally or by force, and especially by avoiding exposure to such information. (pp.60,61)

Lingard et al. (2003) explain how Bourdieu's concept of habitus "addresses the question of how social agents operate in ways that are compatible with the social situations in which they find themselves" (p.62) and opens the opportunity to question "taken for granted, second nature practices of leadership ... that indicate a real feel for the game" (p.73). Individual habitus thus provides some opportunity to explore beyond taken for granted official forms of distributed leadership and venture into the wider social space of a school.

Bourdieu's concept of habitus can reveal "how what it is to be something in the social world is determined by and reciprocally determines practice" (Dreyfuss & Rabinow, 1993, p.38). For Bourdieu (1990), the social world or social space, can be defined as a field, in a manner similar to a pitch or board on which a game is played with people (agents) in different positions. He describes the social field as:

a multi-dimensional space of positions such that each position can be defined in terms of a multi-dimensional system of co-ordinates whose values correspond to the different pertinent variables. Agents are thus distributed, in the first dimension, according to the overall volume of the capital they possess and, in the second dimension, according to the composition of their capital – in other words, according to the relative weight of the different kinds of capital. (Bourdieu, 1991, pp.230,231)

Bourdieu (2004) explains that the capital agents can possess in a field "takes time to accumulate" (p.15) and is in the form of economic capital "which is directly convertible into money" (p.16), cultural capital which includes "long-lasting dispositions" (p.17) and social capital or "connections" (p.16). Though not given the same prominence by Bourdieu, another form is human capital where there is a focus on individual knowledge, skills and expertise (Day et al., 2004; Spillane, Hallett, et al., 2003). Therefore, the concept of capital is useful to identify how people may draw on its differing forms in settings where leadership is apparent.

There may be limitations however to solely applying Bourdieu's theorising to analysing distributed leadership practice, due to what Hallett (2007a) argues is Bourdieu's over-determination of the macro level of fields and the micro level of habitus. The theorising of a distributed perspective of leadership by Gronn and Spillane and the group construct of shared leadership emphasise how leadership stretches across individuals, so interactions between individuals should also have a focus. According to Hallett (2007a), "interactions are the vehicle through which deference is created and deployed as the symbolic power to define actions, situations, and events in ways that induce compliance" (p.166), and so argues that Bourdieu "neglects the constitutive role of interaction" (p.149). To address this meso-level gap, Hallett (2007a) draws on Goffman's (1956) definition of deference. Goffman (1956) defines deference as "activity which functions as a symbolic means by which appreciation is regularly conveyed *to* a recipient *of* this recipient, or of something of which this recipient is taken as a symbol, extension, or agent" (p.477). Even though an individual may desire or

deserve deference, Goffman argues that they are not able to give it to themselves; others can only give it. The use of deference then provides a means to help understand why some people may defer the term leader on others, irrespective of whether they are in a formal organisational role of leadership or not. It provides opportunity to understand emergent and more holistic forms of leadership beyond formal organisational structures and processes.

As an example, Hallett (2007a) integrates deference with Bourdieu's notions of habitus, fields, and capital, to analyse school leadership practice, inclusive of, and beyond official forms of distributed leadership. Hallett (2007a) interprets fields as "repositories of symbolic power" which can also be organisations that have differing forms and values of capital. He explains that deference or symbolic capital "is symbolic power in its potential form" (p.153), and symbolic power "involves control over the meanings and definitions that provide a guide for action" (p.166). This has some link to the power as capacity perspective, where power can be in a potential form and so opens up the opportunity to examine beyond official forms of leadership where power exists outside of the authority tied to formal organisational roles. People can acquire deference from others, and so symbolic power can be accessed at the micro-level of the habitus by those who have an "established stock of deference" (p.152). There is the potential then to better understand, as in the Auckland cases that follow, why leadership can and does emerge in different situations irrespective of whether the source of leadership comes from an official role of authority or not. In terms of micropolitics, it could bring to light further understanding of resistance and other forms of influence that are positioned as barriers when leadership is only equated with the progress, goals and rational perspectives of decision-making.

The need for further debate

The concept of distributed leadership is at a pivotal point in its development. Some proponents of normative approaches suggest it is time for its development to move on, albeit while possibly reifying and restricting distributed leadership to official forms. However, I have presented four key concerns, when aggregated, argue against any such move to another phase. Distributed leadership is still very much in need of a critical re-theorisation and any development without this would be premature. It would limit distributed leadership to forms shaped by education reform and the policy forces that underpin such reforms.

CHAPTER THREE – The conceptualisation and typologies of distributed leadership

A free-floating concept

Distributed leadership is now a free-floating concept represented by a range of typologies and models in the school leadership literature. It has transitioned from a non-normative distributed perspective of leadership used as a unit of analysis (Gronn, 2000; Spillane et al., 2004), to also promote a wider distribution of leadership. Distributed leadership is now considered to be multi-dimensional and beset with a growing prevalence of perceived overlapping definitions (Flessa, 2009; Ritchie & Woods, 2007). For example, two research publications based on the same study, used distinctive yet apparently interchangeable terms, namely distributed leadership and shared leadership, where the latter was referred to as collaborative leadership, though much of the focus was actually on the degree of staff involvement with decision-making (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Heck & Hallinger, 2009). A similar blurring occurred in the substantial six-year *Learning from Leadership Project*, where shared leadership was defined as “teachers’ influence over, and their participation in, school-wide decisions with principals” (Louis et al., 2010, p.41). This use of shared leadership is in contrast to how it is conceptualised as a group level construct in the wider leadership field. The blending of such terminology has led to distributed leadership meaning many things to many people.

The term, distributed leadership, is a powerful attractor to practitioners, policy-makers and researchers. This is because it is an apparent solution for leadership work intensification, as well as having inherent democratic and moral assumptions accompanied by assumed notions of just and democratic distribution. This chapter reviews how distributed leadership has been conceptualised in the school leadership literature since the start of the millennium. It follows the progression from the distributed perspectives of Gronn and Spillane through to a range of typologies. This chronological progression reveals a growing acknowledgement over time that distributed leadership is a complex concept with multiple forms, and leads to the question; does this suggest that there is now too much complexity that can be captured in the single concept of distributed leadership?

The non-normative conceptualisations of Gronn and Spillane

The majority of distributed leadership literature identifies Gronn and Spillane as the theorists who, working independently, catalysed the interest in distributed leadership in schools for research and commentary. Both argue that their theorising should be used as a means to better understand leadership practice, rather than prescribe distribution of leadership work and Spillane specifically advocates for a distributed perspective to investigate school leadership and management practice (Spillane & Diamond, 2007). Gronn (2009b) however, has recently introduced a note of caution in relation to the attention accorded distributed leadership over and above more focused forms of leadership. He argues now, instead, for a hybrid mix of both distributed and focused forms, an argument revisited at times throughout this study.

As I outlined in the previous chapter, Gronn's theorisation of distributed leadership has its roots in leadership theory. Gronn conceptualises distributed leadership into the two main categories that Gibb described (1954, cited in Gronn, 2000); distribution as accumulation or aggregation, and distribution as a form of holistic and conjoint agency where actors influence and are influenced within a framework of authority (2002). The former he defines as numerical action and the latter as multiple or concertive action. Concertive action is interpreted in three ways:

- spontaneous collaboration;
 - anticipated through prior planning; or,
 - unanticipated;
- intuitive working relations that emerge over time and are dependent on trust; and,
- institutionalised or regulated practices.

His conceptualisation of concertive action highlights both the informal friendship and social aspect of leadership activity and the formal organisational distribution of leadership through the division of labour. Sitting across these informal and formal aspects is the need for interdependencies so that leadership activity can be described across two or more people and be situated where there are overlapping or complementary responsibilities (Gronn, 2002). The alternative and widely used focused view of leadership emphasises an individual interpretation of leadership based on dependencies, rather than interdependencies, so that there is distinction between leaders and followers.

The principle of interdependencies also shapes Spillane's theorising of a distributed perspective of leadership practice. He draws upon Thompson's classification of independencies (1967, cited in Spillane et al., 2004); reciprocal, pooled and sequential. In a similar way in which Gibb has directly informed Gronn's theorising, Thompson's classification of independencies has also influenced Spillane's development of his distributed framework for understanding, rather than prescribing leadership practice (Spillane, 2006). Structurally, Spillane employs a similar approach to classifying forms of distributed practice as Gronn does. There is a distinction between accumulative activity that Spillane labels as leader-plus, and distributed practice, though some differences arise with how each form is described by the two theorists. Spillane (2006) categorises leader-plus and distributed leadership practice as:

- leader-plus;
 - arranged through;
 - the division of labour;
 - co-performance where leadership functions are undertaken in a collaborated manner; and,
 - parallel performance where duplication of leadership functions occur in a non-collaborated manner;
 - distributed by;
 - design or redesign of leadership positions;
 - default where intuitive action is enacted (in a manner similar to Gronn's intuitive working relations); and,
 - crisis where impromptu action takes place particularly with unanticipated events (in a manner similar to Gronn's spontaneous collaboration);
- leadership practice through;
 - collaborated distribution that involves reciprocal interdependencies;
 - collective distribution where routines are pooled and co-performed but not at the same place or time; and,
 - coordinated distribution of sequentially arranged leadership tasks.

The most distinctive feature that sets Gronn's and Spillane's theorising apart from mainstream leadership theory and most research into school leadership is that they present a

distributed, rather than an individual or heroic lens through which leadership practice can be studied and understood. A distributed perspective decouples “leadership practice from the individual leader and examine[s] how it is a product of a constellation of leaders and followers working with organisational contexts” (Diamond, 2007, p.65), so that the focus is on the situation as well as people (Hallett, 2007b).

The distributed frameworks of Gronn and Spillane are not intended to be normative and prescriptive. Rather, they provide an alternative perspective to “the myth of individualism that has captured our thinking about work in general and success in particular in Western society” (Spillane, 2006, p. 103). School leadership can be understood as a distributed practice that is *stretched over* the context of the practice (Spillane, Diamond, & Jita, 2003). Spillane (2006) defines leadership practice as a product of the interactions between school leaders, followers and their situation, though he concedes that his theorising and empirical research has to some extent, been limited to focusing more on those with formal leadership responsibilities and restricting the situation only to tools and routines. This predisposes his work towards a suggested managerial bias (Maxcy & Nguyen, 2006) and an over-emphasis on interactions at the expense of students and their learning (L. Wright, 2008). Consequently, the empirical research of Spillane and his colleagues has a functional emphasis due to the little attention given to the local school socio-cultural context and the wider policy context. This is a shortcoming that Spillane (2006) acknowledges, and one that has contributed to the separation of distributed leadership from micropolitics (Flessa, 2009).

Spillane’s differentiation between leaders and followers sets his theorising apart from that of Gronn (2003a) who argues that this binary differentiation is unhelpful because it implies all the influence is with the leader and not the followers. Spillane (2006) suggests that his own data show that teachers construct others as leaders, though this assumes compliant followership (L. Wright, 2008) and it appears as if he has yet to ask if these teachers construct themselves as followers. Despite this, Spillane and Diamond (2007) argue that people “move in and out of followership and leadership roles depending on the situation” (p.9), though the situation is usually confined to core organisational functions:

Questions of effectiveness and direction of influence must be separated from leadership itself. *Leadership* refers to activities tied to the core work of the organisation that are designed by organisational members to influence the motivation, knowledge, affect, or practices of other

organisational members or that are understood by organisational members as intended to influence their motivation, knowledge, affect, or practices. (Spillane, 2006, pp. 11-12)

The removal of effectiveness and influence from leadership means that there could be a tendency to overlook and downplay sources of leadership that exist beyond leadership practice reified as organisational core work. A key question that sits behind this assumption of leadership is who determines in the first place what should be privileged as core work? Spillane and Diamond (2007) go on to argue that focusing on followers helps define the leadership practice, because it is an influence relationship and “helps build a deeper understanding of ... how leadership connects to classroom practice *through* followers” (p.9). However, this appears aligned to existing hierarchical power relations that suggest influence can flow in only one direction, from the principal down through other official leaders to teachers in their classrooms. Therefore, perhaps a more accurate term to use here would be authority rather than leadership, due to the focus on core organisational work and the authority situated with formal roles entrusted with the responsibility to carry out such work, individually, conjointly or by delegation.

Despite this criticism, the acknowledgement of hierarchy, albeit in a largely apolitical and uncritical manner, is a reminder that more focused forms of leadership that emanate from hierarchical structures should also be included in configuring distributed forms of leadership. As an example, Leithwood et al. (2007) have developed Gronn’s conceptual framework of holistic forms of concertive action into four categories: planful alignment, spontaneous alignment, spontaneous misalignment and anarchic misalignment. They argue “that planful and aligned forms of distributed leadership are unlikely in the absence of focused leadership” (p.55) and so add to Gronn’s (2011) emerging argument that there are shortcomings in the current schema used for distributed leadership to add to the four concerns I identified in the previous chapter.

Typologies and models of distributed leadership

Typologies and models of distributed leadership have yet to be developed in a manner that acknowledge both the macropolitical and micropolitical environments of schools. They usually take on a one or two-dimensional diagrammatic form with some inferring that distributed leadership is developed through differing and at times overlapping stages. The

one-dimensional typologies have tended to precede two-dimensional typologies due to the recent acknowledgement of complexity inherent with leadership in distributed forms.

Hay Group Education (UK) one-dimensional continuum

One of the most influential ‘official’ school-based categorisations of distributed leadership in England has been that of the Hay Group Education (UK). In 2004, they proposed to the government-funded NCSL five aspects of distributed leadership and arranged them on a one-dimensional continuum as follows:

- *Instruct* – where initiatives and ideas come only from leaders at or near the top of a hierarchical organisational structure;
- *Consult* – where staff have the opportunity for input but decisions are still made at a distance from them by others near or at the top;
- *Delegate* – where staff take initiative and make decisions within predetermined boundaries of responsibility and accountability;
- *Facilitate* – where staff at all levels are able to initiate and champion ideas; and,
- *Neglect* – where staff are forced to take initiative and responsibility due to a lack of direction at the top.

(Hay Group Education, 2004)

The result of the Hay Group’s continuum led to the development of the NCSL *Distributed Leadership* ‘pack’ for schools. At the time, distributed leadership was presented as a solution to the increasingly unsustainable and unattractive role of the principal, along with a hoped for improvement in student achievement (Arrowsmith, 2007). However, the categorisation of distributed leadership developed for the NCSL and schools is limited. This is due to its resemblance to Hoy’s and Tarter’s (2008) decision-making continuum that has a distinctive administrator-subordinate focus and ranges from unilateral decision making by the administrator, which is equivalent to *instruct* in the Hay Group continuum, through to group consensus where members share equally in the process, which is equivalent to *facilitate* in the Hay Group continuum. The over-emphasis on decision-making limits the Hay Group’s view to a rational and functional model that overlooks the social, cultural and political environment of a school. It exemplifies what can be termed ‘official distributed leadership’, due to its dissemination to schools as an officially endorsed interpretation of distributed leadership.

Hargreaves' and Fink's one-dimensional thermometer of distribution

In a manner reminiscent of the Hay Group, Hargreaves and Fink (2006) present a one-dimensional continuum with apparent equal intervals, but in the form of a thermometer bounded by the terms “too hot” and “too cold” (p.113) at each end:

- *Too hot;*
 - Anarchy;
 - Assertive distribution;
 - Emergent distribution;
 - Guided distribution;
 - Progressive delegation;
 - Traditional delegation;
 - Autocracy; and
- *Too cold.*

The three ‘cooler’ points on Hargreaves’ and Fink’s thermometer are aligned to the *instruct*, *consult* and *delegate* range of points on the Hay Group continuum, though a distinction is made by Hargreaves and Fink in relation to delegation. *Progressive delegation* is presented as a form of *traditional delegation* “with one twist” (p. 118), where people’s hopes are raised in relation to involvement, only for the champion of the process to leave and move on and the situation resort back to *traditional delegation* with predetermined boundaries of responsibility and accountability. Further up the thermometer, *guided distribution*, in a manner similar to Gronn’s (2002) institutionalised or regulated practices, and Spillane’s (2006) distribution by design, acknowledges that there can be intentional leadership distribution. Overt or covert power is exerted intentionally by one or a few individuals, though Hargreaves and Fink (2006) do not critique power in any depth here with their model. The next point, *emergent distribution* is aligned to Gronn’s (2002) unanticipated spontaneous collaborative and intuitive working relations that emerge over time. *Assertive distribution* is defined as having an activist orientation especially amongst teachers, who are “empowered” to challenge those in overall leadership roles. However, the micropolitical focus here is weakened by assuming that teachers need to be empowered by overall leaders to be assertive. Assertiveness can also arise out of individual and group agency irrespective of the role of overall leaders. The final point on the thermometer, *anarchic distribution* is equivalent to *assertive distribution* but without the influence of overall organisational leaders. Hargreaves and Fink (2006) claim that

assertive distribution is prone to shift into *anarchic distribution* and that “the line between autocracy and anarchy is a thin one” (p. 135). This implies that the *too cold* base of the thermometer can simultaneously produce the *too hot* tip of the thermometer and *vice versa*. This highlights the complexity of distributed leadership where multiple forms could simultaneously be evident, a complexity that is not able to be produced on a one-dimensional continuum.

However, Hargreaves and Fink (2006) do identify some important factors that must be considered in any conceptualisation of leadership, such as structural, socio-cultural and socio-political ones. They argue that distributed leadership occurs through structural means, such as roles and formal procedures at the lower end of the thermometer and then ascends the thermometer through socio-cultural factors in the middle and then socio-political factors towards the top. The identification of these factors is important, but must be considered alongside each other, rather than as different points along a continuum if a critical perspective on leadership is to be taken because socio-cultural and socio-political factors will also be sustaining forms of distributed leadership at the cooler end of their thermometer. Hargreaves and Fink (2006) somewhat undo their acknowledgement that leadership is “already distributed” (p. 136) by finally providing prescriptive guidance for organisational leaders in how to progress up the scale of the thermometer while avoiding anarchy. Leaders with role-based authority are assumed to be the only ones who can act as agents of change. In the context of schools, Hargreaves and Fink (2006) equate the role of principals with one akin to transformational leadership where the leader-follower binary is emphasised rather than a more democratic and distributed perspective of leadership that is spread over the context and focuses on interdependent activity.

MacBeath’s one-dimensional developmental taxonomy of distribution

A slightly different form of a one dimensional continuum has been developed by MacBeath (2005), where the complexity and multiplicity of distributed leadership is more apparent in his taxonomy of distribution. Each stage of distribution developmentally flows onto the one that follows. The six categories are:

- *Distribution formally*: through designated roles/job description;
- *Distribution pragmatically*: through necessity/often ad hoc delegation of workload;

- *Distribution strategically*: based on planned appointment of individuals to contribute positively to the development of leadership throughout the school;
- *Distribution incrementally*: devolving greater responsibility as people demonstrate their capacity to lead;
- *Distribution opportunistically*: capable teachers willingly extending their roles to school-wide leadership because they are pre-disposed to taking initiative to lead; and,
- *Distribution culturally*: practising leadership as a reflection of school's culture, ethos and traditions.

(MacBeath, 2005, p.357)

These first four stages emphasise the role of the principal in developing distributed leadership where according to MacBeath (2005) there is top-down emphasis, whereas the last two stages have a bottom-up emphasis on “others in the school” (p. 361). The continuum progresses beyond a structural emphasis into a socio-cultural emphasis in the same manner as Hargreaves’ and Fink’s thermometer, though MacBeath (2005) does emphasise that the categories are not mutually exclusive or fixed. He acknowledges a complexity associated with leadership distribution and explains, “it is rarely that simple, as schools evolve through different stages and exemplify different approaches at different times and in response to external events” (p.356). In a manner similar to the Hay Group (2004) and Hargreaves and Fink (2006), MacBeath (2005) also suggests steps towards developing distributed leadership, though in contrast, he also questions whether the six stages of his taxonomy should be a developmental process. Once again, the principal is positioned as the central agent of progress, starting off cautiously identifying and delegating leadership needs in the school prior to having a wider view that reaches to those with no formal leadership role, so that the principal can finally stand back as mutual trust emerges. This raises the question to what extent is distributed leadership reliant on senior leaders co-ordinating and creating conditions for other sources of leadership to emerge.

Ritchie’s and Woods’ typology of degrees of distribution

In a manner similar to that of Hargreaves and Fink (2006) and MacBeath (2005), Ritchie and Woods (2007) tentatively suggest that distributed leadership is developmental and as a whole school construct can be identified as:

- embedded;

- developing; or,
- emerging.

The embedded stage of distributed leadership is closely aligned to MacBeath's (2005) *distribution culturally* where hierarchy is played down and staff autonomy is likely to evidence itself through informal and spontaneous forms of leadership encouraged within existing structures. The developmental aspect of Ritchie's and Woods' (2007) typology becomes evident when they define schools at the developing or emerging stages as on a "journey towards DL [distributed leadership]" (p.376). They argue that 'developing schools' are more likely to be aspiring to shift to an 'embedded' stage where distributed leadership is deemed to be part of a school's culture and practice reflects the strategic and incremental forms described by MacBeath (2005). Schools deemed to be at the start of their distributed leadership journey are classified as 'emerging', where there are stronger forms of control and a greater focus on hierarchy and formal roles in a manner that reflects MacBeath's (2005) formal and pragmatic categories of distribution. This points again to whether a hybrid configuration is required to conceptualise school leadership practice. The conundrum though is how power manifests in overt, covert and latent forms if a hybrid configuration is used. None of the one-dimensional typologies illustrated so far, address this conundrum.

Gunter's characterisations of distributed leadership

Gunter (2005) is one of the few writers who overtly argue that a distributed perspective on leadership "is dependent on power sources and interactions" (p.51). She identifies the following characterisations of distributed leadership:

- *Authorised* – where through delegation and empowerment, formal overall leaders seek to develop others into organisational roles of leadership or "push work down the line" (p. 52) as a means of addressing intensification of work;
- *Dispersed* – where leadership activity takes place "without the formal working of a hierarchy" (p. 52) through the pursuit of individual interests or consensus-building around shared beliefs in a community; and,
- *Democratic* – where the emphasis goes beyond the school as an organisation, to the school as a public institution in a wider democratic setting. Dissent, ethics and leadership for the common and public good provide a means to shift one's gaze "beyond the instrumentality of organisational goals" (p. 56).

According to Gunter (2005) the categories of *authorised* and *dispersed* distributed leadership provide frames through which research practice can be described and underlying assumptions about power can be revealed. The *democratic* category is separated because any critique of power needs to engage with what is the purpose behind the power. There is an emancipatory aspect to it that goes beyond just revealing and describing. Authentic distributed leadership requires a distribution of power so that collective democracies can emerge. Any framework, categorisation or research into distributed leadership cannot be apolitical (Hatcher, 2005), either at a national policy level or at a local school level and it is here that Gunter's categorisations bring a distinctiveness to how distributed leadership can be conceptualised. Gunter's characterisations are not normative, so there is no attempt, as with the one-dimensional typologies discussed so far, to argue that distributed leadership is a concept that can be developed and described along a scale.

These typologies are also restricted to a whole school level perspective, so the differing patterns of distribution evident within formal teams, informal alliances and social groups are less likely to be acknowledged. Teams and other groups may represent different forms of shared leadership within the same school that together make the organisational concept of distributed leadership complex. This renders organisational level, one-dimensional typologies limited. A more critical conceptualisation of distributed leadership that encompasses complexity, authority and power, is likely to be overlooked in favour of simplified typologies that are better suited for prescribed steps of development and purported school improvement. The two most recent typologies that follow, however, suggest that the field is now starting to acknowledge complexity, though there is still little engagement with the concepts of authority and power.

Harris' patterns of distribution and two-dimensional model of distributed leadership practice

Rather than use a developmental continuum approach to categorise descriptions of distributed leadership practice, Harris (2006) acknowledges the theoretical work of Gronn and Spillane and argues that there are also four normative dimensions to understanding distributed leadership:

- *Representational* – where organisational structures are emphasised with an expectation that leadership is structured through roles and processes more laterally, rather than vertically;

- *Illustrative* – which reflects the increase in the distribution of leadership work due to intensification;
- *Descriptive* – where the implicit and emergent forms of leadership practice are described; and,
- *Predictive* – where distributed leadership correlates with improved outcomes, especially in relation to student learning and managing organisational change.

The four normative dimensions, according to Harris (2006), should be employed in an overlapping manner to describe and understand day-to-day school leadership from a distributed perspective. Since the publishing of these dimensions, Harris (2009a) has developed a two-dimensional model of distributed leadership practice. It utilises a vertical axis ranging from loose down to tight organisational coupling, and a horizontal axis ranging from diffuse or uncoordinated forms of leadership distribution through to deep or coordinated forms. The resultant four quadrants illustrate four differing forms of distributed leadership practice:

- *Ad hoc distribution* (top-left) – A more flexible, lateral and loose organisational structure ... but the distributed leadership practice is uncoordinated;
- *Autocratic distribution* (bottom-left) – Structures remain relatively unchanged but participation and involvement in development work is encouraged;
- *Autonomous distribution* (top-right) – A more flexible, lateral and loose organisational structure has been created with the prime purpose of generating innovation and change [where] ... the leadership work is coordinated; and,
- *Additive distribution* (bottom-right) – Structures remain relatively unchanged but opportunities have been deliberately created for limited forms of developmental and innovative work.

(Harris, 2009a, pp.258,259)

The two typologies developed by Harris (2006, 2009a) tend to emphasise a structural and rational approach to understanding distributed leadership in a manner perhaps distinct to the typologies illustrated earlier that assume an organisational perspective. Though not explicitly discussed, the overlapping assumption made with her four dimensions does mean that a more complex picture of a school is obtainable. Whether or not this allows differences to be analysed within and across teams and other groups is a matter that is still not clear. Similar to

the one-dimensional typologies, there is no explicit articulation of power, authority or micropolitics with each dimension. There is however, acknowledgement in the *illustrative* dimension that connects distributed leadership to work intensification, though this appears to be from a position of acceptance rather than one where there is critique of the education policy environment.

Thorpe's, Gold's and Lawler's two-dimensional model of distributed leadership

In a form similar to Harris' (2009a) two-dimensional model, Thorpe, Gold and Lawler (2011) have articulated four dimensions of distributed leadership using a horizontal continuum of *aligned* to *misaligned* and a vertical continuum of *planned* down to *emergent*. They argue that for organisational effectiveness, distributed leadership should be occurring in the two left hand side aligned quadrants and so acknowledge that their model has a normative aspect to it. The four quadrants are:

- *Classical distributed leadership* (top-left) – A top-down traditional hierarchical approach is planned where existing structures are used by leaders with clear focus, control and alignment to organisational goals;
- *Emergent distributed leadership* (bottom-left) – A reflection of the realities of day-to-day organisational practice where spontaneous and informal configurations of leadership emerge yet are still aligned to organisational direction;
- *Mis-planned distributed leadership* (top-right) – where an organisation intends to use distributed leadership but organisational structures or staff ambivalence hinders it from being established; and,
- *Chaotic distributed leadership* (bottom-right) – distributed leadership may be occurring within some teams but in a haphazard manner with no benefit to the organisation at a wider level.

(Thorpe et al., 2011)

The four quadrants are not supposed to represent a fixed framework. Thorpe et al. (2011) stress that distributed leadership is dynamic and over time the dimensions of distributed leadership evident in an organisation can change. They acknowledge distributed leadership is dependent on cultural, historical and social factors. Their two-dimensional framework is a shift towards encapsulating the complexity of distributed leadership. It is a possible indication that the field is now at a point where it is able to conceptualise such complexity,

given the greater accumulation of distributed leadership literature that Thorpe et al. (2011) have been able to draw on as theirs is the most recent typology.

Where to from here?

A comparison of the typologies discussed in this chapter reveal two major themes. The first one confirms that hybrid configurations are better suited to understanding practice and the second one confirms that a critical theorisation has yet to emerge. Central to hybrid configurations are two key points. Firstly, hybridity indicates that different forms of distributed leadership exist, and secondly, the mixture of these forms in day-to-day practice acknowledges that there is an inherent complexity present, as indicated through the evolution of the typologies.

Hybridity is evident through the mixture of organisational and holistic clusters of leadership distribution. The organisational cluster includes distributed forms that go by terms such as: authorised (Gunter, 2005); formal distribution (MacBeath, 2005); representational (Harris, 2006); planful alignment (Leithwood et al., 2007); and, classical, where existing organisational structures are used (Thorpe et al., 2011). The holistic cluster incorporates such terms as: dispersed and democratic (Gunter, 2005); opportunistic and cultural (MacBeath, 2005); emergent (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Harris, 2006; Thorpe et al., 2011); spontaneous (Leithwood et al., 2007); and autonomous (Harris, 2009a). The typologies all reflect Gronn's (2002) application of Gibb's theorising where distribution is either classified as additive through organisational roles or holistic through conjoint activity. They also confirm Gronn's (2011) argument that forms of distributed leadership co-exist with focused formal leadership in hybrid configurations.

The second theme shows that critical typologies or models of distributed leadership have yet to emerge fully in the field even though the complexity associated with distributed leadership is starting to emerge in recent conceptualisations. If distributed leadership is going to encompass forms of leadership that are situated beyond the power that can emanate from formal hierarchical roles of authority then a wider context of power needs to be employed (Jermier & Kerr, 1997) and our gaze needs to go beyond the technical and functional aspects of an organisation (Flessa, 2009; Gunter, 2005; Hosking, 1988; Ogawa & Bossert, 1995). Even though some conceptualisations incorporate forms of distributed leadership beyond

rational and functional dimensions, there is still a tendency to position the organisation and its goals in the normative position rather than other social, cultural or educative ideals.

The two themes, hybrid configurations are better suited to understanding leadership practice, and a critical theorisation of distributed leadership has yet to emerge, justify and inform the approach taken in this study where attention is given to the hybridity of formally distributed leadership and more emergent forms.

CHAPTER FOUR – The research on distributed leadership in schools

Literature reviews of distributed leadership research

This chapter draws on the research literature focused on distributed leadership in schools and draws a distinction with the previous two chapters that drew on distributed leadership literature that focused on conceptualisation, commentary and critique. Its purpose is to show forms of distributed leadership, the themes evident across these forms, and the strengths and weaknesses associated with the approaches used to research distributed leadership. To do this, research studies had to first be broken down into five categories due to the variety of research approaches. The meta-analysis of these approaches at the end of this chapter contributes to the argument, that distributed leadership cannot exist as a grand narrative due to the various distributed forms and associated complexity evident across the research covered in this chapter.

The 61 research studies that inform this chapter were identified through books that focused on distributed leadership, and journal articles that were located by searching article titles and abstracts for the terms “distributed leadership” “distributive leadership”, “distributed perspective”, or “shared leadership” across a number of journal databases. The searching was limited to articles published since the start of the millennium when distributed leadership became prominent in the education field. This was complemented by scanning the reference lists of each item of literature for other studies. The accumulation and analysis of this literature occurred at two stages in this study, prior to carrying out the two case studies in 2006-07 and again in 2011 after the two case study chapters were completed. This literature review is not exhaustive, but is comprehensive and reflects how distributed leadership is interpreted in so many ways in the education field.

Other literature reviews of distributed leadership

Literature reviews that focus solely on the research literature of distributed leadership are far and few between, which is surprising given that there are calls for its construct development to move on (Leithwood et al., 2009a). The earliest, and perhaps still the largest one that has been published, was the systematic review carried out for the NCSL by Woods, Bennett and colleagues (2004). 32 publications related to distributed leadership were reviewed and three

distinctive characteristics of distributed leadership emerged as themes. Firstly, distributed leadership is an “emergent property of groups or networks of interacting individuals” (p.441), secondly, there is an openness of boundaries of leadership, and thirdly, expertise is distributed across many staff rather than concentrated with the few. The key variables that contributed to the occurrence of these themes were: context; the degree of control and autonomy; the sources of change and development, such as individual leaders, external groups or staff; team dynamics; and, whether distributed leadership was represented in an institutionalised form such as a team or a more spontaneous form that emerged from an ad hoc group. These variables led Woods et al. (2004) to conclude that distributed leadership “needs to acknowledge and deal with conflict” (p.448), particularly beyond the team and group context due to the changes in control that may need to occur organisation wide. Of particular note, and a caution against prescribing norms for distributed leadership, they also argue that their findings did not provide a model of how to distribute leadership, but rather, awareness is raised in relation to boundaries of leadership and who is included and excluded from leadership activities.

In the time since this systematic review, commentators of distributed leadership have tended to package selected samples of research into broad classifications rather than finer-grained themes. Mayrowetz (2008) found that distributed leadership research tends to fall into four categories: distributed leadership either for democracy, efficiency and effectiveness, or, human capacity building, and also as a theoretical lens for studying leadership activity. Harris (2009b) broadly classified distributed leadership research into three areas: distributed leadership and change, the relationship between distributed leadership and student outcomes, and patterns of leadership distribution. The tendency to draw on only selected research studies is also evident in *Distributed leadership according to the evidence* (Leithwood et al., 2009b), where the editors limit ‘evidence’ to authors who mostly assume a normative position with their research.

More recently, two reviews of research literature have revealed that opportunities and alternatives for further investigation exist. As discussed previously, Gronn (2011) in his review of the research literature, saw evidence to suggest that hybrid configurations of leadership may be better suited as an analytical tool than solely distributed or individual configurations. He identified a range of hybrid configurations and drew on seven distributed leadership studies to illustrate each form of hybridity. Bolden (2011) in his review of the

literature, took a different perspective from other reviews listed here and asked what was missing from the literature. He found that there was a dominant silence in relation to: power and influence; silences in relation to not extending organisational boundaries beyond formal leadership roles; and, finally in relation to ethics, diversity and democracy. A comparison of Woods et al.'s (2004) findings with those of Bolden (2011) show that distributed leadership research has still to embrace a more critical perspective that encompasses conflict, power, influence, the boundaries of leadership and who defines how broad or narrow these boundaries should be.

Classifying distributed leadership research for this review

The classification of commentaries and research into distributed leadership currently tends to occur in one of two ways, descriptive and analytical, or normative (Harris, 2006; Leithwood et al., 2009a; Timperley, 2005). Descriptive and analytical studies tend to draw on the theoretical frameworks of Spillane or Gronn to describe practice through a distributed lens and do not attempt to make normative claims about the distribution of leadership. Normative studies tend to rely more on quantitative or mixed methods approaches to research as they seek to find associations between patterns of distribution, degrees of distribution and school improvement variables, such as staff relations or student outcomes. However, I found an increasing degree of overlap between descriptive and normative approaches in some of the research studies reviewed. Other studies focus on alternatives to a single principalship model or seek to politicise distributed leadership.

Differing criteria helped distinguish the 62 distributed leadership research studies and spread them across five categories. The categories were descriptive and analytical; normative; blended; alternative; and, political. Descriptive and analytical studies contained all of Spillane and his colleagues distributed perspective research studies, and other studies where the research design prioritised Spillane's or Gronn's non-normative distributed framework as the main approach for analysis. Normative studies that sought associations between variables came from two sub-groups, those that were sub-components or major components of large studies that involved large samples of participants across many schools or from smaller studies that focused on a school or a small number of schools. Some studies had elements of a descriptive perspective established alongside normative aims, and were placed into a 'blended' category. Other studies highlighted hybrid configurations of focused and distributed leadership'. Rather than try to categorise them as either 'descriptive' or

‘normative’, these studies were categorised as another form of ‘blended’ studies because they tended to highlight the complexity of leadership practice. Another group of studies were distinguishable by their focus on co-leadership, where the focus of leadership distribution was examples of shared principalship as an alternative to the normalised one-school one-principal structure usually mandated in education policy. Alongside these alternative accounts, were research designs that utilised broader sampling frames that were categorised as an alternative to the leader and teacher sampling frames used in most research of distributed leadership. These broader sampling frames included parents and students. One further criterion distinguished the distributed leadership studies. Those that explicitly set out to critique leadership practice by including an analysis of power, micropolitics or the wider policy environment were put to one side and labelled ‘political’.

The initial and larger part of this chapter divides into five sections based on the five categories that emerged from the criteria used to distinguish the distributed leadership research studies. In summary, these are:

Table 4.1 – *Distributed leadership research categories*

| Category | Criteria for selection |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Descriptive and analytical studies | The research studies of Spillane et al. |
| | Other analytical and descriptive studies |
| Normative studies | Large normative studies |
| | Small to medium normative studies |
| Blended studies | Some degree of mixture between analytical and normative studies |
| | Studies that tend towards hybridity |
| Alternative studies | Studies involving alternative school structures and samples |
| Political studies | Studies that politicise distributed leadership |

Brief descriptions of the studies are grouped according to each research category in Appendix one (pp. 262-268).

The second and smaller part of the chapter conceptually maps these categories and focuses on the key themes that emerged across the research studies. The existence of such themes shows that findings emerging from distributed leadership research cannot exist within a single categorisation. The categories and criteria for selection used here do have some blurring and

overlap, due to the way the field is shifting over time in relation to the research findings that have emerged.

Descriptive and analytical studies

This section focuses on what has become labelled descriptive or analytical accounts of leadership practice that highlight a distributed perspective, rather than any advocacy of distributed leadership, either in terms of distributing more leadership or attempting to find associations between distributed leadership and improving outcomes. A distributed perspective of leadership is positioned as a lens for analysing and thinking about leadership with no normative loading (Firestone & Martinez, 2007; Spillane, 2006). It is assumed to be “neither friend nor foe” (Spillane, 2006, p.10), so there can be a tendency for an apolitical stance, both in terms of the policy environment and micropolitical activity. Spillane et al. are the most prolific published researchers of this approach. For the purpose of collating their extensive research carried out over three studies, I was guided by Spillane’s and Coldren’s (2011) summary tables at the end of their book that identified the studies as the: *Distributed Leadership Study*; *Principals’ Professional Development Study*; and, *Distributed Leadership for Middle School Mathematics Study* (see Table A1.1, p. 262).

The *Distributed Leadership Study* is one of the most extensive mainly qualitative studies undertaken in relation to distributed leadership and has contributed extensively to Spillane’s et al.’s theorising over the last ten years. This extensive study, however, was not included as part of Leithwood’s et al.’s (2009b) edited book, *Distributed leadership according to the evidence*, which favoured instead, a chapter from the *Principals’ Professional Development Study* which had a deliberate focus on principals. Principals also figure prominently in the Chicago based case studies from the *Distributed Leadership Study*, which is both “curious and ironical” (Gronn, 2009c, p.314), given that a distributed perspective on leadership across a school is espoused. The emphasis on principals is a reflection of the high-stakes testing and accountability policy where Chicago principals were expected to couple the policies tightly to classroom practice during the time of the study. This however, was not critiqued as part of Spillane et al. studies. Other researchers have also drawn on Spillane’s distributed framework. Some are listed in Table A1.2 (p. 263), whereas others are discussed later in this chapter as examples of Blended Studies.

The focus of the research studies in Tables A1.1 and A1.2 (pp. 262, 263) ranged from focusing on principals' interactions and work, leadership couples, teachers or groups of teachers through to leadership practice across schools that in some cases included external professionals. From a distributed perspective, leadership practice was described as a relational quality, rather than individual, because it was stretched across multiple individuals and arose out of interactions (Møller & Eggen, 2005; Spillane, Diamond, et al., 2003; Spillane & Zuberi, 2009). Leadership was at times stretched over formal and informal leaders, with informal leaders usually emerging due to their degree of expertise that was relied on by others (Cowie, Jones, & Harlow, 2011; Diamond, 2007; Park & Datnow, 2009).

In other cases, leadership was focused and usually situated with the principal. Principals at times led alone, particularly with school administration in primary schools but not secondary ones (Spillane, Camburn, & Pareja, 2007). At other times, principals co-led with others mostly in relation to fostering relationships, so responsibility could be distributed (Spillane et al., 2007). Co-leaders were more likely to be classroom teachers in primary schools and assistant principals in the larger secondary schools (Spillane, Camburn, Pustejovsky, Pareja, & Lewis, 2009). When principals were not central to leadership activity, boundary spanning leadership could emerge that connected formal leaders with others. For example, in Goldstein's (2004) study, consulting teachers acted as boundary spanners between principals and teachers after they had both experienced disengagement from each other under a new teacher appraisal system. Firestone and Martinez (2007) also found external district leaders working in schools started to take on more of a boundary spanning role amongst teachers, only once they had intentionally sought to develop relationships with the teachers.

By using a distributed perspective, the findings across these studies indicate that leadership can exist in multiple distributed forms. These forms relate to a range of factors and demonstrate the difficulty of developing any single construct for distributed leadership. Leadership practice was at times dependent on the degree of trust present, the type of school, the individuals involved, their roles, experience, curriculum area, the policy environment they worked within and particularly their interactions with each other. Trust, expertise, and creating opportunities for quality interactions are recurring and interrelated themes across the studies irrespective of whether the researcher's gaze was over the professional staff of a school, a group or a couple.

Themes, strengths and weaknesses of descriptive and analytical studies

Trust as a form of social capital, took time to develop, was related to the quality of interactions, and shared expertise. In one case study, three school-based initiatives that relied on shared expertise led to an increase in interactions, that over time, led to a growth in trust and value placed on social networks amongst staff (Halverson, 2007). In another case, trust did not emerge as an outcome, rather it developed over time between a leadership couple as a precursor for complementary relations, where any increase in the discretionary latitude the leaders had towards each other was dependent on the shared custodianship of shared values (Gronn, 1999). Trust was also a precursor to school based teachers working with external district-level teacher mentors, though any intrusiveness caused through inappropriate monitoring of teachers by district teacher mentors undermined the trust they needed from teachers to coach well (Firestone & Martinez, 2007). The apparent fickleness of trust is, according to Møller and Eggen (2005), due to the interrelation between trust and power, where both threaten and presuppose each other. In one of the Chicago case study schools from the *Distributed Leadership Project*, the principal was entrusted by district leaders to couple a school with a history rich in teacher autonomy, to expected accountability reforms (Hallett, 2007b). The principal carried out what was expected of her, yet there was a complete breakdown of trust in the principal by the teachers and the attempt for reform failed because it was not “embedded in the relationships” (p.105) that were already in existence. The principal was new, and acted with the mandate given to her by the district and school board to bring about change in staff behaviour, but did so without establishing trust over time with the teachers. The principal may have acted out of authority, but this was not recognised as leadership by the teachers.

In another study, leadership was particularly attributed to principals by teachers due to their interactive relational style (Spillane, Hallett, et al., 2003). The interviews with 84 teachers in this study also revealed that teachers constructed other teachers as leaders based on their expertise, networks and relations of trust, as well as their interactional style, though other studies tend to indicate that certain conditions also contribute to the attribution of leadership particularly through expertise. Where conditions produced a demand for expertise, it resulted in environments ripe for leadership to emerge beyond those in formal roles. The advent of digital technologies in schools as illustrated through two of the studies (Cowie et al., 2011; Park & Datnow, 2009), brought with it a distribution of expertise not bound to the number of years teaching or how senior a formal leadership role is. The schools studied indicate that

there was an expectation that staff with digital expertise would share it, mentor others either in formal or informal arrangements, and provide time for on-going professional learning. Expertise did not have to originate from formal leaders, but they did play a central role in establishing a culture where expertise could emerge and were able to model the effective use of digital technologies. Spillane, Diamond et al. (2003) have also argued that curriculum subjects provide differing conditions for leadership routines. However, it appears as if the external reforms, which were not critiqued in this study, influenced what was expected through standardisation, along with differing internal leadership styles that contributed more to the subject differences rather than the subjects themselves, as promoted here (Burch, 2007; Sherer, 2007).

The strength of the distributed perspective approach to research has yielded descriptions of leadership practice that are “more complex in schools than many distributed leadership advocates have imagined” (Leithwood et al., 2009a, p.272). The descriptive approach however, is not without its weaknesses, especially in relation to the framework utilised by Spillane et al., where leadership is deemed to be stretched over leaders, followers and their situation (Spillane, 2006). The promotion of the situation and particularly the tools and routines that Spillane et al. equate this to, mean that there is a tendency to default to a managerial and technical bias (Flessa, 2009). At times, references are made to differing forms of human and social capital (Spillane, 2005; Spillane, Hallett, et al., 2003), though these do not include a critical socio-cultural or socio-political analysis. Exceptions are the apparent independent critiques by Hallett (2007a, 2010) discussed later in the Political Studies section. Descriptive studies are mainly silent with respect to micropolitics and power, so the apolitical delineation between leaders and followers becomes problematic. This is especially so in Spillane’s et al.’s research that focuses only on how leaders are constructed by others and the question whether or not people allow themselves to be constructed as followers is left unanswered. There is an inherent assumption that followers are always compliant (L. Wright, 2008).

Another weakness related to a large number of the descriptive studies concerns the unquestioned acceptance of the tools and routines shaped through external reforms. The emphasis on description, rather than critique, is captured in Spillane’s, Parise’s and Sherer’s (2011) aim to describe “*how* regulation becomes *embodied* in the school’s formal structure through organisational routines that selectively enable coupling among government

regulation, administrative practice, and classroom practice” (p.588). They acknowledge how teachers at the start challenged reforms, but there appears at this stage to be silence in relation to any critique of the reforms that promoted standardisation, increased monitoring and the deprivatisation of classroom practices. For the distributed perspective of leadership to develop further as a construct for understanding practice, both a macropolitical and a micropolitical dimension need to be added. Only then would it move beyond the tendency of providing apolitical descriptions of distributed leadership, to include some theorisation of power and the micropolitics of day-to-day practice.

Normative studies

Normative studies seek to go beyond description and establish what norms are conducive to bringing about improvement in terms of school operations, staff relations and particularly student achievement. From a normative stance, the descriptive perspective is deemed to be limiting because it shifts the focus away from how effective are different forms of leadership (Timperley, 2008). Normative studies are developed upon a range of assumptions that are usually declared at the outset by the researcher(s) and supported with links to similar literature. A fundamental underlying association widely accepted in normative studies, is that school leadership with a particular focus on the principal, has a mainly indirect but small, yet statistically significant effect on student achievement, and is second only to classroom teaching as a school-related factor associated with improving learning (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Louis et al., 2010). Consequently, the aims of normative distributed leadership research are to explore to what extent does distributed leadership have an indirect or direct effect on student achievement, staff relations or school improvement processes such as decision-making. A range of assumptions supports this quest, such as:

- leaders should “distribute leadership responsibilities to teacher leaders in schools, and this distribution of leadership, in turn is expected to act as a key lever for instructional change” (Camburn & Han, 2009, p.25);
- distributed leadership drives the “development of the school’s capacity for improvement” (Heck & Hallinger, 2010, p.870); and,
- “sharing the work of leadership in the context of whole school reform is viewed as a necessity” (Copland, 2003, p.384).

The twenty normative studies reviewed in this section divide into two groups; large-scale studies and small to medium scale studies (see Tables A1.3 and A1.4, pp. 264, 265). The large-scale studies attempt to find statistical associations between variables, whereas the small to medium scale studies tend to assume norms associated to the way schools expect to operate especially in relation to distributed leadership. The size of the large-scale studies reflects the multiple sources that contribute to each study and highlight the multiple forms of data collection tools used to complement quantitative based questionnaires (see Table A1.3, p.264).

The normative studies reveal that there is no one encompassing way of defining distributed leadership, nor directly associate it as a unitary construct with student achievement. The multiple ways in which the term ‘distributed leadership’ is used alongside ‘shared leadership’ means there is the potential for confusion. As an example, the term ‘shared leadership’ is utilised in some of the studies, but is not necessarily equated to its conceptualisation as a group construct in the wider leadership literature. Wahlstrom and Louis (2008) equate ‘shared leadership’ with leadership that the principal shares with teachers, whereas Heck and Hallinger (2010) equate it with collaborative leadership linked to the degree of involvement in decision-making. In an alternative manner, Leithwood and Mascall (2008) combine different sources of influence together as a measure of collective leadership, whereas Hulpia and Devos (2009) restrict their focus of distributed leadership to teams. The complexity evident in distributed leadership only starts to emerge beyond a conglomeration of differing terminology and broad statistical associations, once case studies and in particular, qualitative analysis are included in the research design, suggesting that more mixed methods approaches will be required in the future. The challenge then for researchers is not to slice the findings from each data-collecting tool into separate journal publications or book chapters as they hinder the holistic and connected view that is possible. For instance, without careful reading, it appears from Table A1.3 (p.264) that there could be twenty different large-scale normative publications on distributed leadership research, whereas there are seven distinct research studies. This issue also highlights the number of replicated publications in edited books and journals not included in this literature review. This gives the impression that the field is awash, particularly with normative studies, thus adding to the apparent prominence of distributed leadership.

An example of providing a more holistic and connected view, is the six year *Learning from Leadership Project* (Louis et al., 2010), one of the largest school leadership research projects undertaken recently. It concludes that collective leadership and staff teams, rather than individual leadership, has a stronger impact on student achievement in State language and maths tests and is mediated through leaders' influencing teachers' motivation and working conditions (Leithwood & Mascal, 2008). In another component of the project Wahlstrom and Louis (2008) argue if leadership is shared, and a professional community is present amongst teachers, then the effect of teachers' trust in the principal becomes less important and classroom teaching is positively affected as "the power differential between principals and teachers is lessened" (p.483). There is agreement in other studies that also emphasise inclusion and collegiality. In differing contexts, they appear to either have an indirect effect on student achievement (Heck & Hallinger, 2010), be related to job satisfaction within senior school teams (Hulpia & Devos, 2009) or lead to holistic forms of distributed leadership rather than additive forms (Leithwood et al., 2004).

Parallel to this relational approach there still appears to be a need for formal leadership and intentional planning. Teachers identified that the form of distributed leadership that was associated more with their own academic optimism was one that required planful alignment and was dependent on their trust in the school leaders (Mascal, Leithwood, Strauss, & Sacks, 2009). The mixture of formal leadership with more distributed forms was also found to be indirectly associated with student outcomes (Mulford & Silins, 2003), thus contributing to the argument that hybrid configurations may more accurately reflect the leadership practice of schools. However, as with the descriptive studies, there is very little critique of the policy contexts that influence these large normative studies and though statistical analysis may provide some guidance with broad associations they are bound to a finite set of variables and student achievement data generated through tests in performative environments. The normative studies only start to reveal some of the complexity reflective of day-to-day practice once they focus on a school or a sample of schools, albeit usually with silence on power and micropolitics.

Small to medium normative studies (see Table A1.4, p.265), when analysed alongside the case studies and interviews utilised in some of the large normative studies, start to reveal some themes and further strengthen the argument that there are multiple forms of distributed leadership that differ from school to school and change over time. The small to medium

studies also reflect how normative studies have evolved from early NCSL sponsored studies that espoused transformational leadership, embodied with the principal, as the catalyst for distributing leadership once staff were part of a shared vision (Franey, 2002; Harris, 2002; Harris & Day, 2003). Even though the emphasis on the principal has not lessened in subsequent normative studies, the accumulation of findings from other normative studies do identify a number of organisational and socio-cultural factors associated with forms of distributed leadership. Somewhat ironically, these factors could now undermine prescribing norms under the guise of distributed leadership, due to the degree of complexity revealed even without any substantial critique of power and micropolitics.

Themes, strengths and weaknesses of normative studies

Several key themes are evident with normative studies: the multiple forms of distributed leadership; the key role of the principal; expertise; trust; supportive inclusive cultures; and, issues related to tensions inherent with hybridity and student voice. When these themes are clustered together, two core components of organisations become evident, the socio-cultural aspect and the structural aspect. Supportive, trusting and inclusive cultures evident across forms of distributed leadership appear to be symbiotically connected to structure that is intentionally expressed through organisational leaders and planning. This however, needs to be considered alongside the unacknowledged political limitations of normative research raised earlier and some acknowledged limitations, such as, focusing on formal leadership rather than also including informal leadership (Hulpia & Devos, 2009; Leithwood et al., 2007) and situating the research in periods where education reforms were expected to be implemented by distributing more leadership work across staff (Camburn, Rowan, & Taylor, 2003; Heck & Hallinger, 2010; Leithwood et al., 2004). An example of prescribing distributed leadership is evident in the study of Mayrowetz et al. (2007), where distributed leadership was used as a form of work design reform where teachers were expected to become formal leaders, undertaking administrative tasks they had not previously carried out. Differing forms of distributed leadership emerge in different contexts, where context can range from school size, type, curriculum design, and school history (Muijs, 2007; Penlington, Kington, & Day, 2008). The *Learning from Leadership Project* (Louis et al., 2010) found that “leadership is more distributed for practices aimed at developing people and managing instruction than it is for setting directions and structuring the workplace” (p.54), and “more complex and coordinated patterns of distributed leadership appear when school improvement initiatives focus directly on student learning goals, as distinct from the implementation of

specific programs” (p.54). From the finer grained case studies of this project it was found that different patterns of leadership emerged over time (S. Anderson, Moore, & Sun, 2009) and that distributed leadership may require a push from the top (Louis et al., 2009), though one of the large teacher questionnaires suggested that there was little support for distributed leadership with some teachers (Leithwood & Mascal, 2008).

A large number of the normative studies pointed to the principal as being the key for distributed leadership and a greater distribution of influence across staff did not equate to the principal having less influence, nor did the focus on the principal exclude leadership emerging from other sources (Harris & Day, 2003; Leithwood & Mascal, 2008). Principals were generally viewed as the persons who could make distributed leadership work (Leithwood et al., 2007; Louis et al., 2010), still tended to have a visible profile performing leadership functions such as influencing decision-making (Arrowsmith, 2007; Camburn et al., 2003; Leithwood & Mascal, 2008), and linked distributed leadership to delegation (Penlington et al., 2008). Some studies also revealed that when principals stood back, teachers moved more into leadership roles (Camburn et al., 2003), teachers were more likely to speak up and show innovation (Penlington et al., 2008) and senior management teams were more likely to demonstrate synergy which could contribute to developing supportive school cultures (Hulpia & Devos, 2010; Wallace, 2002). Principals also needed to be open to reconfiguring their role and professional identity (Camburn et al., 2003; Leithwood et al., 2007) and identifying other sources of leadership (J. Murphy, Smylie, Mayrowetz, & Louis, 2009).

The accumulation of these findings positions principals at the juncture of hierarchical and heterarchical arrangements of leadership. A general weakness of normative studies is that they do not critically explore in-depth how principals navigate the overlap of these arrangements where the influence that arises out of role based authority merges or clashes with other sources of influence that can arise from expertise and alliances not configured or bound to organisational structures. A number of the normative studies that do not rely solely on large scale questionnaires do start to reveal some of the socio-cultural factors associated with this overlap, but do not yet go far enough in problematising day-to-day practice to include a micropolitical perspective or any analysis of power.

As with the descriptive and analytical studies, the most common socio-cultural factor across normative studies is trust. Leithwood et al. (2007) argue that trust is paramount if formal and informal sources of leadership are to co-exist and given that distributed leadership appears to be dependent on teacher expertise (Angelle, 2010; Louis et al., 2010), trust is closely tied to the degree of inclusiveness that teachers experience (Penlington et al., 2008). For teachers, mutual trust amongst themselves and trust towards their senior school leaders appeared to improve their optimism (J. Murphy et al., 2009), contributed to an environment where they could take risks (Angelle, 2010) and could be related to their team leaders not being overly assertive (Law, Galton, & Wan, 2010). Degrees of trust, however, can differ across groups. For instance in Hulpia and Devos' (2010) analysis of senior teams, some senior teams assumed that teachers trusted them, but trust was not confirmed by teachers who saw little point in being involved with any shared decision-making contrived by senior team members. Alternatively, a culture of openness between staff and a reliance on dialogue where issues were articulated, appears to be inseparable from forms of distributed leadership that demonstrate support and approachability in staff relations (Hulpia & Devos, 2010; Law et al., 2010; Louis et al., 2009; Mulford & Silins, 2003).

A weakness of normative studies is one concerning students and their voice, who by their numbers make up the majority of a school's population. Most studies tend by default to remove student voice and student leadership from discussions of school culture and restrict any discussion of relations to adults. As exceptions, Mulford and Silins (2003) found that there was some degree of association between students' positive perceptions of teachers work and their level of participation and engagement in the school, whereas Penlington et al. (2008) suggest that student leadership can be viewed as a means to enhance student achievement.

The tendency to overlook students as members of a school's community and sometimes rely instead on depersonalised aggregated student achievement data is a reflection of the expectations placed on schools to improve measurable outputs. At this time this performative expectation does not appear to be lessening and if large-scale normative studies do not produce associations between distributed leadership and improved measurable student outcomes then the prominence attributed to distributed leadership may be transferred elsewhere. The challenge for normative studies is to place at risk reliance on research designs that depend only on large-scale questionnaires. It "may be more fruitful to investigate what

patterns of leadership distribution contribute most to professional community ... than try to isolate direct links between leadership and teaching and learning” (S. Anderson et al., 2009, p.132). This argument has already raised some debate with researchers who tend to favour quantitative only designs. For instance, Robinson (2009) argues against a focus on staff relations and favours instead a focus on student achievement. This is in contrast to the findings evident in the normative studies discussed in this section, which tend to suggest distributed leadership is too complex a concept to link to student achievement. Rather, attention should turn to how different forms of distributed leadership could be associated with the conditions that shape a teaching and learning environment. Leithwood et al. (2009a), who are also proponents of large scale quantitative studies, imply that the “instrumental value of ... descriptive-oriented questions” (p.272) associated with descriptive studies could lead to a blending with normative studies. They view this as a possible response to the complexities they see evident in descriptive studies, and I would also add, in relation to the case study and qualitative aspects of the normative studies discussed in this section. The second decade of distributed leadership research may subsequently see an increase of mixed methods research and a blended approach that merges descriptive and normative approaches, which is part of the focus of the section that follows.

Blended studies

Blended studies illustrate the overlap between descriptive and normative approaches that can occur and I have extracted the studies listed in Table A1.5 (see p.266) from my original classification as either a descriptive or a normative study. I argued at the beginning of this chapter that it is a challenge to position a research study as a particular type, except perhaps to take a deficit view at times and state what a study is not. The studies discussed in this section illustrate elements of both descriptive and normative assumptions to research and/or highlight hybrid configurations of leadership as well as distributed ones.

A common feature of these studies is that they start to highlight both the formal and informal aspects of schools more than the studies discussed previously. However, they tend not to venture beyond identifying challenges associated with these two aspects to encompass more of a micropolitical perspective or select schools that utilise alternative organisational structures such as alternatives to the single principal model. Some of the studies reveal the value of including a descriptive perspective on leadership. Timperley’s (2005) utilisation of

Spillane's leader, follower and situation framework brought to light how achievement data were utilised and revealed how literacy leaders acted as boundary spanners between the principal and teachers. Timperley's (2005) study is an example of blending the descriptive perspective with normative thinking. She critiques Spillane's framework as being a deliberate shift away from effectiveness (Timperley, 2008) and seeks to go beyond his framework so her standpoint is limited to being "normative and functional" (Hartley, 2010, p.280). The development of Crawford's (2003) case study analysis illustrates an opposite approach to that of Timperley's (2005) study, where she found the application of a transformational leadership framework did not show the whole three year journey of the case study school until she adopted Gronn's descriptive framework. Blended studies can also highlight hybrid configurations of leadership, where distributed and formally focused forms are highlighted. As an example, Waterhouse and Møller (2009) started off with a descriptive perspective on leadership and found that direction from formal leaders was a key finding of their study.

Themes, strengths and weaknesses of blended studies

Blended studies reveal a multi-faceted perspective of distributed leadership that highlight paradox and some of the subsequent challenges that this brings. Hybridity emerges as a theme and incorporates dualities such as, bureaucracy with democracy, and agency with control, direction and alignment. Linked to all of these dualities are the themes of communication and trust in various forms. Compared to descriptive and normative studies there is more of an emphasis on staff relations and the challenges associated with these. In a manner similar to descriptive and normative studies, blended studies do not fully employ a micropolitical perspective.

The differing forms evident in these blended studies reveal the multi-facetness of distributed leadership. It can go beyond a school as teachers and leaders seek external expertise (Dinham, 2007; Haughey, 2006), stretch over a whole school in different yet overlapping forms (MacBeath, 2005) and also identify individuals who act as boundary spanners between others (Timperley, 2005). Findings from blended studies suggest that leadership is less visible when it is distributed across several people (Crowther, Ferguson, & Hann, 2009), that distributed leadership is not equivalent to delegation (Ritchie & Woods, 2007) and that it changes over time (Hammersley-Fletcher & Brundrett, 2005). The variability of these differing forms contributes to questions related to what extent distributed leadership is a phenomenon that can be developed (MacBeath, 2005). Ritchie and Woods (2007) identified

different degrees of leadership distribution across case study schools and “tentatively identified” (p.371) them either as embedded distribution, developing distribution or emerging distribution on their “journey towards distributed leadership” (p.376) and so reflect a normative assumption that distributed leadership contributes to school improvement and student achievement. However, it is also debatable as to whether a greater distribution of leadership is advantageous. Timperley (2005) warns that more leadership is not necessarily better, particularly if it is not effective in the first place, while Hammersley-Fletcher and Brundrett (2005) argue that adding select groups of teachers as ‘leaders’ who make decisions can also result in just another form of control over others. Some of the findings also point to significant changes in a school’s socio-cultural environment if there is a change of principal or approach from a school’s senior team and illustrate the potential fickleness of positioning distributed leadership as a phenomenon that can be developed and then maintained.

Variabilities with distributed leadership tend to develop further in blended studies compared to descriptive and normative ones. A strength of blended studies is that they can identify the inseparability of hierarchy and heterarchy, bureaucratic and democratic processes, and alignment and agency. Formal, hierarchical and bureaucratic forms of leadership co-exist alongside distributed and democratic forms in hybrid configurations (Crowther et al., 2009; Dinham, 2005; Gronn, 2009b; Timperley, 2008). Organisational structure can enable distributed leadership but with contrasting outcomes as illustrated in some of the studies. For example, when distributed leadership is embedded within a school’s culture, hierarchy can be played down (Ritchie & Woods, 2007), though in another study a greater distribution of leadership was also found to need more formal top-level leadership to sustain it (Waterhouse & Møller, 2009). It can also lead to an increase of communication between staff and the principal as well as amongst staff (Haughey, 2006). At the top of the hierarchy leadership tended to equate with setting vision, direction and overseeing decision-making. However, it was only valued at a school-wide level when associated with distributed practices that focused on shared purpose and collaboration that stretched across structural boundaries of subjects, roles and status (Crowther et al., 2009; Dinham, 2005; Hammersley-Fletcher & Brundrett, 2005; Ritchie & Woods, 2007; Waterhouse & Møller, 2009). Within subject-based teams, shared purpose and clear direction were also valued by team leaders, who also acted as advocates for their subjects and mediated between senior team expectations and their team (Dinham, 2007). The organisational processes of shared purpose and collaborative decision-making highlighted here reveal a silence that is evident in much of the distributed leadership

literature, where the term 'management' is rarely employed to describe such processes. Gronn (2009b) in one of his case studies found that respondents tended to attribute leadership to management and hierarchical sources and argued that formal leadership is more akin to management with leadership embedded within it. His argument and the findings discussed here point to the limitations of existing schema evident in distributed leadership research that do not embrace educational management and add to the argument that the field needs to shift to hybrid configurations of leadership to reflect the day-to-day practices that occur in schools.

Management processes along with the recognition of organisational structure are at times paradoxically located alongside more democratic and agential aspects of practice with blended studies. For instance, stepping back and creating space for leadership to emerge is identified as an intentional act that principals in particular need to be mindful of (Crowther et al., 2009; Dinham, 2005; MacBeath, 2005). Middle leaders linked their experienced measure of responsibility to the attitude of their principal, which increased when principals facilitated innovation and decreased when principals led from the front in a singular fashion (Hammersley-Fletcher & Brundrett, 2005). Distributed leadership was also attributed to situations where staff were encouraged to lead and take risks (Hammersley-Fletcher & Brundrett, 2005; Ritchie & Woods, 2007; Waterhouse & Møller, 2009), where expertise rather than formal position was the basis of leadership authority (Dinham, 2007; Timperley, 2005). Allowance for individual expression and autonomy were found to be key elements that enabled leadership practice to arise out of expertise irrespective of role (Crowther et al., 2009). As well as distributing out leadership, as emphasised in normative studies, some of these blended studies reflect MacBeath's (2005) argument that distribution also implies an ability to relinquish and stand back from one's role as an ultimate decision-maker as they trust others.

Trust also emerged as a key theme from these blended studies, as it did with descriptive and normative studies. The relational emphasis within much of the distributed leadership research means that distributed leadership is premised on trust and is inextricably linked to leaders standing back to create space (Dinham, 2005; MacBeath, 2005). Trust is positioned as a key component of a school's socio-cultural fabric if the culture reflected openness between staff, inclusive decision-making, opportunities to take on responsibility and allowance for individual expression (Crowther et al., 2009; Hammersley-Fletcher & Brundrett, 2005; Ritchie & Woods, 2007). In Crowther's et al's (2009) study of teacher leadership operating in

parallel to the school leaders, the allowance for individual expression and communication in a trusting environment, enabled shared purpose to emerge to a greater degree as alignment developed between teachers' preferred approaches to teaching and learning and the espoused school vision. This however, was not without its challenges as school leaders grappled with trying to incorporate the aspirations and views of others. Hammersley-Fletcher and Brundrett (2005) also found that staff could show reluctance to get actively involved, so with distributed leadership "schools need some method in place to force staff 'out of their nest'" (p.74). The findings of Dinham's (2005) study also suggest that establishing shared purpose is not a straightforward process where principals declared that consensus is impossible. Adding to the challenge of articulating distributed leadership within a school is that leadership can be a little understood term across staff (MacBeath, 2005) and can be articulated differently by senior and middle leaders (Hammersley-Fletcher & Brundrett, 2005).

The variety of findings summarised here illuminate the diverse socio-cultural environment that can be evident in a school and suggest that a deeper analysis of distributed leadership and trust is required. A critical analysis of trust may reveal it is premised on difference and mutual acceptance of diversity, as well as alignment and agreement, and what is considered a challenge for leaders, may not be considered a challenge for teachers. Blended studies go some of the way in revealing the complexities and challenges associated with distributed leadership and hybrid configurations, but micropolitical analysis is required if the "organisational underworld" (Hoyle, 1986) of schools is also to emerge alongside the rational and collegial models inherent with most of the studies discussed so far in this chapter.

Alternative studies

The research studies selected for this section tend to go against some of the norms of schools and other distributed leadership research discussed so far. Those categorised as alternative do so in two ways. They either focus on alternative arrangements of principalship where the role is distributed across more than one person as a form of co-leadership, or use a sampling frame that is not evident in other studies. The studies categorised as alternative are listed in Table A1.6 in the appendices (see p.267).

Themes, strengths and weaknesses of alternative studies

Co-leadership as a form of principalship goes against the norm of single principalship, where the latter is often legitimised as the only way that principalship can be arranged in a school. Principals find it particularly challenging to re-envision their role to one not restrained to a single position, due to the strong discourse that locates authority with the one principal, one school model, where principals see a need to stay in control (Hall, Gunter, & Bragg, 2011a; Lingard et al., 2003; Thomson & Blackmore, 2006). This discourse also makes it difficult for policy-makers to accept alternative distributed models of principalship, and so contributes to the barriers that schools face when they democratically choose to restructure the principalship in a more distributed manner that is suitable for the school (Court, 2003, 2004; Grubb & Flessa, 2006). Even if special provision has been made for schools that choose to go against the norm, Grubb's and Flessa's (2006) study revealed that a politics of resentment was then espoused by policy-makers. This was because the policy-makers viewed co-leadership arrangements as being inequitable, as a school with two principals was assumed to have an advantage over a school with one principal.

Schools with more than one principal also faced challenges such as additional costs (Grubb & Flessa, 2006), succession issues (Eckman, 2006; Grubb & Flessa, 2006) and tended to operate unaware of other schools that had followed a similar path (Eckman, 2006). However, the benefits of addressing principal workloads, exhaustion, retention and broadening complementary problem-solving skills through distributed work arrangements usually determined by the principals made the role of principal more effective and appealing to those looking on (Eckman, 2006; Gronn & Hamilton, 2004; Grubb & Flessa, 2006; Thomson & Blackmore, 2006). The communication skills associated with honest and on-going dialogue are a theme across these alternative co-leadership studies and were essential for developing trust, especially with distributed work arrangements and determining how co-leaders spoke with one voice when necessary (Eckman, 2006; Gronn & Hamilton, 2004; Grubb & Flessa, 2006). The strength of co-leadership studies lies in the narrowed down focus of how two or more leaders work together, which can be overlooked in other studies that rely on a general organisational level of analysis. However, this narrowed down focus can also be a weakness, due to the tendency to overlook other forms of distributed leadership that exist across leaders and teachers.

Other alternative studies reveal how a sampling frame can go beyond the norm of just using leaders and teachers as in most distributed leadership studies. This broader, democratic perspective can include other organisations, parents and in particular students and their voice (Flecknoe, 2004; Mitra, 2005). A democratic view of student and parent leadership goes beyond consulting them in decision-making processes to assisting them develop their own leadership voice and requires adult perceptions, particularly towards students, to change (McGregor, 2007). Both Flecknoe (2002) and Mitra (2005) highlight the positive impact of student leadership in relation to learning. Students learnt to become active, rather than passive members of the school (Flecknoe, 2002), teachers' perspectives on students changed, tensions decreased and teachers partnered with students as they engaged in student-voice activities (Mitra, 2005). In his case studies of three schools, Giles (2006) brings further light to leadership activity situated with parents who became actively involved in the school environment. In each of the schools, the principal was identified as the key person who sought to negate the marginalisation of parent leadership. In one school particularly where the highest degree of ownership was experienced by the parents, the principal supported and nurtured groups of parents as “confident self-actuating leaders” due to the principal not trying to manage the parents. Rather, due to the space attributed to them by the school, the parents empowered each other to become activists on behalf of their community as they collaborated with the school. Distributed leadership research habitually refers to leadership only within an organisation (Lumby, 2009), so the strength of using these alternative sampling frames is that these studies go beyond what is traditionally associated with distributed leadership research to include groups that make up a school community.

Political studies

The final category, political, groups together research studies that reveal tensions, micropolitics, power or related education policy environments. As the alternative ones just discussed, political studies also provide a perspective that goes against the norm of most other studies where there is little critical analysis of micropolitics or the policy environment. The studies grouped in this category are listed Table A1.7 in the appendices (see p.268).

Themes, strengths and weaknesses of political studies

An advantage of political studies is that they help reveal and critique a distributed form of leadership that is legitimised as a tool for school improvement and implementing reforms.

This legitimised form is referred to as 'official' distributed leadership and is usually advocated in associated normative studies. In contrast to this 'official' form, political studies tend to reveal the complexity and messiness of people interacting with each other. A school can sometimes be an 'arena of struggle' (Ball, 1987) and political studies can illustrate how a micropolitical perspective can help describe day-to-day leadership practice.

An 'official' form of distributed leadership is premised on the assumption that it is a strategy for school improvement and implementing external reforms. Principals can view this form of distributed leadership as a means to get teachers on board so that external reform is coupled to classroom environments (Hallett, 2010; L. Wright, 2008). However, the accountability environment that can differ across and between nations, shapes how schools operate and can be backed up with rewards or sanctions resulting in principals doing what is expected of them, rather than question a reform (Friedman, 2004; Hallett, 2010). In these contexts, it is more likely that distributed leadership can take on a delegatory form (Lumby, 2003), where externally defined outcomes emasculate teachers' professional identities (Hall, Gunter, & Bragg, 2011b) and standards are introduced into classrooms as a means of reducing ambiguity and creating certainty (Hallett, 2010). As a result, teachers could be more likely to be resistant to distributed leadership (Hall et al., 2011b), show passive and ceremonial compliance with no change to classroom practice (Hallett, 2010; Johnson, 2004) and principals experience little latitude in being able to adjust what is expected (L. Wright, 2008). Principals though, do not always act as inert captives of reform, they can also choose to act as gatekeepers and ensure that historical practices and power relations are talked about as a means of moving beyond 'official' distributed leadership (Johnson, 2004).

Hallett's (2007a, 2010) analysis of a principal carrying out what was expected of her in relation to local reforms is an illustration of the tension that can exist between external accountability and internal autonomy established through historical practice. The principal acted out of the authoritative capital associated with her role and mandate but was not afforded the deference needed from staff to get the symbolic power required to bring about change. The intended reform of classroom practice resulted in distress and eventual emergent conjoint action from the staff. Leadership in the form of active resistance clashed with the accountability reforms of the principal and the school board, and test scores dropped. The principal did not prioritise informal relations with the staff and assumed that staff would be compliant followers or accept embedded classroom practices established through historical

patterns. Differing forms of distributed leadership and their susceptibility to the 'official' form appear to be dependent on individual leaders' professional history, recent school leadership history and the way a school defines distributed leadership (Hall et al., 2011b). The 'official' form of distributed leadership positions the principal as the key source of distributed leadership, so a strength of these political studies is that they also reveal the influence of individual and shared histories that can form deeply embedded patterns of practice that are valued by staff.

Distributed leadership is not a simplistic 'vehicle' that can be used as a tool for change. The evolution of sharing leadership amongst staff can be a slow and painful process as leadership practice becomes more collaborative (Friedman, 2004). The support required to develop social relations so staff become more collaborative and interdependent appears to be connected to the opportunity to engage in honest dialogue that allows for disagreement, either across the whole school or within a team (Friedman, 2004; Johnson, 2004; Lingard et al., 2003; Scribner et al., 2007). When open dialogue is not evident, conflict and mistrust can arise, particularly when an espousal of distributed leadership is not evident in practice. Storey (2004), in her account of competition between leaders in a school, revealed the frailty of distributed leadership once issues of boundary overlap occurred between individuals. In this case, the situation was never resolved, emphasising the need for dialogue in relation to power, expectations and the forming of interdependent relationships.

Collegiality and collaboration amongst teachers within a school are themes that are evident in political studies, though unlike the descriptive, normative and blended studies described in the previous sections, the principal is depicted as having less individual influence. Leadership was not so dependent on upper level formal leaders, rather it was dispersed in the form of pedagogical leadership (Friedman, 2004; Lingard et al., 2003), in the form of teams (Johnson, 2004; Scribner et al., 2007), evident at all levels of the school (Fitzgerald et al., 2006; Lingard et al., 2003), fluid (Lumby, 2003), enacted within a culture of care (Lingard et al., 2003) and demonstrated as a form of consensual resistance (Friedman, 2004; Hallett, 2007a). Both middle leaders and principals perceived that teacher practice was enhanced through collaborative processes, where principals assumed leadership occurred in-between individuals rather than emanated from positions (L. Wright, 2008). Middle leaders stressed the importance of collegiality, particularly in relation to the support they expected from senior leaders and supportive relations that were valued by teachers (Fitzgerald et al., 2006).

A common factor that appears to bind school staff together and yet still allow for disagreement is a focus on learning. In their study of 24 schools, Lingard et al. (2003) found that a commitment to leadership as a dispersed property was dependent on productive leadership, not the distribution of 'busy work' through management task delegation. Productive leadership supports academic and social outcomes, where there is a focus on pedagogy, a hands-on knowledge of education theory, supportive social relations and a culture of care (Lingard et al., 2003). Consequently the gaze shifts away from the principal to teachers as leaders of learning, thus emphasising a multiplicity of leadership sources within a school (Friedman, 2004). This raises the question as to how much leadership activity occurs beyond the formal leadership roles within a school's organisational structure. A focus on pedagogy may reveal teachers as leaders of learning, though teachers may rarely refer to themselves as official leaders (Lumby, 2003), still assume power is situated with principals despite the distribution of leadership (L. Wright, 2008) and may find that there is a little opportunity to practice according to their own beliefs of distributed leadership (Hall et al., 2011b). The apparent contradictions evident in the findings reveal the contextual nature of distributed leadership and how it is mediated through what is officially expected of a school and principals. 'Official' distributed leadership does not equate to a distribution of power (Hatcher, 2005) because the influence of formal leaders is favoured over others. 'Official' distributed leadership is based on influence emerging from role-based authority, whereas political studies reveal that influence can also emerge out of expertise and social relations that have been established through historical practice. Therefore, tension will exist to some degree where accountability reforms reliant on 'official' distributed leadership interact with contexts based on historical practices associated with collegiality and autonomy.

The political studies tend to reveal how this tension is encountered through micropolitical strategies in schools. When distributed leadership is in its 'official' form, principals admitted that they relied on staff relations and tended to select like-minded individuals as a means of distributing leadership, though in their interviews they were reluctant to provide examples where relationships were strained with staff (L. Wright, 2008). In contrast to this, the distribution of leadership onto others due to work intensification has been labelled as "distributed pain" by teachers, rather than distributed leadership (Grubb & Flessa, 2006, p. 535). Two micropolitical strategies tied to dialogue that appeared to have some success, were providing evidence and justification for change to teachers, along with showing that the school had capacity to carry out the work associated with the change (Friedman, 2004;

Johnson, 2004). Change processes are not straightforward and Johnson's (2004) case studies reveal the non-linear and 'stumbling' experiences of the schools as leaders appealed to teachers' moral purpose. Resistance was evident in a passive form, as teachers went along with the initiatives but made no personal change to their practice and also in an assertive form where public dissenters were evident but rarely confronted in public by senior leaders. Collective resistance however, was the turning point for staff in Hallett's (2007a) case study where the authority-based practices of the Principal were rendered ineffective.

The studies discussed in this political section demonstrate how power and relationships can be used and misused in relation to distributed leadership (L. Wright, 2008). Leadership in distributed forms was associated with collegiality and student learning, and was dependent on dialogue and collaboration that provided conditions for trust to develop. The multiplicity and complexity of these forms of distributed leadership mean that it is difficult to encapsulate them under the single term *distributed leadership*; rather *distributed forms of leadership* is a more accurate way of describing the day-to-day practice of leadership in schools.

Mapping distributed leadership research

The research studies reviewed in this chapter illustrate the range of approaches taken with distributed leadership research. Each of the five categories, descriptive, normative, blended, alternative and political have revealed differing and overlapping distributed forms of leadership and associated themes. These forms and themes, along with the strengths and weaknesses of each of the categories are summarised in Table 4.2:

Table 4.2 - *Meta-findings from distributed leadership research studies*

| | Descriptive | Normative | Blended | Alternative | Political |
|--|---|--|---|--|--|
| Forms and sources of distributed leadership | Leadership is stretched over formal and informal leaders; Leadership arises from interactions; Focus on principals; Boundary spanners. | Collective leadership indirectly affects student achievement; Multiple forms of distributed leadership change over time; Distributed leadership reliant on the principal stepping forward to lead and stepping back to create space. | Leadership is stretched over formal and informal aspects of an organisation; Variability of overlapping forms that change over time; Distributed leadership is premised on collaborative staff relations. | Broad sources of leadership (students, parents); Alternatives to principalship (co-leadership). | Contrast between 'official' distributed leadership and what is experienced; Leadership arises from interactions. |
| Themes | Trust - takes time - linked to quality of interactions and expertise; School context and expertise; Interactional style. | Trust - linked to dialogue - Needed for formal and informal leadership to co-exist; School context; Principal is the key; Hierarchy and heterarchy. | Trust - linked to relations; Leaders standing back to create space; Management – shared purpose and collaborative decision-making; Hybrid configurations and associated challenges. | Dialogue; Collegial relations take time to establish. | Dialogue; Collegiality and collaboration; Tension between accountability and autonomy and collegiality; Less emphasis on the principal; Policy and school context with an emphasis on history. |
| Strengths | Provides a rich descriptions; Can encompass sources of leadership beyond official roles. | Collective forms of leadership appear to effect student achievement ; Mixed methods designs start to reveal complexity. | Hybrid configurations are revealed; Paradoxes and challenges revealed. | Not restricted to sampling frames usually used with distributed leadership research. | Challenges and tensions are critiqued; Micropolitical strategies revealed; Not restricted to norms. |
| Weaknesses | Apolitical; Lack of micropolitical analysis ; Assumes compliant followership; Can be silent on effectiveness. | Mixed nomenclature used; Lack of micropolitical analysis ; Quantitative only studies tend to focus more on formal sources of leadership and be accepting of reforms. | Lack of micropolitical analysis. | A focus on co-leadership could take attention away from other distributed forms of leadership. | Needs to be viewed alongside studies that illustrate contexts with little or no tension; There can tend to be an overemphasis on teachers and principals as powerless agents. |

Multiple forms

The overall finding illustrated in Table 4.2 is that there is no one way of defining distributed leadership that incorporates the five categories. The research reveals that leadership stretches over formal and informal aspects of an organisation and arises in-between or as a result of, the interactions that take place between individuals or groups. Distributed leadership is premised on collegial and collaborative relations, so there is a multiplicity of leadership sources because relations exist across and beyond organisations. Organisations however, have structured roles and schools are defined by the norm of having a single leader at the top of a vertical structure. Schools also exist in environments where they are expected at times to implement external reform using a trickle down method that is managed at the apex and filtered through into classrooms. Accordingly, school principals figure prominently in distributed leadership research.

The focus on principals and other sources of formal leadership associated with organisational roles and teams, mean that distributed leadership is also mediated through authority and cannot be apolitically separated from existing power relations, irrespective of whether the power relations foster democratic and educative values and outcomes or not. This rational aspect of organisations contributes to an ‘official’ form of distributed leadership where formal leaders are positioned as catalysts for the distribution of leadership, usually as a means to meet organisational goals. ‘Official’ distributed leadership can contribute to greater collaboration that is valued by staff, but has the tendency to be framed as a universal approach to school improvement in a manner similar to how change management is viewed (Wrigley, 2008). This universal ‘official’ form has tended to be captured in the literature as ‘Distributed Leadership’ and is the form that has been popularised in the educational leadership field.

A universal, grand narrative approach to distributed leadership fails to reflect the complexity of distributed forms of leadership due to the variability, overlap and multiplicity of these forms over time. Some distributed forms of leadership emerge when formal leaders stand back to allow others to lead, whereas others are intentionally planned that include formal and informal leaders. Other forms emerge when the norms that shape formal school leadership and particularly single principalship are challenged. Rather than be restrained by the official term ‘Distributed Leadership’, the term ‘Distributed Forms of Leadership’ encapsulates this variety and positions ‘official’ distributed leadership as just one of a variety of forms that can

be contrasted with the messiness of what is experienced in day-to-day school leadership practice.

Meta-themes

A foundational assumption that underpins most of the studies irrespective of their categorisation is that the primary focus of distributed forms of leadership is to, indirectly or directly, enhance teaching practice and student learning. Most of the research, like most school leadership literature, has an adult-centric perspective so schooling is limited to a view without the perspective of the largest group who populate schools, the students. The focus on the adults in relation to distributed forms of leadership reveals that the meta-themes can be grouped into three connected areas: socio-cultural; organisational; and contextual.

Firstly, trust is the most prominent theme across the categories and symbiotically connects to a range of other socio-cultural factors. Trust also links to staff relations and the quality of interactions that take place where open and honest dialogue is evident. Trust also takes time to be established and can exist to differing degrees across groups and between differing individuals. In some particular contexts, such as digital technology where specialisation is required, trust and leadership defers to an individual or group who share relevant expertise with others. Trust also defers to formal leaders, particularly principals, if they choose to embed their practice in the collegial relationships that already exist amongst staff and when coupled with dialogue appear to provide conditions suitable for the co-existence of formal and informal sources of leadership.

Without trust and the associated collegial relations, the second area of organisational management processes is left in a vacuum. Developing shared purpose through collaborative decision-making incorporates the merging of hierarchical and heterarchical structural arrangements as well as the socio-cultural contexts that exist across a school. This merging opens the opportunity for multiple formal and informal sources of leadership that at times require steerage from upper formal leaders and at other times a hands off approach, so space develops for alternative sources of leadership to emerge. The challenges identified in a large number of studies associated with these organisational and relational processes revealed some of the complexities that arise when leadership is allowed to emerge from multiple sources.

These challenges and complexities are dependent on the third area of context. For instance, one study suggested distributed forms of leaderships lessened the need for hierarchy, whereas another indicated that as leadership is increasingly distributed there is more of a need for direct leadership from the top of the hierarchy. A contextual theme that emerged was that all schools are different and their contexts are continually changing. School contexts were different according to historical school leadership practices, the professional histories of individuals, whether they were primary or secondary, leadership work arrangements and what were expected of them in relation to local and national education reforms.

The influence of context that can be understood in multiple forms raises the question to what extent are the findings of the research studies transferable, given that a sample of similar schools from the same city operating under exactly the same prescriptive accountability reform, as illustrated in Spillane's et al.'s *Distributed Leadership Study*, can produce such contrasting case study stories? Distributed leadership research across a multiplicity of contexts suggest that some answers lie beneath the rational and functional expectations of leadership that can be coupled to reform. It appears that relationships, dialogue, expertise and the resultant trust are the determinants that individuals and groups draw on first if they are to defer symbolic power onto others to lead individually or collectively, irrespective of how much positional authority individuals or groups have. If this symbolic power is not deferred, then tensions emerge between authority, accountability and the individual and collegial professional autonomy of staff. Consequently, differing patterns of distributed leadership still emerge, one based on role authority, the other constructed around resistance and based at times on existing staff relations. The issue though is whether identification of these differing sources of leadership suits the single concept of distributed leadership. It appears that the multiple variations of distributed leadership evident across the five categories are too numerous and complex, so a re-theorising of distributed leadership needed.

Categorical mapping

The meta-themes of the research studies illustrate the multifarious nature of distributed leadership and how no one single category can claim a privileged status over the others. All five categories reveal forms and themes that the others do not and the complementary strengths and weaknesses suggest that adhering to a single categorical position would limit the development of future research and understanding. However, consideration must also be given to any counterbalance that could be required due to any category ascending at the

expense of others. I argued earlier that ‘official’ distributed leadership on the whole represents the prominent view of distributed forms of leadership and this prominence is somewhat reflected in the number of normative publications evident in this literature review. The publication years of the literature used in the review show that there has been a steady increase of normative publications compared to those of the other categories (see Figure 4.1):

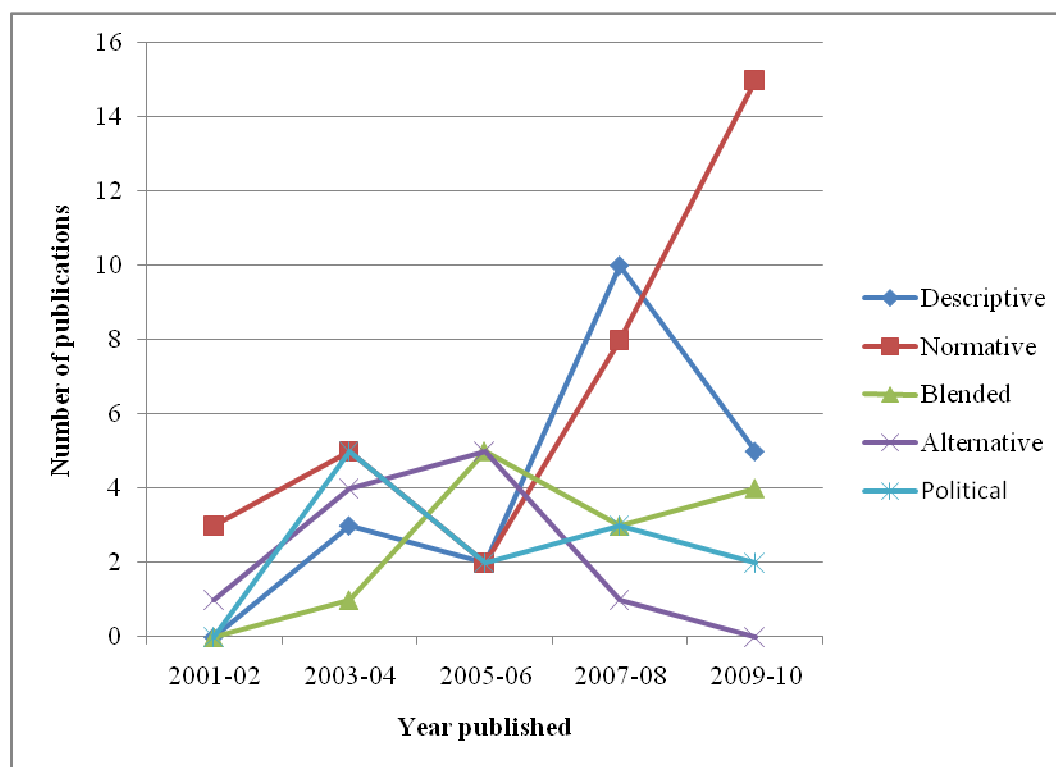


Figure 4.1 – *Distributed leadership research publication trend 2001-10*

Even though the data portrayed here are by no means exhaustive and are affected by edited books that compile several studies, they illustrate the peaks of descriptive publications mostly associated with Spillane et al. and the aggregation of several long-term normative studies that have resulted in a spate of recent normative publications. Based on distributed leadership commentaries and compilations readers can assume that research is categorised either as descriptive or normative. Despite the number of alternative and political studies, very few of these are included as evidence in distributed leadership reviews because they tend to disrupt the norms associated with ‘official’ distributed leadership and school structure.

However, there are signs to suggest the domination of normative studies and perhaps descriptive studies may fracture in the future. Leithwood et al. (2009a) now argue that the

descriptive and normative split is not helpful for moving forward because descriptive studies reveal the complexity associated with leadership that large scale normative studies cannot. I would also argue that the normative studies in this review that offered the most in terms of findings were ones that also utilised qualitative analysis and case studies as part of their research design. These mixed methods studies started to reveal some of the complexity of day-to-day leadership practice and are an argument against using distributed leadership as a single normative construct. In some cases, they reflected more of a hybrid configuration of leadership. My own categorising beyond the traditional descriptive and normative categories revealed that a blending between the two categories is already starting to emerge in the field and is echoed with the blending of hierarchical and heterarchical organisational forms recently recognised by Gronn (2011) as a form of hybrid practice. However, any further development of a blended or hybrid category will need to be constructed in such a manner so that it does not become another leadership theory that sustains “privileged power structures that emphasise a leader-follower dichotomy and authority, power and influence with individual organisational role” (Gunter, 2001, p. 69). It will need to link to political studies so that critical engagement occurs at a macro and micropolitical level. The five categories utilised for this review can be mapped where blended studies are positioned between descriptive studies that rely on a distributed perspective and the normative positions associated with school improvement and effectiveness.

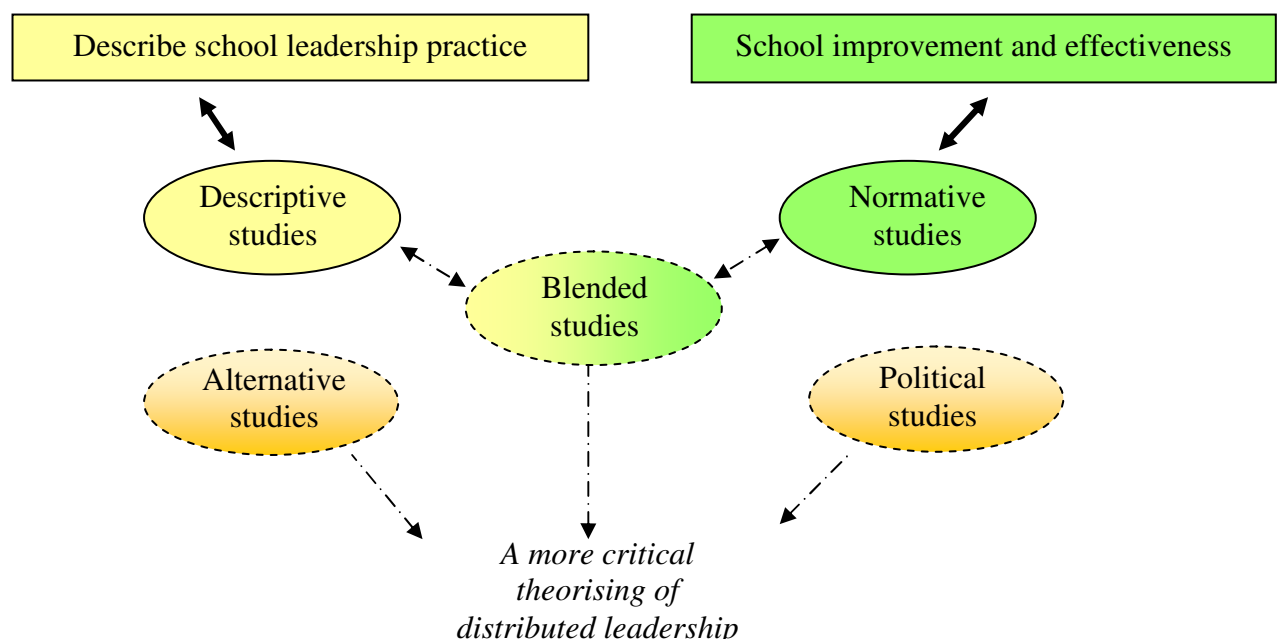


Figure 4.2 – Categorical mapping of distributed leadership research

The solid ellipses indicate the current accepted categories used for distributed leadership research, whereas the ones with dashed lines represent categories not usually evident in compilation literature. These provide some indication of where distributed leadership research needs to develop beyond descriptive and normative approaches.

Conclusion to Part One

In Part One I have traversed three major areas as part of a comprehensive literature review: four concerns related to the conceptual development of distributed leadership; conceptualisations and typologies of distributed leadership; and research studies of distributed leadership. The overall finding from these three chapters reveals that after its first decade, distributed leadership is in need of reconceptualisation and re-categorisation. The nomenclature, *distributed leadership* has tended to capture official forms of distribution useful for school improvement strategies. This has led to the favouring of normative approaches at the expense of other ways that also provide insight into day-to-day leadership practice. These three chapters also support the argument for further critical engagement with distributed leadership so that educational policy environments, historical socio-cultural patterns and micropolitical aspects help bring a greater understanding to some of the paradoxical and challenging issues that have emerged so far in research studies.

Therefore, research of any form of leadership should take place over a sustained period of time so various forms can be identified and the associated issues can be critiqued (Jermier & Kerr, 1997; Ogawa & Bossert, 1995). The chapters that follow make up part two of this study where case studies of two secondary schools over a period of approximately twenty months are examples of critical engagement with distributed leadership. They reveal how leadership distribution is enabled or restrained in midst of the paradoxical forces of external performative expectations and teachers' desires to enhance students' learning.

PART TWO – THE SCHOOL CASE STUDIES

The middle part of this study consists of four chapters. The aim was to interpret from multiple perspectives, understandings of situations where distributed leadership was espoused and/or practiced in two New Zealand secondary schools. These two schools are referred to as the Auckland cases. The following research questions are relevant to achieving this aim:

To what extent is distributed leadership evident in day-to-day practice as seen from multiple perspectives?

Why do particular people hold the views they do in relation to distributed leadership?

Chapter five focuses on the methodology and design of the case study research and is followed by chapters six and seven that report the data from each school. Chapter eight then identifies the themes that emerged from the two case studies.

CHAPTER FIVE – Methodology and design

Introduction

At the beginning of this study, I proposed ethnography as my preferred methodology, but after a couple of months in the field, case study methodology emerged as the ‘best fit’ to describe what actually ended up happening. This chapter documents the process of this research and the readjustment of the research design, in order to allow the research context to ‘speak back’ to the methodology, the sampling frames and subsequent data collecting methods. A three-phase research design that involved developing data collecting tools during my time in the field with three subsequent yet separate submissions to the University of Waikato Research Ethics Committee, created the opportunity to be methodologically reflexive as the fieldwork progressed.

My initial preference for ethnography was developed through my reading of distributed leadership and leadership research literature during 2006-07. Quantitative studies overshadowed qualitative studies in the leadership field even though qualitative studies were more likely to problematise and contextualise leadership practice (Bryman, 2004; Conger, 1998). Qualitative leadership studies tended to favour interviews, rather than observation, even though observation was more likely to reveal informal sources of leadership (Bryman, 2004). I initially argued that little-used research methods in the study of educational leadership, such as ethnography were required to understand and problematise the developing distributed construct in the leadership field. My initial review of distributed leadership research studies (Youngs, 2007) revealed that distributed leadership had yet to be conceptualised in terms of power relations and trust and came to the conclusion that variations of distributed leadership were complex social phenomena. Subsequently, a commitment to some form of first-hand experience over a prolonged period was required to explore day-to-day practice and the social, cultural and micropolitical processes that shape and are shaped by that practice. If a greater understanding of distributed leadership was to eventuate then my study of practice needed to be carried out *in situ*, so ethnography, particularly within some form of critical framework was proposed as the initial research design for the field-based study.

The section that follows discusses the epistemological and ontological considerations that informed my position in relation to methodology and how context and reciprocity through ethical considerations brought about an early shift from an ethnographic study, to case studies that used observation as a key data collecting method. Case study literature is then critiqued and used to justify the embedded case study design, the data collecting methods including related ethics processes, and the units of analysis. The chapter closes with a critique of the rigour of the research and leads into the two case study chapters that follow.

Epistemological, ontological, ethical and methodological considerations

Towards an epistemological and ontological position

In chapter one I articulated my position in the field of school leadership research as one that is aligned to Critical Leadership Studies (Collinson, 2011; Grace, 1995) and Critical Studies (Gunter, 2001). I did not want to take an apolitical stance in relation to any relationship between education policy and distributed leadership, nor in relation to understanding the day-to-day practice of distributed leadership. In response to my first two research questions, the overall finding from the literature review in part one showed that a re-theorising of distributed leadership, particularly in relation to hybridity, power and micropolitics, was required and the prominence of distributed leadership, was in part, a product of education policies informed by NPM. The literature review process reaffirmed my position in the field and meant that I rejected the positivist researcher position, as I was interested in interpretation and multiple perspectives of espoused and realised practice rather than hypothesis testing.

Also informing this rejection was my own personal history as a past secondary school teacher, Head of Department, year level Dean and Deputy Principal. Over the years, my experiences in these roles informed my understanding that school leadership practice cannot narrow down to a small number of variables. The day-to-day context of the school for me had been one replete with multiple and sometimes paradoxical perspectives in and between groups or individuals. Some groups formed through organisational structures and others through friendships and socio-political alliances that would operate outside of and across these structures. What I read in most of the school leadership literature did not tend to reflect the complexity I had experienced and the similar accounts I heard from others since I finished working in secondary schools in 2000. My personal history informed through practice and

my position in the field informed through my critique of the literature in the early stages of this research influenced the epistemological and ontological position that I took throughout this research. Moreover, my position enabled me to go ‘back and forth’ and critique the original intended research design as I encountered differences between research based on idealism and the problem of adapting to day-to-day school practices so that there was mutual benefit to both schools and myself.

The second research aim “to interpret from multiple perspectives, understandings of situations where distributed leadership was espoused and/or practiced” clearly positioned this research in the interpretive paradigm where there is a commitment to “explore perspectives and shared meanings and to develop insight into situations” (Wellington, 2000, p.16). Social constructivism is often combined with interpretivism due to the emphasis on understanding individuals’ meanings of their experiences and the assumption that these meanings are socially constructed (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998). My commitment to a constructivist approach informed the way I negotiated access into the two schools so that together we could co-create the context of the research. The research questions developed from my initial literature review meant that I came to each school with a framework for interpreting distributed leadership in two broad open contexts, the revised *New Zealand Curriculum* and a school-based initiative. Initially I intended to carry out broad descriptive observation that would develop into more focused and selective observation (Spradley, 1980) as an ethnographic study of the two schools over an approximate twenty month period.

A shift in methodology

Both schools selected new, school-based initiatives as a context alongside the revised curriculum. Consequently I organised my fieldwork time to fit around the ‘ebbs and flows’ of the initiative development processes, meetings, and the groups situated in these contexts. My personal history as a past teacher and leader in secondary schools was an influencing voice with the expectations I placed on myself as I started the fieldwork. I realised that to have an outsider come in to a school to observe for approximately twenty months was a significant commitment for each school to take. There had to be a degree of reciprocity with the fieldwork and the maintaining of goodwill. Both schools voiced a desire to have some evaluative findings related to each respective initiative. I realised that I needed to allow the fragmented ‘ebbs and flows’ of day-to-day practice and my commitment to mutually benefit each school, to speak back to and critique the intended research design (see Figure 5.1).

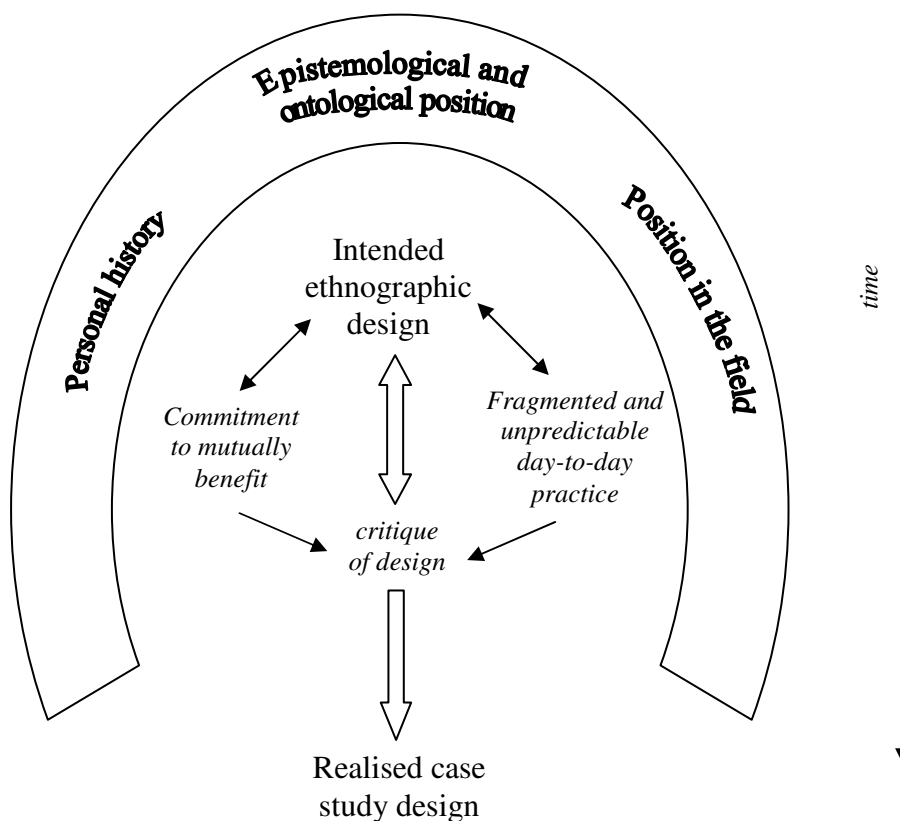


Figure 5.1 – *Epistemology, ontology and the realised methodology and research design*

The ‘ebbs and flows’ of the initiative development processes meant that any transition from broad descriptive, to focused and then through to selective observation became problematic. The context and nature of some of the initial observations meant that I quickly shifted into a focused mode and the day-to-day intensity of school life. Consequently, I was not able to carry out ethnographic interviewing with participants I had observed in the manner I had hoped, as they often needed to ‘rush off’ and attend to other matters. I was stretched as an individual part-time researcher across two schools while also trying to work full-time, and did not want to impinge on the goodwill of so many participants who were starting to accept me as part of their school environment. The majority of the voluntary interviews took place once I had stopped undertaking the observations as part of the revised and realised research design. In each school, two questionnaires were developed, one for staff and one for Year 11 to 13 students so that I could provide some evaluative findings in relation to each school-based initiative at the end of my time in each school. The purpose of the questionnaires became twofold. Firstly, they provided an opportunity for me to present a report to each school so that mutual benefit and some degree of self-determination could be experienced by each school.

Secondly, the questionnaires served as a means to collate perceptions of staff particularly in relation to individual and collective influence across the groups that participated in the fieldwork. The highly fragmented and unpredictable day-to-day practice in each school and my commitment to a constructivist approach meant that the realised research design and methodology shifted early on, from what was originally intended, to one that fitted a case study approach.

The original ethnographic study reflected the ideal world, whereas the case study approach provided me with the flexibility to adapt in relation to the mutual relationships established with each school and what was occurring in their day-to-day practice. Case study does not rely solely on observation like ethnography, rather it relies on multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2009) and interpretation over a period of time (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2005). Another key aspect of case studies is that there is no attempt to control the context (Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010; Wellington, 2000). Even though observation was still a major tool for collecting data, over time it became one of multiple data collecting tools used with the two schools as I made no attempt to control the context.

Firming up my epistemological and ontological position

A constructivist approach to qualitative inquiry meant ontologically I was interested in how relative realities were co-constructed within each school in relation to distributed leadership practice (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). This meant assuming epistemologically, that participants' co-created meaning in their realised practice and their espoused views of practice. Guba and Lincoln (2005) argue that constructivism is one of five alternative inquiry paradigms, the other four are: positivism, postpositivism, critical theory, and, participatory. For reasons already discussed, I dismissed the objectivism and hypothesising of the positivist and postpositivist paradigms. The critical theory paradigm requires the inquirer to act as an "advocate and activist" (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p.196), a position that would have overtly influenced the practice of the participants. Despite the ontological assumption that "virtual reality" is shaped by "social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender values" (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p.195), I still needed to take as much of a non-activist stance while in the two schools as a non-participant observer so I would not unduly influence the micropolitical processes that shaped the practice I observed. Despite this, I still took a critical position at a more macro level in relation to how distributed leadership is conceptualised in the literature, why it became prominent, and how I analysed fieldwork data.

I discussed earlier how my position assumed staff at each school would co-construct the contexts for the fieldwork. This co-construction meant that at times the participatory paradigm with its emphasis on practical knowing was evident, not in the actual fieldwork where data were collected so much, but more in determining the context that situated the fieldwork. In negotiating access with both schools, I was never totally free to do as I pleased. Ethically, I was bound through reciprocity so that the schools and I both benefited from the research. The “primacy of the practical” (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p.195) through providing some evaluation of the school-based initiatives meant that for some small periods near the end of my time in the schools, I was traversing two paradigms. Any mutual exclusiveness of Guba’s and Lincoln’s (2005) constructivist and participatory paradigms would not have helped the overall spirit of my inquiry (Husén, 1997). Without some evaluation of the school-based initiatives for each school, the two case studies may not have occurred as the main strategy of inquiry within the constructivist and broader interpretive position that I was able to take.

A strategy of inquiry connects the researcher to data collecting methods and means of analysis associated with the strategy (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Case study is concerned with process, context, discovery and why things happen as they do (G. Anderson & Arsenault, 1998; Merriam, 1998). The section that follows focuses on case study as the strategy of inquiry and the subsequent research design that supported my time in each school.

Case study strategy and design

Case study as the strategy of inquiry

There are varying views in the research literature as to whether case study should be categorised as a methodology or not. Stake (2005) argues that even though case study is a common way to undertake qualitative inquiry, it “is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied...we choose to study the case” (p.443). Alternatively, case study can be viewed as a strategy of inquiry in its own right, rather than just being limited to Stake’s focus of the inquiry perspective. It has been labelled as a methodology (Merriam, 1998; Sturman, 1997), a strategy of inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), a rigorous research method (Yin, 2009) and one of five main approaches to qualitative inquiry (Creswell, 2007). There is no one definition of case study, except that the emphasis on the ‘case’ is what differentiates it from other strategies of inquiry such as phenomenology, ethnography and grounded theory

which can also be drawn on to inform case study research design (Merriam, 1998). This is where the qualitative case study researcher can act as a *bricoleur* drawing on a combination of approaches to add rigour and depth to the strategy of inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Some writers also position case study as a form of qualitative inquiry (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2005), though others argue that quantitative analysis may also be required to ensure that a broader range of evidence is collected (Bassey, 1999; Sturman, 1997; Yin, 2009). My initial intention to use ethnography as the strategy of inquiry would have clearly situated the research of distributed leadership as wholly qualitative and in the spirit of the *bricoleur* assembling a quilt, may have ended up as two ethnographic case studies. Fieldwork though is not straightforward, particularly when it is spread over a substantial period of time. Adhering to the ethical principle of mutual benefit meant that some data were collected through the evaluative staff and student questionnaires, analysed quantitatively and used to support the interpretive emphasis of the study and associated qualitative analysis.

When I first entered the schools, I assumed that a sociocultural analysis of distributed leadership practice would be sufficient with an emphasis on non-participant observation and ethnographic interviewing. I have already discussed the challenges I faced that resulted in not being able to carry out ethnographic interviews. However, another factor emerged early in the fieldwork that also contributed to the shift to a case study strategy of inquiry. With case study research the boundaries between the phenomena, the focus of the case, and the context of the case are not clearly evident (Yin, 2009), though the case study itself is intrinsically bounded (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2005). Distributed leadership practice was the phenomena under observation and the context of the phenomena emerged as each school articulated its preferred school-based initiative. Each initiative provided intrinsic boundaries around participation and led to the eventual selection of groups in each school where focused observation occurred. The context of my cases shaped the phenomena, and past and current patterns of the phenomena determined who did and who did not influence the context of the school-based initiative. Distributed leadership practice was essentially tied to the initiatives that each school had nominated in such a way that the realised research design matched the strategy of case study inquiry evident in the literature.

Case study design

The prioritising of the phenomena and context of a case meant that a multiplicity of approaches to categorising case study design found in social and education research literature was considered. I identified these categorical approaches as combined inquiry, conceptual framework, and contextual, where the case study researcher is able to select from across these approaches to inform and define the design. In practice, case studies do not fit neatly into categories, but categories are useful for helping the researcher think about the objectives of the research (Stake, 2005).

Combined inquiry categories draw on other strategies of inquiry to identify different types of case study such as, ethnographic case study, historical case study, psychological case study and sociological case study (Merriam, 1998). Secondly, conceptual framework categories appear to be more common in the literature and inherently shape the type of research questions formed. Case study can broadly be conceptualised as either descriptive or story-telling (G. Anderson & Arsenault, 1998; Bassey, 1999; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2009), interpretive, explanatory or instrumental that goes beyond description to abstraction and conceptualisation (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2005; Yin, 2009), and evaluative (Bassey, 1999; Merriam, 1998; Sturman, 1997). Finally and thirdly, the researcher also needs to consider if the phenomena can plausibly be studied across single or multiple contexts or sites, though each site must be treated as a single case in its own right (Stake, 2005; Yin, 2009).

Yin (2009) utilises single and multiple categories as the horizontal dimension of a 2 x 2 matrix where the vertical dimension consists of either “unitary or multiple units of analysis” (p.46) and are respectively categorised as holistic or embedded. The four resultant designs all assume that boundaries between the phenomena and context are not clear and are labelled as:

- Type I – single-case holistic design;
- Type II – single-case embedded design;
- Type III – multiple-case holistic design; and,
- Type IV – multiple-case embedded design.

(Yin, 2009)

The realised case design in this study was Type IV. The reciprocity that narrowed the context to a school initiative and the implementation of the revised curriculum meant that more than

one case was needed if sufficient observations of leadership practice interpreted from multiple participant perspectives would contribute to a satisfactory re-theorising of distributed leadership. The ethnographic residue of the initial research design still meant I was committed to an extended time of fieldwork, though as a part-time independent researcher I was also restricted to what was manageable, so two, rather than three or four schools were used. The Type IV design was interpretive and associated to aspects of ethnographic and sociological case study strategy with the intention of re-theorising, particularly in relation to power and micropolitics.

The case design also required four embedded units of analysis if the second research aim and its two subsequent research questions were to be addressed. The research aim was to interpret from multiple perspectives understandings of situations where distributed leadership was espoused and/or practiced. The two research questions were:

To what extent is distributed leadership evident in day-to-day practice as seen from multiple perspectives?

Why do particular people hold the views they do in relation to distributed leadership?

I needed to observe practice, understand it in relation to past and present socio-cultural and socio-political contexts, and compare this with the espoused understandings of the participants. Accordingly, the four embedded units of analysis for each case school were:

- observed patterns of leadership and meeting participation practice;
- perceptions of historical and present staff relations;
- espoused understandings of distributed leadership; and,
- perceptions of sources of influence in relation to groups and the school-based initiative(s).

Despite the various perspectives evident in case study design literature discussed earlier, the literature is largely unanimous in arguing that multiple sources of evidence are required so the units of analysis can be used “to build up an understanding that is informed by the context” (de Vaus, 2001, p.220). Three data collecting methods were employed across three phases so that each unit of analysis contributed to meeting the objective of the second research aim. Observation was used for the first unit of analysis, individual and group interviews were used to analyse the perceptions and espoused views of the participants for the

second and third units of analysis, and questionnaires were used to collate general staff perceptions related to the fourth unit of analysis. During my time in the field, both schools suggested that student questionnaires would also be useful for their future decision-making as part of the reciprocal relationship that I had established with each of them.

Selecting the cases

Data were collected at two suburban secondary schools, known individually in this study by their pseudonyms, Esteran College and Penthom High School and collectively as the Auckland cases. Each school is described at the beginning of its respective case study chapter. Four schools in total were approached to take part in this study, with their selection being determined through each principal espousing the promotion of distributed leadership in public settings. Each respective school was approached until two signalled their intention to follow through by providing organisational consent. The Auckland cases were the second and fourth schools who were invited to participate. My initial informal approach was always to the principal who espoused distributed leadership was evident in his or her school. The first school withdrew a few months prior to my initial ethics application due to a forthcoming change in principal and the third school did not reply in relation to the initial approach. The selection process was purposive, as I wanted to select schools where there was some espousal of distributed leadership, no major performance issues evident in their public Education Review Office evaluative reports and were not in the limelight of national media. I was alert to schools that in one sense were ‘under the radar’ of the public eye.

The principals of Esteran College and Penthom High School both had approximately four years of experience as principals in their schools when I first met them. For both it was their first principalship. The principal of Penthom argued that leadership practice occurred across the school irrespective of role and could lead to innovative practice. The Principal of Esteran indicated how the senior management team was guiding the school towards a flatter organisational structure by means of distributing leadership responsibility across a wider number of staff. Gaining access to the schools was not a single event, but was a process that took time and was a continual part of my fieldwork. Participants and contexts are often not known beforehand (Goulding, 2002) and the two schools were no exception to this, particularly as I expected them to identify part of the research context.

An emergent three phase approach to ethics approval

The emerging nature of the fieldwork context and the subsequent purposive sampling that was needed as school initiatives were developed meant that I needed to employ a three phase approach to designing the data collecting tools. Once reciprocity had been established with both schools, I knew that observation, interviewing and questionnaires were to be used, but I did not know at the outset how the context would inform the tools that were to be used more than a year after gaining initial ethics approval. The overall ethics approval from The University of Waikato, incorporating access and phase one data collecting tools was the first of three phases (see Table 5.1). Separate second and third ethics applications were needed, particularly for the interviews and questionnaires.

Table 5.1 – *Ethics approval timeline*

| Phase | Timing | Documentation |
|--|----------------------------|---|
| Overall ethics approval and phase one approval | Approved 18 March 2008 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ethics approval form;• Research information letter;• Letter requesting organisational consent;• Organisational consent form;• Phase one data collecting tools (group interview with school leaders and observation schedule) and associated consent material. |
| Phase two approval | Approved 12 November 2008 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Phase two data collecting tools (interviews and reworked observation schedule) and associated consent material. |
| Phase three approval | Approved 29 September 2009 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Phase three data collecting tools (questionnaires) and associated consent material. |

After gaining initial ethics approval, I met with all or some of each school's senior leadership team, consisting of the Principal and the Deputy Principals to discuss when it was appropriate for me to enter each school in relation to their meeting cycles. These planning meetings took place in April and May 2008. These were prolonged at Penthom due to the Principal being overseas at the time and so caused a slight delay to the start of my observations. Table 5.2 provides an overview of when I was able to collect data in each school (P = planning meeting; G = general observation; F = focused observation; GI = group interview; I = individual interview; and, Q = the respective questionnaires given to staff and students). Separate reports related to the evaluation of each school-based initiative were given to each school in January 2010.

Further details pertinent to the respective sampling frames for each phase are provided at the start of the two case studies that follow in chapters six and seven respectively.

Table 5.2 – *The three phases of data collection*

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|-----------|---|---|-------|-------|-------|----|-----|-----------|---|------|---|-------|-------|-------|---|-------|----------|-------------|-----|---|--|--|--|
| | Phase one | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | Phase two | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Phase three | | | | | |
| | 2008 | | | | | | | | | | 2009 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | A | M | J | J | A | S | O | N | D | J | F | M | A | M | J | J | A | S | O | N | D | | | |
| Planning Esteran | P | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Planning Penthom | P | P | | P | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Observation Esteran | | G | G | G & F | G F | | | G | | | | | G G F | F F F | F F F | F | | | | | | | | |
| Observation Penthom | | | | G G G | F F F | F F F | F | G G | | | | F | G F | G F F | F F | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Other data Esteran | | | | | | | GI | | | | | | | | | | GI GI | I I | | Q Q | | | | |
| Other data Penthom | | | | | | GI | | | | | | | | | | | I I I | GI I I I | | Q Q | | | | |

Observations and interviews were the primary data collecting tools used during my time in the field. Any “critical organisational analysis of schools must begin by being rooted in and developed upon the experiences, views and interpretations of the individual actors who constitute ‘the organisation’ and their real and practical concerns and interests” (Ball, 1987, p.16). Observation afforded me the opportunity to analyse the experiences and expressed views of the participants *in situ*, and then compare data with the participants’ interpretation of experiences in the interviews as a means to reveal their concerns and interests. The use of questionnaires as a secondary data collecting tool at the end of the field work, meant that I was also able to see if any general perceptions arising from the questionnaire data

triangulated with the combined findings of the observations and interviews. In the sections that follow, I discuss how each method was employed, what ethical considerations were made and how the data were analysed.

Observations

Construction and implementation

The observations carried out during phases one and two were the most time intensive of the three data collecting processes and reflective of the extended time required on site when carrying out case study research in a natural setting (Bassey, 1999; Stake, 2005; Yin, 2009). Spradley (1980) provides five different types of participation ranging from non-participant, through to passive, moderate, active and finally complete participant. Throughout my time in both schools, I intentionally positioned myself as a non-participant observer as often as I was able to. All of the observations were of meetings, and for most of them, I started and finished each period of observation in a passive mode where some interaction took place with the participants. This usually involved introductions and verbal acknowledgment of my presence with the group and the occasional informal conversation that took place at the end of a meeting once the observation had finished. In each school, the principal acted as the key gatekeeper to my access and this broadened to other members of the senior leadership team or team leaders as my time in the field progressed. On entry, I would always sign in as a visitor using the term “PhD researcher” at the school administration office and have an official “visitor” label attached to my clothing.

When I first entered the field I always physically positioned myself back from the meeting participants, only to be often invited to sit around the meeting table so my handwritten fieldnotes were often written in full sight of the participants. The handwritten fieldnotes were then typed, usually within 24 hours of the observation, and this provided opportunity to add in my own memos alongside the typed fieldnotes, informed by the observation frameworks that were developed. An initial framework for observation was used during phase one (see Appendix two) and developed further for phase two so it incorporated emerging themes from the phase one data (see Appendix three).

Due to each school selecting part of the context for the observations, I needed to focus on purposively selecting samples from which the most could be learned (Merriam, 1998). At

Esteran College, I was encouraged to attend curriculum planning events and the curriculum managers' meetings. During phase one in the latter part of 2008, academic counselling as a school-based initiative started to emerge and the jurisdiction for implementing it became situated with the student support year level Deans who met on a regular basis. Goulding (2002) argues how purposive samples do not need to be known beforehand and my experience at Esteran College was no exception to this as it wasn't until phase two that I was able to observe Deans' meetings. Penthom High School on the other hand, was a different experience due to the timing of its school-based mentoring initiative, which started its two-term pilot at the same time I entered the school for phase one observation. From the outset, I was able to observe mentors' meetings as well as the Heads of Learning (HOL) meetings. A more detailed and chronological account of all the observations is provided in each school's respective case study chapter.

Ethical considerations

Negotiating and gaining access to meetings was an on-going process throughout the fieldwork. Permission to enter each school was signed off by each principal as part of the organisational consent prior to the start of phase one (see Appendix four), though this did not mean that I could arrive at any time, engage with staff members and students, and go to any part of the school when I wished. My access was one based on, what Spradley (1980) describes as, limited-entry where permission was on-going. Access and co-operation are often intertwined with fieldwork (Wanat, 2008) and my commitment to a constructivist approach in relation to the research context meant that each school was able to benefit. Consequently, I was often invited to meetings and at times included in emails sent to staff from a gatekeeper for the group, like the principal, outlining the time and focus of the meeting. These invitations increasingly took place after the first couple of months in each school though I still checked that my presence was acceptable to those who attended the meeting. I was aware that other meetings did take place throughout my time in each school but due to the lead taken by gatekeepers I was satisfied that the access granted to me over a prolonged period of time was both appropriate and sufficient to meet the aims of the research.

Whenever I attended a new setting, the principal or meeting leader introduced me and at times, I had opportunity to explain the purpose of the research and what I would be recording in my fieldnotes. Near the end of my time in the field I found out through the interviews that some staff had earlier on approached the principal with a question like "who is he?". For this

small number of staff and others I interviewed they stated how, I had to them, become ‘a fly on the wall’. My sphere of acceptance broadened as my visits increased⁴.

Despite the on-going acceptance of my presence in both schools I continued to remind participants about the ethical issue of personal identity which needed to be protected from the outset (E. Murphy & Dingwall, 2001; Spradley, 1980). To safeguard identity, pseudonyms were used for each school and all participants. My handwritten and out of the field version of the fieldnotes used codes to distinguish between individuals and details related to participants’ specific roles of responsibility were generalised to help protect anonymity.

Fieldnotes

During phase one, particularly in the first few observations, I chronologically recorded everything, including what appeared at the time to be mundane. To some extent, I was observing ‘in the dark’ in the early days as it took until mid-way through phase one to see patterns of behaviours and understand what the groups under observation were attempting to achieve. Early days are a suitable time to notice aspects that may later vanish or may be helpful later on in the fieldwork (Delamont, 2002; Wolfinger, 2002), so most of the general

⁴ During phase one, two excerpts from my personal diary fieldnotes reflected how this took place:
As the day went on, I began to realise how my sphere of acceptance is slowly broadening:

- *Late last year it was the principal;*
- *After today [where I observed for six hours] it was the three other DPs.*

My acceptance hasn’t spread to the wider group I was with today at an individual level. And as for the wider staff, not yet at all. I sat alone in the staff room eating my lunch (and self-consciously noticing the grated carrot as it fell onto the new carpet from my wrap – well I had to pick all the little pieces up – did this draw attention to me?), knowing full well I needed to keep to myself with my “visitor” sticker on. I wasn’t a member of their ‘social space’ and hadn’t been invited in. However one staff member did sit across from me and said “hello visitor”. (Fieldnote diary entry 16/6/08)

My personal fieldnotes a couple of months later reflected the widening acceptance of my presence:

I arrived and signed in as usual – this time the receptionist was happy for me to make my own way through [after signing in and collecting my visitor sticker], first into the SMT area and then through to the staff room. I noticed that no one appeared concerned about my presence as I arrived to observe a full staff meeting – maybe my face is becoming familiar. A HOD placed their things next to my seat and came and sat alongside a few minutes later. It was as if people didn’t mind sitting next to me, another teacher sat on my left – there were other spaces left but these people didn’t choose to leave a space around me. (Fieldnote diary entry 25/8/08)

broad observations took place when I observed a setting for the first or second time. The out of the field version of the fieldnotes was copied directly from the handwritten version and included details about meeting agendas, times, seating arrangements. When I had remembered who the participants were I started to record participation patterns as shown in an extract from an early set of fieldnotes (see Figure 5.2).

2 July 08 Esteran High School (term 2, week 9)

Personal commentary: written notes – journal #1, pp. 12-16

Senior Leadership Team 2:00-4:20 Curriculum planning

Seating and opening moments

The meeting of curriculum leaders and SMT consisted of three segments:

- Banding 2:10-2:40
- Junior options 2:40-3:40
- Strategic Issues timeline 3:40-4:20

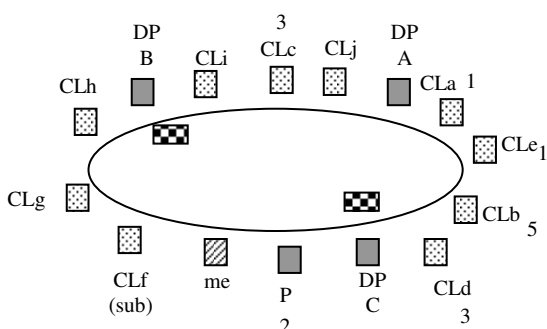
CLs and the SMT on the whole situate themselves around the oval table in a similar manner to the last mtg. This time the SMT are more spread out, though the P sits in the chair nearest the opening to their office. Two laptops are on the table – DP C is recording the minutes, DP A appears to be using their one to look at relevant files.

The P starts with an overview of the mtg and then makes the following comment in relation to the new curriculum:

“Our heads are very much in the curriculum we’ve had, not the curriculum that we have to move into”.

Banding:

P – go around the core – prompts CLa to start. Some minutes later the P summarises the first phase of the discussion. The first phase is displayed below:



Rather than just report back a brief discussion ensues with CLb providing the links/prompts/questions. Chronologically:

CLa – majority keen, one dissenting view

The Deans at Y9 – discipline issues not related to banding

- We will get a better understanding when we get the mid-year asTTle results.

CLb – at this point prompts CLe to make a short comment about “other core”

CLb – there is a need to get more data – want to know that we know how they are achieving. Need to redress what we mean by achievement.

CLc – asTTle was a disaster, too narrow

Need to use entry maths test

Could use this for Science banding

CLb – mentioning Science, currently banded on literacy

Short sound bites – CLd, CLc, CLd, CLb

Principal summarises and states “really important to get that long-term picture in place”

Figure 5.2 – Out of the field example of fieldnotes

Often, as soon as I left the field, I would also write down or digitally record my own reflections. These reflections were either personal memos for my own fieldwork diary or memos that would assist with the development of theoretical notes added later to the out of the field version of the fieldnotes. Over time these fieldnotes and theoretical memos accumulated into what Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (2001) describe as a larger *corpus* of possibly useable material, where subsequent codes became processes to explore as well as a means to sort the data accumulated through the observations (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001).

Data analysis

During the end of phase one, the initial codes that emerged from the fieldnotes and memos were clustered into groups through the employment of NVivo8 software. NVivo8 is a tool that enables the researcher to link codes together as nodes and develop the connection digitally with the electronic version of fieldnotes and interview transcripts. The ability to create ‘floating’ nodes meant that I was able to reassign codes and reorganise them between and within groups. From this point on, I was able to code, group and collect data concurrently so that it informed the development of the phase two and three data collecting tools.

During phase one I became increasingly aware that I could quickly record patterns of interaction between participants and this brought a greater degree of focus to the observations. I was able to analyse if the patterns changed based on the type of meeting, or within a meeting if the patterns changed from agenda item to agenda item. In addition to the more descriptive fieldnotes, I was then able to go back and add participation totals prior to further analysis (see Figure 5.3):

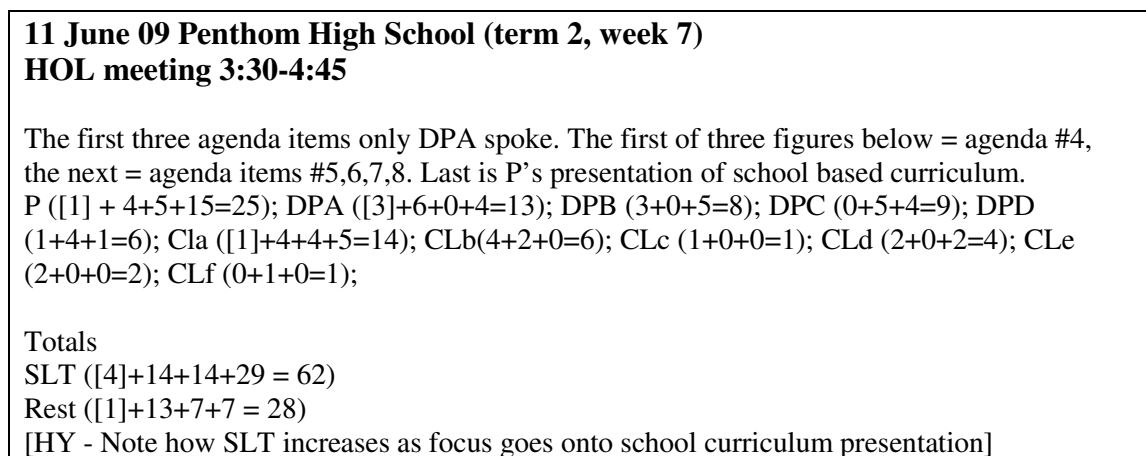


Figure 5.3 – An example of fieldnote participation figures

In this example the principal (P) dominated the conversation related to the last agenda item with 15 instances of participation whereas four of the six curriculum leaders (CL) present did not participate at all.

Breaking 'new ground': Analysing interactions in situ

The order of participation was also analysed and tabulated for every focused observation. Observation is more likely to reveal informal leadership (Bryman, 2004) so a methodical process was specially developed to analyse participation patterns visually through the use of sociograms and quantitatively through calculating coefficients of variation. The rationale for developing this process was because I did not want to rely on participants' espoused perceptions of connection used for social network analysis. Social network analysis does not rely on *in situ* data, so an alternative method of analysis was developed to understand group participation and any associated forms of distributed leadership. Due to this alternative method being a possible new approach to group analysis, a full account of the analytical process and its possible limitations is provided here.

Firstly, data were reduced into a numerical form as displayed in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3 – *Tabulated participation data*

| EC #3 2 July | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------|--------|---------|------|-------|-------|--------|-------|--------|-----|-------|------|-------|---------|-------|
| <i>Number of times followed on after</i> | Rachel | Hamish | Natasha | Neil | Harry | Craig | Louise | Roger | Raewyn | Ken | Lloyd | Rose | Carol | Rebecca | Total |
| Rachel | | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 13 |
| Hamish | 2 | | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| Natasha | 1 | 1 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Neil | 3 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 17 |
| Harry | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Craig | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 16 |
| Louise | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 10 |
| Roger | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Raewyn | 1 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 17 |
| Ken | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| Lloyd | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11 |
| Rose | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Carol | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | 1 |
| Rebecca | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | 5 |

In this example, the numbers across each row represent how many times a participant followed on from others present in the meeting. The highlighted green row shows that Rachel followed on from others, thirteen times, by adding up the numbers across the row. Each number represents all others in the meeting in the order listed down the table. For instance, the first two numbers zero and two, meant that Rachel followed zero times after Hamish and two times after Natasha. The highlighted purple cells show that Natasha followed on once after Rachel and once after Hamish. Therefore, the two times Rachel followed on after Natasha and the one time Natasha followed on after Rachel, both circled in red, provides a total of three linkages. These linkage totals for every possible combination between participants were then used to develop sociograms from *in situ* data. The lines between participants in the sociograms (see Figure 6.2 for the example related to Tables 5.3 and 5.4) were drawn so that each linkage total was represented by a 0.5 thickness gradient in each line. For example a linkage total of three would be represented by a line of thickness 1.5. The sociograms were then used to visually examine the degree of distribution of linkage between participants so that overall patterns could be analysed and compared over a period a time. This meant I was able to look for boundary-spanners (Goldstein, 2004; Timperley, 2005) and investigate links between senior leadership participation, agendas and the participation of others.

The visual interpretation required validation quantitatively if the distribution of involvement could be compared between meetings and agenda items. For each participant a mean score was generated by dividing their total number of follow on occurrences by the total number of other participants in the meeting. For example, the green row highlighted in Table 5.4 shows that Rachel's total of thirteen occurrences divided by the number of other participants present (i.e. thirteen) resulted in a mean of 1.00 occurrences per participant with a standard deviation of 0.82.

Table 5.4 – *The quantification of participation data*

| EC #3 2 July | | n=14 | |
|--------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| | V | \bar{x} | s |
| | 177 | 0.65 | 1.15 |
| Rachel | 81.65 | 1.00 | 0.82 |
| Hamish | 144.2 | 0.54 | 0.78 |
| Natasha | 190 | 0.23 | 0.44 |
| Neil | 172.1 | 1.31 | 2.25 |
| Harry | 244.1 | 0.15 | 0.38 |
| Craig | 58.91 | 1.23 | 0.73 |
| Louise | 120.5 | 0.77 | 0.93 |
| Roger | 156.1 | 0.31 | 0.48 |
| Raewyn | 180.4 | 1.31 | 2.36 |
| Ken | 144.2 | 0.54 | 0.78 |
| Lloyd | 172.9 | 0.85 | 1.46 |
| Rose | 131.7 | 0.38 | 0.51 |
| Carol | 360.6 | 0.08 | 0.28 |
| Rebecca | 169.1 | 0.38 | 0.65 |

Standard deviation is a measure of spread and I was interested in how distributed the occurrences were amongst the participants. A low standard deviation would indicate that the individual participated by following on after a wider range of participants, whereas a high standard deviation would indicate a higher likelihood of a dominant two-way conversation that could exclude others from participating. Standard deviation is also dependent on the mean, so the coefficient of variation (V) was used as the indicator of diversity, where V is calculated by dividing the standard deviation (s) by the mean (\bar{x}) (Bedeian & Mossholder, 2000).

Using the coefficient of variation meant that the degree of participation as well as the distribution of participation could be combined. For instance, a boundary-spanner would be someone who not only followed on from a wide range of other participants, but also would have had a high degree of participation. The lower the value of V, the more likely that the participant was a boundary-spanner in the meeting. As an example, Neil (highlighted in blue) and Craig (highlighted in maroon) had approximately the same mean showing they participated nearly the same number of times, yet their standard deviations were quite different. Neil's higher standard deviation indicated that his participation was less spread around the group compared to Craig's. Consequently, Craig's V value was lower than Neil's. Craig's spread of participation as indicated by the standard deviations was nearly the same as Ken's (highlighted in yellow), yet Craig's V value was lower due to his higher degree of participation. As well as calculating V values for all participants, an overall V value was calculated for each meeting by combining all the participation data (as in Table 5.3). This is shown circled in red on Table 5.4 as 177 and along with other meeting V values, was used to see if there were shifts in distribution across meetings during my time in both schools.

Validity, reliability and limitations

The reliability of diversity measures, such as the coefficient of variation has been called into question by Biemann and Kearny (2010). Using simulated data they argue that the coefficient of variation is more likely to exhibit bias when the sample size is very small (i.e. less than six or seven) and lead to an underestimation of V. Most of the meetings I attended where V was calculated consisted of more than six or seven participants and with the emphasis on qualitative analysis of the observations, rather than quantitative, the issues raised by Biemann and Kearny (2010) for possible sources of bias for the two case studies have been minimised.

Unlike quantitative data analysis with its emphasis on reliability, the robustness of qualitative data analysis is established through internal validity; do the findings really capture what is there (Merriam, 1998)? Anderson and Arsenault (1998) argue that a chain of evidence should be produced and I have endeavoured to provide insight into this through providing evidence from original fieldnotes (see Figures 5.2 and 5.3) that filter through into the two case study chapters that follow.

A key issue for the researcher who carries out observation *in situ*, is the researcher effect on the participants and how the researcher accounts for it (Lofland, Snow, Anderson, & Lofland, 2006; Merriam, 1998). It is important for participants to become used to seeing the researcher in the settings over a prolonged period of time so self-consciousness and disruption caused by the researcher's presence is minimised and internal validity is increased (Merriam, 1998; Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999). The actions of the gatekeepers in terms of letting me know about meetings could be interpreted to mean that I was not viewed as a disruption. As my fieldwork progressed, I did experience an ever-increasing degree of engagement initiated by staff. What I experienced still needed to be tested though, through interviewing the participants near the end of phase two, where I asked them about the effect of my presence on their own and others' behaviour in the meetings I observed.

Some staff at Esteran College did appear to be more aware of my presence especially when I first entered the school. "I did notice you initially, but, and then I just see you slipping in after that, and I don't think it's made any difference" (Raewyn, Middle Manager, Esteran). Others like the Principal and Deputy Principals commented how they had become more reflective and had noticed that other staff did not find my presence intrusive:

Do you think people have still been themselves or have they been a little bit ... (Howard, Interviewer)

They've been themselves. (Natasha, Deputy Principal, Esteran)

Perhaps a little watered down. They've been slightly better behaved for a nano-second. (Rachel, Principal, Esteran)

Do you think so? (Natasha, Deputy Principal, Esteran)

Actually, the comment I've had back is after they've kind of got that you're not the Ministry. They've enjoyed it and I think it actually has had a positive impact in the sense that they have chosen to think about what they're going to say just a little fraction more than usual, which is good... We (the SMT) got over you pretty quickly. I don't know, I think it's been good for us for the same reason. I think that we are generally reflective as a team but sometimes in a random way so it's been nice to have that extra structure. (Rachel, Principal, Esteran)

A similar response was provided by the equivalent group at Penthom High School:

I think I've been aware of your presence. I don't think it's altered much in the way that I do things but there is an awareness that you're there because you are actually looking at me in a lot of what you're doing and your research predominantly is looking at me. I'm certainly aware of that. (Jim, Principal, Penthom)

I think in terms of the meeting though, I don't think your presence has changed whether people will respond or not respond. (Brenda, Deputy Principal, Penthom)

So there's the awareness thing, that's one thing, but the effect on how the meeting was either conducted or topics discussed: Awareness: maybe, effect: minimal. (Mike, Deputy Principal, Penthom)

The accounts of practice that follow in chapters six and seven therefore need to be interpreted in a context where participants may have given more reflective attention to what and how they were going to make a contribution, either verbally or non-verbally. The study of leadership can be prone to presentational data rather than operational data and interviews can be an effective way of enhancing internal validity to see if espoused views are aligned to what was observed (Conger, 1998). To help validate data collected through the phase one and two observations, individual and group interviews were employed as key sources of data in each case study.

Interviews

Construction and implementation

Interviews can be an essential source of data in case study research, providing insight into historical and current practice, though they need to be corroborated with other sources of data due to the possibility of poor recall and articulation (Yin, 2009). They can arise out of an on-

going relationship between a researcher and potential participants during fieldwork and shed light on personal experiences (Heyl, 2001). Schensul et al. (1999) also argue that the gatekeepers who control the researcher's access into the field should be interviewed because they can be key informers. Subsequently, the first interviews that took place in each school were group interviews with the principal and deputy principals. These took place during phase one and enabled me to focus on the gatekeepers' interpretation of past and current staff relations, school culture and structure, espoused understandings and application of distributed leadership and insights into their plans and aspirations for the following twelve months (see Appendix five).

Earlier in this chapter, I explained how the research design shifted from an ethnographic inquiry to a multiple case study inquiry. Two factors emerged early on in the fieldwork that contributed to this; one is discussed below, whereas the second one is discussed in the following sub-section on questionnaires. An ethnographic inquiry should include informal unstructured interviewing that occurs during an observed event as a means to supplement observations and test hypotheses (Delamont, 2002; Spradley, 1980), yet on the other hand ethnographic data collection also needs to be efficient and unobtrusive (Schensul et al., 1999). I quickly realised early in phase one that I would be unable to include informal unstructured interviews. Often at the end of a meeting, participants would quickly depart to carry out their work elsewhere. Accordingly, I shifted my expectation in relation to what part interviews would play as part of the case study approach that provided a better fit to the research context.

Semi-structured interviews were developed and implemented near the end of phase two when the observations were coming to an end. An advantage of carrying out the interviews at this stage in the research was that, over the previous fifteen months, I had become accepted by the potential interview participants in their own setting. All participants from the observed meetings with the exception of staff meetings were invited to be interviewed, except the principals and deputy principals who had already previously agreed to participate in a second group interview. The phase two interviews focused on participants' understanding of distributed leadership, how they perceived any changes to staff relations, structures and processes over the previous fifteen months and questions related to the two contexts that informed the case studies (see Appendix six). During the process of the interview I did not necessarily keep to the order of the questions on the interview schedule, rather I tried to use a

participant's reply to guide what question should follow. The questions related to the two contexts, the revised curriculum and the school-based initiative, gave the participants opportunity to discuss some of the socio-political patterns they perceived were evident and to what extent these patterns enabled or prevented them from being heard and saying what they intended to say. At the end of each interview, participants had the opportunity to discuss any impact my presence had had on them and the groups I had observed.

Ethical considerations and internal validity

Each participant who agreed to be interviewed, either as an individual or part of a group, was required to provide informed consent prior to the interview (see Appendix seven) and was provided a copy of the interview questions usually at least a week prior to the interview. All interviews were digitally recorded in a room on the school site selected by the participant at a time that was convenient for them. As part of the ethics process agreed to, participants were provided transcripts of their interviews so their contribution could be checked and any data could be edited or removed. Participants in group interviews had their contributions attributed to an alias. All references to actual names in the transcripts, both in terms of the school and staff members were altered so pseudonyms were used to protect all identities from the outset.

Data analysis

The analysis of the interview transcripts consisted of three iterations. The first iteration was based on listening to the interview for a sense of the whole as well as dividing up the transcript responses according to the type of question so units of general meaning relevant to specific questions could be established (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). For instance, accumulating all of the responses in relation to espoused views of distributed leadership was a straightforward 'cut and paste' exercise, prior to the initial coding that helped identify patterns and differences between the participants within each school. The second iteration was informed by the codes that had been initially generated from observation data and a review of the limited literature on micropolitics and school leadership. The additional small-scale literature review that took place near the end of phase two opened up the opportunity for me to engage more with the language of micropolitics prior to reviewing the transcripts again and assigning or reassigning codes. This second iteration enabled me to compare clustered units from the transcripts accumulated through the codes with the coding and summaries of each of the observations. This provided opportunity for me to enter into what Kvale (1996) describes as a *dialogue* with the transcript texts as I sought to clarify and

expand what was being expressed by the participants. The third and final iteration then provided the means to merge observation and interview data together so that the accounts of practice could be provided for each case study chapter, an aspect of methodological and combined level triangulation discussed at the end of this chapter.

Limitations

At the end of phase two, nine individual and three group interviews took place with two of the group interviews involving the respective senior leadership teams at each school. At Esteran College, only two curriculum leaders accepted the invitation to be interviewed, though nine of the student support services staff, including all six Deans decided to come together for a group interview. At Penthom High School, seven staff accepted the invitation to be interviewed, all of whom were curriculum leaders, of whom five had been actively involved in the school-based initiative. Ideally, more interviews would have further enhanced the comparative analysis between interview and observation data, particularly in relation to the number of Esteran College curriculum leaders who participated. Interviews can be inconvenient for potential participants so I was mindful of not appearing demanding to the staff in both schools (Cohen et al., 2007). For instance, two reminders of invitations were sent to the appropriate staff at Esteran College by a deputy principal on my behalf. I was aware that any further encouragement to participate may have been interpreted as a directive.

Questionnaires

Construction and validity

The reciprocity inherent in the research design meant that questionnaires ended up contributing more to the research than was originally intended in the initial ethnographic design. The two school-based initiatives involved staff meeting one-on-one with senior students. Both groups of school leaders indicated to me during phase one, when I enquired how they thought their benefit from the research could be further enhanced, that an evaluation of the initiatives from the perspective of students would be appropriate. Two questionnaires were designed and tailored to fit the context of each school, one for the staff and one for the students (see Appendices eight, nine, ten and eleven).

The purpose, particularly that of the staff questionnaire, was to support the mainly qualitative findings that emerged from the observations and interviews. The construction of the staff

questionnaires was informed from three sources: the initial findings emerging from the observations, the staff who were interviewed and the emerging themes of micropolitics, voice and influence. As part of the interviews discussed in the previous section, participants were asked what questions should be included in the staff and student questionnaires, particularly in relation to the school-based initiative so that I could provide each school with some evaluation findings related to the effectiveness of each initiative. The suggestions from the interviewees strengthened the content validity of the questionnaire so that it was more likely to measure what was going on from the perspective of the staff (Maxim, 1999). Even though a number of these findings tended to sit outside of the bounds of my research questions, the findings from the questionnaires did reveal that something else was going on in the schools while the research took place, a kind of ‘twist in the tale’ of each school that I discuss in the latter part of each case study.

The questionnaires consisted of statements with likert scales and opportunities for respondents to make further comments if they desired. A six-point scale was used for each statement with zero at one end of the scale and five at the other. If respondents did not know how to respond they were instructed to leave a question blank rather than provide an arbitrary answer. For this reason, an even number of scale points was used to minimise casual responses that looked for a middle point that would exist with an odd number of scale points.

Ethical considerations

The staff questionnaire was developed and delivered on-line (www.surveymonkey.com). I did not request access to staff e-mail addresses, so a deputy principal in each school sent the invitation to all staff except those who did not teach and were not involved in each schools’ initiatives. Staff were requested not to provide details of their identity, nor that of their colleagues in their responses. Through surveymonkey.com, I was able to access the corresponding data and had no way of tracing who had contributed due to computer IP addresses not being collected. The ability to do this was deselected for the administration of the questionnaires. Participants provided informed consent by anonymously completing the questionnaires and were able to access their answers for editing or removal up to the time when the questionnaire link on surveymonkey.com closed. It is deemed to be reasonable to presume that once a participant moves past detailed information about the purpose of the questionnaire and related ethical considerations to completing and returning the questionnaire that they have provided informed consent to participate (de Vaus, 2002).

It was not logistically possible to administer the student questionnaires electronically. With approximately 1050 senior year 11 to 13 students across both schools making up the population for the questionnaires and with school computers being a high demand resource, the student questionnaires had to be paper based. Questionnaires were given to form teachers by a deputy principal in form class envelopes and it was left up to form teachers when they invited students to participate over a period of one week. Form teachers gave out the questionnaires to any students who volunteered to participate but did not receive any completed questionnaires directly from the students in a manner so that form teachers could see students' responses. With advice from the University of Waikato Research Ethics Committee, students passed a large envelope around, placing their questionnaires in the envelope. When all had deposited their questionnaires, the envelope was returned, sealed to the form teacher who then passed it back to a deputy principal for me to collect. As with the staff questionnaire participants, senior students provided informed consent by anonymously completing the questionnaires. In a similar manner, they were also requested not to provide details of their identity, nor that of anyone else in their responses.

Data analysis

Univariate and some bivariate and multivariate analyses were undertaken using PASW 18 (formerly SPSS) statistical analysis software. Univariate analysis, limited to likert scale means was mainly used for staff questionnaire data due to the smaller sample sizes along with a small amount of qualitative analysis of any comments that were provided. Due to the sample sizes with the two student groups, I was able to undertake a more detailed analysis of data, though most of this sat outside the scope of this study and was used mainly to inform the evaluation reports I provided to both schools six weeks after withdrawing from each school⁵.

Limitations and reliability

To optimise the possible findings from a questionnaire, both the sample size and response rate should be as high as possible (Blaikie, 2003). The sample sizes and response rates for the staff and student questionnaires were reasonable. 304 out of 507 (60%) and 216 out of 541

⁵ For the student data, Pearson correlation co-efficients were calculated at the $\alpha=0.01$ level of significance to see if there were any associations between scale responses. Independent sample t-tests at the $\alpha=0.05$ level of significance were used to test for differences between two variables within school groups and one-way ANOVA tests were carried out at the $\alpha=0.05$ level of significance to see if there were any statistical differences between year levels 11, 12 and 13 at each school. Some examples of the ANOVA test results can be found in Appendix twelve.

(40%) students from Esteran College and Penthom High School respectively completed the paper based questionnaires. 43 out of 67 (64%) Esteran staff and 39 out of 85 (46%) Penthom staff completed the on-line questionnaire. The respective samples cannot be assumed to be representative of other secondary schools, though to some extent could be representative of the two respective schools. Another factor of reliability is the Cronbach's alpha measure of scales used in questionnaires⁶. The alpha scores indicated a reasonable degree of reliability with the scales used.

Construct validity and analytical generalisation

The reliability and validity discussed in the previous section for the questionnaires, observations and interviews are restricted to each respective data collecting tool. In case study research, rigour also needs to be evident at the research design level as well as with each data collecting tool.

Case study rigour

Several strategies can help ensure that rigour is built into case study research. Gibbert and Ruigrok (2010) compared case study research in Management journals from 1995-2000 and found that priority was given to both internal and construct validity over external validity, where construct validity focused on triangulation from multiple sources. Case study research gains credibility through using appropriate multiple sources of evidence that are brought to convergence through triangulation continuously throughout a study (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2005; Yin, 2009). External validity, particularly in relation to the generalisability of findings to a population, is not so appropriate for case studies and is a characteristic of case studies that cannot be disguised (Thomas, 2010). Due to the emphasis on the context of a bounded case, alternative strategies of rigour are then required as highlighted above in the review research of Gibbert and Ruigrok (2010). The remainder of this final section focuses on how construct validity was strengthened through differing forms of triangulation and how external validity was based on analytical generalisation rather than population generalisation.

⁶ Cronbach's alpha is a common measure of reliability for scales used in questionnaires. It has values ranging from 0 to 1 and should return a value of least 0.80 or higher so that a scale can be considered reasonably reliable (Maxim, 1999). The Esteran staff questionnaire returned a scale reliability measure of 0.992, whereas there were too few returns with the Penthom staff questionnaire for any reliability measure to be calculated. The two student questionnaires returned Cronbach alpha values of 0.896 for the Esteran student questionnaire and 0.992 for the Penthom student questionnaire. Therefore, since a consistent 6-point scale was used across all questionnaires there is some evidence to suggest that reliability was reasonably achieved in the questionnaires.

Construct validity

Multiple sources of evidence in case study research allows for “a broader range of historical and behaviour issues” (Yin, 2009, p.115) to be addressed and were required to adequately meet the second aim of this research that started with the wording “to interpret from multiple perspectives”. Multiple sources do not add to the construct validity unless the data and findings from each source are triangulated so that more rigorous and valid conclusions can be drawn (Denzin, 1997). Triangulation though, cannot be limited to a ‘one-size-fits-all’ definition and employment, rather it needs to be ‘tailor-made’ to fit the research (Wolf, 2010). In this case study research three forms of triangulation, as defined by Cohen et al. (2007) were employed: time triangulation, combined levels of triangulation, and methodological triangulation.

Time triangulation “attempts to take into consideration the factors of change and process by utilising ... longitudinal designs” (Cohen et al., 2007, p.142). The approximate fifteen-month timespan of phase one through to the end of phase two meant that there was a degree of longitudinality built into the research design. During my time in each school, I was continuously looking for shifts and consistencies of behaviour patterns as well as the espoused views of the participants until I reached a point where staying in the field any longer would not have produced any new major evidence related to the aims of this research. The fieldnotes of the observations were collated chronologically after I withdrew from the field so that I could further identify consistencies and shifts across them. This analysis was supported by comparing the sociograms and co-efficients of variation for similar groups over time. Time triangulation was also evident in the cross-analysis of the two senior leadership team group interviews that took place nearly twelve months apart. In both interviews participants referred to past and present staff relations and how they thought they had changed during my time in both schools.

Combined levels of triangulation involve drawing on more than one level of analysis in social science research, namely, the individual, the group or interactive, and the organisational (Cohen et al., 2007). For the Auckland cases this overlapped with methodological triangulation where use is made of “either the same method on different occasions, or different methods on the same object of study” (Cohen et al., 2007, p.142). At the individual level, I was able to extract from observation and interview data the influence that agenda holders or boundary keepers had on their groups. The positioning of the groups in terms of

micropolitics was established through comparing the accounts of historical and present group behaviour with what I observed, and corroborated with some of the staff questionnaire data. An example of this was the role of the Deans' group at Esteran College that is gradually unveiled in the following chapter. The staff questionnaire data also gave, within the earlier stated limitations of the sample sizes and response rates, some insights into each school's own initiative aimed at improving student achievement and were connected with finer grained data from the observations and interviews.

In terms of methodological triangulation, I was drawing on interview data collected at the end of phase two with support from some of the questionnaire data collected from phase three so it could be compared with the observed data that had been collected beforehand. This mainly involved comparing the codes generated from interviews with observation data again so that I could weave together a story of observed practice with the espoused views of the participants.

The case studies reported in each of the following two chapters were not reviewed by the key informants as suggested by Yin (2009). I kept the interpretative authority to myself as an independent PhD researcher. I did however utilise the phase two interviews as a means to check what some of the initial observation findings were suggesting and did ask interview participants for their advice in relation to the types of questions that should be included in the questionnaires as a form of participant validation. To further enhance construct validity, I did however, keep a detailed chain of evidence, an aspect of rigour in case study research that I have interwoven into each case study chapter (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2009). This type of documentation helps bring to the fore the salient features of a case so readers are better able to see if the multiple case study findings are appropriate for them to apply to their own setting (Sturman, 1997) and assist with any possible future replication of the study (Merriam, 1998).

Analytical generalisation

With research that utilises observation, external validity is limited with the applicability to other groups (Schensul et al., 1999). The findings of this mainly qualitative study cannot be generalised to any population as a form of statistical generalisation, though they can still be generalised to a theory (de Vaus, 2001). de Vaus (2001, p.237) goes on to ask "what does this study tell us about a specific theory?", an aspect of case study external validity that Yin (2009) labels as *analytical generalisation*. Key to establishing analytical generalisation was identifying how the case study findings overlapped and contrasted with previous research

studies. This consisted of going beyond describing leadership distribution evident in the schools to analyse why it existed in hybrid configurations of organisational and emergent leadership. The subsequent analytical generalisation of the Auckland cases discussed in chapter nine, reveals how educative, social, cultural and political contexts can then be used as a framework to analyse how authority and symbolic power underpin variations of leadership distribution in any school. The two chapters that follow present the observed situations and participant's accounts of staff relations that bring illumination to day-to-day practice, firstly in Esteran College and then Penthom High School.

CHAPTER SIX – Esteran College Case Study

Scene setting

This case study reveals the tensions and complexities of ‘stepping up’ as a distributed form of leadership. Esteran College is a decile⁷ eight, co-educational State secondary school that provides education from years nine through to thirteen. During the period of 2006 - 2009, the school roll had increased from approximately 850 students to 1050 students, nearly doubling in size since 2003 and in 2009 employed 67 teaching staff. Prior to this, the school’s roll had dropped consistently over a number of years due to parents and caregivers choosing to send students elsewhere. There was a shared understanding within the Senior Management Team (SMT) that the school required turning around so that it again became the preferred choice with the local community. Compared to other schools in 2008, Esteran’s NCEA results in numeracy and literacy were well above the national average, below the national average for NCEA level one, about national average for levels two and three but behind other schools with a similar decile rating (as reported to staff by the Principal on 27/4/09)⁸. Consequently, there was a major emphasis placed on a discourse of staff ‘stepping up’ to raise student achievement while I was in the school through 2008 and 2009.

In this chapter, I have used the nomenclature related to leadership and management as was evident in the school. The Principal “Rachel” and three Deputy Principals made up the SMT with each Deputy Principal having different responsibilities. “Neil” was responsible for systems and operations, “Hamish” was responsible for curriculum and “Natasha”, the longest serving Deputy Principal, was responsible for student services. Most of the delegated areas of responsibility to other staff in the school were structured across two areas, student services and curriculum:

⁷ A decile is a 10% grouping. A school’s decile rating indicates the extent to which it draws its students from low socio-economic communities. Decile 1 schools are the 10% of schools with the highest proportion of students from low socio-economic communities, whereas decile 10 schools are the 10% of schools with the lowest proportion of these students. A decile does not indicate the overall socio-economic mix of the students attending a school or measure the standard of education delivered at a school. (Source: New Zealand Ministry of Education website, www.minedu.govt.nz)

⁸ I ran a report on the NZQA school results database (www.nzqa.govt.nz/studying-in-new-zealand/secondary-school-and-ncea/secondary-school-statistics/) that compared the school’s averages with all other schools with the same decile ratings. The report findings confirmed what was reported by the Principal.

So those two groups [curriculum and student services] are, mmm, they're great big, no not monsters, you know, but they are great big lumps in the school's professional leadership area, as if somehow or other, they're not connected. (Rachel, Principal)

The management of system and operational tools such as the student management system software, the timetable, allocation of physical space and the week-by-week organisation of school activities was not delegated to the same extent to other staff and was situated more within the SMT with Neil (Deputy Principal – Systems and Operations). Student services with a particular focus on pastoral care were situated mainly with year level deans, who worked alongside Natasha (Deputy Principal - Student Services). Curriculum management existed across two tiers, Heads of Departments (HODs) and other middle managers who had curriculum responsibility. The HODs along with the SMT made up the Curriculum Management Team (CMT) that had the mandate for ensuring the implementation and operating of curriculum initiatives and associated school systems by teaching staff through subject-based departments. Rachel (Principal) and Hamish (Deputy Principal – Curriculum) tended to assume the oversight of this group. A wider group of curriculum managers designated the Middle Managers' Team (MMT) also existed and consisted of the other curriculum middle managers and varying members of the SMT and CMT depending on the relevancy and jurisdiction of responsibility in relation to the agendas of MMT meetings.

The overall jurisdiction for ensuring the implementation of the revised *New Zealand Curriculum* and school-based initiatives, Academic Counselling and Restorative Practice, existed within the school's SMT. Hamish (Deputy Principal - Curriculum) and Natasha (Deputy Principal - Student Services) had the mandate to lead the implementation process in these respective areas. Though members of the SMT had an individual focus of responsibility, they nevertheless expected the other members of the SMT to influence how they carried out that responsibility through their own leadership practice.

Responsibility for implementing the revised *New Zealand Curriculum* was distributed by the SMT across the CMT which met regularly through the data-collecting period. The CMT first started meeting together in mid-2008, so I was able to observe the initial phases of the group's development as their gaze partially shifted from a conglomeration of individual departmental perspectives to include school-wide perspectives. Prior to the CMT there had been a larger curriculum group that incorporated the CMT and MMT and was perceived by

the SMT as being too large. At the end of 2009, one MMT member, Raewyn, perceived the MMT meetings had become “trite” events.

The perceived demise of the MMT and the previous larger curriculum group was in contrast to the perceived increased profile afforded to members of the Deans’ group who emerged, along with the SMT, as leaders of the Academic Counselling school-based initiative during 2009. The meetings structure in the school adjusted according to the priority placed on initiatives. In 2008, Restorative Practice was the prioritised school-based initiative associated with student services across the school. The responsibility for implementing Restorative Practice was distributed to Natasha and a group of staff who had undergone restorative training at the end of 2007 and the beginning of 2008. All four members of the SMT, all year level Deans and the Head of Guidance had attended off-site training courses. In 2009, Academic Counselling overtook Restorative Practice and had the higher profile.

Data were collected in the context of these two school-based initiatives and the implementation of the revised *New Zealand Curriculum* through the three modes of data collection, observation, interviews and questionnaires:

Table 6.1 – *Esteran College data collection*

| Time period | Observation | Interviews | Questionnaires |
|------------------|--|---|---|
| May – Nov 2008 | Approximately 9 hours of general observation and 4 hours of focused observation. 7 observations of staff or group meetings. | 1 hour initial group interview with SMT | |
| First half 2009 | Approximately 2 hours of general observation and 8 hours of focused observation. 10 observations of staff or group meetings. | | |
| Second half 2009 | | 2 semi-structured interviews with individual middle leaders. 2 group interviews; one with the Deans and one with the SMT | A staff-wide questionnaire (n=43 out of 67 – 64%) A student questionnaire to Year 11, 12 and 13 (n=304 out of 507 – 60%) |

The remainder of this chapter is organised into five sections where emphasis is placed on telling the observed story of ‘stepping up’ in the first two sections before providing some of the participant’s perceptions of this story. The first describes the observed patterns of leadership and the roles of different groups through the 2008 – 2009 period, whereas the second is an in-depth analysis of between group relations and within group patterns of participation. Readers of these accounts of practice need to remain aware of the context in which they took place and the possible impact of my non-participant observation. The third and fourth sections respectively capture some of the context of the school with a focus on perceived historical and 2008 – 2009 staff relations, followed by espoused staff understandings of distributed leadership. The fifth section is then used to compare the observed practice with participants’ espoused views of practice to reveal the underlying discourses and differences associated with distributed leadership in the school, particularly in relation to the discourse of ‘stepping up’.

Observed practice: May 2008 – July 2009

Introduction

My observations took place across five groups, a variety of locations within the school, and were restricted to formal meetings (see Figure 6.1). The five groups were the CMT, the MMT, the Deans and Support Staff, the inaugural Effective Practice Team and whole staff meetings. This meant I was able to follow in parallel the groups associated with curriculum leadership (CMT and MMT) and student support services (Deans and Support Staff). Additional time spent in whole staff meetings at critical points enabled me to observe how the implementation of the revised *New Zealand Curriculum* and the two school-based initiatives, Academic Counselling and Restorative Practice, were portrayed to staff as a whole. The timeline in Figure 6.1 displays each of the seventeen observations, with the CMT and MMT curriculum leaders’ groups and their focus on implementing the curriculum on the left hand side and meetings that were contextualised around student support services and the two school-based initiatives, Restorative Practice and Academic Counselling on the right hand side. In between these two contexts are events where links existed between the external initiative, the implementation of the *New Zealand Curriculum* and the two school-based initiatives.

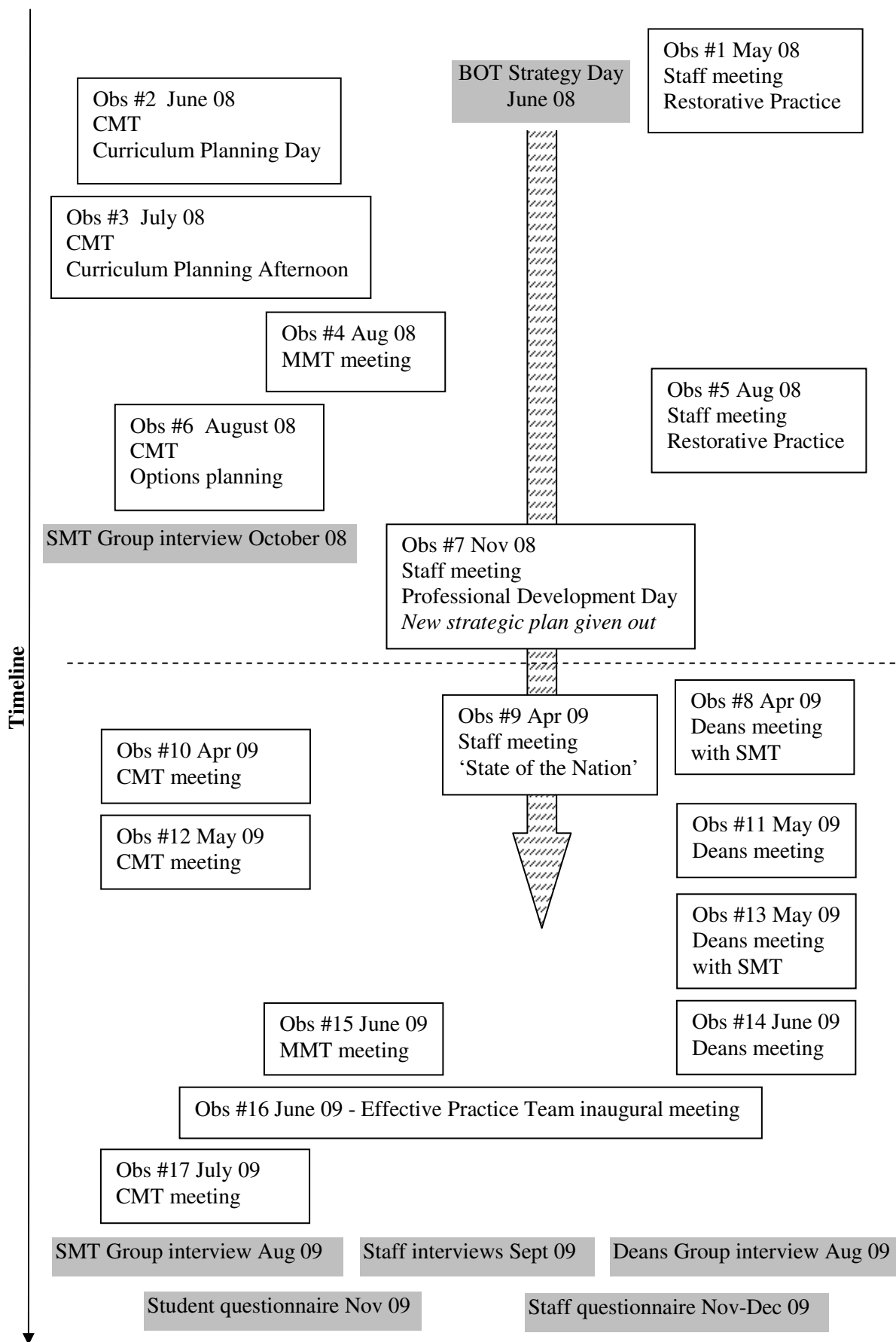


Figure 6.1 – Esteran College timeline of observations 2008-09

The shaded box “BOT Strategy Day” near the top of the timeline was an all day Saturday event attended by the School Board, the SMT and other leaders in the school. I was not able to attend this event, but it is included due to the significance it played informing the Professional Development Day and ‘State of the Nation’ meeting that followed some months later. The timing of the other data collecting events are identified in the remaining shaded boxes.

A reconstruction of the school’s administration block was completed during July 2008 so the first staff meeting I attended (observation #1) took place in the school auditorium. Subsequent staff meetings were located in the new staff room. Next to the staff room was a meeting room that could be partitioned off. This meeting room was used for all but the first two CMT events (observations #2 and #3) and all MMT meetings. Situated adjacent to the staff room and meeting room was a ‘wing’ where the SMT members had their offices. At the end of this ‘wing’, adjacent to the Principal’s office was the School Board meeting room that could be entered directly or through the Principal’s office. At the other end, the entry to the ‘wing’ was closed off to the rest of the administration block with double doors that automatically swung shut after opening.

Raewyn, a middle manager had commented how this for her had altered staff relations, “we don’t even walk past the door [of the Principal] because this whole wing is totally cut off”. For her the historical “open door” policy had changed, and from a micropolitical perspective, this contributed to the isolation of SMT members from her. Craig, on the other hand, did not see this as an issue, but understood that for some staff, the ‘wing’ had become a barrier:

I think the new architectural configuration is interesting... Rachel flippantly calls this the West Wing, but when you do that several times it reinforces the sense that you’re removed. And I think, it doesn’t, I come and go but the door out there is a barrier for some people, I think. And it’s interesting when they come in, even the seating arrangements don’t encourage staying, really, you stand and you look and you wait and you leave. And to me, though, that’s fairly typical of schools I worked for in the past, but it didn’t used to be the case here. It’s a bit more of a business model, that’s certainly true. (Craig, HOD)

At the end of the “barrier for some people” in the ‘West Wing’ was the location where the Deans and Student Support Services staff met. Their early morning meetings before the start

of timetabled classes, always took place in the Board Meeting room rather than the meeting room adjacent to the staff room. The Board meeting room was also used for the whole day and half day CMT curriculum planning days (observations #2 and #3), though during this period the meeting room adjacent to the staff room was still being completed. The only other time I was present for a meeting in the Board Room was when the SMT met with the numeracy and literacy leaders and the Special Classroom Teacher (SCT) for the inaugural Effective Practice Team meeting. For some staff, the 'West Wing' as a meeting venue may have created a perceived micropolitical alliance between the SMT and whatever group met there. What for Raewyn was a "barrier", could have been for the Deans just another door and corridor that led to the venue of their regular meetings. However, the barriers as perceived by the SMT existed not in relation to physical space but more in relation to staff 'stepping up' into school-wide issues and initiatives.

The justification of 'stepping up'

The SMT in its initial group interview defined distributed leadership as a 'stepping up', especially for curriculum leaders, from advocating just for their own area, to one where they contributed "to the direction of the school [and] big planning" (Rachel, Principal, group interview 2008). During 2008, I became aware of four contextual factors used to justify 'stepping up' as a form of distributed leadership:

- the mandatory implementation of the revised *New Zealand Curriculum*, which was a regular feature of curriculum meetings leading up to the 'State of the Nation' staff meeting in early 2009;
- the Board Strategy Day in June 2008 that led to the development of a new strategic plan given out to staff at the start of their Professional Development Day in November 2008;
- the high number of student 'stand-downs'⁹ in comparison to schools with a similar decile rating; (Staff meeting, May 2008) and,
- having NCEA results described by the principal as "not that flash" in comparison to schools with similar decile ratings. (CMT meeting, June 2008)

⁹ A stand down is the formal removal of a student from a school by the principal as a form of disciplinary action that requires formal notification to the Ministry of Education. Restorative practice on the other hand involved the student staying at school and restoring relationships that were adversely affected through their behaviour.

The latter two factors were linked to school image, a point that was highlighted by Roger (Dean and HOD) early on during the June 2008 Curriculum Planning Day when he referred to a popular magazine article that showed schools with a similar decile rating had performed better than Esteran College. A month earlier the staff had also been brought together to learn more about Restorative Practice, particularly as a new strategy to deal with situations that involved verbal abuse of staff, which accounted for just under half of all student stand-downs from the school. School image rarely featured however, as a primary driver of the dialogues that took place in the meetings I observed. When referred to, it was usually in the context of communicating with or involving the school's local community in relation to improving student achievement.

The recently formed CMT was positioned as a key decision-making group in 2008 by the SMT with a whole school day (observation #2) and a further half school day (observation #3) put aside with relieving teachers releasing HODs and option subject leaders to attend these planning times. The staff attending these days were also expected to "get [other] people on board" in relation to developing a school-based curriculum that was informed by the revised national curriculum, banding of students based on achievement results, compulsory and elective curriculum mix and a strategic timeline. The high priority afforded these matters was reflected in early June where four events took place in differing contexts over a five day period. The first on a Saturday was the Board Strategy Day that involved the SMT, followed two days later by the CMT Curriculum Planning Day. At the end of the CMT planning day once the students had left school in the afternoon, HODs met with their subject departments followed by another meeting two days later with all middle managers. The expectation was "we can't lose focus for this year" (Rachel, Principal, CMT Curriculum Planning Day, June 2008). The CMT was the structural means through which the SMT distributed curriculum leadership through the HODs into the departments.

In parallel to this was another form of distributed leadership. Restorative Practice was a school-based initiative that did not have the same regular high profile in formal meetings as curriculum matters. Rather than use the CMT setting, "a filtered top-down approach...with small steps" (Natasha, Deputy Principal, Staff meeting, May 2008) distributed through the Student Services structures was used. Only the "more enthusiastic staff", namely the SMT and the Deans had received training up to that point. This trained group were the channels through which leadership distribution occurred:

...for me it really is about culture change and choosing the people, the right people, choosing is most probably not the right word, selecting the right people to do the training, is people who you know are going to take the places [at the training workshops]. (Natasha, Deputy Principal, group interview 2008)

At the staff meeting (May, 2008) where Restorative Practice was first presented to the whole staff, the break-out discussion groups that followed the initial presentation and role-play were pre-selected according to Natasha so that “potential resistors” were grouped together as a micropolitical strategy to limit resistance to just one group. According to Natasha, each group had staff members who were in “similar spaces” in relation to restorative practice. Staff were ‘stepping up’ into restorative practice but by selection only at this early stage of implementation. Within the SMT the implementation of Restorative Practice was often referred to as a “Trojan horse”, defined by Natasha (Deputy Principal) as a model of change where “we can’t put it on others” (Effective Practice Team meeting, June 2009). However, use of the term “Trojan Horse” was later discouraged within the SMT due to the micropolitical overtones of covert action associated with the term. This helped explain why after the May 2008 staff meeting Restorative Practice received little profile through the meetings I attended except for two restorative stories presented briefly at a staff meeting in August 2008. When I withdrew from the school some months later, Restorative Practice started to resurface openly again in meetings, this time with espoused links to the revised curriculum document and somewhat under the ‘shadow’ of a new major school-based initiative, Academic Counselling.

Connecting to the big picture

Academic Counselling was not at the forefront of meetings throughout 2008. The focus, particularly of curriculum leaders was kept to revision issues of the junior curriculum (Years 9 and 10), reporting of student achievement and NCEA operational issues. Early in July 2008, the Principal, Rachel declared, “our heads are very much in the curriculum we’ve had, not the curriculum that we have to move into” (CMT Curriculum Planning Afternoon). Throughout most of the meetings I attended, there was often a comment from Rachel reminding curriculum leaders of the revised *New Zealand Curriculum*:

Have a think about how we are to use the new curriculum. What we have done today is about structuring our existing curriculum. We haven't looked at the new curriculum today, barely touched on it. (CMT Curriculum Planning Day, June 2008)

I think the new curriculum will flow into academic counselling and restorative practice. (CMT Curriculum Planning Afternoon, July 2008)

We need to be over it [i.e. the new curriculum] being new. It is extremely open, so how does it connect to our school and the new strategic plan? It is important that we join the dots. (Staff Professional Development Day, November 2008)

The Curriculum is not so much about what we teach, but how we teach. (CMT meeting, April 2009)

Near the end of the 'State of the Nation' staff meeting in April 2009, Rachel revealed to the staff more of her motivation for leading change, for the school and for herself. She explained to the staff how her own personal development objectives focused on raising student achievement. She stated, "I can only achieve them if I work with my colleagues". Her espoused micropolitical interests were based on inclusivity, rather than control. One of her objectives was to see a team set up that focused on pedagogy across the whole school and at the subsequent inaugural Effective Practice Team meeting two months later, she re-iterated how "this is the most important part of my role – learning". The intention to set this team up had been there for nearly a year, as she and Hamish had had "some very tentative conversations around this" (SMT Group Interview, October, 2008). The other members of the SMT also contributed to the building of a 'big picture' that staff were expected to 'step up' into throughout 2008 and 2009. This 'stepping up' was viewed as a means of having a wider distribution of leadership related to school-wide, as well as department-based thinking. Hamish explained to the CMT in June 2008 how "the vision and values from the Board Strategy Day have a strong alignment with the new curriculum". A month later Natasha asked the CMT to consider what a broad curriculum was and what parents and students want in relation to this. In the background to these 'big picture' statements was the emerging initiative of Academic Counselling.

At the Curriculum Planning Day with the CMT in June 2008, the HODs focused most of their attention around urgent and tangible issues related to banding students and option choices. A

draft strategic timeline was given out early in the day and at the bottom of the second sheet, written in the largest font of the handout was “ACADEMIC COUNSELLING PROGRAMME FROM 2009”. Rachel explained how it was a means of “support for kids learning” and that “personalised learning is the signature of the future”. Academic Counselling appeared again at the Curriculum Planning Afternoon a month later.

The initiative was implemented through the Student Services structure with year level Deans both ‘stepping up’ as a form of distributed leadership to also filter through academic counselling to form teachers¹⁰. Academic Counselling had “forced us to review every system that we use to support learning to occur” (Rachel, Principal, Deans meeting April 2009) further elevating its importance and the role of the Deans as an influential alliance above other middle leaders in the school. At the ‘State of the Nation’ staff meeting, the importance of Academic Counselling was reiterated to the staff, portrayed at the centre of a triangle linking together “Curriculum and pedagogy”, “School organisation” and “relationships”, though Rachel stressed to the staff that Academic Counselling was “not a silver bullet, there are no quick fix solutions”. She did encourage the staff however, stating, how the SMT were “really thrilled with you and your response to getting it off the ground. We know that every student has set some targets”.

However, data collected from students revealed that there had been some drop off in meetings with their form teacher later on throughout the year. The student questionnaire completed at the end of 2009 provided some further insight into the sources of influence within and outside of the school in relation to staff, parents and caregivers and their friends at the school (n=304, 60% response rate). It showed that, according to the students, something else was going on beyond the forms of distributed leadership evident with the staff. Students were asked to rate the degree of perceived influence different groups had in relation to three

¹⁰ Most subject teachers at Esteran were also form teachers. Form teachers met with their form class early most mornings to carry out administrative tasks such as recording student attendance and communicating school notices. Academic counselling was an addition to the role of form teacher, where form teachers were expected to have one-on-one conversations with students about their goal-setting and progress through the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA).

All of the Deans were subject teachers and a small number of them were also curriculum leaders.

aspects of their learning and related decision-making¹¹. These three aspects related to the aims of the Academic Counselling programme, and focused on students' perceptions of their:

- motivation to learn at school;
- preparation for NCEA assessments throughout the year; and
- decision-making about their subject choices for the following year or what they should do if they were planning to leave school.

Using the rating scale (disagree = 0; agree = 5), Year 11, 12 and 13 students responded to the statements below in the following way:

Table 6.2 – *Esteran College students' assumptions of Academic Counselling*

| Expectation | Mean |
|--|-------------|
| I know what my targets are for this year | 3.98 |
| It looks likely that I will achieve my targets for this year | 3.51 |
| I understand the purpose of Academic Counselling | 3.30 |
| I have had meetings at least once a term with my form teacher about my targets for this year | 2.80 |

The lower rating given to the meetings with form teachers replicated how students rated the roles staff played in influencing their learning, assessment preparation and decision-making related to subject and career choices (see Appendix twelve, Table A12.1, p. 298). For them the staff members influencing them the most, for good or for bad, were their subject teachers, not their form teachers. Despite the Deans 'stepping up' into the new school-wide frame, the flow on of developing personalised learning conversations between form teachers and students had yet to impact all students in Years 11, 12 and 13. From their perspective, they experienced a range of engagement and revealed that the likelihood of them setting targets could have occurred without regular meetings with their form teacher. The findings revealed that school-related influence on students came mainly through their subject teachers. From a staff perspective, the Deans had become a major influential alliance; however, this was not evident when viewed from the students' perspective. The further a group of staff were up the school's organisational structure, the less direct influence they had on students. This suggests that senior leaders were then reliant on distribution down through organisational structures and middle layers of management if they desired to see students influenced.

¹¹ A six point scale was used for each group with 0 being equated to "have no influence" at one end and 5 being equated with "have a major influence" at the other end.

During my last few months in the school, the SMT and Deans struggled at times to keep Academic Counselling planning and review a focus of their meetings as intended. After a joint early morning meeting in April 2009 that focused on Academic Counselling (observation #8), they attempted two follow up meetings in May and June (observations #13 and 14). During the follow up meetings, urgent matters shaped by approaching deadlines superseded Academic Counselling, such as senior reports, school management system software upgrades and preparing student subject handbooks for the following academic year. The process of change was fragmented due to the day-to-day demands that emerged.

Despite struggling to create space at times to attend to further Academic Counselling planning, the 'big picture' in 2009 had a sense of coherence for the SMT with the Deans positioned as leaders of learning distributed in parallel to the HODs. This did not mean what the SMT perceived as coherence and 'stepping up' would be experienced and perceived the same way between and within other groups in the school. Nor was it that the Deans' understanding of how Academic Counselling contributed to the 'big picture' would necessarily be the same as HODs and other subject middle managers.

Within group patterns and between group comparisons

Within group patterns

There was a wide variety of participation and non-participation particularly in the CMT and MMT groups, compared to the Deans' group, where the spread of participation was more even in meetings. Curriculum leaders, whether HODs or subject middle managers, often provided contrasting views and degrees of verbal involvement within the same meeting. The same small number was often silent, sometimes offering a view only when asked. When they did speak without being prompted I once saw members of the SMT look at each other and smile as if the brief involvement was on cue as expected by them. At other times, an indirect prompt was provided. For example, when HODs were expected to be "tweaking" their department plans, Hamish asked HODs if any support was needed (observation #4). Rachel, the Principal, said "writing", paused and then looked at Harry, who rarely contributed in meetings. He responded "It's all in my head ... I am not convinced we need plans and ... these targets. Why have plans when we aren't going to meet them?". Later on in the meeting, as if spurred into action, Harry volunteered to be a member of the Year 9 options review team, an area where he had no responsibility or involvement.

There was however, a small group of HODs who contributed beyond their own departmental perspective. When this did occur the SMT responded positively, often using terms like “good idea”, “mmm, yes you could...”, “I agree”, “can I put this down in the minutes for further discussion?” as a strategy to reinforce this behaviour. In the CMT meetings, Craig was one of these HODs who provided a ‘stepping up’ perspective not bounded to his department. He acted as a ‘boundary-spanner’ often connecting one colleague’s point with another. In these instances, leadership was distributed beyond the agenda speaker. In his interview Craig attributed this to being “around for a while”. The role of Craig and other participants was also analysed in terms of the conversation pattern that emerged during meetings where I was able to record the order of conversation. These patterns are displayed diagrammatically like a sociogram, and based on *in-situ* data (see Figure 6.2).

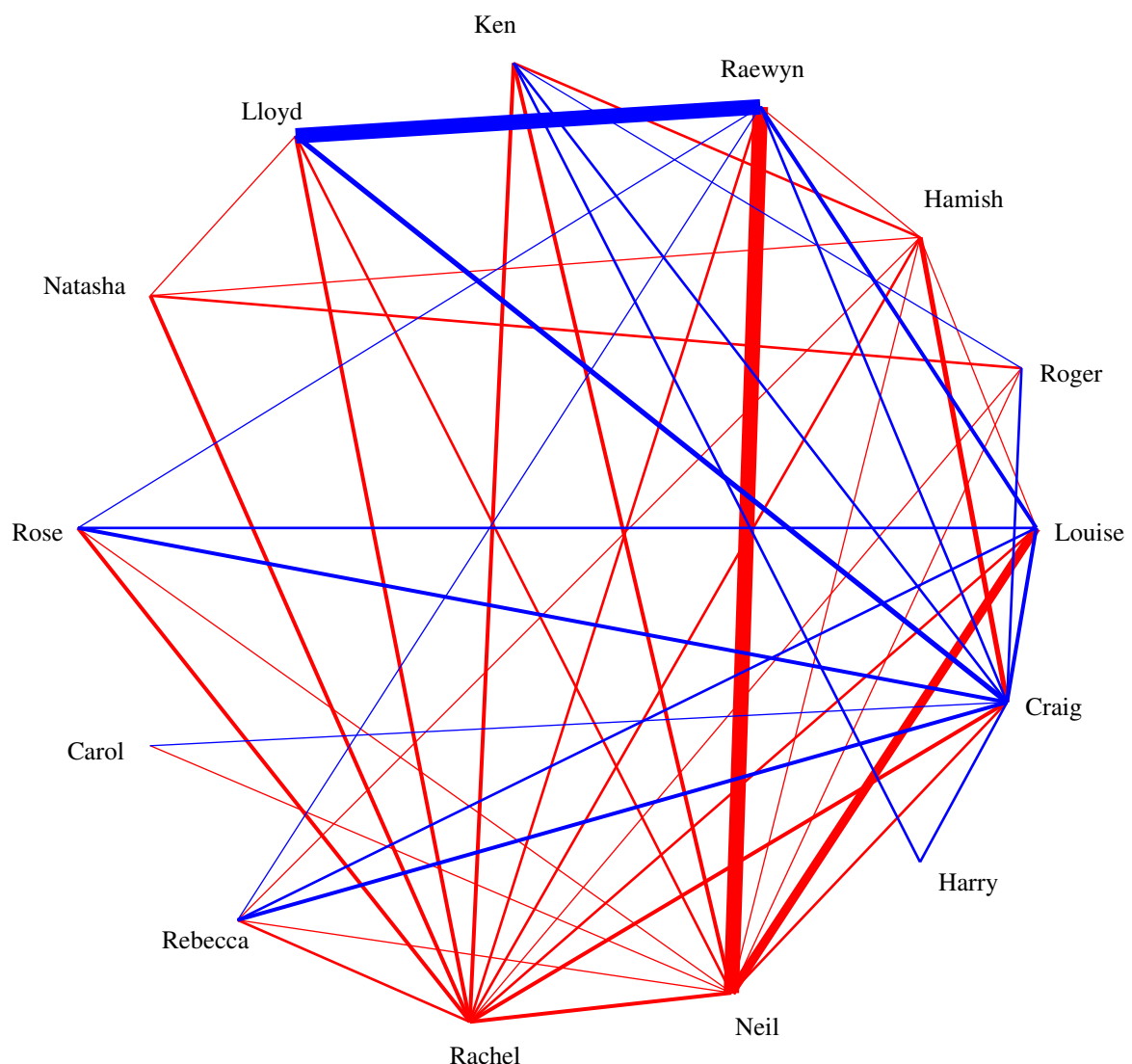


Figure 6.2 – *Esteran College Curriculum Planning Afternoon sociogram*

Figure 6.2 displays an excerpt of the interactions that took place during observation 3 at the Curriculum Planning Afternoon. The thickness of each line is representative of the number of times each participant followed each other in conversation, with the red lines showing interaction involving SMT members and the blue lines showing interaction between two non-SMT members. In the CMT meetings for instance, Craig emerged as one of the few participants who demonstrated boundary-spanning leadership across a group, adding to a wider distribution of leadership. He consistently followed on from nearly everyone else in the meeting, rather than regularly following on from the same one or two in the group. The sociogram also reflects Harry's tendency to isolate himself and not participate in meetings unless prompted.

The broad participation of Craig evident through the blue and red links to nearly all the other participants is similar to Rachel's and Hamish's who jointly chaired this session. The distribution of Craig's involvement was also evident in his lower individual co-variance score when compared to all the other participants. In contrast, the thicker lines are reflective of how Neil and Raewyn became involved in a closed conversation, while Lloyd and Raewyn became embroiled in a heated discussion related to differing assumptions and interests about their shared curriculum area. A few weeks later at a CMT meeting that focused on option subjects (observation #6), Lloyd epitomised an example of a HOD "rearing their head now and then" (Neil, Deputy Principal, Final Group Interview). Lloyd expressed concern that another HOD did not have enough specialised classroom space to fulfil proposed curriculum delivery for the following year.

Between group comparisons

The amount of verbal participation with the groups did tend to alter. This depended on the agenda item and who was the agenda speaker. In nearly all instances irrespective of which group was meeting, the agenda speaker was a member of the SMT so the expectation of 'stepping up' was a regular feature of the meetings I attended. The SMT controlled the setting of the agenda. Across the 17 observations there were 48 agenda items, of which 42 (88%) were led by a SMT member. When the agenda item was not presented as an information report to a group, the amount of participation beyond the SMT increased. In general, a wider distribution of participation occurred in the Deans' meetings compared to the CMT and

MMT meetings, due to the lower V scores attained in the Deans' meetings¹². These scores are possibly reflective of more participants 'stepping up' to align with the SMT led agendas, though this conclusion needs to be moderated somewhat due to the sometimes larger numbers of staff that attended the CMT meetings and the fewer number of SMT members that generally attended Deans' meetings.

In contrast, the V score for the MMT meeting (observation #15) was 283 and reflected the 'reporting to' style that had come to epitomise those meetings. Craig, was one of the few HODs who chose to attend MMT meetings and commented how they were "just an information dissemination session". Raewyn, one of the middle managers who did not attend CMT meetings, lamented that the MMT meetings had become a reporting mechanism of the SMT and included "nothing about the difficulties of teaching and learning in the classroom". She went on to explain how staff no longer had a meeting where they could "vent all their frustrations" and were likely to do this now "over lunch or morning tea or whatever in departments". Having fewer MMT meetings meant for Raewyn that "they're [i.e. the SMT] doing away with the voice of the people"; for her the micropolitics of isolation were evident. Raewyn's perspective was in contrast to most of those represented by the Deans who espoused a closer connection to staff:

I feel like I don't stand up here and my form teachers are down here anymore. I feel like it has flattened it out a bit and the gap between us has shrunk so that we're a team. (Julie, Dean)

There was evidence to suggest when I withdrew from the school, the message communicated to staff was more coherent and linked to the 'big picture', particularly in the staff meetings and the agenda items of different group meetings. For some, such as the Deans and some of the HODs, this message was equated to them having a voice that was valued by the SMT. For others, though they could hear the message, their focus remained on their departments instead of the SMT encouragement to 'step up' into school-wide thinking. Alternatively, these HODs may have equated 'stepping up' to mean they needed to 'get on board' with the initiative Academic Counselling. With their focus on the implementation of the revised curriculum in their departments, 'stepping up', may have been a 'step too far'.

¹² The group level coefficient of variation (V) scores for five CMT meetings ranged from V=136 through to V=177 (observations #3, 6, 10, 12, 17), whereas those for the three Dean's meetings ranged from V=97 through to V=131 (observations #11, 13, 14), the lower scores reflecting a wider range of engagement across the participants.

The events I observed do not present the whole picture. My documentation of them in this section also requires a comparison with how participants interpreted this season of ‘stepping up’, informed by their stories of past and present staff relations, and their own understanding of distributed leadership. The two sections that follow help to provide a deeper sociological perspective of what occurred at Esteran College as staff were expected to ‘step up’ with improving student achievement during 2008 and 2009.

Perceptions of staff relations

Historical staff relations prior to 2008

In the SMT, there was a shared understanding that the Esteran College staff room had for a long time “been a nice place to be” (Natasha, Deputy Principal). Compared to other secondary schools it was perceived as a place where “staff were a much more homogeneous, very sociable group of people” (Craig, Head of Department). The historical perception of relations amongst the teaching staff held by the Principal, Rachel, was also echoed by a long-serving staff member, who spoke of a previous principal, yet lamented that the presence of the SMT in the staff room had changed over recent years:

We had a reputation in the school that it was a school run by teachers, maybe it was, maybe it wasn’t, but it’s what I understood...the social culture, I agree with Natasha, everything I heard about Esteran was always the extra bit, it was really, you know, it’s a really friendly staff room. So I think that’s been a constant. (Rachel, Principal)

All the people in leadership roles would have morning tea and lunch times with the staff. I know that [the previous Principal] actually made a point of sitting in different groups in the staffroom for morning tea and lunch...But that doesn’t happen anymore. (Raewyn, Middle Manager)

A possible factor that contributed to ‘friendly’ staff relations beyond the staff room setting in the past was the physical location of the offices belonging to the SMT and Deans in the main administration building. Prior to the Administration Block rebuilding programme, staff had to walk past these offices “down the corridor to the (school) main office and general reception area” (Raewyn, Middle Manager) on their way out of the school. There was also a perception that the Deans, along with other student support services staff, had accumulated sufficient

deference to play an influential role within the school over many years, though this had not been without internal tension:

I don't know what it was like before that but ... I get the sense that people see that the Deans have more responsibility or are more involved with Management decisions. Now whether that's true or not I don't know, as I said I don't know what happened. (Chloe, Dean)

In this school I have been here for 14 years I think. Over the period of 14 years it has always been like that. (Olivia, Dean and Middle Manager, spoken in response to the quote above)

There has been a perception about the Deans for a long time compared to say the HODs and some sort of desire at times on part of the Deans for HODs to take more responsibility. (Lance, Student Support Services)

Even though the current relations amongst staff were perceived generally as being "nice", there also appeared to be some underlying past issues between staff and senior management.

Well, we always have good agendas and we always kept good records. I can remember there was always fights over who kept the records 'cause there were fights as to whether the records were truly well kept by the DP's. And so, then the HOD's were keeping really good minutes, accurate minutes of the meeting, which we referred to. (Raewyn, Middle Manager)

The influence that the teaching staff had in the past, raised for Rachel when she started as the new Principal, issues of safety:

It feels safer [now], I don't know if that's a weird word to use, but that's how it feels to me. It's okay to say stuff now and to travel down a path that might challenge a few sacred cows and not feel like I am going to be put through the 'mincer' at the end of it. (Rachel, Principal)

The SMT viewed historical staff relations as both friendly and problematic. They valued the contribution that staff brought to a friendly staff room climate, yet also recognised that there was more to being friendly if the school was going to grapple with internal and external professional matters raised by the SMT. Internally they perceived that the school had lacked direction and a coherent professional culture that emphasised conversations about learning. These perceived concerns became more poignant when linked to external factors such as,

being required to have implemented the revised *New Zealand Curriculum* by February 2010, the annual reporting of their NCEA results against other similar schools and a visit from the Education Review Office every three years. For them, teaching staff needed to change from a perceived default reactive stance to a more proactive one in relation to grappling with change. There was also an inherent expectation held by the SMT that the HODs should place their dominant departmental and subject based interest second to the school-wide interests of the SMT.

When I first came here, it felt like the school had gone up an educational cul-de-sac and the wheels had fallen off. That was the feeling and there was a sort of lack of coherence I think in terms of management decisions, professional development. (Neil, Deputy Principal)

In the past I think there was very much a culture around all of these things, um, are happening to us, you know the Ministry have done this to us and none of it's our fault and it's kind of tucked away like that, you know, protecting ourselves. (Natasha, Deputy Principal)

When I first discussed with the SMT late in 2007, the possibility of carrying out fieldwork in the school, I perceived that I had entered an environment that was friendly. Yet from within the SMT, I also heard their desire to bring about change to the decision-making culture that according to Rachel "hadn't taken the school to a good place" in the past.

Staff relations 2008 - 2009

The SMT spoke with some enthusiasm about how they had perceived a change in staff relations since they had been together as a team for nearly three years. Their enthusiasm however, was moderated amongst themselves. At one point in their initial group interview in October 2008, the following dialogue provided a glimpse into differences that informed their self-moderation:

People are taking more ownership at every level, one from their classroom to curriculum heads... [gets cut off]. (Neil, Deputy Principal)

There's still some way to go yet. (Natasha, Deputy Principal)

Oh yes. (Neil, Deputy Principal)

Of course. (Hamish, Deputy Principal)

There's a danger in sounding 'Pollyanna-ish'. (Rachel, Principal)

Yeah. (Neil, Deputy Principal)

Yeah. (Hamish, Deputy Principal)

There have been some significant changes, is that what I am hearing? (Howard, Interviewer)

Yeah, I think so. (Rachel, Principal)

Mmmm [shared agreement from other members of the SMT]

The SMT identified a greater clarity of direction, a clearer coherence in how the school structure identified jurisdiction around decision-making and role, and their espoused willingness to seek feedback from staff as possible causes of the changes they perceived in staff relations. They also acknowledged that differences existed amongst the staff:

I think that most people now [October, 2008] have more of an understanding about the direction that the school is wanting to take. They have a bit better idea I guess of the big picture than what they've had before and probably see their role in that more clearer than perhaps in the past. I think, you know, it's difficult for us sitting kind of on the outside but I generally get the feeling that people feel that things are much more open. And there's a bit more of a structure of, um, who you go to. (Natasha, Deputy Principal)

I can see pockets of, um, historical, um, practice and politics within the school and some of the stuff that so-and-so who has been here a long time, but I can also see a lot of change. (Neil, Deputy Principal)

An example of a different perspective was evident with Raewyn's comparison of historical staff relations with those more recent:

Ever since I've been in this school it's been a really close, supportive staff ... I'm not overly sure it's as supportive as it used to be. (Raewyn, Middle Manager)

For Raewyn, a member of the MMT group and not the CMT formed in 2008, staff relations had possibly changed for her. She had previously been part of the larger group of curriculum managers who used to meet with the deputy principals as one large group. Rachel, the Principal acknowledged that structures had changed, particularly for curriculum leaders:

The curriculum leaders I think are now operating in a different structure that very clearly has been signalling for a while. Now, what you were saying Natasha, that this is not about you advocating for your department, this is about you contributing to the direction of the school, big planning, so that the CMT and the way it works is quite different. (Rachel, Principal)

Some of the organisational structures had changed for curriculum leaders during 2008, Craig one of the HODs, identified a possible source of tension in the sense that staff still generally mixed as they had done historically in the staff room. However, he also acknowledged that this did not necessarily equate to moving from a subject-based perspective to more of a school-wide perspective as promoted by the SMT where “people can connect to the big picture” (Rachel, Principal). Mixing socially in the staff room as one group did not mean that within departmental alliances were necessarily tempered for the sake of school-wide perspectives:

What happens is people get stuck in their departments, don't they? You know, head down, and it's hard to see beyond it. And I think sometimes, yeah, you just have to drag people out, to look across a bit. I mean, secondary schools, for all the talk of new curriculum, they're still incredibly subject obsessed, really. (Craig, HOD)

The “big picture” particularly for Rachel, the Principal, centred on student achievement and supporting the HODs:

It's not about being done to you, unless you choose not be part of it, but this big picture is something that makes sense, it has cohesion and this is the part you play in this and that the outcomes in the end are about student achievement. Who's going to argue with that? (Rachel, Principal)

Near the end of 2009 staff members were invited to complete a questionnaire (n=43 out of 67, 64% response rate) so that some of their perceptions shaped in the 2008-2009 period of ‘stepping up’ could be ascertained. Staff members who completed the questionnaire generally perceived that a different alignment existed between Deans and form teachers compared to HODs and subject teachers in relation to how they rated their perceived degree of influence

on each group in the school and how each group influenced them¹³. The two coloured ellipses show the alignment between two differing structures in the school (see Figure 6.3).

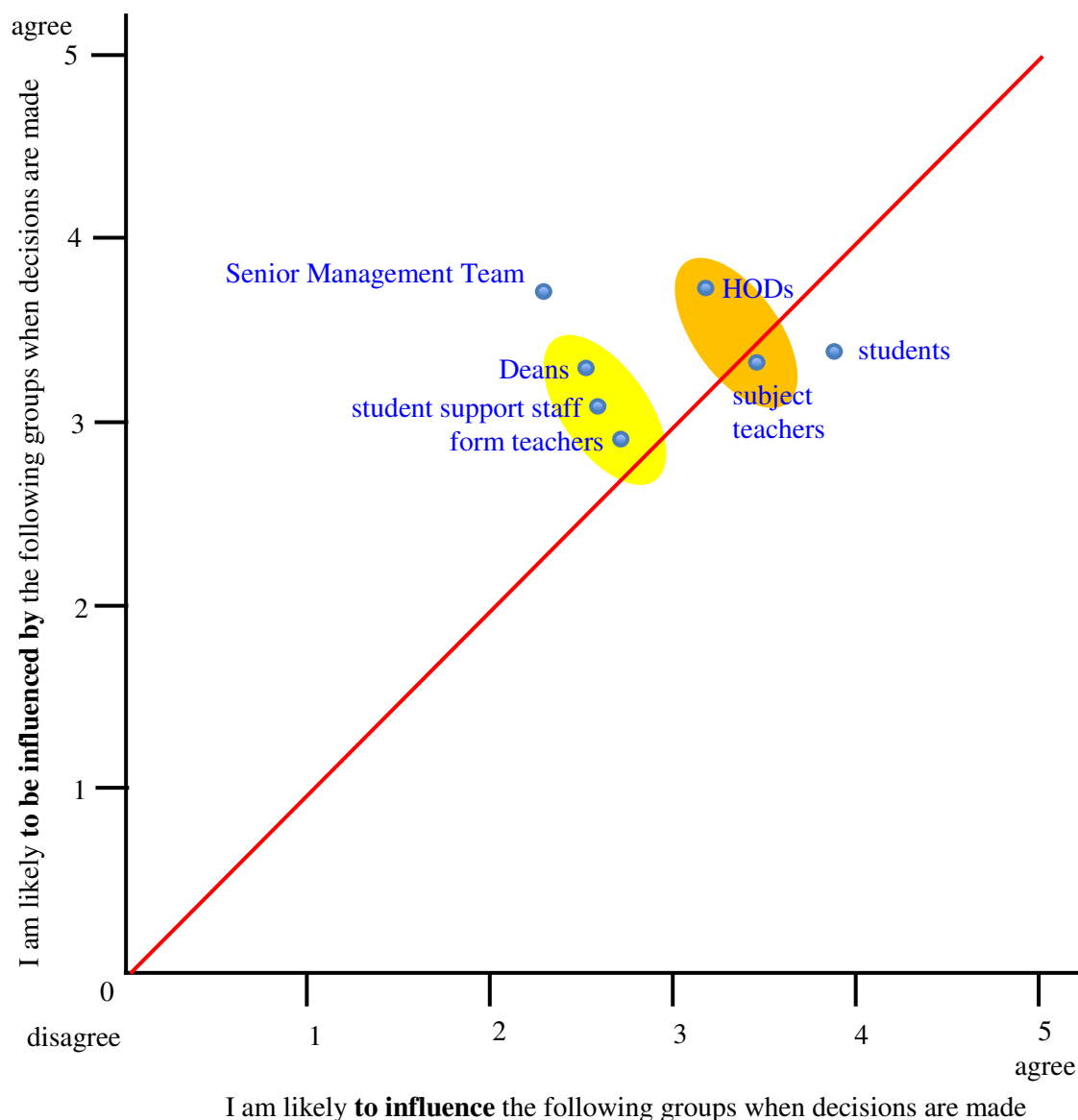


Figure 6.3 – Esteran College staff perceptions of group influence in decision-making

The yellow incorporates those involved in student support services and Academic Counselling, whereas the orange highlights the linkage between HODs and subject teachers. The further that a group is positioned perpendicularly to the left of the red diagonal line, the greater the influence it has over the staff. This broadly meant that at Esteran College late in 2009, the staff members who completed the questionnaire perceived that they were more

¹³ A six point scale was used from 0 (no influence) to 5 (major influence). Staff generally perceived that they were less able to influence decision-making processes involving the Deans (mean = 2.52) in comparison to HODs (3.16) and subject teachers (3.45).

likely to be influenced by the SMT, Deans and HODs compared to subject teachers and students. The perceived difference between the Deans and the HODs was also acknowledged by the SMT as an expected norm of secondary schools in their final group interview:

Is there friction between the two groups? (Howard)

Oh yeah. (Hamish, Deputy Principal)

This is [said with emphasis] a secondary school. (Rachel, Principal)

But more apparent in some curriculum areas than others, quite a bit more apparent. (Natasha, Deputy Principal)

Craig expressed a similar view in his interview but questioned the validity of making such a distinction between the groups.

I think people have these perceptions of other groups that are probably not entirely valid half the time. I think the Deans have a lot of power in the school and they form a distinct cultural subgroup, I think, they are perceived by a lot of teachers to have the power. (Craig, HOD)

Historically, according to Olivia, a Dean and a curriculum middle manager, the Deans had a reputation for having more responsibility and being closely involved in management decisions for years. This perception still existed and Roger, a HOD and a new Dean, was able to provide a view shaped by his position on the outside previously looking in and the inside now looking out:

With regards to our position in the school I'd say that since I've been, that it's "the Deans will do it". If something needs to be done the Deans will do it and the buck stops with the Deans, and the responsibility is with the Deans. That was before I was a Dean and now that I am one. That's my perception. (Roger, HOD and Dean)

The perceived differences between the Deans and HODs rarely emerged in the conversations between staff when I was present. An exception was early in 2009 at a CMT meeting (observation #10) where Craig commented in a friendly yet half-joking manner that a strategy was needed "to stop poaching our [department] teachers for the Deans' network" from his department, suggesting that there were some possible micropolitical issues that were not always being exposed.

The SMT did not seem to position the Deans' group as a possible threat. Natasha, the Deputy Principal responsible for student services met regularly with the Deans and interpreted "the Deans will do it" approach as a 'stepping up' and modelling of emergent distributed leadership. Her enthusiasm for this group became evident during the initial group interview with the SMT in mid-2008:

I kind of think that I see the Deans in the school as being people who I think are successfully modelling leadership, distributed leadership. It's been really interesting watching the new ones come on board because they have definitely been unafraid to step up, but completely feeling safety in the support that's around them. But that's probably a [pauses]. (Natasha, Deputy Principal)

Is it more distributed, your [fades off]. (Rachel, Principal)

Definitely, I'm finding it really interesting because the ones that have been around longer, are definitely more dependent on me for decisions. That has been really interesting. (Natasha, Deputy Principal)

The reference Natasha made to distributed leadership was one of the very few times that a staff member used this terminology without me prompting for it directly in an individual or group interview. Natasha understood distributed leadership to mean "empowering people", her interpretation was one of several as the staff I interviewed sometimes struggled to explain what it meant to them. Despite the prominence of the term "distributed leadership" in school leadership literature, Esteran staff did not use it during my observations or interviews with them.

Espoused staff understandings of distributed leadership

Views of the SMT

When I first interviewed members of the SMT in 2008, they acknowledged that they did not hear the term "distributed leadership" used amongst the staff. The SMT were aware of the term, but did not use it regularly as a means to describe practice or as something to aspire. When prompted, they did articulate their own assumptions and equated distributed leadership with: "empowerment" (Natasha, Deputy Principal); "distributing the decision-making power" (Hamish, Deputy Principal); providing "opportunity to grow with enough support...to feel like they're moving forward" (Neil, Deputy Principal); "building a community of practice",

where “they’re all in it together sharing ideas” (Hamish, Deputy Principal); and, “teaching people to lead” (Rachel, Principal). Distributed leadership was espoused as a “lot more than delegating stuff to other people to do” (Rachel, Principal). Rachel identified structure as a means to develop distributed leadership throughout the school so that it also incorporated students as well as staff:

If [staff] don’t have a structure in which they can make decisions and feel that that structure is about that, then they won’t or they can’t, or they make decisions and they’re not well considered and well informed...if it’s [i.e. the structure] not enabling, then what’s the point? I don’t understand that. (Rachel, Principal)

Leadership, particularly in a distributed form, was viewed by the SMT as a key component that could contribute to school-wide student achievement and shifts in school culture:

I can’t imagine how this school is going to grow and change if people don’t step up in this respect, and that, there’s only four of us. We have to grow people who can think about student achievement in a global way and then apply it locally as it were, and when I say global, I mean really for their schooling and the wider community. I can’t see how we can shift practice in this school if there aren’t sufficient people who step up and say, you know, these are the expectations, this is what we need to do to meet them, this is your role and my role in all of this. I just can’t see how we can change. It is beyond my capacity to see how you shift a school’s whole culture without taking this other step, or supporting the growth of leadership in the school, I don’t know how you’d do it. (Rachel, Principal)

There was an assumption that developing leadership practice as a form of distributed leadership across the school involved a “step up” into articulating expectations, having a school-wide perspective and clarification of roles, though the SMT did admit in their initial group interview that they also did not know what staff understandings and expectations of leadership were. Hamish developed this further and was the first to make a link between practice and theoretical knowledge:

They can lead without knowing about the [leadership] theory, but it does actually give them a good basis about making decisions and looking at collegiality and building trust if they do have that theoretical background. It doesn’t have to be huge detail, but there are different

conceptions and perceptions about what leadership is, so I think it is necessary for people to address the knowledge base as well as the practice. (Hamish, Deputy Principal)

The SMT positioned leadership in 2008 as a vehicle to bring about shifts in the school's culture through having a greater number of staff who could "step up" cognitively as the SMT expected, distributed across the school. Distributed leadership was seen as being much more than delegation by the SMT, though by the end of 2009 the staff I interviewed did not reflect similar views. In some cases confusion and a variety of views were attributed to the term "distributed leadership".

Other staff views

Delegation and decision-making processes were two aspects of day-to-day leadership and management practice that staff appeared to associate with distributed leadership. At times, a hesitancy underlined some responses:

Is that the ability to delegate at the same time retaining responsibility, something like that? (Raewyn, Middle Manager)

I suppose it implies that the active leading could be split between a group of people. You know, that you can't do it all on your own. I'm not sure what the difference is with delegation, that sort of suggests maybe a bit of autonomy, maybe... But I don't know. I mean, it's, I can see lots of possible meanings of the word, I'm sure it's got precise management meaning but I wouldn't know, obviously. (Craig, HOD)

Both Raewyn and Craig acknowledged, like Rachel, that distributed leadership was not exactly the same as delegation. Both of them suggested that leadership practice could span across several leaders due to individuals not being able to "do it all on their own". They expected that responsibility would be retained by an individual yet also "split between a group", a view that was echoed by Hamish, one of the Deputy Principals, "sure, you still have to have the boss...but the boss can't do everything".

This view of leadership suggests there could be two ends of a spectrum related to responsibility. At one end, an individual leader endeavours to do it all on his or her own, whereas at the other the end, so much responsibility is distributed away that there could be an abrogation of what is expected of that leader by others. Some of the staff involved in the

Deans' and Student Support Services group members interview at one point expressed a range of views across this spectrum and made particular links between their understanding of distributed leadership and decision-making:

How would you define distributed leadership? (Howard, Interviewer)

Nobody makes the tough decision. (Tracey, Student Support Services, who responded without any hesitation)

[laughter] (Julie, Dean)

Yeah the thing that comes to my mind is passing the decisions onto everybody else. (Ethan, Student Support Services)

I think it is like the consultation between a group of people to come to a decision. (Ryan, Dean)

I see it as a flat style as opposed to a hierarchy so much, it kind of flattens out a bit. (Julie, Dean)

I think decisions are made too. They're not avoided, they're made. (Lance, Student Support Services)

Ryan emphasised group context in a manner similar to Craig (HOD), though expanded on this and explained that there could be at times a congestion attributed to distributed leadership, particularly across middle managers. Others quickly noticed his comments in the group interview:

I think at times you get too almost middle management full with this distributed leadership sort of style and have way too many people involved with things and nobody actually makes a decision. (Ryan, Dean)

Decision by committee rather than decision by...[fades off]. (Chloe, Dean)

You get distribution delegation and it turns into buck-passing. (Roger, HOD and Dean)

Yeah well it is easy to [gets cut off]. (Ryan, Dean)

No one wants to take the action. (Tracey, Student Support Services)

And that's the problem, everyone wants to be right, or maybe everybody, I don't care. (Roger, HOD and Dean)

That's why you need a bastard. I mean you need a person who is a visionary and you need a person who is staff management. (Tracey, Student Support Services)

Tracey's use of the term "bastard" had caught the attention of others in the group interview. Earlier on, she explained what she meant and the following dialogue took place:

I think you need a bastard, you need someone that actually will cut [gets cut off]. (Tracey, Student Support Services)

A what? (Julie, Dean)

A bastard. You need someone who will cut the line and say, "right, well actually this person needs to be performance managed, this person needs to be whatever" and somebody needs to be prepared to do that. So I don't mean that that's [distributed leadership] against that necessarily, but you need someone that will say the hard yards. (Tracey, Student Support Services)

You're talking about effective leadership? (Chloe, Dean)

Yes, I think you need someone that everyone is a little bit scared of and not in a terrible way but in my experience when you've got someone that will hold everyone accountable and that if you are not at a meeting that you are meant to be at they will pull you up. I think we need that, as humans we're a bit guilty of sliding to the lowest denominator at times, not all the time. But if we always rely on people's good will, that good will, will erode eventually if you see other people not being pulled up. (Tracey, Student Support Services)

This is back out to all of you. If there is a distribution of leadership is there a greater need to have accountability? (Howard, Interviewer)

Four replied "yeah"

But not just on that group, but across the board. (Tracey, Student Support Services)

I think it just needs to be defined as well. I think we have distributed leadership but not everyone would have the same structure in their head as the Principal does, or as we do, you know? There's some conflict about where the leadership is distributed. (Chloe, Dean)

I think it is good to have distributed leadership but every now and then there comes a decision that is difficult to make and those decisions need to be made by people at the top and sometimes we just have to suck on it and that's just the decision that's made. It is better to make a decision than not to make one. (Ethan, Student Support Services)

These views of staff outside of the SMT were collected approximately 14-15 months after those of the SMT. The SMT had suggested that distributed leadership included a 'stepping up' of staff in relation to articulating expectations and transitioning from a subject-based perspective to a wider school-based perspective. For the SMT, this interpretation of distributed leadership was deemed necessary if school culture and student achievement was to change, something that they admitted was beyond the scope and influence of the four of them.

The challenge of 'stepping up'

'Stepping up' into a school-wide level of thinking, dialogue and action brought with it a series of implications for different groups in the school, due to those groups 'stepping up' or not from different contexts shaped by past patterns of practice. How the SMT interpreted the revised *New Zealand Curriculum* with its additional emphasis beyond and across learning areas to key competencies and inquiry-based approaches to pedagogy, brought with it an expectation that HODs should be able to 'step up' beyond just seeing their role as leaders of their subject areas. Rachel elaborated on this highlighting some of the external forces that shaped and hindered HODs:

...right at the beginning of the year [2009] or even last year, we've been talking over and over about the effective practice network as we've moved into a different frame. I think the opportunity that we have still is to work out some way in which, as a professional group, we focus on what our expectations are and I haven't been able to do that. I think that because the Deans operate in a different context, that's something that they, in order to survive, have to reflect like that constantly. In a curriculum area you don't because you've got all these other wolves around you. You can blame the university entrance requirements or the NZQA. There are all these other things out there that say you have to behave in this fashion or you believe you can't do that because what about the results and what about the statistics that are going to be in Metro¹⁴ and so forth? (Rachel, Principal, Final SMT Group interview)

¹⁴ Metro is a popular magazine that annually ranks secondary schools according to how well each school performed in NCEA.

Rachel went on to explain how some of the HODs had struggled to connect to the wider perspective associated with Academic Counselling;

...they see academic counselling as an additional problem rather than part of how they should be working to improve student achievement. They don't see themselves as making a contribution to it. They're not all like that at all but there are significant people who struggle to see the connection... The patch they protect is about doing stuff in the best interests of students and, although that may be articulated in the curriculum leaders' area and practice, that's a harder ask for them because they see their priority really as delivering quality curriculum. We hope that the outcome will be good for students. There's nothing new about that. That's the dilemma that secondary schools always struggle with. (Rachel, Principal, Final SMT Group interview)

As an example, one of the HODs during a CMT meeting (observation #17), some thirteen months after Academic Counselling was first discussed, still had not made the connection the SMT had hoped for. In reference to a discussion about developing a thinking skills option for students, the HOD asked "is this like Academic Counselling?" to which three rapid replies came back with a unified "no". The SMT assumed that the Deans' group was better able to 'step up' due to its members not needing to be confined to one subject area:

The pastoral care team gets what it's all about and they connect it [i.e. Academic Counselling] to restorative practice, they connect it to the key competencies ... The strategic thinking is there and I'd put that down as the role of the Dean to step outside curriculum areas and look at all sorts of issues in a more general sense. Academic counselling, in terms of how the Deans have responded to it for example, they seem to have got it really quickly, understood what we were trying to do, understood how that impacts on their role and they made the most amazingly positive contributions to getting it going. In the curriculum area that hasn't been so. That is still very driven by the silos of the curriculum. (Rachel, Principal, Final SMT Group interview)

This did not imply however that the SMT or the Deans knew the impact of Academic Counselling in subject classrooms. For Raewyn, one of the few teaching staff who was not a form teacher and despite acknowledging that Academic Counselling was to "slowly be integrated" she nevertheless from the outside looking in stated how "nothing is linking to actually what's going on at the coal face, nothing's linking to the classroom. Which is a bit

weird, to be honest” (Interview). Rachel also recognised the challenge of influencing the classroom environment:

What happens in classrooms is the most important thing. Getting inside that door, in terms of influence, I think is huge. Although I say that the pastoral care team are more responsive to the sense of change, in the end I don’t know what their influence is inside the classroom door. I think they’ve made some huge changes themselves around how they manage behaviour but whether they are influencing teachers to do things differently in their classroom or not, it’s a hard ask to know. (Rachel, Principal, Final Group Interview)

A challenge associated with Academic Counselling were the assumptions the Deans and other support staff made in relation to some form teachers who had a central role in meeting with their students about targets:

I think we’ve got to recognise that there are a number of staff who actually wanted to cut down our form period time because it was a waste of time and suddenly they’ve got this counselling which is contrary to their whole belief system about what form period is. You go in and mark the roll. It is a chill out time. (Olivia, Dean and Middle Manager)

Ryan went on to elaborate how there was a certain degree of micropolitical resistance from form teachers:

I think when you come to things like Academic Counselling there is always going to be a certain degree of resistance because it is another thing they’ve [i.e. form teachers] got to do. So I think they [i.e. the SMT] are trying to change that perception and the mindset of what the form teachers roles are ... so it is really hard to try and turn that around and get them to buy into Academic Counselling. This [i.e. Academic Counselling] is going to be great, you know, which is going to require them to do, you know, it is not a lot of work, but it is more work. (Ryan, Dean)

The challenge of requiring Deans, HODs and form teachers to ‘step up’ into the school-wide initiatives was not enough if the SMT’s intention to see classroom practice influenced was realised or not. Another means of influence needed to be developed that complemented Academic Counselling with its emphasis on individualising learning for each student across

subjects. Rachel and Hamish captured the complexity of the task at the inaugural Effective Practice Team meeting midway through 2009 (observation #16):

...this is not a task for the faint-hearted. I think this is a biggie. We've been around the edges. We need to get to the heart here. It will be uncomfortable. "An Effective Practice Team, who are they to tell me?". The best teachers in the school are not necessarily here, they may not know they are the best teachers. (Rachel, Principal)

We can identify shifts in teaching that create shifts in achievement, over five years perhaps. (Hamish, Deputy Principal)

At this inaugural meeting, there were staff with extra responsibility who sat outside of the CMT, MMT and Deans' groups. They were the Literacy Team leader, the Numeracy leader and the Ministry of Education funded Specialist Classroom Teacher (SCT), all of whom had a school-wide perspective associated with their role and spoke of how their area needed integration across the school. HODs were not positioned as possible initiators and Hamish, one of the Deputy Principals, raised near the end of the meeting, "the question for me is how do we create the tentacles out to staff?". The SMT picked up on this again during their final group interview and though a clear way forward had yet to emerge as I withdrew from the school, Rachel was determined there would be no covert micropolitical 'Trojan horse' process of influencing teachers in their classrooms:

The conversations we're having around academic counselling are more valuable, even when we sometimes say they're not that valuable with CMT or MMT or teachers at large, there's far more reflection on practice happening in this context than there is in our so-called appraisal professional development. It's not happening there at all. (Rachel, Principal)

Maybe that's a vehicle again, like the RP ... (Neil, Deputy Principal)

Well we've always said this is a Trojan horse going on here but the minute we start to introduce that element and that it's about influencing the way people behave in their classrooms, I sense there will be a "hello? We won't be having any of that thank you very much". (Rachel, Principal)

Is it inbred defensiveness I think? And resistance to change. If it's working for you because your kids are relatively well behaved and they're getting through the work, that's fine, but what are they learning and how effectively are they learning? I think the academic counselling is focussing on the kids, and that's the way it should be, but the next will have to be somehow, without compromising academic counselling, working on how teachers can improve their practice in the classroom. There is a gap at the moment. (Hamish, Deputy Principal)

Hamish's summary highlighted where the challenge still existed. There had been a 'stepping up', a wider distribution of school-wide leadership had occurred mainly with the Deans and with some of the HODs who would "rear their head now and then" to see "what was going on in the school in general" (Neil, Deputy Principal, Final Group Interview). For the Principal Rachel, the challenge was also a contextual one for HODs due to the "wolves" that hindered their 'stepping up' in the manner expected by the SMT. These "wolves" were external education factors such as university entrance, NZQA requirements and the public reporting of achievement rates. This meant that much of their attention was on delivering their subject as a performative requirement, rather than reflecting how it could be taught with connections to school-wide initiatives. In addition to these challenges, was a mix of historical stories that shaped the distribution of leadership in parallel through the HOD and Deans' groups throughout the 2008-2009 period from which the participants drew on their symbolic capital and a range of position taking in relation to 'stepping up'.

A sociological perspective to 'stepping up'

Fields, capital and deference

Esteran College, according to the SMT, was symptomatic of New Zealand secondary schools, where school systems and structures were situated around two differing 'lumps', each with its own 'patch' or field as if they were not connected. These two 'lumps', student services and curriculum, amounted to differing perceptions of symbolic capital within and between the staff who positioned themselves as members or non-members of these groups. Rachel, though she acknowledged the two 'lumps' as disconnected, along with the members of the SMT, sought to create a different frame around 'the big picture' where both 'lumps' could connect in the context of improving student achievement. This meant creating sufficient cultural capital around this new connected frame through expecting student services and curriculum

leaders to think and act in a manner synonymous with the discourse of ‘stepping up’ from their ‘lump’ to also include a perspective that was school-wide. For the SMT, this was distributed leadership in practice. Two school-based initiatives, Restorative Practice, with its emphasis on staff to student relationships and Academic Counselling with its emphasis on personalised student target setting, created opportunity for staff to ‘step up’ during my time in the school. As I withdrew from the school, a third initiative linked to the Effective Practice Team that was to focus on pedagogy across the school was emerging as another dimension of the new connected frame. The SMT hoped that teachers would ‘step up’ from their subject fields to a school-wide field that incorporated inquiry-based pedagogies, literacy, and numeracy.

Different groups within the school could not use the same pathway into this new field due to the differences in symbolic and human capital associated with each group and the different position taking that existed between and within each group. Historical staff relations positioned the Deans in the student services ‘lump’ as a micropolitical alliance that ‘got things done’. They were “the coalition of the willing”. Based on the deference given them by other staff, I observed how the Deans used this symbolic power to ‘step up’ into the new frame first through Restorative Practice and then more overtly through Academic Counselling. According to the SMT, the curriculum leaders on the other hand positioned Academic Counselling as an ‘add on’ to their existing field that was bounded by their subjects and departments. The silo historical structures based around departments, common in secondary schools due to the fragmentation of the curriculum into subjects, meant that the HODs in particular, were not able to ‘step up’ in the same manner as the Deans, either in their practice or espoused views.

Habitus, group histories and decision-making

The expectation of the SMT to reframe what was expected in the school meant that a change in leaders’ habitus needed to take place, one that was aligned to the SMT. For the Deans, their accumulation of deference given by others enabled their habitus to embrace ‘stepping up’. For the HODs, their field shaped through deeply embedded historical structures meant that their habitus was more likely to disable them from ‘stepping up’ unless they allowed the new symbolic capital emerging with the new school-wide field to reshape their habitus. For a small group of HODs, they were able to do this, for others the pull of the silo meant that their

habitus was embedded in protecting what had always been and kept them located in their subject-based field.

The differing histories of the Deans' group and HODs also meant that distributed leadership was understood in a variety of ways. Chloe, one of the Deans defined distributed leadership where "not everyone would have the same structure in their head as the Principal does, or as we do, you know". The SMT contextualised distributed leadership around a school-wide field and defined it as 'stepping up' to contribute to the overall direction of the school and in relation to HODs, not just their department. The SMT also utilised and expressed shared decision-making as a means to enable a wider distribution of leadership. Conversely, some of the Deans, looking across to the curriculum 'lump' defined and experienced distributed leadership as middle management congestion where no one makes the decisions. Hence some of the data reported in this chapter revealed a desire by some staff to have a "boss", someone who is a "bastard" who will "do the hard yards" and "drag people [in departments] out to look across a bit".

The decision-making related to Academic Counselling development did get delayed at times due to the tendency to deal with urgent operational issues, as did the implementation of the Effective Practices Team that had been spoken about for twelve months before it finally met for the first time. Despite the challenges of attending to the urgent day-to-day matters and the distinctions between the two 'lumps' of student services and curriculum in the school, Academic Counselling nevertheless still became operational from the start of 2009.

Conclusion

The SMT legitimised interpretation of distributed leadership for the 2008 and 2009 period at Esteran College was 'stepping up', though this did not mean that all staff and the respective groups were able to do this. Embedded patterns of practice enabled some and frustrated others. For the Deans, leading the Academic Counselling initiative, meant a SMT endorsed 'stepping up' into a school-wide initiative. On the other hand, the HODs were constrained by their assumed need to 'look after their own patch' first and for some this resulted in some aversion towards 'stepping up' and beyond their subject area. Despite these differing patterns of practice, the staff who participated in this case study were on the whole in agreement with what distributed leadership was not, that is, an act of mere delegation. Rather, distributed

leadership existed in differing and overlapping forms. The curriculum and student services structures within the school meant that leadership was distributed through these structures, in parallel to each other, via the HODs and Deans respectively. Within the HOD and Deans' groups, leadership was distributed beyond agenda holders in the form of emergent boundary-spanning leadership. At a school-wide level of distributed leadership, the Deans' group were more likely to emerge as a collective leadership group, compared to the HOD group due the deference given to the Deans by staff over a long period of time. This emergent form of leadership that embraced school-wide thinking was deemed by the SMT to be "distributed leadership", known to them as 'stepping up'. It was for the SMT how the 'game' was expected to be played in the social space of the school, and the Deans were the group who were better equipped to play by the rules.

My time in the field at Esteran College revealed some of the complexities that school leaders and staff face through the prioritising of agendas, voice and groups, and the micropolitics that can arise through this prioritising. The micropolitics, degrees of symbolic capital and the forms of distributed leadership identified at Esteran College are discussed further in chapter eight, along with the findings from the case study of the second school, Penthom High School that follows next.

CHAPTER SEVEN – Penthom High School Case Study

Scene setting

This case study reveals how the senior school leaders' expectation of 'leadership by action' enabled and moderated two seemingly paradoxical forms of distributed leadership, 'stepping back' and 'directed through'. Penthom High School is a decile nine, co-educational State secondary school that provides education from years 7 through to 13. It went through an extensive building expansion programme of developing new buildings and re-developing existing ones. A product of this expansion was the replacement of a single staff room area with a number of smaller ones situated across the school site that had a consequential impact on staff relations. Each year the school progressively offered education at a new year level, culminating with the start of year 13 programmes in 2009. During 2009, the roll was approximately 1300 students and the school employed approximately 85 teaching staff, a small number of whom were staff members of the original intermediate school. Jim, the founding principal, late in 2008 explained that the school's development process had been "tension inducing" though they were "most probably just at the end of our childhood in terms of development and building and now we're moving into a ... sustainability of structure" period.

Set against this emerging period of "sustainability of structure" was a discourse of difference where students were referred to as "learners" and homework was relabelled "home learning". The rationale for this discourse was to elevate the focus on learning, "learning in your face if you like", as Jim described it. My general observations indicated that this discourse went beyond rhetoric; the walls of classrooms and shared learning areas were often covered with mind-maps and evidence of thinking skills based on Arthur Costa's sixteen Habits of Mind (Costa, 2008). One of these habits became a term that Jim would use during my time in the school, namely that teachers were expected to take "responsible risks" (Costa, 2008, p.33). Consequently there was an emphasis placed on 'stepping back' to create space for others to take responsible risks as a form of distributed leadership, albeit in a school that had gone through a period of rapid development and growth. Therefore, there was an acknowledged need also for systems to be 'directed through' the organisational leadership structures as another form of distributed leadership. At the apex of this structure were the Principal, Jim, the Associate Principal, Mike, and the three Deputy Principals, Brenda, Sharon and Simon.

These five senior school leaders made up what was referred to as the Senior Learning Team (SLT), the nomenclature matching Mike's fighting talk where "the priorities are learning, learning, learning ... and they're not negotiable". The SLT members did not have clear demarcations between their main areas of responsibility when I first entered the school in 2008, though by midway through 2009 this had started to change.

Sitting beneath the SLT in the organisational structure were the Heads of Learning (HOLs) with each designated learning area broadly aligned to the eight learning areas of the *New Zealand Curriculum*. One level beneath the HOLs, were the Heads of Department (HODs) so a HOL could have two or three HODs in their designated learning area. In this two-tier structure, there was one form of meeting for these middle leaders. The HOLs met every fortnight with the SLT and HODs would attend only if their HOL was not able to be there. Subject based departments were dominant fixtures in the organisational structure though the pastoral care network through year level Deans did not have a high profile in relation to school-wide decision-making.

During my time in the school, the HOL meetings focused primarily on the sustainability and further development of structures and processes in the school. It was not until 2009 that the SLT turned its attention to the revised *New Zealand Curriculum*, which was intended to be one of the contexts for my observations in the school. During the second half of 2008, much of the attention of the SLT and particularly the Principal, Jim, was directed instead towards a new school-based mentoring initiative with Year 11 students. The start of the initiative's two term trial coincided with my entry into the school so I was able to observe the meetings of the initiative's project team of quasi-volunteer mentors from the outset. Thus, two groups within the school became the focus of my observations throughout 2008 and 2009, the mentoring project team meetings and the HOL meetings. These meetings also reflected a discourse of difference where no paper-based agendas were ever used and photocopied documents were rarely distributed. Data were collected in the context of these two teams, the school-based mentoring initiative and the review of the school's curriculum through three modes of data collection, observation, interviews and questionnaires:

Table 7.1 – *Penthom High School data collection*

| Time period | Observation | Interviews | Questionnaires |
|--------------------|--|--|---|
| July – Nov 2008 | Approximately 6 hours of general observation and 5 hours of focused observation. 12 observations in total. | 1 hour initial group interview with SLT | |
| First half 2009 | Just over 1 hour of general observation and approximately 7 hours of focused observation. 8 observations in total. | | |
| Second half 2009 | | 7 semi-structured interviews with individual middle leaders. 1 group interview with the SLT | A staff-wide questionnaire (n=39 out of 85 – 46%) A student questionnaire to Year 11, 12 and 13 (n=216 out of 541 – 40%) |

The overall purpose of this chapter is to interpret the data collected so that staff understandings of situations where distributed leadership was espoused and/or practiced are analysed. The first section of this chapter follows a broad chronological approach and describes the observed patterns of leadership in relation to the activities of the HOL meetings and the development of the school-based mentoring initiative. A finer-detailed within group analysis of the HOL meeting group and the mentoring initiative group is provided in the second section and reveals further insight into the shifting leadership and participation patterns that occurred from mid-2008 through to mid-2009. The accounts of practice in these first two sections need to be interpreted in the context where, Jim, the Principal, particularly was aware of my presence as an observer and stated that my presence made him “a little bit more conscious” about his own leadership practice in the meetings I attended. The third and fourth sections focus on staff relations and espoused staff views of distributed leadership. The observed patterns of leadership from sections one and two are compared with the espoused accounts in sections three and four in the fifth section. The fifth section reveals the tensions and opportunities that emerged from the seemingly paradoxical forms of distributed leadership, ‘stepping back’ and ‘directed through’ that emerged as dominant patterns during my time in the school.

Observed practice: July 2008 – June 2009

Introduction

My observations started slightly later at Penthom High School than I had intended owing to the Principal being away during term two. Prior to his departure, I formally gained access to the school and recorded in my personal diary fieldnotes the manner in which I had experienced a preparation meeting with the Principal, Jim, and the Associate Principal, Mike:

The resonance between the P, AP and the research again was so encouraging. The trust established was also reflected with the principal having no issues with me being in the school for phase 1 while he is away for the first term of the study. (Fieldnote diary entry 16/4/08)

Despite these initial positive signals and two attempts to contact Mike, while Jim was away, it wasn't until just over half way through term two that I was able to discuss where, when and which group I could observe due to Mike's additional workload with overseeing the managing of the school. Without Jim, as the key gatekeeper, present, I did not want to come across as overbearing or demanding. Mike warmly invited me to come and speak to the SLT at their afternoon meeting. I recorded soon after how I was "surprised at how quickly the other members engaged with me and saw value in the research". I left the meeting with an assurance of observing some Deans' meetings and HOL meetings.

The first two observations took place the following week just before the end of term two though I did not have any clarity as to what school-based initiative would serve as one of the contexts for future observations. During term two while Jim was away on his trip some decisions were placed on hold by the SLT and HOLs who I observed were reluctant to take responsible risks in Jim's absence. It was as if the authority associated with the role of principalship had not been fully distributed and released in Jim's absence. For instance the SLT and HOLs didn't want to make a final decision about senior course information, we "must wait for the Principal to return" (observation #2) and Jim was to admit at a later meeting that the school timetable scheduled for review did not occur "due to me not being here in term two" (observation #5). When Jim returned, he brought with him a school-based mentoring initiative that he had observed in an overseas school and went about setting up its trial implementation at Penthom within two weeks of his return. The mentoring initiative subsequently became a major context for my observations (see Figure 7.1).

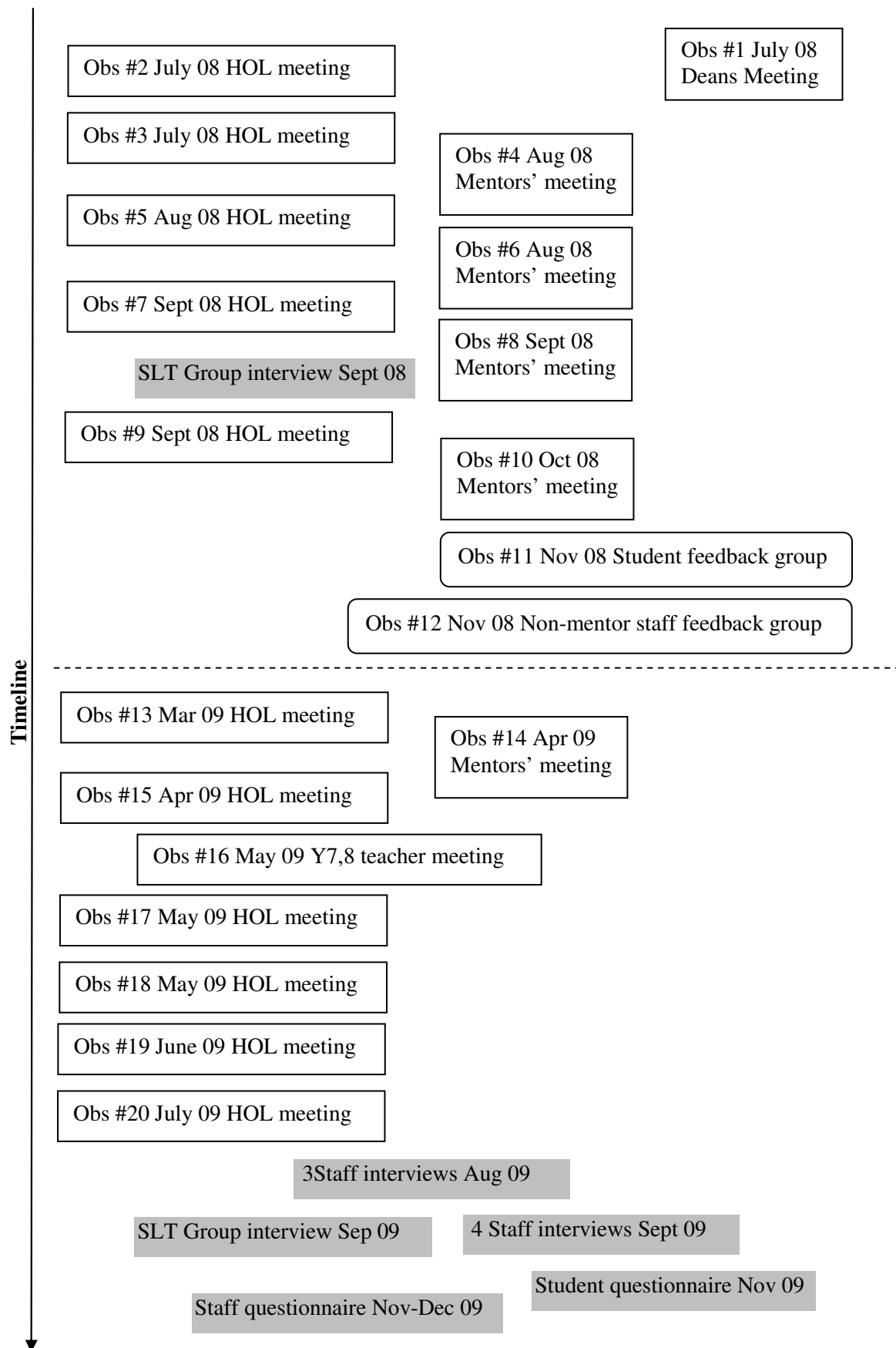


Figure 7.1 – *Pentthom High School timeline of observations 2008-09*

The observations became a ‘tale of two seasons’ with the mentoring initiative trial dominating the first period throughout the second half of 2008 and the emergence of curriculum review dominating 2009. Consequently, the pattern of the observations followed this change in emphasis. Throughout this chapter, these two seasons are referred to as the 2008 ‘on the go’ season and the 2009 season of ‘systematisation and non-negotiables’. All of the observations were formal meetings except for observations 11 and 12 where I observed two mentoring initiative feedback sessions. The first took place during lunchtime with a group of ten Year 11 students, where pizza was provided by the school and the session was facilitated by a HOL who was not a mentor. The second feedback session consisted of six staff who were not mentors who self-facilitated their own discussion related to the impact that the mentoring initiative was having on their classroom environments, the Year 11 students they taught and the other students who were not involved in the trial. The timing of all the other data collecting events in Figure 7.1 are identified by the shaded boxes.

The 2008 meetings, including the two feedback sessions, all took place in a temporary meeting room that doubled as Jim’s office while the new administration block was built. While Jim was away in term two the room was used for meetings only, the acting principal, Mike stayed situated with the deputy principals in another room that acted as their open shared office space. The open office space for the SLT members was replicated in the new administration building that opened at the start of 2009. This transition signalled the end of the building and re-building period of the school site. The HOL meetings observed in 2009 took place in a dedicated meeting room adjacent to the Principal’s office and just down the corridor from the new open office that accommodated the other SLT members. The two other 2009 observations, a meeting of 38 mentors (observation #14) and a curriculum review meeting of the Year 7 and 8 teaching team with Sharon (observation #16) were situated respectively in the foyer of the Performing Arts Centre and a classroom in the Year 7 and 8 building. The utilisation of the Performing Arts foyer was a reflection of the smaller staff meeting places that were now distributed throughout the school. Rather than have one large dedicated staff room, several departmental based areas existed with one general staff area adjacent to the meeting room in the new administration block that could accommodate approximately a quarter of the staff. By the end of 2009 some staff accepted this distribution as characteristic of a large school; “I think it’s just one of those things that comes with being in a bigger school” (Bronwyn, HOL, Mentor). For others, the lack of a common space was an issue:

But I do think this one common staff room thing that we don't have, where everyone goes, does tend to put people into their groups. And yeah, it's very, it can be very cliquey at times as well 'cause some people are not really very good at getting out and wandering around. (Roslyn, HOL)

We are a fairly disparate staff as a collegial body because of the geography of the place unless people make a really decent effort to get around the place ... We have got little groups who work in their own area and will socialise together and we don't have the strength of a single common room, a single staff room. (Andy, HOL, Mentor)

The transition from the last remaining group of temporary offices and meetings into the new ones at the end of 2008 also coincided with the transition from the 2008 'on the go' season to the 2009 season of 'systemisation and non-negotiables' that emerged through the observations. Near the end of 2009, Angela, one of the staff who had been at the school since it opened, provided some further insight into the lead up to this period of transition that coincided with my time in the school:

I think there was a time when things seemed pretty clear and there were good systems and structures in place, and then we went bang and grew and it kind of lost a little bit in the middle there, and now I think it's back to looking at some of those systems and structures. (Angela, HOL, Mentor)

I entered the school during the last stages of this 'bang' period and so encountered an environment where procedures were often reviewed as related issues or gaps arose. The HOL meetings I attended in 2008 were settings where flexibility was mixed with decision-making 'on the go'.

'On the go' during 2008

Several patterns emerged in the HOL meetings that characterised the 'on the go' period and differentiated it from the more structured and systems focused period of 2009. Every meeting had a predetermined agenda, though the meetings in 2008 operated with a higher degree of flexibility where HOLs would email agenda items to the Principal on the day of the meeting and raise issues as general business items as a means to ask questions sometimes with no prior warning to the Principal and SLT. At no time did I observe any negative reactions to

these emergent agenda items nor any oppositional micropolitical ‘undercurrents’. I often also recorded how relaxed the participants were with each other throughout the meetings:

One of the DP’s gives a brief update. The AP gets up, wanders over to the Principal’s desk. Everyone is very relaxed. (Observation #2)

Simon leaves after the 2nd agenda item for an appointment.

Jim’s phone vibrates, he gets up answers the phone and walks out. Terry continues.

At the end of item 4, Mike leaves and returns 5 minutes later. (Observation #3)

Another characteristic of these earlier HOL meetings was the day-to-day operational focus of the agenda items and the tendency for Jim, the Principal to lead the discussion of the agenda items more than the other members of the SLT combined. Jim would always have the agenda on his phone, a paper-based version was never evident and yet all pre-determined agenda speakers spoke from a place of being prepared because the agenda had been emailed to all attendees. A snapshot of four 2008 HOL meetings (observations 3, 5, 7 and 9) revealed that 22 agenda items were pre-determined and nine agenda items emerged as general business items as questions of clarification in relation to operational expectations and matters where procedures were unclear. Just over half of the agenda items were led by the principal or a member of the SLT (see Figure 7.2).

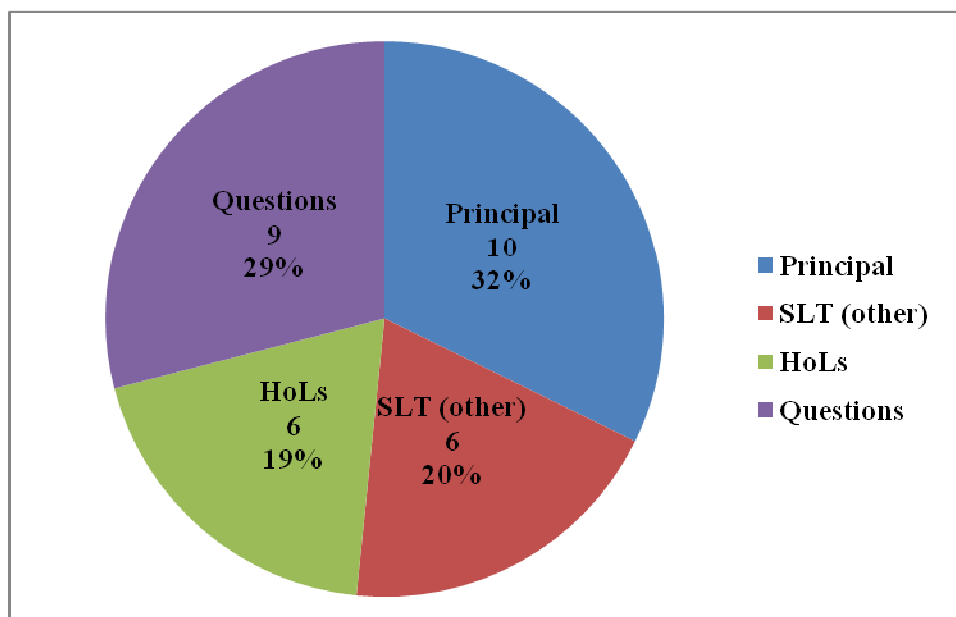


Figure 7.2 – *Penthom High School HOL meeting agenda speakers 2008*

Participants appeared to accept how the agendas unfolded in these meetings, though the general relaxed demeanour did not mean that voices and questions of concern were trivialised. These voices were nearly always directed to Jim, a pattern that is discussed in the following section where within group patterns are analysed in more detail.

The questions and concerns were usually related to HOLs requiring clarification of operational procedures and revealed how some of these procedures perhaps “got lost in the middle there” (Angela, HOL, Mentor) during the period of rapid school growth and site redevelopment. These incidents of clarification at times transitioned into a distribution of leadership responsibility ‘on the go’ usually through Jim, where short-term groups of staff entered into guided opportunities of emergent leadership activity to decide on practical policy. This occurred in relation to internal moderation (observation #2), NCEA Scholarships (observation #5), the withdrawal of students from NCEA achievement standards (observation #5) and the development of a school management plan for school trips (observation #9). In most situations, the Principal Jim acted as the gatekeeper in 2008 determining, if it was an open invitation, if the area of clarification needed to be addressed ‘on the run’ or left to another time. An example of the latter occurred soon after Jim returned from his term away when Steve enquired about the timetable (observation #5):

Are we doing a review of the timetable? (Steve, HOL)

It needs to be done early in term two; otherwise there is too much pressure on the timetabler.

Due to me not being here in term two, we will wait until next year. (Jim, Principal)

This example illustrated how in 2008 the SLT and HOLs looked to Jim as the gatekeeper for school-wide decisions and were not prepared to make major decisions in his absence, a pattern that started to change the following year and is discussed later on in this chapter.

Parallel to the short-term groups listed above established ‘on the go’ was the emergence and expectation of further leadership distribution based on expertise and role. Near the end of my first full term in the school during the first SLT group interview, it was explained how the SLT expected school leadership to be distributed and directed through the HOLs. “We’ve asked the Heads of Department, the Heads of Learning to go into their teams and lead by example ... I think that’s going to be a key unit in terms of leadership” (Mike, Associate

Principal). During the 2008 HOL meetings, expectations of responsibility and accountability were clearly placed on this “key unit” particularly by Jim though these expectations were not always met:

In relation to University Entrance - “you’re the only professionals who can make that judgment, I can’t”. (Jim, Principal, observation #3)

“It is important that you are there as HOLs [at the next staff meeting], I’m not saying you’re not. Leadership by action is so important”. (Jim, Principal, observation #8)

“We are flicking back into revision now [for the senior students] – you need to model it. You need to push it through in your teaching and your department”. (Jim, Principal, observation #9)

There is an issue of teachers going directly to Simon about their timetabled classes. It appears as if HOLs have been assigning classes without letting their department members know. (Jim, Principal, observation #5)

The focus for much of this expected leadership distribution through the HOLs was on the learners (students) and their achievement. Jim described Penthom High School as a “lead learning school” with a student-centred timetable where “the timetabler meets the needs of the learners not the teachers” (Jim, Observation #5). The deliberate ordering of his description “lead learning” reflected Penthom’s discourse of difference as it aspired to be different from other secondary schools where it was assumed that learning had a “low-level agenda” due to schools attempting to meet a range of demands (Jim, Principal, first SLT group interview). Another factor driving the focus on learners was the acknowledgement that student academic achievement measured by NCEA pass rates was expected to improve during 2008:

We’re setting targets for Y11. We are looking at a 85% pass rate this year, compared to the lower rate last year. (Jim - Observation #3)

Linked to this focus was the overseas mentoring programme that Jim introduced to the school mid-way through 2008. The adaptation of the programme for Penthom was described over a

year later by one HOL as Jim's "way of promoting academic achievement in the school" (Andy, HOL, Mentor).

The mentoring programme initiative

Jim viewed the mentoring programme as a means for mentors "to step outside of the systems to get things to work for them, especially for those [students] in the critical group", described as students "in the 60-90 target credit range" for level one NCEA where 80 credits is equated to a level one NCEA pass (Observation #4). Consequently, the mentors' group emerged as a form of wider leadership distribution.

The mentors started meeting with Jim early in term three 2008 and met fortnightly as a group so that the Thursday meeting cycle oscillated week-in-week-out between the mentors' group and the HOL group. For the SLT and the few HOLs who were also mentors every Thursday afternoon was now a meeting event. The initial group of mentors involved in the trial with Year 11 students consisted of all five SLT members and seven other teachers, most of whom were either HOLs or HODs. The distribution of responsibility throughout the initial group went beyond mere delegation as Jim and the SLT positioned themselves as equals alongside the other mentors who regularly exhibited authentic enthusiasm and commitment to the mentoring programme. During the first SLT group interview, Jim explained how members of this initial group were selected:

I deliberately chose the mentors, I mean there were more people wanting to do [it] than are here in the group, but I said I wanted to have a smaller group of people who I felt would be committed to making it work and I did do a little bit of choosing around the mentors and the learners so that there was a little more, um, you know, I certainly put some of the more risky kids in areas where value would be most achieved. Yeah so there was a little bit of management around that. (Jim, Principal, first SLT group interview)

Each mentor, including Jim, had approximately 15 students. From the outset, mentors were encouraged to take responsible risks. They were clearly expected to take the lead, as they were "in charge" and could use "anything" that helped a student's achievement (Jim, Principal, Observation #4). Jim later explained that, "we need to be careful that it doesn't make people too led" (first SLT group interview), so rather than 'directing through' the mentors as a form of distributed leadership as with the HOLs, the SLT members repositioned

themselves as mentors alongside the others. Their ‘stepping back’ from an authority role created an environment where leadership was expected to emerge from anyone in the mentors’ group, leading to a wider distribution of leadership. ‘Stepping back’ however, did not equate to an abrogation of responsibility for the SLT as mentors, as they still saw a need to model the way to the other mentors during their first meeting together (Observation #4). Jim provided an example of how he prepared for his first meetings with students by showing the other mentors how to make full use of the school’s spreadsheet of individual student goals coupled with the school’s Student Management System (SMS), a repository for achievement, pastoral care and attendance data. Brenda followed Jim, demonstrating how student numeracy data could be used as well. In both cases, Jim and Brenda were able to locate their students’ data with ease. Throughout the meetings that followed, mentors would often discuss their emerging practice with each other and spontaneously offer to take the lead on behalf of the group if there was a problem that required addressing between the fortnightly meetings. Boundary-spanning group leadership emerged from a wide range of members. Mentors also frequently updated each other with stories of how the Year 11 students “really wanted to be involved” (Simon, Observation #5) and that most “liked it too much” (Mike, Observation #10). The stories also flowed over into the HOL meetings where it was noted that more students were asking for help (Observation #9).

The reported enthusiastic acceptance of the mentoring initiative by most of the Year 11 students was reiterated in the student feedback session (Observation #11). This brought with it another form of emergent leadership, one that would eventually lead to a problem of sustainability the following year. The Year 12 students started to hear about the trial mentoring initiative, and as one teacher put it, were “pissed off” that they were excluded (Observation #12). A year later, Sharon, one of the Deputy Principals recalled how the Year 12 Tutor Group teachers¹⁵ were also “a bit miffed they had been left out”. The Dean of Year 12, Angela, recognised that a significant number of “borderline” Year 12 students were at risk of not gaining the required number of credits for Level Two NCEA during the latter stages of the 2008 school year and so initiated a smaller scale mentoring programme similar to the one being trialled with Year 11 students. There was no resistance to the Year 12 Dean’s leadership from the SLT or mentors, because she was taking a ‘responsible risk’ according to

¹⁵ Most subject teachers at Penton were also tutor group teachers. Tutors met with their year level group of students early most mornings to carry out administrative tasks such as recording student attendance and communicating school notices.

what was expected of staff at Penthom. She entered the social space of the mentors, aware of how the 'game' was played. The Year 12 students were assigned to their Tutor 'mentor' teachers, going "crazy", "falling over themselves" showing their mentors and other staff study plans and appreciation for the one-on-one support (Observation #12).

As the impromptu Year 12 mentoring support got underway, the issue of tutor workload started to emerge in the Year 11 Mentors' meetings. Jim acknowledged this emerging issue and so started to ask the Year 11 mentors which students needed the most support as a means of streamlining and re-targeting support (Observation #10). Concern was also raised by staff who were not mentors in relation to mentors operating too far outside of the student support systems put in place by departments. There appeared to be a lack of alignment between department NCEA related requirements and the extra support offered by mentors. During the staff feedback session (Observation #12), anecdotal evidence was provided that showed department based systems for re-assessment were being over-ruled by some mentors and that too much pressure was being placed on departments to run extra tutorials for students. The micropolitical protection of departmental interests did not create tension due to most of the mentors having a dual role also as a HOL or HOD. By the end of 2008, there was also widespread agreement amongst staff that the issue was not how well the trial mentoring initiative had been for students, but rather did the school have the capacity to sustain it in its current form for the following year given the extra demands now experienced by mentors and classroom teachers?

Systematisation and the emergence of non-negotiables during 2009

The 'on the go' culture that characterised most of the meetings I attended in 2008, was replaced in 2009, by what one of the HOLs later described as, "a little bit more of, 'we're going to rein this in a bit from the top [the SLT], and we're going to look at this and we're going to deal with it this way'" (Bronwyn, Head of Learning, Mentor). The 'reining in' was evident with more attention given to the systemisation of school procedures in HOL meetings. Jim intentionally stepped back from the mostly sole gatekeeper role of 2008 and the wider emergence and distribution of leadership in the HOL meeting group was mainly limited to other SLT members. In the first few months of 2009, the SLT members were instrumental in developing a broad framework for the school's curriculum that consisted of several 'non-negotiable' pillars. Their increased distributed influence was connected to this curriculum review and "making sure people knew what the structures were" (Simon, Deputy

Principal, second SLT group interview) in relation to meeting NZQA requirements and addressing the mismatch between mentor practice and departmental systems of support that arose at the end of the previous year.

A wider distributed form of leadership emerged in the expanded Mentoring Programme that experienced a moderate escalation of the sustainability issues at the end of 2008. At the start of 2009, the Mentoring Programme transitioned out of its trial period with Year 11 students to include Year 12 and 13 students. The Programme was now integrated into the school's SMS and referred to in school documentation related to internal moderation (Observation #15). The initial group of 12 mentors increased to 40 with the wider distribution including non-teaching administrative support staff. Later on in the year Jim reflected how there had "been quite a significant change in the support staff around their role as emerging leaders" (second SLT group interview). This change was also recognised by others:

I think it's fabulous that the admin staff and the office staff and everything are part of the mentor program, they take it really seriously and they're really dedicated to it. (Angela, Head of Learning, Mentor)

The mentors were again encouraged to create their own way of supporting the students by taking responsible risks. Jim reminded them early in the year that there was "no set way of doing it, it is your way; reward them, though it shouldn't be expected all the time". The mentors' focus was expected to be on "the ones who have the potential to fall through the gaps ... those on the edge" (Jim, Observation #14). Those students who were able to meet regularly with their mentor during 2009 did acknowledge that they were more motivated and better prepared for NCEA assessments though it was acknowledged that the impact on students was "less this year than last year, because I think number one, you've spread the mentors" (Andy, HOL, Mentor).

The mentoring initiative was still beset with issues of resourcing, particularly with some mentors struggling to put aside the time to meet with their students, though this did not diminish overall staff support for it. At the end of the year, Ethan, one of the mentors and HOLs commented, "I think ... people are behind this initiative that Jim has brought in". Nevertheless, during the end of year interviews with the SLT and other staff, the challenge of

working with so many mentors and students with a Programme that was additional to pre-existing student support structures and systems in the school was raised as a common issue.

I think [for] Jim with a bigger group [it] has been an additional challenge to move us all along together. Probably being a bigger group ... well the challenge ... [is to] make it effective over a longer period of time. (Ethan, HOD, Mentor)

There's an issue around resourcefulness and resourcing. Can we actually afford to run this? ... The targets were a huge amount of work to develop, hundreds of hours. (Jim, Principal)

The mentoring initiative had grown to a size where it was suggested a greater distribution of leadership beyond Jim was now required to oversee it, though it was acknowledged that Jim's passion was still needed:

I think that's probably where having it led from the front for two years now it almost needs that distributed leadership. It needs the discussion of, okay, for two years it's worked like this, now where do we take it? (Andy, HOL, Mentor)

It still must be seen to be done from up there for this to carry on as it is, because there's a passion there for it. And without the passion at the top who knows what. (Bronwyn, HOL, Mentor)

Despite the broadening of the Mentoring Programme, meetings for mentors were a lot less frequent during the first half of 2009 compared to the trial period with its fortnightly meetings. One person could no longer lead the broader distribution of mentoring across a wider group; the initiative appeared to require a degree of managing. The regularity of referral to it in the HOL meetings also diminished during 2009 as the focus of the HOL meetings turned to the review of the school's curriculum and the fine-tuning of systems related to managing NCEA and meeting associated external requirements. The resources available to the school were at a critical point and the mentoring initiative would not be sustained if greater attention was afforded to curriculum review in 2009.

Data from both staff and student questionnaires completed at the end of 2009 supported this issue. Mentors were admitting that they were struggling to see their group of students and a number of students commented that they wanted to see more of their mentors. Overall, the

students rated the influence of the mentors on aspects of their learning environment lower than that of the other staff they had regular contact with (see Appendix twelve, Table A12.2, p.299). The expected distribution of responsibility was now beyond the collective capacity of the mentors according to the mentors and the students.

There was also an overt shift away from dealing with issues as they arose that was evident in the 2008 meetings to systems and processes in 2009. Near the end of 2009 during the SLT group interview, Simon and Jim reflected on this shift stating that:

I think there's been a lot more clarification of things. I'm not necessarily sure there's more structures. I think there's been more work on making sure people knew what the structures were and explaining the structures as well. (Simon, Deputy Principal)

What's happened is the structures which are needed are stronger and the structures which aren't needed have disappeared. (Jim, Principal)

A core aspect of these structures was the 'pillars' that the SLT developed as part of the curriculum review. The initial pillars were numeracy, habits of mind, integration, higher order thinking and literacy. When initially presented by Sharon (Deputy Principal) HOLs were told the pillars were "on the whole non-negotiable", she acknowledged to the HOLs that they were doing so much of these already (Observation #13). It was explained by Sharon that "we need to check we are not doing anything against the [revised National] Curriculum rather than do everything it states". Five weeks later the pillars were presented by Sharon again to Year 7 and 8 teachers with another two pillars added (evidence based teaching for improved learning and assess to learn), and had shifted from being "on the whole non-negotiable" to "it is non-negotiable" (Observation #16). Sharon's meeting with the Year 7 and 8 teachers was due to them being "the experts in integration", which was one of the pillars. The emergence of Sharon as the spokesperson on behalf of the SLT was explained later in the year to me during the second SLT group interview:

We have transitioned slowing on our sending out the agenda and chairing the meetings. Jim's slowly handed that over to me but I don't think that's changed anything too much. (Sharon, Deputy Principal)

Sharon's emerging role as a gatekeeper for the HOL agendas and her facilitation of meetings was not the only shift observed in the HOL meetings during 2009. Each member of the SLT had higher profiles as agenda speakers and subsequently delineation between their responsibilities became more evident. In addition to the SLT, Vern, a HOL who was the school's Principal NZQA Nominee, a formal role ordained for all New Zealand secondary schools, emerged as a regular agenda speaker alongside the other SLT members. Vern, and the Deputy Principal, Simon, were both at the centre of ensuring that the school's policies and procedures not only met the requirements of NZQA but also reflected the practice of the HOLs and their departments. His emergence as a leader in the group was evident in the manner that Jim would check matters with him during the course of a meeting and the way Vern would volunteer to offer flexible SMS training to HOLs to meet their development needs.

Accordingly, the distribution of agenda speakers and the nature of agenda items for the six HOL meetings I attended in 2009 shifted somewhat from the practice of 2008 (see Figure 7.2 and Figure 7.3):

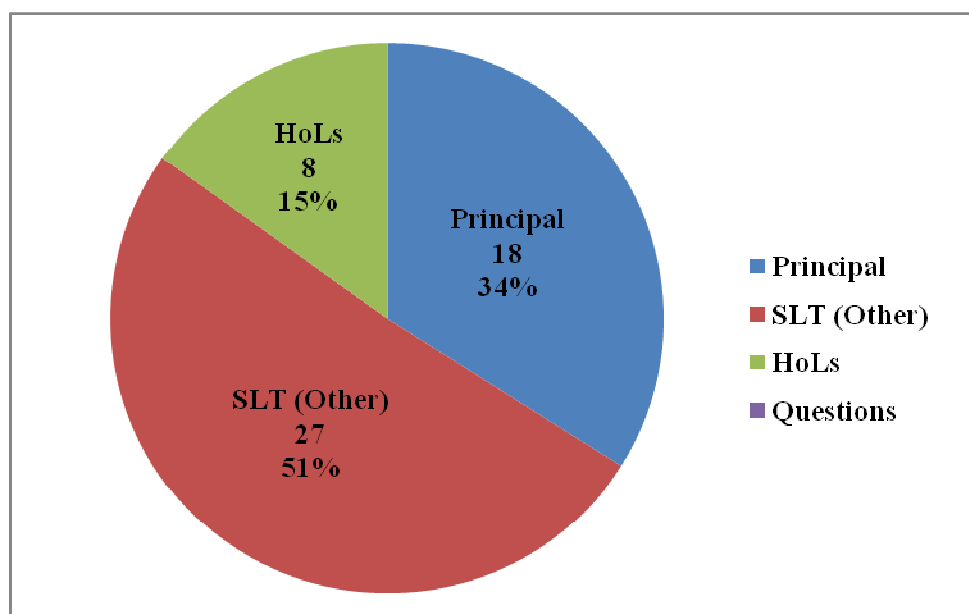


Figure 7.3 – Penthom High School HOL meeting agenda speakers 2009

Even though Jim intentionally stepped back and distributed the gatekeeping role to others, this distribution appeared to go no further than the other members of the SLT and Vern, who contributed half of the eight agenda items associated with HOLs in Figure 7.3. Unlike the year before, HOLs with the exception of Vern, rarely stepped into the role of an agenda

speaker during the 2009 meetings. Jim's contribution stayed similar to that of the previous year, though the general business items that emerged as questions of clarification during 2008 did not occur again as a trend in these six 2009 meetings. During an interview at the end of 2009, Andy, one of the HOLs commented:

I think it is a case that everyone is growing into their role as well and so I think from the principal down. Everyone's a little more comfortable in what they're supposed to be doing and where their responsibilities lie.

Despite the broader distribution of agenda speakers through the SLT and with Vern, the implementation of many decisions was still 'directed through' the HOLs into their departments, though the HOLs were also positioned by Jim as gatekeepers who were expected to take responsible risks, so the HOLs experienced more than a mere delegation of tasks. Once the pillars of the school-based curriculum had been established, the SLT turned the HOL's attention to revisiting what were the expected roles of learners [students], teachers, assessment and learning tasks in the school. Jim asked the HOLs:

Is it okay for me to bring this up with staff as I don't want to cut across what you may be doing with your staff? Before moving onto our curriculum [in more detail] we need to know what our core means; being a lead school in learning. (Observation #19)

This gatekeeping role of the HOLs was also reflected in Mike's reiteration of his 2008 SLT group interview comment at the end of 2009, stating:

Some of the structural things we've tried to drive a lot through the curriculum teams. I think that was a decision we made and I can't quite remember when that was – as opposed to saying to the whole staff "right, we're going to tell you all how to do something". We talk about things at a HOL meeting and we ask them to take it back to their team. (SLT second group interview)

The reporting back role of the HOLs to the SLT was also clarified during 2009. There was now a greater emphasis on HOLs needing to have departmental goals, as well as ensuring that departmental practices reflected the school assessment guidelines that had dominated the 2009 HOL meetings alongside the curriculum review. HOLs, as indicated by Andy's earlier comment were clearer about whom they reported to; Jim for department goals and student

achievement review reports, Mike for department budgets and teacher appraisal, and Simon or Vern for NCEA related matters. At the end of 2009, Jim summed up the changes in a manner reminiscent of his 2008 “sustainability of structure” comment, stating:

I think we’ve moved into a phase which is more structured around our decision making. It’s more structured around getting those decisions and ideas made because they don’t have to be made by yesterday. They often were needing to be made yesterday. I think that time of decision-making allows you to do that. (Jim, Principal)

In a matter of months the SLT and the members of the HOL group had shifted from addressing matters ‘on the go’ to an environment that appeared more systematic. This shift mirrored the physical environment around them as the school site emerged out of its building site season into one of an established school site. The section that follows explores at a deeper level if this shift at a structural and system level resulted in changes with the patterns of behaviours within the groups where focused observations were undertaken.

Within-group patterns

Participation patterns in the HOL meetings

The HOL meeting observations revealed a redistribution of agenda speakers. Within the SLT there was a wider distribution of agenda speakers as Jim intentionally stepped back, though the comparison between the 2008 and 2009 HOL agenda speaker patterns (see Figures 7.2, and 7.3) showed that he still spoke to a similar percentage of agenda items. In isolation this may not appear like a form of ‘stepping back’, until the number of agenda items spoken to by other members of the SLT is taken into account. In 2008, Jim spoke to 10 out of the 16 (63%) items that the SLT presented, yet in 2009 spoke to 18 out of the 45 SLT items (40%). The other SLT members had increased their participation as agenda holders from 20% of the agenda items to 51%, whereas less opportunity was given to other HOLs. However, this redistribution of agenda speakers did not appear to alter the opportunity for HOLs to speak during the meetings despite some HOLs having differing perceptions of this.

The number of times HOL meeting participants spoke was collated for three of the 2008 meetings (observations #5, 7 and 9) and six of the 2009 meetings (observations #13, 15, 17-20). In a pattern similar to the distribution of agenda speakers, Jim tended to be less involved

in a conversation during the 2009 meetings compared to the 2008 meetings, whereas the other SLT members tended to be more involved in conversations (see Figure 7.4).

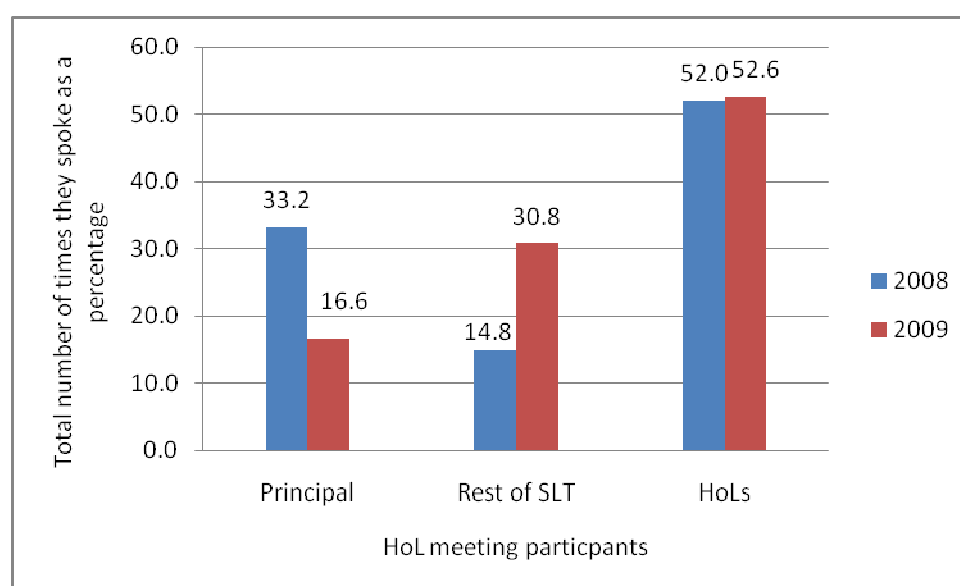


Figure 7.4 – *Penthom High School HOL 2008/2009 meeting participation comparison*

The figures presented here do not reveal how long participants spoke for during the meetings so are limited to indicating the general changes. Some of the HOLs interviewed in the latter part of 2009 tended to perceive that a wider distribution of voices was apparent in the meetings, though this was not evident amongst their own group when 2008 data were compared to 2009 data (see Figure 7.4). Brenda, from her SLT perspective also commented that she had seen a “big change, I think there’s lots more voices speaking up and being listened to and being heard” (SLT second group interview). Jim’s involvement in most discussions was commented on, though acknowledgment was given to the need to keep the meetings moving:

Probably more people are getting the opportunity to say things as well. Jim likes to talk to us, I think. He likes us to listen. But yeah, I think there’s getting a little bit better at doing that sort of thing as well. (Roslyn, HOL)

I think pretty much the meetings work reasonably well as that kind of open discussion and yeah, but then at times the Principal or whoever’s running this will cut things short when they need to move on. (Steve, HOL, Mentor)

The referral to “whoever’s running” the meeting reflected the wider distribution of agenda item speakers in 2009 discussed earlier. The *in situ* sociogram (see Figure 7.5) from observation #5 illustrates how in 2008 participants tended to focus their contribution through Jim and the relatively lesser contribution from the other SLT members; in this case, Sharon and Simon. The red lines indicate conversation involving a SLT member, whereas the blue lines indicate where a HOL has followed on from another HOL. The thicker lines indicate the more dominant patterns of conversing in the meeting.

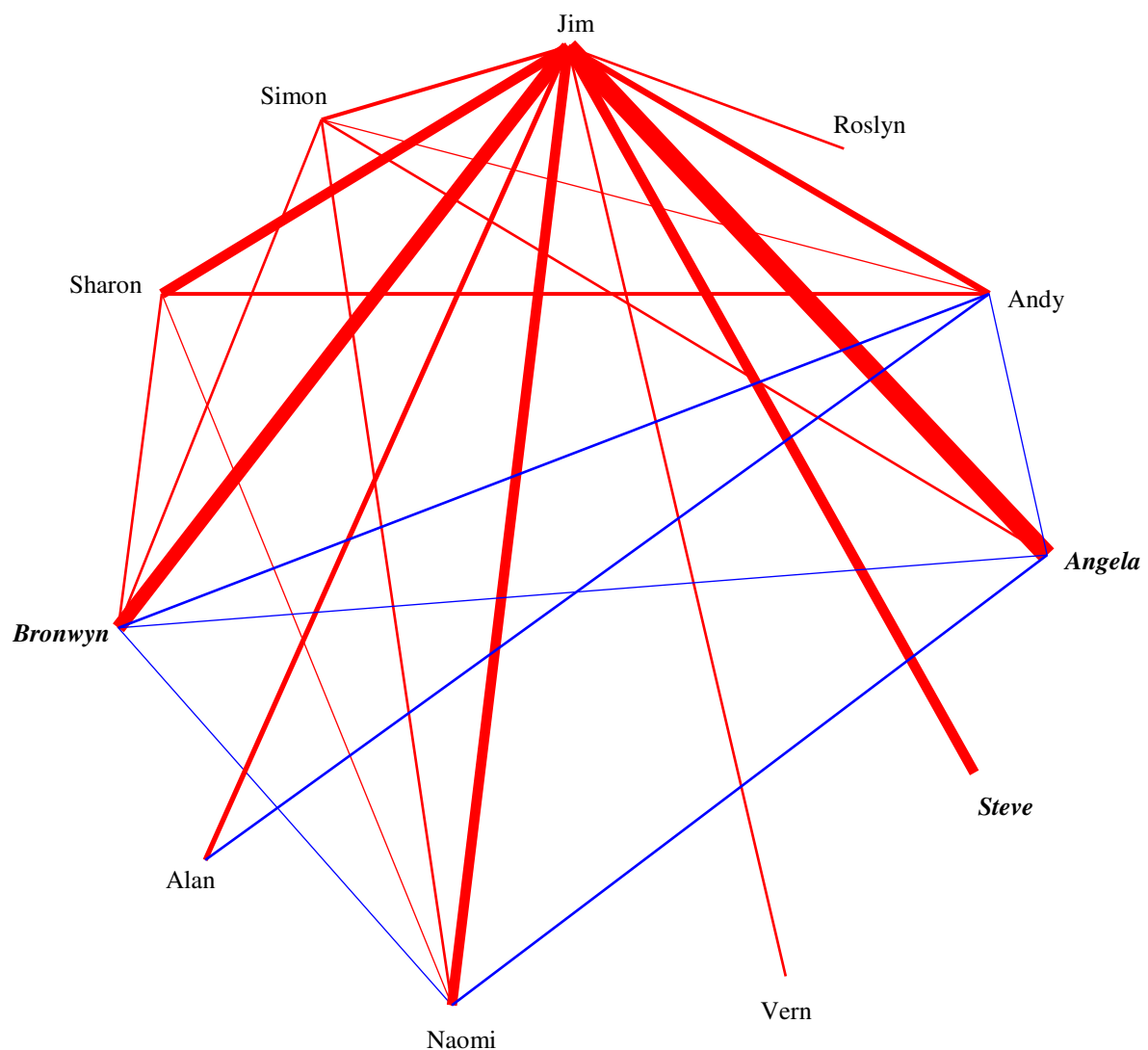


Figure 7.5 – Penthom High School HOL meeting sociogram (21/8/08)

Bronwyn, Angela and Steve (represented in ***bold italics***) all raised agenda items as questions of clarification, the thicker lines between themselves and Jim indicating how their questions were directed to him rather than to others in the SLT. Consequently the co-efficient of

variation for this meeting was relatively high ($V = 196$) when compared to the five equivalent CMT meetings of Esteran College with V values in the range of 136 to 177, their lower values indicated a wider distribution of participation compared to the equivalent group setting at Penthom. There was however, a slight decrease in the V values for the Penthom HOL meetings from 2008 into 2009 (2008 mean V value = 206; 2009 mean V value = 189) suggesting that there were some meetings in 2009 with a slightly broader distribution of participation. An example of this occurred in observation 17, which generated the lowest V value of 135 of the Penthom HOL meetings (Figure 7.6).

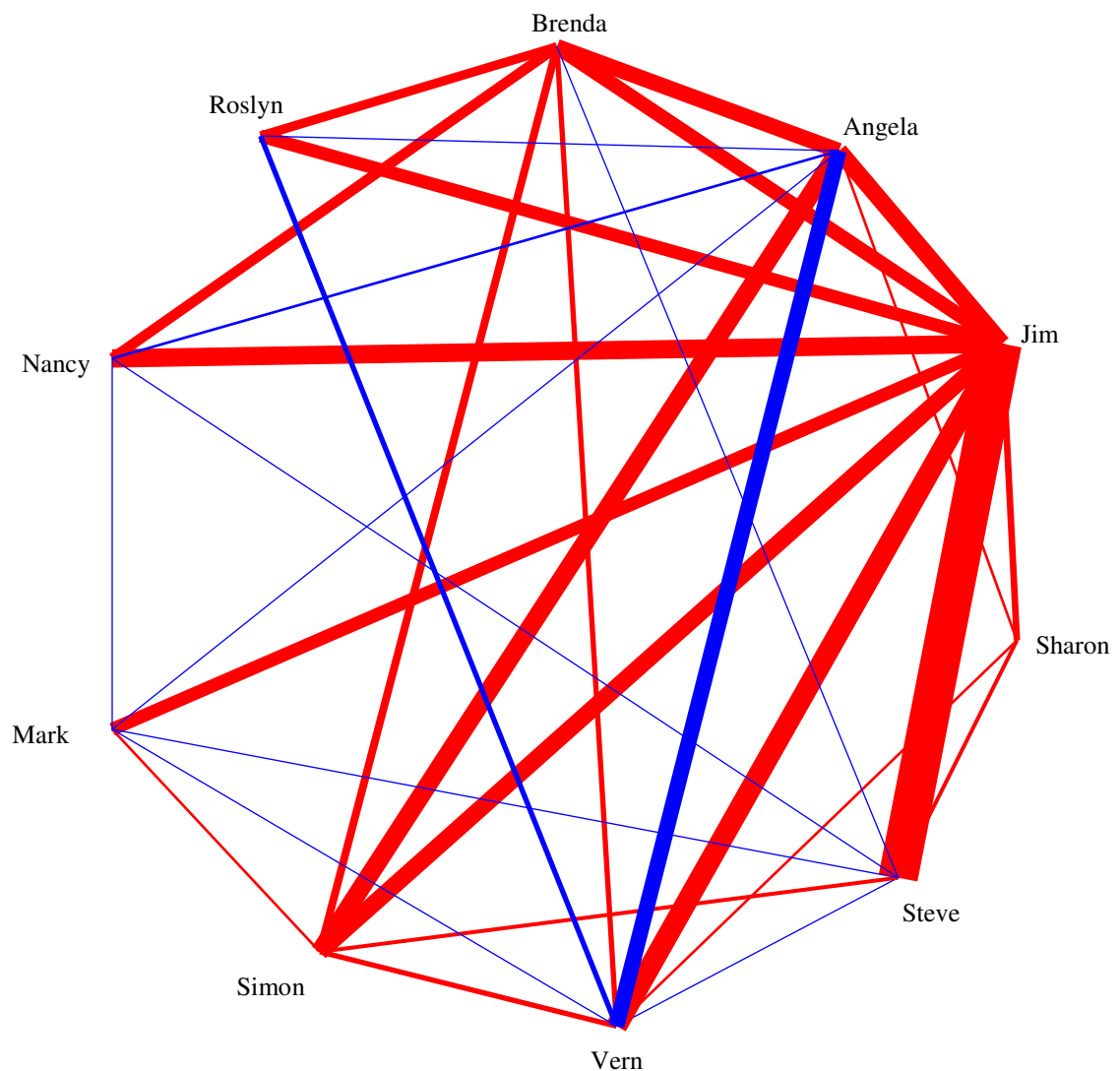


Figure 7.6 – *Penthom High School HOL meeting sociogram (17/5/09)*

The six agenda items of this meeting divided equally between Jim and the other SLT members combined. It illustrates the broader involvement of other SLT members, Brenda,

Simon and to a lesser extent in this meeting, Sharon, while still reflecting the equivalent degree of participation from Jim as compared to Figure 7.5. The emergence of Vern, as the school's Principal NZQA Nominee is also evident in the sociogram where on several occasions Jim would turn to Vern for clarification of a NCEA or SMS related discussion point.

In comparison to the HOL meetings, the patterns evident in the trial phase of the Mentoring Programme meetings I attended in 2008 tended to show a greater degree of participation distributed amongst all the mentors present. The three meetings where I was able to track participation patterns produced V values of 130, 143 and 155 respectively (observations #6, 8 and 10) where a boundary spanning role as a form of distributed leadership was not limited to the same one or two participants. These trial phase meetings were also characterised by shared decision-making patterns where multiple participants would speak within a short period of time, best illustrated in observation #10 when 12 participants collectively established within four minutes three key 'next steps' for adapting the programme to address emerging issues while Jim recorded the decisions on a whiteboard. The ease between the mentors was also reflected in the humour that emerged at times:

While at the whiteboard writing up the priorities the group break into laughter, Jim is still standing next to the board and NCEA is sung by those present to the tune of YMCA. Jim dances, there is more laughter. (Observation #8)

The friendly banter and associated laughter continued to occur at times during other observations and was sometimes associated with intentional planning associated with maintaining and developing staff social relations that appeared to be in response to the wider geographical distribution of staff meeting areas across the school site. Planning was focused at a department level (observation #2) and a school-wide level where departments were encouraged to "adopt" an administrative staff member (observation #9). Full staff out of school social events and in-school events such as Book Week where teams would dress up as characters of a book were seen by Jim as opportunities to break down some of the silos "due to our size" (observations #9 and 20). Mike described how recent staff functions appeared to be a reflection of changing staff relations: "Another positive change or observation about staff relationships is we have a couple of particularly enjoyable functions" (SLT group

interview, 2009). His comment revealed however, that the social relations evident in the school during the period of my observations had not always been so positive in the past.

Perceptions of staff relations

Historical staff relations prior to 2008

The building programme that was completed at the end of 2008 had been “a tension inducing process” (Jim, Principal) where there were “trial and errors ... a culture of change from day one” (Alan, HOL, Mentor). This environment had created “a lot of stress” on staff (Roslyn, HOL) along with factions within the staff:

I think we had factions at the beginning of the school. Don't know if the others would agree?
(Brenda, Deputy Principal)

I'd agree with that (Sharon, Deputy Principal)

Yeah I think the key word that changed over time is tension (Jim, Principal)

Mmm (agreement) (Sharon, Deputy Principal)

I think there is a lot less tension, there's still some tension (Jim, Principal)

But it's quite pocketed isn't it? (Sharon, Deputy Principal)

Well I think, yeah there is a lot less tension than there had been. (Jim, Principal)

The SLT made these comments during their first group interview in 2008 where it was also acknowledged it was “getting less of a challenge to be a survivor of a year at Penthom High School, but once you have survived a year here ... there is some pretty strong attachment around that” (Jim, Principal).

A year later, the interviews with other staff provided some glimpses into some of these tensions that were associated with historical staff relations. The HOLs I interviewed tended to affirm the view that tension had dissipated somewhat but their responses still suggested that factions could possibly still be evident in the school. In his response above, Jim referred only to tension despite Brenda and Sharon referring to “factions” and “pockets”, two terms that Jim did not repeat in his replies to them, suggesting that where some saw factions, Jim saw

tension. Alan (HOL, Mentor) shed some insight into one such historical faction that involved some staff talking about the “deputy principals behind their backs”. He went on to add that staff used to be “hesitant about who” they approached in the SLT “because things were too busy”. Roslyn (HOL) explained how “when they [the SLT] were sitting up there, sort of planning for everybody ... we all just did what we were told, sort of thing, whether we sort of wanted it or not”. Jim also confirmed this stating that:

In terms of the history of the school there’s always been urgency around decision making which doesn’t allow you to consult and doesn’t allow you to hear people’s voices as much as what you would like. (Jim, Principal)

On the other hand, Steve, one of the HOLs, contradicted this. In the past, he perceived there were more “tasks that the staff could be involved in and participate in and share their ideas” compared to the 2008-2009 period. Steve went on to add, “in the past there was a bit more extensive review” where the status quo could be questioned. During my interview with Steve, he linked his comments to his request for the expected timetable review that did not take place in 2008 as part of a planned three-yearly cycle (observation #5). He did not see the HOL meeting at that time as a forum where the concerns of his department were addressed as was hoped. Steve’s comment in reference to past participation may also have been a reflection of the smaller size of the school back then. At the end of 2009 where there was “a lot more structure in the school” (Bronwyn, HOL, Mentor), Jim commented how “there’s a sense the school’s a big school now and some people don’t want it to be a big school and the fact that staff don’t know other staff is not unusual in a school of this size”. Sharon, one of the Deputy Principals, acknowledged that staff too were aware of this and had told her they did not “know all the staff at the school now”. She went on to add how “that obviously affects relations”. The building development associated with the growth not only affected staff relations but also the manner in which staff were distributed throughout different physical locations in the school.

Staff relations 2008 - 2009

When the building programme culminated at the end of 2008 with the completion of the new Administration block, staff no longer had a central staff room that could accommodate them all. The emphasis had been placed on developing a number of smaller staff areas across the school site, thus adding to the likelihood that staff were less likely to all know each other:

The staff obviously meet in sort of faculties and they have a pretty good relationship in that sort of sense, but broader than that probably not as much as I would like to see if it was my decision to make a change. Certainly, in my experience in previous schools there was much more of a whole school, a whole staff feel, but there are strengths and weaknesses there. You get to know the people you work with much more closely perhaps, but you don't necessarily know people from other parts of the school as well. (Ethan, HOD, Mentor)

Staff were showing signs that they were prepared to bridge the physical and social space between themselves. Some had approached Sharon in the SLT "just on a casual basis about perhaps starting up invites from one department to another". By the end of 2009 there was acknowledgment that staff were "definitely getting on a lot better" (Roslyn, HOL) and had "a greater ability to input, put your hands up, to present what's going on" in the whole staff meetings that were held once every three weeks (Alan, HOL, Mentor). The strengthening of staff relations was also evident in each department or faculty space and were described by the SLT as places where "there's people talking, chatting, they welcome you when you go there, you don't get the sense that the room goes quiet when you walk in" (Brenda, Deputy Principal). There was some implication that differences did exist between departments and Steve linked the difference he saw back to how long a department had been in its new or refurbished location:

In those departments that have already sort of got their geographical location, certainly I kind of perceive that Alan's department has been together, and although staff members have changed over the various years they're all together and have been all together since that was one of the first buildings to go up. (Steve, HOL, Mentor)

Alan described his relations with the SLT in a manner that echoed Steve's perception of togetherness in Alan's own department. Alan perceived the SLT as a "close-knit" and "approachable environment" where the SLT members were "all on the same page". Angela qualified what the 'same page' meant to her, the emphasis placed on *then* in her statement that follows suggested that the 'same page' possibly came with some conditions:

That's what I quite like at this school, is you open it up, it's open to people who are interested and *then* [emphasis added] they can come on board and help change that system or modify it. (Angela, HOL, Mentor)

“Interested” staff were deemed to be those who were “keen to get together and work ... and not poo-poo a new idea, put their head in the ground or stir a bit of tension” (Sharon, Deputy Principal). Instead “interested” staff took “responsible risks in their teaching” (Jim, Principal), put themselves forward for leadership “opportunities in the school” (Brenda, Deputy Principal) but also knew when not to put Jim and the SLT “on the spot” in a staff meeting, otherwise they wouldn’t “be listened to” (Angela, HOL, Mentor). “Interested” staff had learned how to play the ‘game’ in relation to school-wide social relations.

The SLT held Angela up as an example of “interested” staff. She was not one of the original mentors in the trial Mentoring Programme, yet in response to the requests from Year 12 students and their tutors she put in place an impromptu condensed mentoring programme alongside the one being officially trialled with Year 11 students in the latter stages of 2008. Sharon, one of the Deputy Principals, summed up the SLT’s reaction to this “interest” and perceived exclusion from staff and students of Year 12 as “oh gee we missed out, let’s just do it ourselves, which is fantastic”. Consequently, when Angela was interviewed a year later, her perception of opportunity in the school was one of openness:

So, there are opportunities for people to get involved in leadership or involved in decision making at this school, I think. There’s probably more of that, yeah ... I would say that nothing’s really a closed book in this school, which is fabulous ... Jim’s door is always open. (Angela, HOL, Mentor)

Angela’s unprompted reference to Jim reflected how she positioned him as the overall gatekeeper in the school. The other HOLs and SLT members interviewed acknowledged that Jim was in charge and that the Mentoring Programme was “his idea” (Andy, HOL, Mentor). During the first SLT group interview, Brenda described Jim’s leadership as “really strong” and:

... one of your classic sayings is “we need to step back for a minute”. You look at the big picture and what’s the purpose, why would we want to do that, or what’s the thinking behind it? And I think the way you question and think about things, you don’t just go for standard ways, I think that is a good part of our school. (Brenda, Deputy Principal)

Brenda's reference to not using "standard ways" also reflected Jim's leadership style. He did not draw on one standardised style of leadership; rather he adjusted his style based on the context, particularly in relation to decision-making so responsible risk-taking could be encouraged. He self-moderated his leadership of the Mentoring Programme explaining that "we need to be careful that it doesn't make people too led, because I think that's a risk ... In other words they don't have to report to me, all they have to do, is do the mentoring". The observations of the Mentors' meetings and the interviews supported Jim's espoused expectations, he saw himself as the one with the responsibility for shaping "the environment which allows people to take risks". The manner in which mentors were afforded the space to take risks was not totally transferable to the Head of Learning and department contexts. Brenda on behalf of the SLT explained how the HOLs were expected to take the lead, but with guidance and direction. During 2008, guidance and direction predominantly came via Jim as HOLs looked to him with their responses and questions. This started to change as Jim 'stepped back' and the SLT emerged as a distributed group. By the end of 2009, HOLs and the SLT acknowledged that relations and voice within the HOL group had started to change, though there were differing perceptions amongst the interviewees.

Staff voice and decision-making

Bronwyn (HOL, Mentor) interpreted the guidance and direction provided by the SLT for the HOLs as, "there has been a lot more of releasing things" onto HOLs. In the HOL meetings there was, near the end of 2009, "a willingness to put yourself above the parapet a bit more often and say "no, I don't agree with that, is there another way of doing it?" ... those meetings have become much more interactive, much more inclusive" (Andy, HOL, Mentor). The increased willingness for HOLs to speak was perceived in a range of ways:

I think there's some confidence that obviously people have got and you still hear the same three or four Heads of Learning who will talk every single meeting but that's not going to change no matter where you go. Others are feeling that they can make a statement about this which is good. (Simon, Deputy Principal)

I think unneeded [i.e. too many] voices are creeping in more to HOL meetings, the Boss [Jim] used to be, let's cut it off, it's not relevant, let's move on. Lately it's become a little more of a sit down and converse and let's take as much time as we need to make sure we've heard everyone which is a very PC approach to it. (Alan, HOL, Mentor)

Sometimes he [Jim] has to be careful that people are heard ... if you sometimes try and squash 'Negative Nellies' then they've got to keep talking. (Angela, HOL, Mentor)

There was general acceptance from all of the interview participants that HOLs were saying what they intended to say in meetings when the focus of conversation was based around school operations. The comments above though perhaps reveal that the HOLs had not yet ventured into talking openly with each other about their perceptions of voice and process in the meetings and the perceived impact that was having on decision-making processes.

Further insight was gathered from a wider group of staff at the end of 2009 (see Figure 7.7).

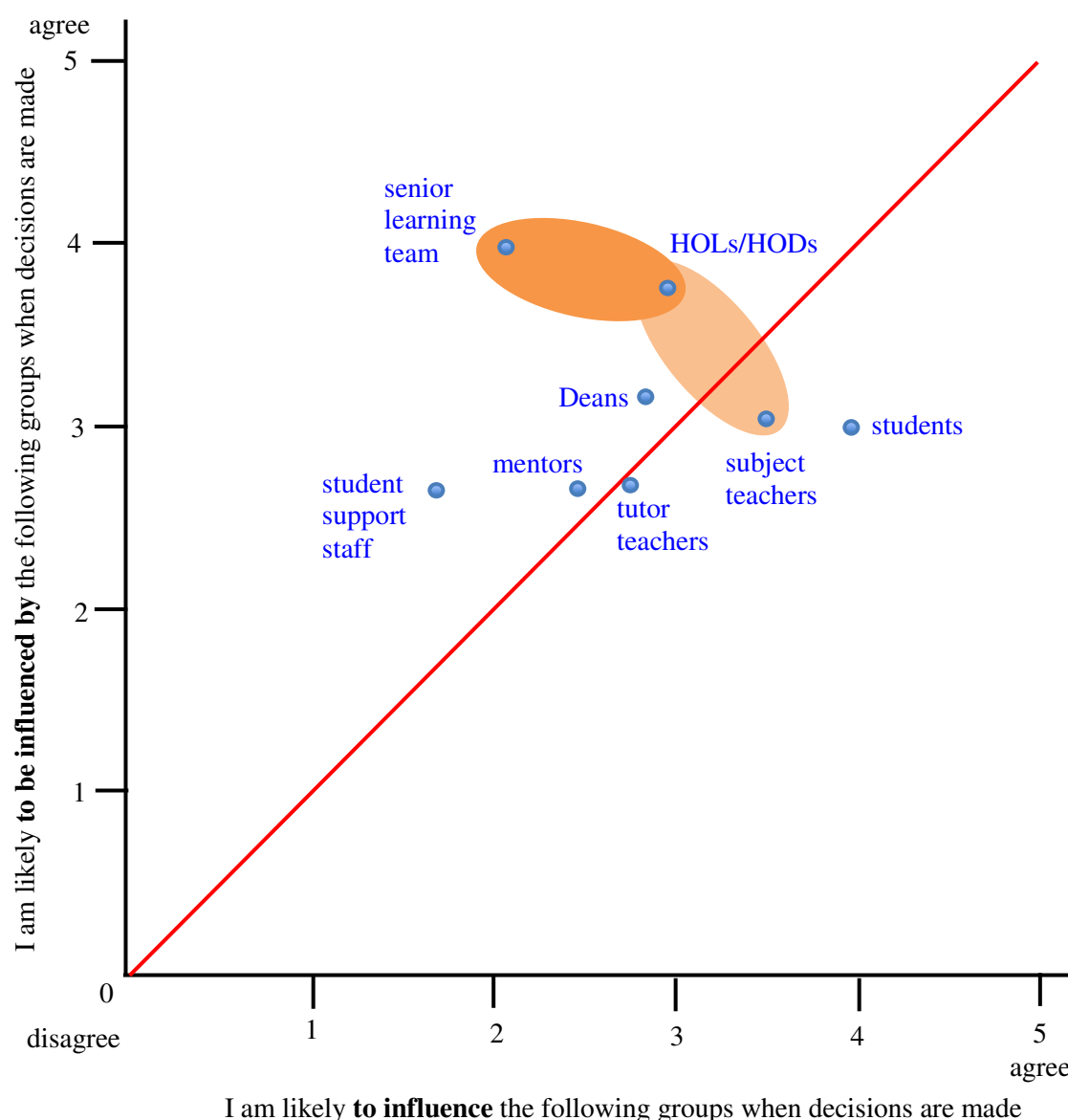


Figure 7.7 – *Penthom High* staff perceptions of group influence in decision-making

All staff were invited to complete a questionnaire (n=39 out of 85 – 46% response rate) so that some of their perceptions shaped in the 2008-2009 periods of ‘on the go’ and ‘systemisation and non-negotiables’ could be ascertained. Respondents indicated that the ‘directed through’ alignment did exist from the SLT through to the subject teachers via their HOLs and HODs. They generally perceived¹⁶ that they were less able to influence decision-making processes involving the SLT (mean = 2.10) in comparison to HOLs/HODs (2.95) and subject teachers (3.52). The coloured ellipses show the alignment between these groups

The further that a group is positioned perpendicularly to the left of the red diagonal line, the greater the influence it has over the staff and so reveals the flow of influence originating with the SLT, through the HOLs/HODs to the subject teachers onto the students. This connection of groups perpendicular to the red line was only evident with one structure in the school, that which involved the SLT working through the HOLs/HODs. There was no other clear perpendicular ‘line’ of influence that was evident across student support services either through the Deans meeting structures or the Mentoring Programme.

At Penthom High School there were no indications provided by the interviewees of isolationist micropolitical alliances associated with the Mentoring Programme. For example, Roslyn, a HOL who was not a mentor also added that the original group of 14 mentors in the trial programme were not positioned in any way different when compared to other staff, she did not see them as an alliance within the staff. The only group of staff where relations and expectations had perhaps changed were the administrative non-teaching support staff, several of whom had become mentors during 2009. During their second group interview, the SLT also described how they were now more proactive in involving the administrative staff:

There is an essence of change and I’ve felt there’s been quite a significant change in the support staff around their role as emerging leaders [as mentors with the students]. (Jim, Principal)

And I think we have seen a little bit in other teaching staff’s perception of them and their capabilities of doing that [i.e. mentoring] as well. (Sharon, Deputy Principal)

¹⁶ A six point 0 (no influence) to 5 (major influence) scale was used.

I think another fact with that Jim, would be the Monday morning interval and you meet with the support staff if they want to have a cup of tea just to run through the similar stuff that has gone through at the staff briefing, the 8.30 one. I think that makes them informed and therefore valued. (Mike, Associate Principal)

The perceived wider involvement of staff was not restricted to this administrative group in the mentoring programme. Alan, one of the HOLs, described how the staff were now “opening up to the idea that they’ve got so many professionals in different areas” and how “everyone’s got really good ideas”. This acknowledged distribution of expertise was however, coupled with concerns related especially to the Mentoring Programme. Due to the number of adults and students now involved there was universal concern expressed through the interviews and the staff and student questionnaires that the leadership of the programme now needed distribution beyond Jim or cut back so that the rhetoric to the students would match their experience of meeting with their mentors. Andy in his interview argued that the Mentoring Programme “where having it led from the front for two years now almost needs that distributed leadership”. His reference to “distributed leadership” was one of the very few occasions where I heard the term used; it did not appear to be part of the day-to-day language used by staff. The interviews with the SLT and HOLs were for some the first time they heard of it. For others who had heard of it, the interview caused them to reflect for perhaps the first time as to what it meant and what it looked like in a secondary school.

Espoused staff understandings of distributed leadership

Views of the SLT

During their first group interview the SLT acknowledged that the term “distributed leadership” was not used to describe leadership practice in the school, though Brenda and Sharon did acknowledge that “quite a lot of distributed leadership happens here but again I wouldn’t have labelled it as such”. All of the SLT members argued that distributed leadership was not structuring and distributing responsibility where people are packaged “into baskets” and pre-defined roles through detailed job descriptions:

Some structures work very strong against distributed leadership and those structures which do work strongly against distributed leadership we actually don’t have in this school or if we do we don’t take any notice of them and, an example is job descriptions. Like none of these people [the SLT members present] have job descriptions. (Jim, Principal)

We have generic ones though. (Sharon, Deputy Principal)

Do we? [laughter]. (Brenda, Deputy Principal)

When I applied for the job [laughter]. (Sharon, Deputy Principal)

I'm hoping that we can expand that a little bit more into not having job descriptions at the next level down. I think job descriptions work against distributed leadership because they package people into baskets and if you package in a basket how can you show leadership? You can only show leadership within those constraints. (Jim, Principal)

This conversation took place during the 'on the go' season in the SLT's first group interview. A year later in the 'systemisation and non-negotiable' season there was recognition from a HOL perspective that some shift had occurred towards some structuring of roles in the SLT, but not at the expense of the fluidity that the SLT had advocated a year earlier:

Everyone's a little more comfortable in what they're supposed to be doing and where their responsibilities lie. (Andy, HOL, Mentor)

I quite like it at the DP/AP level ... sometimes those jobs are quite fluid in the DP/AP level and they kind of cross over, and so if you can't find one you can go to another one and they kind of share everything at that level. (Angela, HOL, Mentor)

Brenda associated this fluidity with "room to move" and to label practice as distributed leadership implied that "you are creating a structure around it". Mike linked 'room to move' with responsibility but paused and checked to explain that responsibility was not just something that overall leaders gave to others. There was an element of risk-taking in allowing others the 'room to move' which led to links with Jim's leadership style in the school as interpreted by others in the SLT:

Distributed leadership is about letting people take on the responsibility and giving them the authority to make it happen. Now as soon as you give both the responsibility, no, [pause] do we give it? We actually allow people to take it as well. Whether it's offered or whether it's asked for, responsibility and the authority, then you've got the potential for great success or with the risk-taking. Sometimes things fall flat on their face. (Mike, Associate Principal)

And they have on occasions. (Jim, Principal)

Not very often though and I think that's quite pertinent Mike, what you say, is that sometimes people have been allowed to take the responsibility and take on leadership and if they've come up with a really good idea. Again, Jim's leadership has been really important here. He has allowed people to say how I would really like to do such and such. They might get the response "hey, go away, research it, come back and show me what you want to do". (Sharon, Deputy Principal)

Mike clarified his view arguing that distributed leadership was a process rather than a delegatory activity; it was not "please do this by now, have you done it? Tick". He went on to acknowledge others have "got the power, you know, the authority to do it" and inferred that accountability was incorporated within the responsibility that others chose to take up.

Other staff views

The linkage between responsibility and distributed leadership was also evident in some of the views beyond the SLT. Andy described distributed leadership as giving "people more responsibility where they're experts" and Alan described it as "sharing the responsibility". The manner in which Alan described his own leadership practice with his department paralleled what he saw modelled to him by the SLT:

You hear something, I want you to go away and think about it, what can you do with it, go away and come back and tell me what you think about it and as a result I've taken it away, thought about it, here's an idea and then, are you happy to run with that, yeah, absolutely, not a problem. So, I've never felt that I've been told to do something. It's a responsibility, what can you do with it? (Alan, HOL, Mentor)

Alan's description was an echo of Sharon's from the SLT, yet these two comments were made twelve months apart and spanned the two seasons of 2008 and 2009. Others made similar comments linking distributed leadership with ownership (Angela), freedom to use one's strengths (Andy), decentralisation of leadership (Ethan), opportunity to bring ideas (Steve) and "opportunity to try different things out" (Roslyn). Bronwyn on the other hand drew on her experiences of using "a bit of distributed leadership" in her department and found "there are those that do want it and are keen and are stepping up, but then there's also the reluctance". Her comments revealed that the common views of the participants I

interviewed did not necessarily mean that their views were representative of other staff, particularly those who did not belong to the senior or middle layers of the school management structure.

The HOLs did tend to refer to the management structure as a means to complement their distributed leadership perspectives more so than the SLT when asked to define distributed leadership. Andy explained that distributed leadership could not be “unfettered”; it required some form of moderation to function effectively. Bronwyn argued that the source of this moderation was the principal. Distributed leadership to her was “when it goes down from the top and it gets spread out”. In reference to the Mentoring Programme, she stated, “the whole distributed thing is fine, but it still must be seen to be done from up there”. For Steve the moderation came via the filter-down approach that was commonplace with decision-making as leadership was ‘directed through’ the HOLs from the SLT where “the process of change is, you feel included and have the chance to then go back to your departments and get their ideas as well”.

Only once in all of the interviews was a definition of distributed leadership linked directly to student learning without me providing a prompt. Ethan viewed distributed leadership as the shifting out of leadership “to as many other people as possible in order that it can have the biggest sort of impact on learners”. Given that the term leadership, according to Brenda and Sharon, was not used in the school alongside terms associated with “distributed”, it still occurred in day-to-day school practice. Most of the staff I interviewed referred instead to terms associated with “responsibility”, where responsibility was either given out from one staff member to another, or a staff member was allowed the space and encouraged to shape his or her own responsibility in a manner that was mostly “unfettered” but with some associated expectations. The expectations usually related to an assumption that the leader considered a management layer higher would know about the proposed idea in the first place. If this expectation was met, then a staff member would be encouraged to go and research the idea.

Due to the continual espousal by the SLT of taking responsible risks related to learning, conditions existed for staff to trial new practices without necessarily needing to check them with a higher layer of management first. Jim’s attitude to this was “if it does collapse around you, then, hey, you can still come tomorrow for a job”. However, this freedom of

responsibility still had to be situated within the general intent of the school's values where learning and the learners' [students'] needs were prioritised. This was demonstrated particularly during the 2008 trial period of the Mentoring Programme, where mentors were encouraged to develop their practice based on whatever worked for them and the students. Jim did not want the mentors to be "too led" because he saw that as a risk to stifling the mentors' attempts to meet the needs to their students.

Another form of distributed leadership was espoused by the SLT in relation to the expected responsibilities that HOLs were expected to undertake and model. The SLT positioned HOLs as the conduits through which the development and review of school practice was directed to the staff in their respective departments. Alongside this 'directed through' form of leadership the credence given to another expectation of responsibility became increasingly visible throughout the 'systemisation and non-negotiables' season of 2009. Coupled to the distributed responsibility of 'directed through' was a greater expectation of 'reporting back'. Responsibility had been given from the SLT to the HOLs and the associated tasks were expected to be completed, on time and in the form expected. These tasks were associated with two contexts that developed during my time in the school. Firstly, as the school emerged out of its 'bang' stage of growth and site development, greater attention was afforded to meeting the external requirements expected of NZQA with the school's administration of NCEA, which was the focus of an external trial audit in mid-2009. Secondly and perhaps symbiotically related to the increased attention afforded to external requirements and the need to adjust systems to suit a large school for the first time, clearer lines of reporting were established between individual SLT members and the HOLs. Associated with this shift was the increased distribution of responsibility from Jim to the other members of the SLT, where they made decisions at times "that then get passed onto us [the HOLs] without too much discussion" (Steve, HOL, Mentor). Given the SLT's espousal of taking responsible risks and not wanting to impose too much structure, the 'sustainability of structure' period that Jim saw the school was now in leads back to a question he asked during the first SLT group interview:

We didn't impose a lot of structure but it has tended to evolve, in a certain way. I mean, and I'm not unhappy with that, but I suppose it is interesting. I've often wondered whether if that's happened because, it's certainly not something we've driven, or whether that's happened because that's the only way schools can operate. Is there something organic around schooling? You know, that makes that the nature of schooling. And I wonder if there is a little

bit of truth around that or whether it's the nature or something around the, um, the way that school teachers work? (Jim, Principal)

Autonomy, structure and additional rules to the 'game'

Jim's reflection about whether or not there is something organic about schooling, raises the question to what degree do schools, their staff and their students have authentic "unfettered" autonomy to determine the degree of structure they so desire and espouse? At the outset of the school, it was decided that there would not be "a whole big manual of this is the way Penthom High School will work" (Jim, Principal). Rather, from the outset there was a continued espousal of "to make learning at the forefront" where "one of the key facets of learning is about risk-taking" (Jim, Principal). It was "not negotiable, we're here to learn" (Mike, Associate Principal) and if staff agreed with this vision of the school "then you're on a pathway with it" (Brenda, Deputy Principal). During the early stages of the school "things seemed clear" and then "we went bang and grew" where the non-negotiables perhaps were "lost a little bit" (Angela, HOL, Mentor). As the school emerged from the period of site development and rapid roll growth it was then that Jim asked, "is there something organic about schooling" that is to some extent outside of their control and desire to develop a discourse of difference that requires structure, systems and "whole big manuals?".

My time in the school coincided with their journey two years beyond the 'bang period' just as they entered into what Jim described as a "sustainability of structure" phase. I was present as the espoused "unfettered" approach to "responsible risk-taking" came into increasing contact with the structures and systems associated with larger schools and the external requirements associated with NCEA. As a metaphor, the school was in a season where two rivers joined for the first time, creating an increase in current, turbulence and eddies off to the side. The increase in current brought about through an increase in water mass equated to the 'on the go' season I observed throughout 2008. 'Downstream' from this was the reorienting of systems and non-negotiables that shaped the practices of 2009. The autonomy, staff relations and organisational structure experienced in the school would not be the same as in the past. Culture as a non-material form of capital changed through these seasons and so with it "the power to confer meanings upon social reality" (May & Powell, 2008, p.128). Consequently, habitus, which is "a product of history" and "ensures the active presence of past experiences" (Bourdieu, 1990, p.54) was adjusted to fit the conditions that had rapidly evolved within the

school. The tension for some staff was that the stock of deference acquired through previous events that promoted responsible risk-taking would now need to be situated in a context where structure was more likely to determine what was constituted as acceptable action. The ‘rules of the game’ had changed slightly.

This adjustment was evident in the forms of distributed leadership observed in the 2008 ‘on the go’ and 2009 ‘systematisation and non-negotiables’ periods. The dominant distributed forms of leading by ‘stepping back’ and leading by ‘directing through’ appear paradoxical and so need to be understood alongside each other through considering individual and collective symbolic capital or deference. ‘Stepping back’ was part of the culture established in the school from the start through the meaning conferred in “taking responsible risks”. It was evident in the practice associated with trialling new ideas and was particularly visible in the Mentoring Programme when it was contained to one year level. The emergence of an impromptu form of the Programme with the Year 12 students near the end of 2008 was also a product of historical deference shaping the present. The mentors at this time were selected because they “were on the same page” or social field, and the initial group of mentors was small enough so they experienced a degree of individual and collective autonomy.

The following year, when the Mentoring Programme expanded, the degree of individual autonomy was expected in a similar manner to the year before, but the group of approximately 40 mentors had now grown too large to develop a sense of collective autonomy. The symbolic capital of the 2008 mentors could not be replicated in the expanded 2009 format, it needed “that distributed leadership” (Andy, HOL) while retaining “the passion from the top” (Bronwyn, HOL, Mentor). The “unfettered” approach linked to taking “responsible risks” appropriate for the trial programme now resulted in issues “around resourcefulness and resourcing” a year later (Jim, Principal). The ‘stepping back’ form of distributed leadership that enabled more leadership to emerge, evident in the Penthom Mentoring Programme and successful in the ‘on the go’ season, now required further organisational structures to sustain it in the ‘systemisation and non-negotiables’ season.

The emergence of structure

Organisational structure marked the other dominant form of distributed leadership, ‘directed through’. This form was positioned as the link between the SLT and the HOLs during 2008 once the school grew too large for the SLT to meet regularly with all staff. The HOLs were

initially asked by the SLT “to go into their teams and lead by example” as they were expected to now “be a key unit of leadership” (Mike, Associate Principal). During the ‘on the go’ season responsibility was viewed as a form of distributed leadership given to the HOLs by the SLT coupled to ‘stepping back’ so that HOLs could still take responsible risks as a form of emergent leadership. The HOLs tended to look back to Jim for clarification and direction during this time. Unbeknown to them, Jim was ‘stepping back’ in late 2008 – early 2009 without abrogating his overall responsibility, so that the SLT could emerge with a collective identity in addition to the individual ones that they had historically had while they attended to matters ‘on the go’. The HOLs were also aware that changes needed to take place:

Every year there’s a little more formality in the structures just because it’s getting bigger, another year level and so now the whole school is here. There’s probably a need to be more definitive about the way things are done, more intentional so that the whole staff are actually moving in the same direction rather than less structure in the past. (Ethan, HOD, Mentor)

I think people like to know where they stand with certain processes ... towards our own NCEA framework. People feel safe with paper around them, they feel safe, “if I do this, this and this I’m actually right, I can’t be criticised, I can’t be tripped up. If I follow what’s in place”. I think there’s a danger where you go over the top with it or you end up having so much of a paper trail or so much of the pressures that people actually forget to be teachers and be relationships, or have relationships with the learners that they’re with so I think it is a fine balance ... NCEA brings some of those by its own requirements rather than the schools. (Andy, HOL, Mentor)

Now that the school had reached its full size at the start of 2009 and with the increased focus on systems brought about by operating at every level in the NCEA environment, the ‘directed through’ form of leadership became fettered to what is expected of New Zealand secondary schools. The symbolic capital established during the ‘on the go’ season now required some readjustment. May and Powell (2008) argue that “the status ascribed to forms of capital changes over time” (p.128) and this case study is no exception to this. The status afforded to taking ‘responsible risks’ and learning did not diminish over time, rather they were joined with more structural forms of distributed leadership that were espoused and observed during my time in the school. What occurred over the 2008-09 was an addition to the ‘rules of the game’ in the social field of Penthom High School.

Conclusion

The ‘rules of the game’ of ‘being on the same page’ and ‘pathway’ ended up being influenced by external expectations that emphasised HOLs reporting back to the SLT. In the past, these conditions or ‘rules’ were not so formalised and structured. The historical practice and ‘rules’ of ‘stepping back’ and ‘taking responsible risks’ still existed, but the responsibility attached to ‘leading through’ shaped by both external accountability demands and internally shaped expectations, now existed in parallel to these historical practices, adding new rules to the social field of Penthom High School. The school set out to be different and not to have any “big manuals”, yet when I departed the school late in 2009, the HOLs had worked extensively with the SLT and their respective departments to produce a manual that provided guidelines and responsibilities for consistent practices related to the administration of NCEA. Rather than use the term distributed leadership to describe their practice, the staff I associated with in the school ascribed and practiced a form of distributed responsible autonomy. Nevertheless, forms of distributed leadership such as directed through, stepping back so that leadership could emerge and boundary-spanning within groups were evident. These forms of distributed leadership, alongside those that emerged from Esteran College, are discussed and critiqued against the distributed leadership literature from Part One in the chapter that follows.

CHAPTER EIGHT – Discussion

Introduction

The multiplicity and variability of distributed leadership evident in the Auckland cases indicate that there is no grand narrative labelled ‘distributed leadership’. Distributed leadership was a little known and understood concept across both schools, yet it was acknowledged that there were different forms of distributed leadership evident in day-to-day practice. Therefore, from this point on, the nomenclature ‘distributed leadership’ is replaced sometimes with ‘distributed forms of leadership’ because it is a more satisfactory way of describing leadership practice evident in the Auckland cases. This chapter starts with the views of the staff and then illustrates several distributed forms of leadership practice that were evident during the observation period. Sitting behind these distributed forms, something else was going on. The ‘backstories’ of each school reveal other stories, strategies and tensions evident across the distributed forms. Threaded through them are interconnected strands, each of them a weaving together of three related sub-themes discussed in this chapter: alignment, autonomy, and responsibility; symbolic power, trust, and deference; and, relations, micropolitics and dialogue. The analytical framework used in this chapter, reveals how a critical and sociological analysis can apply to case study research of distributed forms of leadership, which serves as a more useful term than distributed leadership.

Distributed leadership: A term that was rarely used

The profile of distributed leadership evident in commentary, research and education policy was not evident in either school. For most staff I interacted with it was merely the focus and title of my research that drew their attention to distributed leadership. The senior leadership teams in both schools were more likely to have heard of the concept but both acknowledged that the term “distributed leadership” was not part of everyday practice. As with other studies there was “little reality on the ground” (Leithwood & Mascal, 2008, p.550) especially with those not in the higher levels of the school hierarchies (Hall et al., 2011b). Staff who were in official middle leadership roles, whether pastoral or curriculum, attempted to define distributed leadership by drawing on practices that could be traced to historical and current expectations that were evident in the talk of senior and middle leaders, rather than theoretical models and typologies.

The Deans and other pastoral support leaders at Esteran College situated their definitions in the context of decision-making where some argued that distributed leadership was equated to “passing the buck” so no one ended up making the “tough decisions”. This resulted in situations where extensive consultation created congested spaces that were “too middle management full”. Given that the Deans were historically positioned by the senior leaders and staff as the group that “got things done”, it appeared that this group drew on their proactive reputation to define distributed leadership. Their argument for a “bastard” so that stagnation and avoidance could be confronted somewhat reflected the argument from the Penthom High School curriculum middle leaders that distributed leadership required some form of moderation as it could not be “unfettered”. The Penthom curriculum middle leaders also drew on historical and current expectations to try to define distributed leadership by associating it with responsibility and the opportunity to try “different things”. The Penthom High School discourse of “taking responsible risks” appeared to inform their responses and when combined with the Deans’ responses from Esteran College revealed how middle leaders at the two schools shaped their understanding of distributed leadership around what was expected of them through the messages embedded in each school’s past and present culture.

In contrast to the case studies of Penlington et al. (2008), the senior leadership team members in each school were clear that distributed leadership did not equate to delegation and associated their understanding of distributed leadership with the manner in which they desired the school to develop. Members of both teams referred to structure as they articulated their understandings, but in differing ways associated with what they valued and desired in each school. At Esteran, where the SMT members perceived that the school had become stuck up a “cul-de-sac”, value was placed on developing a school-wide perspective of improving student achievement and the clarification of roles. The structure associated with role clarification was viewed as a means to enable distributed leadership where middle leaders particularly could “step up” into a school-wide view of student achievement rather than solely a subject-based one. On the other hand, at Penthom, the SLT members grappled with structure and clarity of roles as a possible hindrance to distributed leadership, the notion of structure contrasted with their desire to promote fluidity and room for staff to move and take responsible risks. Members of both senior teams argued that their interpretation of distributed leadership was right for them as they viewed their interpretation, rather than a single definition of distribution, as a means to improve student achievement in line with the culture, values and strategies that they hoped would permeate their school.

Understandings of leadership distribution appeared to be socially and culturally constructed in both schools. Consequently each school setting, both in terms of historical practice and current relations meant that a range of understandings were evident. At Penthom, there was some degree of alignment between what the SLT members and the HOLs believed, where links were made between emphasising fluidity, opportunity, and taking responsible risks with some degree of moderation that did not restrict staff to pre-defined roles. On the other hand, there was an acknowledged possible misalignment between the views of the SMT members and other middle leaders at Esteran. The SMT members acknowledged that they did not know how staff understood the term leadership and Deans argued that distributed leadership needed to be defined in the school because they did not all have “the same structure in their head as the Principal”. The SMT members interpreted distributed leadership as “stepping up” whereas Deans constructed their interpretation of it in their group interview around decision-making. Spillane and Coldren (2011) encourage school leaders to come up with a working definition of leadership and argue that a shared understanding “is a critical first step in improving school leadership” (p.28). However, this first critical step may be more complex than what is implied here if espoused understandings are socially and culturally constructed due to the multiplicity of individual and shared histories that inform how staff make sense of leadership, particularly as it also exists in a range of distributed forms.

Distributed forms of leadership

The distributed forms of leadership observed in the two case studies reveal that each form needs to be understood in concert with the others and against the ‘backstories’ of ‘on the go’ and ‘systematisation and non-negotiables’ at Penthom High School, and ‘stepping up’ at Esteran College. Further to these different ‘backstories’, there were also contextual similarities between the schools due to secondary schools being structured around curriculum areas within a management hierarchy, students being grouped into year levels with associated pastoral support systems and both operating under the same education system using the same national curriculum and assessment framework. Additional to these structural similarities and different ‘backstories’, the distributed forms of leadership tended to vary over time and support Louis’ et al’s (2010) *Learning from leadership* project finding that showed patterns of leadership change over time and there is no one best way for leadership to exist in a distributed form.

Distributed through in parallel

The organisational structuring of subject departments and the deeply embedded grouping together of the departmental leaders into the CMT and HOL group in each respective school meant that leadership was distributed as a division of labour to support and maintain the structure, whilst the structure at times enabled and also hindered other distributed forms of leadership. At Esteran the structure was described as “two big lumps”, one built around curriculum, the other built around the Deans and student support staff, whereas at Penthom only the curriculum leaders were positioned as the “key unit of leadership” in the school. Leadership was officially distributed through parallel structures with some structures more influential than others as previously displayed in the group influence scatterdiagrams with the coloured ellipses (see Figures 6.3 and Figure 7.7) and illustrated by the thickness of the arrows in Figures 8.1 and 8.2:

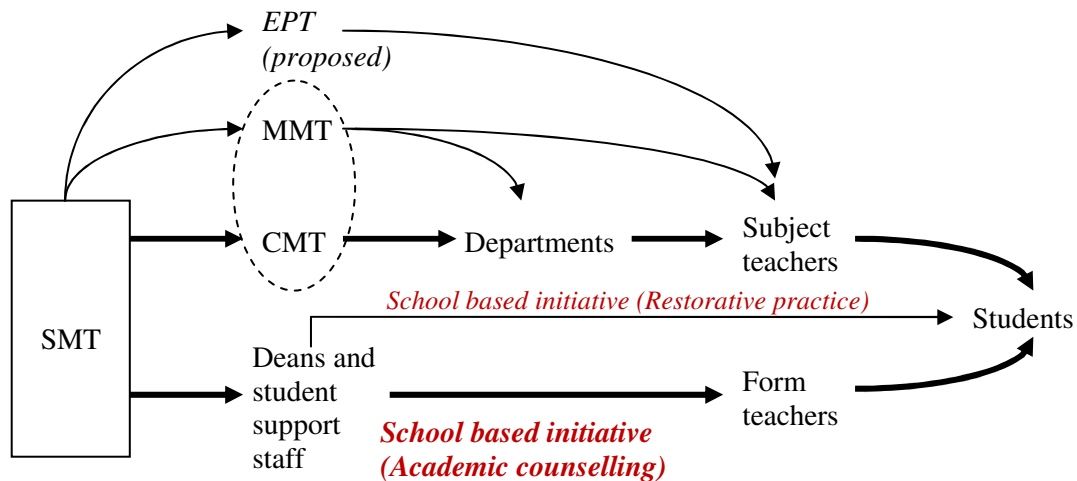


Figure 8.1 – Esteran College distributed structural forms of leadership

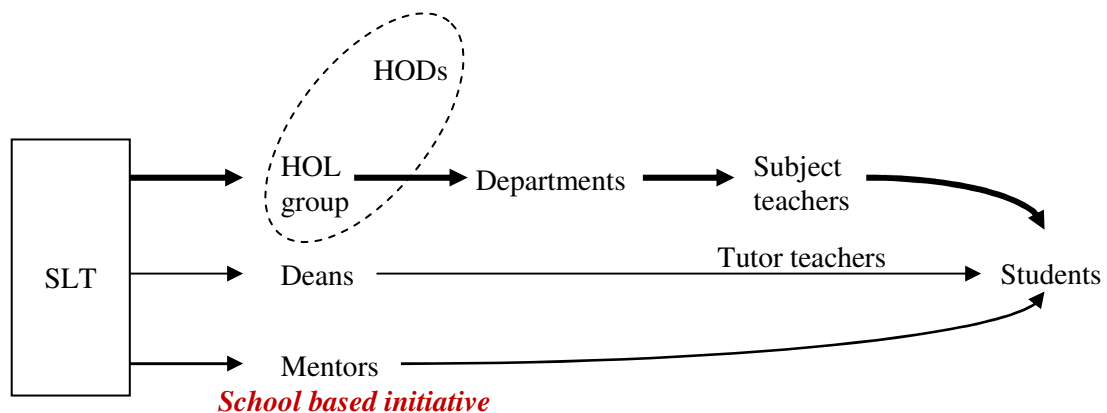


Figure 8.2 – Penthom High School distributed structural forms of leadership

In relation to the theorising of Gronn and Spillane, the sum of these parallel leadership structures for each school illustrates the aggregation or accumulative distribution of leadership (Gronn, 2002) and as leader-plus, arranged through the division of labour, distributed by the design of the senior, curriculum and pastoral care leadership positions (Spillane, 2006). A purpose of these structures was for the respective SMT and SLT teams to use them as institutionalised conduits where leadership could be *distributed through* them. Where a line of the structure was deemed unsuitable for a school-based initiative, an existing alternative line or a new one was developed. At Esteran the existing alternative line of the Deans was selected over the curriculum line for both school based initiatives, whereas at Penthom a new line was created with the mentors that by-passed other existing parallel structures. In both schools, in a manner similar to Johnson's (2004) case studies of micropolitical agency, project teams were needed to guide the internal reforms; Deans at Esteran, and the initial group of mentors at Penthom.

The parallel structures do not imply that Crowther's (2009) notion of parallel leadership characterised by collective action, mutual trust and shared purpose was evident throughout the whole of each school. Nor do the parallel structures imply that each conduit was always a separate track as suggested by Lingard et al. (2003). The overlap and gaps between the parallel structures varied over time and illustrated the challenge of implementing school-based initiatives that were not confined to leadership *distributed through* the curriculum based departmental line. At Esteran, the SMT hoped that HODs *stepping up* to a school-wide perspective would create the overlap between the "two big lumps" in the school. Located off to the side, the overlap between the CMT with the larger MMT group contributed to a perceived demise of the MMT. Both groups existed in parallel, but the overlap was problematic rather than productive particularly for those who belonged only to the MMT. In a similar manner, the initial support offered to students at Penthom by the mentors overlapped with the student support emanating from departments resulting in contradictory messages given to students. These examples illustrate that some degree of focused leadership and intervention were needed to manage the degree of overlap required. In both schools, the SMT and SLT attempted to provide focused leadership for the middle leaders by expecting them to step up into a broader school-wide leadership role.

Stepping up

The historical patterns of practice within each school meant that *stepping up* as a distributed form of leadership was experienced by middle leadership groups differently. At Esteran, *stepping up* was equated with a broadening of school-wide thinking related to improving student achievement, whereas at Penthom, *stepping up* was interpreted as leading by example and taking the responsibility as the “key unit of leadership” to report back to the SLT. The former was a cognitive distributed form of leadership, whereas the latter was a distributed form based on concertive action. Both required a *stepping up* beyond previous ways of thinking and acting, though it was not viewed by each senior leadership team as a means of easing their own workloads as described in one of the case studies by Louis et al. (2009).

The cognitive form of *stepping up* was how the SMT at Esteran defined distributed leadership, and this form is not evident in other studies of distributed leadership. For them *stepping up* was a key component that could contribute to school-wide achievement and shifts in the school culture that would enable this. The SMT perceived that the HODs needed to step up and out from their department subject based silo to engage with this school-wide view that incorporated Academic Counselling, Restorative Practice, literacy and numeracy. The Deans on the other hand were already used to thinking and acting beyond a subject-based silo and so with the historical stock of deference afforded to them by other staff, their collective social identity became what Day et al. (2004) describe as a potent leadership resource. In this case, their ability to step up into a school-wide space meant that they emerged as the leaders of the school-based initiative and were described by the SMT as role models of distributed leadership rather than the HODs, though some HODs did “rear their head now and then”.

The historical practices embedded at Penthom that encouraged responsible risk-taking especially during the ‘on the go’ season meant that HOLs were possibly more accustomed to stepping up into a school-wide space but as the school grew in size the SLT and HOLs acknowledged that there needed to be some form of moderation and clarification of roles. Moderation emerged for the SLT and HOLs during the ‘systematisation and non-negotiables’ period that followed in 2009 where the external expectations of NZQA in relation to the managing of NCEA were coupled to school systems. Subsequently, HOLs were required to *step up* and report back to the SLT in relation to achievement data analysis, team plans and budgets as well as connect to the non-negotiable pillars that they had agreed to as the school-

based curriculum. The focused leadership of the Principal and the SLT was required to bring about a more aligned distributed form of leadership as argued by Leithwood et al. (2007). Distributed forms of leadership, however, require formal leaders to simultaneously hold on to and let go of responsibility so that innovation and risk-taking can still emerge (Hammersley-Fletcher & Brundrett, 2005; MacBeath, 2005). Both principals acknowledged the need to have some structure and alignment. Too much structure according to them would disable distributed forms of leadership and package staff into pre-defined roles with little room to move. To what extent formal leaders stepped into and stepped back in differing situations was to them a crucial aspect of day-to-day leadership practice.

Stepping in and stepping back: The managing of emergence

The Auckland cases illustrated that the most visible emergent distributed forms of leadership were those that were coupled to school based initiatives resulting in an inherent mix of emergent leadership with orchestrated leadership as a hybrid configuration (Gronn, 2011). The mixture varied over time and context, oscillating towards a tight coupling to initiatives and at other times towards a loose coupling in a manner akin to Leithwood's et al.'s (2007) spontaneous alignment. The orchestration of leadership by those in higher-level authority based roles was premised on the relational trust that had been established over time with other staff and the symbolic capital of individuals and groups recognised and accepted by the majority of staff. The resultant distributed forms of leadership reflected in Gronn and Spillane's theorising tended to be intuitive actions (Spillane, 2006) where spontaneous collaboration was both unanticipated and anticipated through prior planning (Gronn, 2002) as long as the resultant forms met the conditions that led to their legitimisation in each school.

These conditions were espoused by the senior leadership teams as a means for enabling emergent forms of leadership and were associated with the intention to improve students' achievement. At Esteran, the SMT *stepped in* with an expectation that teachers, and particularly the HODs, would *step up* into school-wide thinking of improving student achievement and connect to the 'big picture' developed in 2008. If this expectation or condition was met, then SMT members were more likely to *step back* and allow other leadership to emerge because it aligned to the perceived overlap of the two school-based initiatives, Academic Counselling and Restorative Practice, with the Key Competencies of the revised *New Zealand Curriculum*. Near the end of 2009, the Deans had "got it really quickly, understood what we [the SMT] were trying to do ... and made the most amazingly

positive contributions to getting it going”. They had a ‘feel for the game’. Having met the condition of *stepping up*, the Deans once again strengthened their reputation as the group that got things done in the school, whereas some of the HODs were viewed as being “very driven by the silos of the curriculum”. Consequently, deference was given to the Deans’ group collectively by other staff. Without making any direct reference to silos, some of the Deans looked across to other middle and senior groups and positioned them as places of congestion where decisions were not made, which suggests that *stepping in* to protect one’s silo worked against meeting the condition of *stepping up*. Distribution implies “holding on and letting go” (MacBeath, 2005, p.354) and if HODs tended to hold on only, then they were less likely to experience *stepping back* from the SMT until they were also prepared to let a silo perspective go at times, which was a ‘rule of the game’ associated with *stepping up* in the social field of Esteran College.

A similar situation emerged at Penthom where the expectation of letting go to enable responsible risk taking was merged with some holding on and reining in from the SLT, particularly as the school transitioned from its 2008 ‘on the go’ season to the ‘systematisation and non-negotiables’ season of 2009. In a manner similar to Esteran, the managing of emergence at Penthom was based on certain historically based social rules espoused by both SLT members and the HOLs. These two groups were content to defer the gatekeeping role of these conditions to the Principal during 2008 and to the Principal and the SLT during 2009 where the Principal *stepped back* to encourage the other SLT members to emerge. The ensuing environment resulted in staff being encouraged to “research” their ideas and then if they were supported to go ahead and take responsibility for implementing them. The *stepping back* of the Principal and the SLT engendered a culture for some where they took their own responsible risks in a manner similar to other distributed leadership research where leaders encouraged innovation, teacher voice and shared leadership (Copland, 2003; Hammersley-Fletcher & Brundrett, 2005; Penlington et al., 2008). This was illustrated in the manner that the pilot mentoring initiative was set up by the Year 12 Dean and tutor teachers outside the officially sanctioned Year 11 initiative. The Year 12 staff knew the general intent of the initiative and given the responsible risk-taking culture in the school, emerged unopposed as leaders in parallel with the initial group of piloting mentors. Socially they behaved according to the SLT’s espoused ‘rules of the game’. The commitment to such forms of leadership dispersal required senior leaders to have a hands off approach similar to that argued by

Lingard et al. (2003), though the Auckland cases illustrate that the hands off approach was mediated by certain conditions.

In both schools, another condition for enabling legitimate emergence was managed through the selection of staff for initial project teams. This started to reveal the micropolitical strategies that occurred beneath the managing and enabling of emergent leadership. At Esteran, the implementation of Restorative Practice was managed by one of the SMT members “selecting the right people to do the training”. In a similar manner “a smaller group of people who ... would be committed to making” the mentoring initiative work at Penthom was selected for the 2008 trial. In both schools, the senior leaders anticipated spontaneous collaboration to occur due to their prior selection planning and intuitive working relations based on mutual trust with each selected group would emerge over time, suggesting that these two forms of concertive action theorised by Gronn (2002) are inextricably connected in certain conditions. The context in which most of these distributed forms emerged were teams where “the distribution of leadership [was] ... ultimately constituted through processes of social interaction” (Scribner et al., 2007, pp.72,73), so the group level analyses of the teams observed in the Auckland cases add further to the distributed forms of leadership discussed so far.

Group level forms and boundary spanners

Group level forms of distributed leadership can also be understood as forms of shared leadership, where shared leadership is defined as the “interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organisational goals or both” (Pearce & Conger, 2003, p.1). Distributed leadership research that includes group level analysis indicates that different forms of leadership and interaction take place within teams that are located in the same organisation (S. Anderson et al., 2009; de Lima, 2008; Sherer, 2007). The Auckland cases were no exception to this. At Esteran, the co-efficient of variation (V) scores that provided a measure of how interaction within groups was distributed indicated different interaction patterns between the CMT, MMT and Deans’ meetings. Differences were also apparent between the HOL and mentor meetings at Penthom though the *stepping back* of the Principal as the key gatekeeper of the HOL meetings in 2009 led to a slightly wider distribution of interaction in HOL meetings and a significant increase of agenda items that emerged from other SLT members. Patterns of interaction did not only change between the groups, but also within the same group over time.

Leadership in the groups tended to take two forms that often occurred during a meeting. An institutionalised form was evident that regulated meetings around agendas and agenda speakers, as well as emergent forms that were dependent on who was present and the focus of the meeting. At Esteran the institutional form was nearly always situated with members of the SMT if it was a CMT or MMT meeting, but less so if it was a Deans' meeting. At Penthom a similar pattern started to emerge with the HOL meetings in 2009 once the school shifted beyond the 'on the go' season of 2008 characterised by HOLs asking questions for clarification of unclear school procedures as general business agenda items. Emergent forms of leadership within the groups were usually linked to staff engaging with a school-wide perspective or in response to invitations for involvement, which in the case of Penthom in 2008 was usually in response to the opportunities that arose from the general business items.

The other emergent form of leadership evident at a group level was *boundary spanning* as described in some research studies of distributed leadership (Goldstein, 2004; Timperley, 2005). *Boundary spanning* leadership appeared to be dependent on an individual's ability to *step up* into school-wide thinking and engage beyond their own area of responsibility. At Esteran, Craig, one of the HODs, regularly participated in this manner, whereas Vern at Penthom emerged as a *boundary spanner* due to his responsibility for school-wide NCEA system requirements. In both cases the observations revealed their expertise was the basis of leadership rather than authority as both tended to follow on from others leading the discussion. *Boundary spanning* leadership was more evident in the two groups responsible for implementing the school-based initiatives where multiple group members drew on their expertise to engage in collaborative problem solving. In these groups leadership practice tended to be stretched across individuals and embedded in their interactions as described by Spillane et al. (2003).

The wider distribution of emergent leadership activity observed in the Esteran Deans' group and the Penthom trial mentors' group was confirmed with their lower V scores and suggests the wider leadership distribution across a team could, for these two groups, be linked to effective team relations. Associating a wider distribution of leadership with effective teams is not always evident in other research (e.g. Mehra, Smith, Dixon, & Robertson, 2006) where a key factor appears to be coordination rather than the degree of distribution. In both of these initiative implementation groups, the co-ordinator positioned themselves as an equal to the others in the group. At Esteran, the Deputy Principal responsible for Student Support

Services was “loving” the distributed culture of expertise and leadership within the group and at Penthom, the Principal who was leading the initiative, positioned himself as a new mentor like others in the group. These cases suggest that the wider distribution of leadership across a group can contribute to effective teamwork provided there is some degree of co-ordination where those with positional authority choose to position themselves in a similar role to others in the team.

Something else was going on

The distributed forms of leadership, *in parallel*, *distributed through*, *stepping up*, *stepping in*, *stepping back*, and, individual and collective forms of *boundary spanning* are not sufficient as constructs to reveal all that was going on in each school. Contrary to Crowther et al.’s (2009) claim that leadership becomes less visible when it is invested across several people rather than one, the longer I spent in each school, the more aware I became of multiple distributed forms and sources of leadership as it was invested across a wider range of people. Observation provided me with the opportunity to view aspects of day-to-day leadership practice which consisted of “intensified, fractured, variable and interrupted work routines and rhythms” as reflected in Gronn’s (2009b, p.29) description of observed school leadership practice. I became aware that something else was always going on in the schools so leadership practice was also manifested differently due to what Møller and Eggen (2005) describe as differing historical, cultural, social and political contexts. For these reasons merely identifying and labelling distributed forms of leadership with descriptive examples is not enough if a more critical perspective is to emerge. The ‘backstories’ of each school also play a prominent part in making sense of why these distributed forms of leadership were observed and also bring to light other less observable themes that sat ‘beneath the surface’. The sub-sections that follow elaborate on what else was going on in the schools and provide a contextual bridge to the themes discussed later in this chapter.

The ‘backstories’ and present context

Common to both schools was the external policy environment that set in place a range of non-negotiable expectations for New Zealand secondary schools. The performative aspect of these expectations was connected to the publicly available NCEA results and the quality assurance systems that NZQA stipulated had to be in place to support the assessment processes. Parallel to these was the expectation from the MoE for the revised *New Zealand*

Curriculum to be embedded as a school-based curriculum around the time I withdrew from each school. Each school's response to these expectations was different due to their histories and the subsequent forms of human, cultural and social capital that had accumulated throughout their pasts. Therefore, what occurred in one school would not have necessarily worked in the other. For instance, aspects of Esteran's past were perceived by the SMT as not being a "good place" where the school had lacked direction and coherence, whereas the SLT at Penthom attempted to hold onto the past that valued fluidity and responsible risk-taking. The responses to these differing histories by each senior leadership team shaped what occurred during my time in each school and revealed the degree of symbolic power that each team had in a non-overt form. Both teams positioned themselves as the group that had the responsibility to redefine and protect what was valued particularly in relation to improving student achievement.

The distributed forms of leadership that occurred in each school are a weaving together of their responses to their pasts and how that mediated their responses to the external expectations placed on them in the present. As an example, *stepping up* into a space of school-wide coherence at Esteran was different from *stepping up* into a space of responsible risk-taking at Penthom. The former was a deliberate strategy away from the past, whereas the latter was a strategy to protect what was valued from the past. The implication of this means that the transferability of a distributed form of leadership from one school to another school needs to be mediated and understood against the cultural capital attributed to each school's past staff relations and practices, a finding that was also evident in the recent case studies of Hall et al. (2011b).

The present setting of each school also mediated the distributed forms of leadership. The physical environments of each school shaped to some degree how staff interpreted leadership in the school. For instance, the development of the 'west wing' at Esteran gave the impression to some staff that the SMT members had distanced themselves from the staff, though distancing was never part of the SMT's espoused agenda for staff relations. Physical distance between groups of departments was also an issue for some staff at Penthom who wanted a shared space for all staff to congregate. The establishment of smaller staff areas strengthened the position of subject groups as the key organisational unit in the school and their HOLs as the key sources of leadership.

At a group level, differing expectations were deferred by staff onto groups in each school. The group influence scatterdiagrams (see Figure 6.3 and 7.7) revealed how at the end of 2009, there were differing flows of influence between groups. In both schools, the senior leadership teams had the most influence over others, but this was aligned to differing groups. The SMT at Esteran appeared to be more in line with the Deans and Form Teachers, whereas the SLT at Penthom appeared to be more in line with the HOLs. Each grouping confirmed what was espoused by each senior leadership team where the Deans were positioned as the ones who got things done at Esteran and the HOLs were positioned as the key units of leadership at Penthom. One of the findings from the *Learning from leadership project* (Louis et al., 2010) stated “how leadership is distributed in schools depends on what is to be accomplished, on the availability of professional expertise, and on principals’ preferences regarding the use of professional expertise” (p.54). To this, I would add the degrees of influence different groups are perceived to have and the histories that shape the expectations placed on each group by other staff. If a principal or a senior leadership team do not consider these group influences and the relations that support these groups then a principal’s preference may be rendered ineffective as illustrated in the Chicago school case study of Hallett (2007a).

The majority voice and issues of school capacity

Located amongst these groups of staff and in the physical environments of schools are the students, whose voice is usually left out of distributed leadership research (Mittra, 2005). This is somewhat surprising given that they make up the largest group in a school and so reveals the adult-centric nature of most school leadership research. In one large normative study principals were perceived from a large sample of teachers as contributing the most as a source of leadership and students the least (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008). This may capture teachers’ perceptions of school leadership but needs to be complemented with the perceptions of students who can position the influence of principals and senior leaders quite differently. In both of the Auckland cases, the senior leadership team members were less likely than any other group to influence students. Students instead positioned their friends, their parents and caregivers and subject teachers above all other groupings of adults in both schools. This finding illustrates how senior and middle leaders were less likely to influence students directly and their learning environment unless their efforts affected the classroom environment and the relations they had with the students and their homes. From an adult perspective, having a group of staff ‘on board’ with an initiative may be deemed a success;

from the students' perspectives this would mean nothing to them unless it influenced their learning environment and relationships.

The majority of students who completed the questionnaires in each school indicated that the respective Academic Counselling and mentoring initiatives influenced their learning environment and associated decision-making, provided their form teacher or mentor met with them regularly. Though these findings are tentative at this stage they highlight the issue that not all form teachers and mentors were able to meet with students due to the intensiveness of their day-to-day practice, despite staff, particularly at Penthom, supporting the initiative. The mentoring initiative at Penthom was also beset with another issue that emerged as the number of tutors swelled to over 40 in 2009. Groups can continue to grow in size up to a point where a greater degree of formal co-ordination and collaboration is required (Leithwood et al., 2007; Seers, Keller, & Wilkerson, 2003) and there was acknowledgment that it now required "distributed leadership" at the helm rather than the Principal co-ordinating by himself. Distributed forms of leadership may assist senior leaders to couple initiatives to middle leaders and other teachers, but the issue evident in the Auckland cases was how is this done when teachers perceive their space is a congested one. This congestion is brought on by the demands that they face in relation to external and internal expectations, and their own desire to meet the needs of the students in their classrooms.

Strategies and tensions

The challenge of working in these congested spaces is one that is reflective of most New Zealand secondary schools (Ingvarson et al., 2005). In the Auckland cases different strategies were employed with the distributed forms of leadership. These strategies revealed acknowledgement of the congested spaces by the senior leadership teams and their desire to influence and reshape those spaces in the hope of improving student achievement. These strategies illustrated how distributed forms of leadership can be "inherently political" (Maxcy & Nguyen, 2006, p.164) as well as being inherently educational and premised on staff relations. The Auckland cases were schools where the senior leadership teams hoped for active involvement of staff in distributed forms of leadership and needed "some method in place to force [some] staff 'out of their nest'" (Hammersley-Fletcher & Brundrett, 2005, p.74).

At Esteran, *stepping up* was used particularly to appeal to HODs' sense of moral purpose and to garner the support of the teachers through them in a manner similar to the strategies described in the micropolitical case studies of Johnson (2004). The justification and use of this strategy was transparent and linked directly to the strategic planning processes, the implementation of the revised *New Zealand Curriculum* with the integration of Academic Counselling and Restorative Practice. Behind the scenes, not all were privy to other strategies employed. For instance possible dissenters were deliberately placed together in the same discussion group when Restorative Practice was first introduced at a staff meeting and the intentional selection of staff for training was referred to at times as a 'trojan horse' where change would slowly "trickle-down" through the school. Those who had completed the training and others who demonstrated that they could *step up* into the space of school-wide thinking were labelled as the "coalition of the willing". It was acknowledged however, by the Principal that the "wolves" of NCEA and NZQA made it challenging for HODs to move beyond protecting their silos due to their desire to have students perform well in their departments' subjects.

The selection strategy of shoulder-tapping those who were more likely to be willing was also used at Penthom by the Principal so that the trialling of the mentoring initiative would be piloted by those who had proven they could *step up* and take responsible risks; a strategy Wright (2008) found was common with principals. The resultant success of the trial meant that other students outside of the trial were 'clambering over each other' hoping to get the similar support and encouragement from their Year 12 Dean and tutors. Johnson (2004) discovered in his case studies that leadership teams had "to demonstrate that the school had the space ... to undertake the work associated with the proposed reform" (p.278). For Penthom, this was an issue the leadership team and original 2008 mentors were still grappling with when I withdrew from the school at the end of 2009. This was despite the positive responses from the students. Ironically, it was as though the strategy employed for the trial of the mentoring initiative had been too successful. The school appeared to struggle to keep the level of success going as it turned its attention to fully meeting its obligations in terms of NZQA quality assurance requirements, and formalising the reporting lines from HODs back to the SLT as it experienced its first year with students studying at every year level. It was as if the system that the Principal had encouraged mentors to work outside of, had come back, so the school could operate as externally expected, as if, in the words of the Principal, "there is something organic about schooling". Both schools ended 2009 with their own tensions. For

Penthom, it was the struggle between fluidity and structure. For Esteran, it was between having a school-wide perspective that incorporated subject views and subject based views that were perceived to be protectionist and silo-based.

The interweaving themes

The distributed forms of leadership evident in the Auckland cases when combined with the ‘backstories’ and contexts of each school reveal the paradoxical nature of day-to-day leadership practice. Louis et al. (2009) argue that a paradox of distributed leadership is that it “may require a push from the top” (p. 160). The themes interwoven through the distributed forms of leadership, the ‘backstories’ and the contexts of each school reveal that the paradox runs deeper than this and exists in the midst of alignment and autonomy, symbolic power and trust, and, relations and micropolitics. None of these themes can be isolated if the paradoxical nature of distributed forms of leadership is to be made clear by respectively grounding them in the thinking and actions associated with responsibility, deference and dialogue.

Alignment, autonomy and responsibility

The interplay between alignment and autonomy occurred across three different levels for both schools: individual, group and organisational. Individuals and groups were more likely to experience some degree of sanctioned autonomy if their actions were aligned to organisational school-wide non-negotiables such as the strategic plan at Esteran and the curriculum ‘pillars’ or mentoring initiative at Penthom. If individuals or groups were already predisposed to *step up* into a school-wide space where staff were perceived as being ‘on the same page’, they tended to exhibit responsible risk-taking and responsible autonomy. They had a ‘feel for the game’ in the social space of each school. Unfettered autonomy where a group or an individual regularly worked independently and outside of ‘the same page’ was rarely observed in either school. There were however, one-off occasions where authority based intervention from a senior leader was deemed necessary. For example, this was illustrated by the gentle rebuke the Esteran HOD received when he claimed his overdue department plan was “all in his head” as he questioned the need to have targets and the Penthom HOLs who had bypassed staff in their department in relation to adjusting timetabled classes.

The combining of alignment and autonomy helps bring some understanding as to why the Deans as a group at Esteran and staff who took responsible risks at Penthom were able to influence others through emergent forms of leadership. A few research studies of distributed leadership attribute risk-taking and autonomy with an increased distribution of leadership as long as there was no fear of censure (Angelle, 2010; Hammersley-Fletcher & Brundrett, 2005; Ritchie & Woods, 2007). Emergent forms of leadership were evident in both schools provided responsible autonomy was displayed, rather than unfettered autonomy. Individuals and groups were expected to stay linked and aligned to espoused collective principles, practices and initiatives. The Deans at Esteran “got it” [i.e. the big picture] and acted with responsible autonomy in their form teacher groups so the Academic Counselling initiative could be implemented. In a similar manner, the Year 12 Dean and tutor teachers at Penthom *stepped up* and took a responsible risk in establishing their own impromptu mentoring programme beyond the trial one that was authorised. In both cases, the senior leadership teams and a number of middle leaders recognised these individuals as taking the responsibility and displaying a degree of autonomy aligned to wider school plans.

The group who were openly encouraged the most to demonstrate responsible autonomy were the initial trial mentors at Penthom. The message of “do what you like” was backed up with other messages such as “step outside of the system” and not wanting to make the mentors “too led”. The lack of restraint via systemic structures resulted in the trial mentors taking responsibility to develop their own systems that they shared with each other during the 2008 ‘on the go’ season. This group however were on the whole pre-selected and had already exhibited responsible risk-taking to the Principal who used the authority associated with his role as a “constitutive base for legitimating human conduct” (Gronn, 2003a, p.275) and establishing the mentoring initiative in the first place.

The other key group who were not collectively involved in the two school initiatives were the curriculum middle leaders. For them the *stepping up* into the ‘big picture’ and being ‘on the same page’ was mediated by factors that the Esteran Deans and Penthom mentors were less likely to face. The Esteran HODs from their perspective displayed alignment with their curriculum area and tended to interpret their responsibility as being restricted to this and their departmental team. The SMT though had a different expectation of what responsibility included. For them it also encompassed a school-wide perspective that incorporated a broader view of the how they expected the school to respond to the revised *New Zealand Curriculum*.

Consequently, the SMT positioned some HODs as being too autonomous and stuck in their silos. In comparison to the Deans, these HODs were not displaying the same degree of school-wide responsibility that the SMT had hoped for. The context was somewhat different for the HOLs at Penthom where the recent establishment of smaller curriculum based staff areas around the school was creating, according to a number of interviewees, cliques amongst the staff. HOLs were expected to take responsibility as a “key unit of leadership” and model what was expected to staff, so that departmental practices were aligned to what was expected.

When the themes of alignment and responsible autonomy are combined with the distributed forms of leadership evident in each school, the hierarchical role based authority needed to enable *distributed through in parallel* is shown to co-exist and overlap with heterarchical distributed forms of leadership. This was illustrated by the collective actions of the Deans, the mentors and some of the curriculum leaders who were able to step out of their silos. These heterarchical forms tended not to be based on role authority, rather symbolic power was utilised as a means to bring about influence. Role based authority overlapped with symbolic power, where symbolic capital or deference existed as symbolic power in its potential form (Hallett, 2007a).

Symbolic power, trust and deference

The inclusion of symbolic power as a theme helps provide some understanding as to why different groups in the two schools appeared to exert more influence at times than others. The responsible autonomy displayed was not just dependent on *stepping up* to what was expected, it was also related to the degree of deference that had been given over time by staff to other individuals and groups. As mentioned earlier, collective social identity can be a potent leadership resource (Day et al., 2004) and when this form of cultural capital connects with the social capital or trust that others may have in the collective, then those belonging to this collective or group are able to influence others, not out of a role of authority, but out of their stock of deference (Spillane, Hallett, et al., 2003). The acquirement of deference is conditional though on demeanour:

To acquire deference, people must exhibit the appropriate demeanour towards others. Deference is symbolic power in potential form; once deference is acquired, it can be deployed as the symbolic power to frame actions, situations and events in ways that induce compliance and constitute the social order. (Hallett, 2007a, p.149)

Hallett's explanation helps bring further understanding as to why the emergent distributed forms of leadership were able to co-exist alongside the more official structural forms based on authority. For instance, the Principal at Penthom pre-selected trial mentors who had acquired sufficient deference from others in relation to being trusted to take responsible risks aligned to what was valued in the school. The ensuing symbolic power that these trial mentors demonstrated equated to an emergent and distributed form of leadership, particularly across Year 11. The Year 12 Dean and tutor teachers did not view this as mutually exclusive to the trial mentors, rather, because taking responsible risks had been encouraged in the school, the Year 12 Dean in particular drew from her own stock of deference to influence students and staff at another year level. The Dean's stock of deference was also added to by the encouragement she received from the SLT, the trial mentors, the Year 12 tutor teachers and the Year 12 students. Once the mentoring initiative expanded the following year to involve over 40 mentors, the initial encouragement amongst the trial mentors and the Year 12 Dean started to wane. The mentors I interviewed at the end of 2009 knew they had sufficient deference and trust to influence and support students but regretted not being able to change this form of potential symbolic power into actual symbolic power. For them the intensity and demands of day-to-day life started to limit their influence and collectively subdue the emergent leadership of the year before.

Another major emergent group in the case studies were the Deans and student support staff at Esteran. The ensuing cultural capital amassed over time meant that the Deans were the group with "the power", who managed to "get things done" beyond departmental silos. They were aptly placed to be trusted with the two school-based initiatives, Academic Counselling and Restorative Practice by the SMT, as they had previously demonstrated responsible autonomy with school-wide thinking and operating. Some individual HODs also demonstrated symbolic power in the CMT meetings through *boundary spanning leadership* rather than role based authority because they were not intent on protecting their silos. Rather, they had placed a school-wide perspective before a department based one. When HODs occasionally demonstrated this, they were encouraged particularly by SMT members who would make comments like "good question" and "can we place that on the next agenda". Near the end of my time at Esteran the emerging profiling of other staff who worked across the school, such as the numeracy co-ordinator and literacy co-ordinator, were also starting to acquire deference, mainly from the SMT and the identification of these co-ordinating roles with the revised *New Zealand Curriculum* and the strategic plan. This small group were yet to display

the same degree of symbolic power as the Deans, due to the lack of historical deference that had built up at that stage.

Another group, which emerged in the case studies, was the SLT in the HOL meetings at Penthom. The Principal had deliberately *stepped back* to allow the other SLT members to emerge as agenda speakers and leaders of the school-wide systems that were representative of the ‘systemisation and non-negotiable’ season of 2009. There was a difference with this group compared to the others discussed in this section as their emergence was also based on the authority associated with their roles. This authority did not appear to be received as ‘power over’ by other participants I interviewed and observed; they interpreted it more as a clarification of what was expected without diminishing their deferring of trust onto the SLT members and the Principal due to the social relations that already existed. The *stepping back* of the Principal did not result in him having any less symbolic power in the meetings due to the increased influence of the SLT, a finding that is evident in the distributed leadership research of Leithwood and Mascal (2008) and suggests that symbolic power does not have a finite capacity as argued by Parker-Follett (cited in, Graham, 1995).

In some research studies, expertise is positioned as a condition for distributed forms of leadership (e.g. Leithwood et al., 2007; Louis et al., 2010; Spillane, Hallett, et al., 2003; Timperley, 2005; L. Wright, 2008). The Auckland cases tended to illustrate that there was more to deferring the potentiality of leadership onto individuals and groups than relying on their expertise. Expertise, if used as a form of unfettered autonomy could be deemed unproductive, so the expertise that was valued at Esteran and Penthom tended to be conditional on the amount of deference that individuals or groups had acquired. Human capital that incorporates expertise, needed to be complemented with sufficient social capital where trust had developed in networks and staff relations.

Relations, micropolitics and dialogue

The establishment and maintaining of staff relations that enabled deference to be given and acquired was premised on the depth of dialogue that took place in the Auckland cases amidst the less visible backdrop of micropolitics. As far back as Ball’s (1987) micropolitical case studies of schools, boundaries of control between pastoral care specialists and curriculum specialists have been an area of negotiation and the Auckland cases were no exception to this. Esteran’s Principal described pastoral care and curriculum as two “big lumps” that were

unconnected and typical of secondary schools. The deference afforded the Deans over many years had contributed to this perception more so at Esteran than at Penthom, where tension was never equated to comparisons between the low profile Deans and the high profile HOLs perhaps because curriculum boundaries were rarely crossed. However, when the curriculum boundaries of student subject based support were crossed and contradicted by trial mentors in 2008, the issue was brought into the open at both the HOL and mentor meetings and then clarified for the following year.

At Esteran, some of the Deans perceived the curriculum groups as too full of middle leaders who put off making decisions and resulted in some wanting to see HODs *step up* and take more responsibility. The Deans also perceived some form teachers as being lazy and resistant to Academic Counselling, suggesting perhaps that some staff had passively agreed to the initiative but remained unaffected in their form rooms. The Deans' position as the group with symbolic power in the school was not perceived as a threat by those I interviewed and observed, though one public comment suggested that another story may sit beneath the surface. One of the HODs who often emerged as a boundary spanner joked one day that the Deans network better not steal any more of the best department staff, suggesting that the gap between the "lumps" was tangible from both sides. Despite this, the Deans were expected by staff to get things done as they were better placed according to the Principal to *step up*.

The relations amongst the curriculum middle leaders and between the CMT and MMT groups and the SMT varied over time and suggested that some were experiencing displacement. There was evidence from the CMT observations that some HODs had started to engage in a school-wide perspective, though there was some indication the CMT group was being preferred as a place of dialogue over that of the wider MMT group where the SMT tended to report decisions to them. Subsequently for a small number, there was a growing sense of distance between the SMT in the 'west wing' and some of the staff. Distance was also an issue for some of the staff at Penthom, who bemoaned the lack of a central staff area large enough for all of them. For some the distributed departmental staff areas were places where they were welcome, for others it spoke of fragmentation.

In places where dialogue regularly took place there was more of a likelihood of leadership emerging out of the interactions that took place, as long as those who held authority over the agendas allowed space for this to occur. Open and honest dialogue is identified as a key

factor of shared leadership that needs to be nurtured in groups (Fletcher & Kaufer, 2003; Møller & Eggen, 2005) and is inseparable from problem solving (Louis et al., 2009). Both of the initiative groups, the Deans and the trial mentors were placed in contexts where they were required to problem solve during their meetings, leading to lower V values that indicated a wide distribution of participation and collective *boundary spanning* as a form of shared leadership. The relations I observed amongst the members of these groups were based on the trust, the social capital that the members had towards each other and their shared objective of wanting to improve students' achievement ahead of any other agendas. The V values of other meetings, like the CMT and HOL, also dropped whenever dialogue was encouraged in relation to an agenda item though not all participants interpreted the chance to participate as a productive activity. The perceived increase in participant involvement in the HOL meetings was also interpreted as a 'politically correct' shift to include democratic principles that overrode the need to make decisions.

The relations, micropolitics and dialogue that took place in the schools were also subject to focused leadership so that external expectations were met and progress was made in relation to decision-making. Amidst the distributed forms of leadership, staff also expected senior leaders to exercise the authority associated with their role. Dialogue was deemed to be productive up to a point, but once it continued past the point where staff believed a decision should have been made, there was a desire to see someone, "make the hard calls". For some staff members at this stage they were content for formal leaders to utilise their authority rather than wait for a collective decision. Dinham's (2005) research of principals revealed that consensus is impossible and highlights the co-existence of authority based leadership with distributed forms of leadership. So that stagnation was less likely to occur with decision-making, each school employed several micropolitical strategies as a means of addressing this, such as appealing to teachers' sense of moral purpose, applying a 'trojan horse' approach, identifying a coalition of the willing and shoulder-tapping staff members who were more likely to *step up*.

A criticism of applying a political perspective to school leadership practice is that the micropolitical activity and emphasis on power relations can be over-emphasised (Ball, 1987; Bush, 2011). Even though micropolitical activity was apparent in both schools enough to warrant being discussed as a theme, destructive micropolitics were not the over-riding component of the staff relations I observed. Most of the time, the groups I associated with

and my times waiting in staff rooms were characterised by episodes of mutual respect between staff and friendly banter often amidst frantic and intense activity, or tiredness and exhaustion. The staff members of both schools tended to be ones that fitted the description of many New Zealand teachers evident in two national research studies. Most staff tended to persist to strive and “attain high personal standards for reasons of personal commitment” (Ingvarson et al., 2005, p.165), so their work with the students would be a contribution to society (Kane & Mallon, 2006). Despite this, distributed forms of leadership were inherently complex and situated amongst the paradoxical hybrid configurations of focused authority based leadership and distributed forms based in symbolic power.

Conclusion to Part Two

The Auckland cases were subject to an external policy environment that is particular to New Zealand. Therefore, the evidence presented in the two previous case study chapters along with the findings discussed in this chapter need to be interpreted in this context prior to the reader attempting to establish any degree of transferability and external validity to their own setting. A significant amount of distributed leadership research is also situated in primary and elementary schools, whereas the Auckland cases are located in secondary schools structured around subject based departments.

Most of the case study research discussed in chapter four is from the United States or England. In the U.S. studies there appear to situate distributed leadership research with the tight coupling of external reform to the classroom environment and in the English studies there tends to be more emphasis on what is termed ‘official distributed leadership’. The latter studies also reflect a higher degree of awareness in schools of the term distributed leadership, due to its popularisation through the NCSL and Government reforms; an awareness that was not evident in the Auckland cases. In contrast to these two broad contexts, New Zealand schools are expected to be loosely coupled to the revised national curriculum, have their own school-based curriculum, though be tightly coupled to external expectations related to national forms of assessment. Senior and middle leaders are expected to be active in curriculum design and support the learning environment through pastoral care, while also meeting the quality assurance requirements associated with national forms of assessment.

Despite these contextual differences, the case studies confirmed a key finding of the *School Leadership Project* (Louis et al., 2010) that there was no one single pattern of leadership distribution that could be identified as being linked to student learning. Moreover, they also captured some of the distributed forms of leadership identified in the meta-findings of the research summarised in chapter four (see Table 4.2), such as *stepping in*, *stepping back* and *boundary spanning*. The *distributed through in parallel* form reflected the official structural forms that distributed leadership research studies tend to promote more than other forms. However, the day-to-day practices of the Auckland cases revealed that a lot more was going on beyond these structural and authority based forms. The complexity, paradoxes and micropolitical strategies evident in distributed leadership case study research that goes beyond description, was also revealed in the Auckland cases. The sub-themes of responsible autonomy, deference and dialogue contributed to understanding why hybrid configurations of hierarchical, heterarchical and shared leadership in groups, co-existed. Though care is required to transfer these findings into other settings, the theoretical frameworks used to analyse the findings can be used as a form of analytical case study generalisation (Yin, 2009). It is with this analytical generalisation that the Auckland cases are used to assist with the final part of the study, the re-theorising of distributed leadership.

PART THREE – RE-THEORISING DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

In this final part, which is the thesis of this study, the Auckland cases and the analytical generalisation arising from them speak back to the field. The two chapters are primarily informed by the third research aim, to re-theorise distributed forms of leadership in relation to day-to-day practice. The following research questions are derived from this aim:

To what extent do two case studies of distributed leadership contribute to a satisfactory re-theorising?

How could “distributed leadership” be critically re-theorised?

The first chapter focuses on how an analytical framework based on the Auckland cases informs a subsequent re-theorising that explains how authority and symbolic power co-exist to form hybrid configurations of organisational and emergent forms of leadership. The second chapter concludes with a rejection of “distributed leadership” as a grand narrative and then focuses on the subsequent implications for the field.

CHAPTER NINE – Distributed forms of leadership: A satisfactory theorising

Introduction

The analytical framework used to collect and understand data from the Auckland cases reflected my intention to go deeper and keep asking “why?”. Merely identifying organisational and emergent distributed forms of leadership and commenting on their appropriateness through the eyes of the participants was not enough. I sought to understand why these forms were evident due to the current educative, social, cultural and political contexts that shaped day-to-day practice. This however, was also not enough. The current contexts were also informed by historical educative, social, cultural and political contexts that revealed why the patterns of practice were different between both schools.

In this chapter a four-level analytical framework derived from the case studies is developed. It is used to critique the categories of distributed leadership research established in chapter four and the conceptualisations and typologies discussed in chapter three. This leads to the central argument of the thesis, that distributed leadership should no longer be used to try and describe or modify leadership practice. Rather, it should be replaced with distributed forms of leadership that exist in hybrid configurations, understood through past and current educative, social, cultural and political contexts.

Analytical generalisation from the two case studies

The aim of analytical generalisation with case study research is to define “the domain to which a study’s findings can be generalised” (Yin, 2009, p.40) and what can it “tell us about a specific theory” (de Vaus, 2001, p.237), in this case, distributed leadership. The analytical framework that follows signifies the bounds to which the case study findings can be generalised. The framework can be applied to analyse other settings, though the distributed forms of leadership identified and embedded in the past and present contexts of the Auckland cases can only be generalised to other settings with much care and consideration to the similarity of contexts. To help the reader discern the typicality of the Auckland cases to their own context, the salient features of each school (Sturman, 1997) and rich thick descriptions of events (Merriam, 1998) were documented in Chapters One, Six and Seven.

Organisation forms of leadership

The first level of the four-level analytical framework focuses on identifying distributed forms of leadership that are formally embedded within the organisational structure and management roles across a school. The focus on the associated organisational routines and formal responsibility distribution give rise to what Spillane and Coldren (2011) define as formal accounts of leadership practice. The formal accounts of the Auckland cases revealed that leadership was distributed through organisational structures in parallel as shown in Figures 8.1 and 8.2 (p.193). The distributed forms, *in parallel* and *leading through*, were largely defined by the division of labour, team roles, and the formal reporting lines that connected the teams to each other and school goals. Individuals within the teams I observed had differing degrees of authority associated with their management roles that anchored the role system of each school to its goals and operational systems (Gronn, 2000).

These organisational forms of leadership can be arranged differently from school to school, but are common in that they reveal the vertical formal distribution of authority based roles and the lateral team structures that are used to aggregate these roles around common purposes, subjects and student year levels.

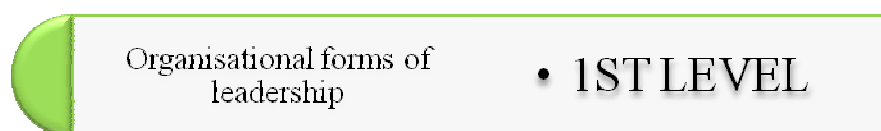


Figure 9.1 – *First level of the analytical framework*

This first level of analysis reveals a perspective that is functional and rational, where the study of interactions between staff is likely to be limited to formal decision-making processes. Though easily identifiable, these organisational accounts do not reveal the “rich understanding of how the organisation’s work is *actually* done” (Spillane & Coldren, 2011, p.75). The Auckland cases illustrated that other distributed forms of leadership also existed. Some supported organisational forms of leadership or were mediated by them, whereas others were more emergent.

Emergent forms of leadership

The second level of the analytical framework revealed other distributed forms of leadership, such as *stepping up*, *stepping in and stepping back*, and *boundary spanning*. In both of the

Auckland cases, I became aware of these patterns of leadership only after observing practice in each school for over a year. Any alternative research design established around a shorter *in situ* timeframe could have limited the Auckland case findings to forms associated with first level analysis.

The findings instead, illustrated how emergent forms of leadership are not mutually exclusive from formal organisational forms. The individuals or groups associated with emergent forms of leadership did not decouple themselves from their authority-based roles and often sought to align their behaviour to the general intent of school goals. For all participants the common ground was improving student achievement, though this did not mean that they aligned themselves to this in the same way. This is illustrated by the paradoxical themes of alignment and autonomy that were mediated through differing expectations of responsibility. At Esteran, *stepping up* to wider-school thinking was expected of the Deans and the HODs, whereas at Penthom, middle leaders were expected to *step up* and take responsible risks. In both cases, *stepping up* as emergent thinking or action also involved senior leaders *stepping in* and *stepping back*. Participants in both schools explained that emergent and distributed forms of leadership required some proactive intervention, strengthening the point that emergent and organisational forms of leadership were inextricably linked in day-to-day practice and required individual leaders to manage distributed forms. This resultant mix revealed that hybrid configurations of leadership were evident.



Figure 9.2 – First and second levels of the analytical framework

Even though both of these levels overlap somewhat, they have distinct starting points as their frame of reference. First level analysis focuses on the formal organisational structure of the school and the distribution of authority and labour through to individuals and teams. Second level analysis focuses more on observing and capturing the patterns that emerge over time and as illustrated in the Auckland cases, can be predictable, spontaneous, surprising and challenging to identify unless appropriate data are collected. For instance, *boundary spanning*

was reported because the interactions within groups were analysed using the new form of *in situ* group interactional analysis developed for this research, as an alternative to social network analysis, which is based on participants' perceptions of past interactions, rather than interactions observed *in situ*.

Identifying and illustrating distributed forms of leadership leaves the researcher and practitioner with a question: why were these forms evident in day-to-day practice over a period of time? Gronn (2000), in his early theorising of distributed properties presented the education field with two questions:

- which are the factors that contribute to relatively dispersed or concentrated forms of leadership? and,
- when is the leadership of organisations likely to take a dispersed or focused form?

(p.323)

A decade later, the field is still struggling to find a suitable response to these questions. Louis et al. (2010) declare, "what constitutes and promotes the distribution or sharing of leadership in a school is somewhat unclear" (p.41). If this is true of most distributed leadership research, then, it is either a reflection of a lack of deeper sociological and critical research in the field, or the possibility that distributed leadership is inadequate as a unit of analysis, or a mixture of both. Ball (1987) argues that priority must be given to the social actors over and above the organisational structure, if a critical analysis is to take place. Furthermore, Thrupp and Wilmott's (2003) critique of educational leadership and management literature indicates that this priority has not been evident for some time in the field. In response to this, concentrating only on first and second analysis with distributed leadership research leaves Gronn's questions unanswered and things "somewhat unclear" (Louis et al., 2010, p.41). Further levels of analysis are required.

Current educative, social, cultural and political contexts

In both of the Auckland cases something else was going on that formed the 'backstories' of organisational and emergent forms of leadership. Any attempt to understand why the distributed forms of leadership were present was dependent on a range of educative, social, cultural and political contexts that were unique to each school. The amalgamation of these

contexts helped identify the season that characterised my time in each of the schools. Esteran was characterised by one season established around the notion of *stepping up*, whereas Penthom transitioned from a season of ‘on the go’ to one of ‘systemisation and non-negotiables’. It is at this third contextual level where normative assumptions of distributed leadership associated with statistical generalisability start to break down, due to the context of an individual school being different from another. In Chapter One, I outlined how both of the Auckland cases appeared similar and in particular were implementing similar strategies to improve student achievement, while also implementing a revised national curriculum. However, the findings of the first and second level analysis could not be transferable from one school to the other. As an example, *stepping up* at Esteran differed from *stepping up* at Penthom. Without a third level of analysis, transferability based on the first two levels can be incorrectly assumed.



Figure 9.3 – First, second and third levels of the analytical framework

The third level of analysis in the Auckland cases revealed what else was going on in the midst of the organisational and emergent forms of leadership. This included building into the case study design, perspectives from students and staff so that perceptions of influence, issues of capacity, along with the strategies and tensions that existed between organisational and emergent forms of leadership could be identified. This also provided the means to grapple with the sometimes paradoxical notions of, alignment with autonomy, symbolic power with trust, and, staff relations with micropolitics. Analysing why and how these paradoxes existed alongside each other in day-to-day practice opened up the opportunity to respond to Gronn’s (2000) earlier questions. For the Auckland cases, the listed paradoxes that emerged from practice were mediated through the respective behaviours of, taking responsibility, applying deference, and engaging in dialogue.

For other case studies, a different range of paradoxes may emerge from data. Some other examples are: role based authority with teacher professionalism; expertise with incompetence; resistance with engagement; polarisation with communities of practice; or, spontaneity with control. Whatever paradoxes become evident, the quest is then to identify how these play out in practice. The subsequent behaviours that mediate the paradoxes will differ from school to school, but start to enlighten what sustains distributed forms of leadership. Some of these paradoxes arise because of the macro-political forces that shape education policy and reform, where tensions exist between the self-managing school concept and the marketisation of education (Smyth, 2011). The resultant standardisation of practice and quest for improved outcomes, creates different educative contexts both nationally locally, as well as undermine autonomy and notions of professionalism based on expertise (Codd, 2005). In the Auckland cases, the educative context shaped by NCEA and the associated quality assurance requirements, created slightly different issues for each of the schools. At Esteran it was viewed as one reason that prevented HODs from *stepping up*, whereas at Penthom is created some tension between structuring practices and taking responsible risks.

To understand the behaviours I needed to view the four contexts, educative, social, cultural and political as connected. Theoretically, it may be tidier to separate and analyse them and then bring them together, but this is not how the participants in the Auckland cases viewed them in practice. With them, the four contexts were often intermeshed and so added to the complexity of day-to-day practice. Just focusing on the macro-political, micropolitical and resultant NCEA dominated educative contexts that illustrated how each school was responding to meet student achievement needs was not enough. The longer I spent in each school the more I came to appreciate how another dimension was at play, particularly as I sought to understand how the social and cultural contexts contributed to the establishment of some unquestioned behaviours.

Past educative, social, cultural and political contexts

When the participants referred to the past, it provided a deeper understanding of what I had observed in the present. “Patterns of practice can emerge in a school over time that have little to do with the formal design efforts of school staff” (Spillane & Coldren, 2011, p.21) and the Auckland cases were no exception to this. The establishment of the Deans at Esteran as the group “who got things done”, and the Year 12 Dean and tutors who took a “responsible risk” in establishing their own mentoring programme at Penthom, were both illustrations of how

historical patterns and expectations of practice contributed to these distributed forms of leadership. Different groups and individuals acted out of the capital they had acquired over time, so a sociological framework was needed to understand how this took place. During the period of analysing data from the Auckland cases, Bourdieu's (1990) concepts of capital, and to a lesser extent, habitus, were applied. However, a concept at the collective level that linked the current acquisition of capital to the past was missing. Due to distributed forms of leadership being based in interdependencies across two or more people in the Auckland cases, as well as in related theory (Gronn, 2002; Spillane, 2006), this link needed to be based in interactions, rather than the individual notion of habitus.

Deference, also referred to as symbolic capital, emerged as the concept that linked current practice with the past, as interactions are the vehicle through which it is created and deployed (Hallett, 2007a). In the Auckland cases, individuals and groups had acquired deference over a period of time from others by means of respect, acknowledged expertise, and expectations that were established through patterns of past practice. An example, the Esteran Deans were respected as a group that "got things done", had the expertise to engage in school-wide activity and thinking, and were expected to carry on in this way due to historical patterns of practice. In contrast to this, the Deans at Penthom had not acquired a similar stock of deference, so were not selected as the group to trial the mentoring initiative. No one in either school questioned why the respective Deans' groups were or were not leading each school-based initiative. In both cases, the distributed forms of leadership that emerged or did not emerge went unquestioned. What occurred appeared to be based on the deference acquired by each group. Deference, or symbolic capital, is symbolic power in its potential form, and for the Auckland cases, contributed to understanding why one distributed form was evident with a group in one school, and not the other.

The historical fourth level of analysis can also illustrate why a school responds in a certain way to addressing student achievement needs. Both schools drew on historical achievement data to justify their prioritising of raising NCEA pass rates in comparison to other schools whose communities had a similar economic profile. The balkanisation of subject-based departments in secondary schools is one that is historically and firmly embedded into their organisational structures (Mayrowetz et al., 2007) and yet in both of the Auckland cases each initiative that was expected to improve achievement, was located outside and across this historical subject-based structure. At Esteran this gave rise to some tension between HODs

and the Deans who in contrast to curriculum leaders had more of a reputation for ‘getting things done’, whereas at Penthom this was not so apparent, possibly because of the overlap in membership between the HOL group and the trial mentors group.

The combining of the third and fourth levels add sociological and critical analysis to the overall framework, so that the manner in which a social space or field contributes to organisational and emergent forms of leadership is identified and understood. For the Auckland cases, the findings generated through third and fourth level analysis supported Hallett’s (2007a) point, that “symbolic power can be used in concert with formal authority, but it is distinct ... [because] it is generated in rituals of deference and demeanour” (p.150). This revealed how emergent forms based on symbolic power co-existed with organisational forms established in role-based authority. Furthermore, this adds to the argument that distributed forms of leadership co-exist with some form of co-ordination at a team level (Mehra et al., 2006) and some form of planned alignment at an organisational level (Leithwood et al., 2007), so that hybrid configurations, as argued by Gronn (2011), should become the unit of analysis across the first and second levels.



Figure 9.4 – First, second, third and fourth levels of the analytical framework

Each level of the analytical framework has been derived from the analytical processes that were used for the Auckland cases. The first and second level findings from these cases are

not generalisable to all schools due to the current and historical contexts that were unique to each school. They could be transferable to certain schools if care is taken comparing the respective contexts. The generalisability of the Auckland cases lies more with this analytical framework as an example of case study analytical generalisation (Yin, 2009). The strength of the framework lies in its versatility across any educative, social, cultural, and political contexts where hybrid configurations of leadership practice could exist in a school.

Applying the analytical framework to other research studies

The application of this analytical framework raises some implications for researching distributed forms of leadership in schools. Gronn (2002) argues that, “research should advance understanding of the circumstances and factors which facilitate or impede participants’ perceptions, acceptance, and expectations of distributed arrangements, and provide evidence of the nature and extent of workplace interdependencies and reciprocities” (p.447). Using Gronn’s (2002) terminology, the meta-findings of research studies at the end of Chapter Four (see Table 4.2, p.77), illustrate that multiple “distributed arrangements” have been identified and that “participants’ perceptions, acceptance, and expectations” of these “arrangements” are based around trust, dialogue, and their relations. What is missing from most of the studies are “the circumstances and factors which facilitate or impede”. A general criticism of most research studies is that they are uncritical and tend to ignore power, micropolitics and the merging of emergent forms of leadership with formal organisational forms of leadership (Bolden, 2011; Flessa, 2009; Gronn, 2011; Hartley, 2010). Further to this, current and past sociological “factors” such as forms of capital, as well as the “circumstances” shaped by external policy forces, such as performativity, are usually glossed over. To advance understanding, research needs to go beyond identifying distributed arrangements and describing “participants’ perceptions, acceptance, and expectations” of these and ask why and how these arrangements became part of day-to-day leadership practice. This could happen if the third and fourth levels of the analytical framework are applied, and has different implications for each of the distributed leadership research categories identified in Chapter Four.

Descriptive research studies have tended to focus on first and second level analysis by viewing practice through a distributed framework based often on Spillane’s (2006) interactional model that links leaders, with followers and the situation. The placement of micropolitics outside of this framework has led to Spillane’s model being categorised as an

apolitical description of practice that masks a managerial bias (Flessa, 2009; Maxcy & Nguyen, 2006; L. Wright, 2008). Despite these concerns, Wright (2008) argues that a strength of Spillane's framework is the focus on the situation so that the socio-cultural context is afforded a greater analytical profile. However, as far as I can tell, the situation seems to have been analysed at the third and fourth level of analysis, only when Spillane and Hallett have co-authored and applied Bourdieu's forms of capital (e.g. Spillane, Hallett, et al., 2003). Hallett's (2007a, 2010) subsequent, and deeper sociological analysis of a case study by drawing on symbolic power and Goffman's (1956) concept of deference and comparing them to role-based authority is an example of how a descriptive study can be developed into a political study by applying third and fourth level analysis. His latter findings revealed why leadership solely reliant on role-based authority was ineffective and resulted in emergent resistant forms of leadership. A key aspect of this analysis was including what had occurred in terms of the historical context that shaped the school and a critique of the policy forces that contributed to the situation.

Descriptive studies have recently been positioned by Leithwood et al. (2009a) "as a powerful stimulant for future [normative] research" (p.272) due to the acknowledged complexity of leadership practice that can be described. The irony here is the lack of third and fourth level analysis evident in descriptive studies may strengthen the future position of normative studies. If, on the other hand, descriptive studies were subjected to deeper sociological and political critique, as illustrated in the Auckland cases and Hallett's analysis described earlier, then the complexity of practice in a school will be connected to unique current and past educative, social, cultural, and political contexts. Subsequent attempts to isolate contextual variables for the purposes of statistical generalisation, in the pursuit of establishing norms, will likely be beyond the bounds of future normative research studies. Third and fourth level analysis may limit large-scale normative studies that seek to connect distributed leadership, as a single concept, to changes in student achievement through statistical models and analysis.

A few of the normative studies in Chapter Four that incorporated qualitative case study analysis as part of their research design, started to reveal some of the complexity that is also evident in some of the descriptive studies. Case study design was common in blended, alternative and political studies. These revealed some of the paradoxes and challenges associated with distributed forms of leadership that incorporated some degree of hybridity of

formal organisational arrangements and emergent activity. The cases that were categorised as blended, alternative or political studies were more likely to have some or all aspects of third and fourth level analysis. Given the acknowledged complexity that is emerging in the field in relation to what is broadly termed distributed leadership research, blended, alternative and political studies are perhaps best placed to move the understanding of distributed forms of leadership forward. This is due to the likelihood of deeper sociological and critical analysis being part of the research design. With this depth of analysis, how emergent forms of leadership co-exist, enable and challenge other forms already in existence through organisational roles and teams, is more likely to be understood.

A critical and sociological re-theorising

The findings of the Auckland cases generated through the four level analytical framework, when combined with the analysis of the literature in Part One of this study, provide sufficient support for re-theorising from distributed leadership, to distributed forms of leadership. The intention of this re-theorising is to integrate power and authority into a conceptualisation of distributed forms of leadership. The critiques of distributed leadership conceptualisations and typologies in Chapter Three, illustrates that a more critical and sociologically informed conceptualisation has yet to fully emerge. I choose the wording “yet to fully emerge” with a great deal of consideration, because a chronological comparison of the conceptualisations and typologies reflects a growing acknowledgement of complexity and overlap of components, or what I would label “distributed forms”, in the latter typologies. The acknowledgement in the most recent typology (see Thorpe et al., 2011), that distributed forms change over time and are dependent on cultural, historical and social factors, suggests that it is time to take another step forward and include political factors, as argued for by Bolden (2011) in one the most recent reviews of distributed leadership literature. The re-theorising that follows is broken down into two parts. The first lays the sociological foundation, and the second is developed around the integration of authority, symbolic power and hybrid configurations of leadership.

Establishing the foundation

Ever since the prominence of distributed leadership in the education field, the typologies that have followed reveal two foundational clusters of distributed forms of leadership. None of the typologies discussed in Chapter Three have deviated from acknowledging organisational structure and roles, alongside more holistic and fluid distributed forms of leadership that I

label as emergent forms. These two clusters are also clearly reflected in Gronn's (2002) and Spillane's (2006) theorising of a distributed perspective of leadership, across the forms of leadership evident in distributed leadership research studies that were identified in Chapter Four (see Table 4.2), and in the findings of the Auckland cases. However, what is lacking is an understanding of how these two clusters co-exist, particularly in relation to power and authority.

For the purpose of this re-theorising, authority is defined as the means of anchoring roles to the systems of an organisation (Gronn, 2002). These roles are designed for individuals and can be arranged into teams through an organisation. The authority afforded these roles is also recognised and often defined through national or local area government policies and systems, with the role of the principal at the apex of the organisational structure. Authority defined in this way is unidirectional and expected to flow down through the roles that are arranged hierarchically, particularly in relation to schools implementing external reforms (Hallett, 2007a). The flow of authority through these roles can also rely on regulation and performance management mechanisms as described by Hatcher (2005). However, for this re-theorising, his use of the term 'managerial power' to encapsulate these mechanisms is not helpful, as it blurs the distinction I want to establish between the use of authority, deference and symbolic power.

The conceptualisation of power in this re-theorising reflects my commitment to do so in relation to school day-to-day practice, as expressed in the third research aim of this study. Therefore, attention is paid first to what forms of capital exist across an organisation. These forms of capital are grounded in the day-to-day practice evident in previous distributed leadership research and the Auckland cases, where the latter in particular, highlighted the importance of accumulated history with understanding distributed forms of leadership practice. "The social world is accumulated history" (Bourdieu, 2004, p.15) and can be understood through applying the concept of capital, how it accumulates in different forms and then how it is accessed and used in day-to-day practice. For the purpose of this re-theorising, capital is defined as the "resources that are acquired, accumulate, and are of value in certain situations" (Spillane, Hallett, et al., 2003, p.3). It can exist in the form of:

- human capital - expertise, skills and knowledge (Day et al., 2004; Spillane, Hallett, et al., 2003);

- cultural capital – disposition towards cultural practices, ways of being (Bourdieu, 2004; Lingard et al., 2003; Spillane, Hallett, et al., 2003);
- social capital – networked relations, relations of trust, membership in a group, collective social identity (Bourdieu, 2004; Day et al., 2004; Spillane, Hallett, et al., 2003); and,
- authoritative capital – jurisdiction embodied in a role and the expectations that are associated with this.

The use of capital has its conceptual roots in the theorising of Bourdieu (1990), but differs slightly in how it is applied with the dimension of time. Bourdieu did this through the notion of ‘habitus’, which is viewed as history embodied in individuals and made “apparent in and through social practices as manifested in ways of talking, moving, getting on with people and of making sense of the environment” (May & Powell, 2008, p.129). Hallett (2007a), in his critique of ‘habitus’, argues that deference, or symbolic capital, is a more appropriate analytical tool for linking forms of capital accumulated over time with present practice, due to it being based on meso-level interactions, rather than micro-level ‘habitus’. Considering that the distributed perspective theorising of Gronn (2002) and Spillane (2006) is established on interdependencies, and that the research of distributed leadership (see Table 4.2) reflects this, deference has been used instead of ‘habitus’.

In light of the emphasis given to interdependencies, interactions between people and groups need to have a high profile with re-theorising to distributed forms of leadership. Therefore cultural capital is interpreted as how it shapes the stylistic form with which “people interact, and especially the demeanour that they exhibit towards others” (Hallett, 2007a, p.153). Social identity can also be positioned collectively as an emergent potent leadership resource, as well as a professional community (Day et al., 2004; Halverson, 2007), as it was with the Estera Deans and the Penthom trial mentors. Forms of capital, however, lie dormant, unless they are drawn upon, in the same manner that monetary capital can stay untouched when sitting in a bank account. With money in an account, it can be withdrawn, but until it is used as an exchange for goods or services, it stays in a potential form while in the person’s wallet or purse. Therefore, forms of capital need to be drawn and changed into a symbolic or potential state first. Lingard et al. (2003) explain that different forms of capital become symbolic, when the forms are “known and recognised as legitimate and powerful” (p.66). Symbolic

capital or deference is then symbolic power in its potential form, where symbolic power is used from a previous stock or deposits of deference. Deference in day-to-day practice is the acquiring of esteem and respect shown to a group or an individual over a period of time. In New Zealand, using the indigenous Māori language, it is best described as *mana*, the prestige that is afforded to others (Mead, 2003).

Re-theorising with authority and symbolic power

The two clusters of organisational structure and emergent distributed forms of leadership draw on differing types of capital, so that they are respectively experienced as authority or symbolic power, or a mixture of both. Authoritative capital is distributed and arranged through individual roles and teams across an organisation, known also as the division of labour or jurisdiction. In a hierarchy, as is the case with most schools, the role of the principal has the largest individual deposit of authoritative capital. On the other hand, emergent distributed forms of leadership draw on human, cultural and social types of capital acquired by groups and individuals in the form of deference.

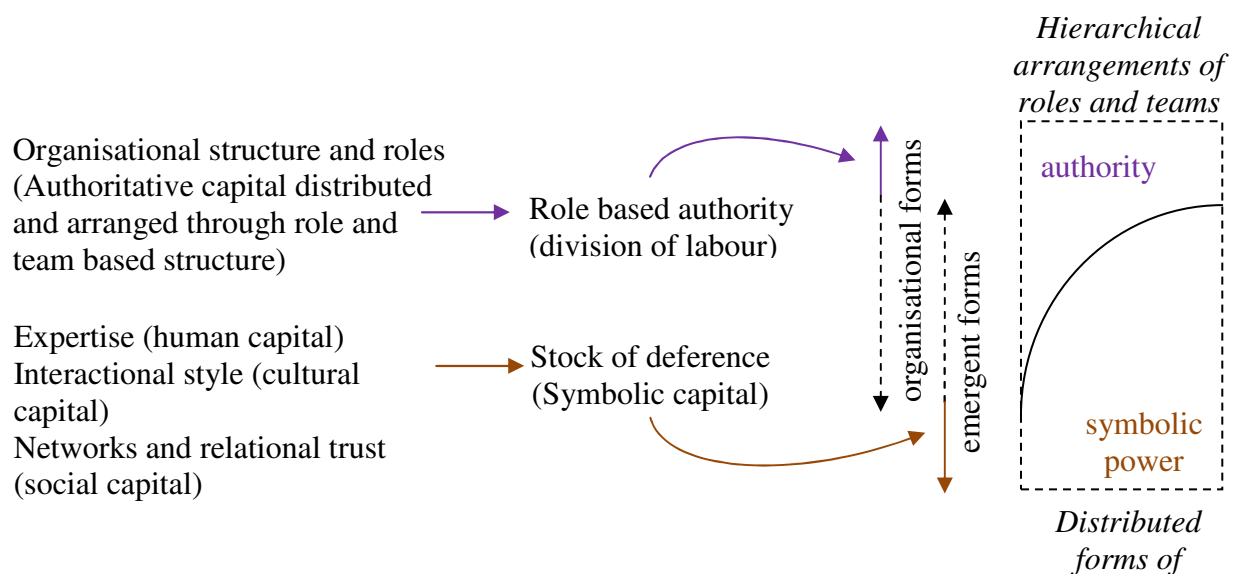


Figure 9.5 – Types of capital and distributed forms of leadership

Rather than identify a multitude of distributed forms of leadership, Figure 9.5 peels back the lid on what is observable in an attempt to understand why distributed forms of leadership co-exist in organisations structured upon roles and teams based on authority. Two overlapping classifications of distributed forms are required to explain this co-existence, organisational forms and emergent forms. Organisational forms are based on people accessing authoritative capital, whereas emergent forms are based on people accessing human, cultural or social

capital or any combination of these. Irrespective of what type or types of capital have been accessed, the resultant authority or symbolic power, is then experienced by others as influence, where influence is defined as “the ability to affect another’s judgement and decision-making, by word or action” (Ball, 1987, p.131). If this influence is expected and accepted by those who exert it and experience it, then it is likely to be labelled as ‘leadership’ in the current education environment, because ‘leadership’ is currently the preferred nomenclature legitimised through national, state, district, and school based policy.

Authority and symbolic power are rarely mutually exclusive domains in day-to-day practice. Symbolic power is generated through deference (Hallett, 2007a), whereas authority is generated through the jurisdiction that is embedded within a role. Therefore, distributed forms of leadership often illustrate a mix of the two classifications, organisational forms and emergent forms because of the co-existence of symbolic power with authority. This mix is where Gronn’s (2011) recent argument for the field to consider hybrid configurations, comes into play as illustrated earlier in this chapter through the first two levels of the analytical framework derived from the Auckland cases. Acknowledging that the forms of capital on the left hand side of Figure 9.5 are still apparent, hybridity can be added to the re-theorising as illustrated in Figure 9.6:

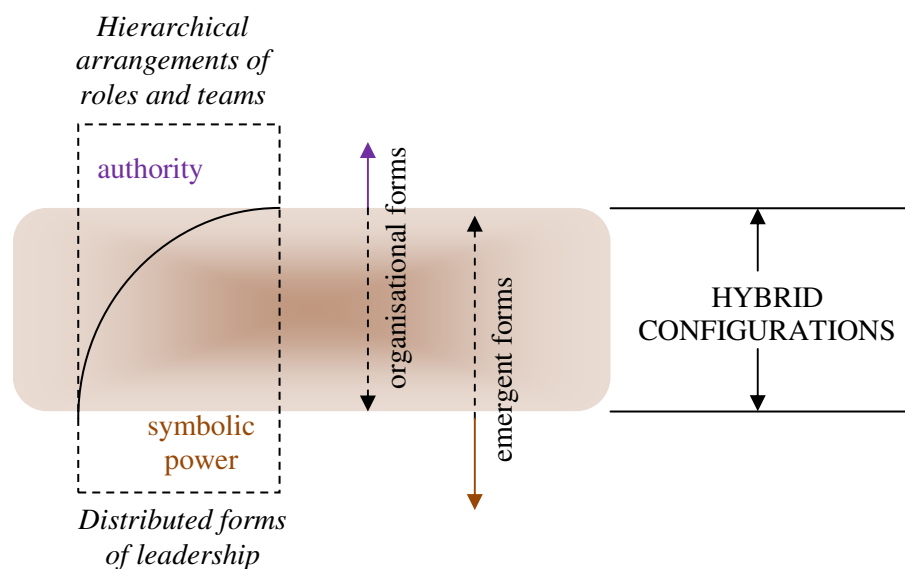


Figure 9.6 – Authority, symbolic power and hybrid configurations of leadership

The shaded region illustrates where most day-to-day leadership practice takes place. Only in a few situations would leadership be solely based on authority or symbolic power. An

example of this is Hallett's (2007b) case study of how a principal attempted to influence teachers only by drawing on authoritative capital. The eventual resistive response from the teachers to the governing body was an emergent form of leadership based on symbolic power. In contrast to the principal, when the new deputy principal arrived, he set about first developing relationships with the staff, which resulted in his stock of social capital growing. Eventually he was able to find some way forward for all concerned because of the authority in his role and the deference he was afforded by staff. This illustrates how the blend of authority and symbolic power can change, over time, in the same organisation. In Figure 9.6 the arc represents the variability to this blending or co-existence between authority and symbolic power, across the rectangle of day-to-day practice that consists of hierarchical arrangements and distributed forms of leadership. The arc is deliberately positioned so the shaded area associated with symbolic power is greater than the area associated with authority. This is done to reflect how human, cultural and social capital, are more evident as themes across all categories of distributed leadership research, when compared to authoritative capital (see Table 4.2).

The arc is not necessarily a distinction between individuals or groups. For instance, as in the Auckland cases, those who were in a role with a large deposit of authoritative capital did not always choose to influence out of that deposit for the whole of a meeting, choosing instead to either draw on their other stocks of symbolic capital or deference, or stand back, and grant deference to others instead. This was often illustrated in the forms of emergent leadership that were identified in the Auckland cases, where those in roles of authority *stepped back* at times and at other times *stepped in*. Both of the school forms of *stepping up* were grounded in the hope that staff would have a sufficient stock of human capital in the form of expertise to respectively think school-wide in terms of student achievement or take responsible risks. In both schools, *stepping up* was positioned by those whose roles had larger deposits of authoritative capital, as the accepted way of being in the school. It was also a form of cultural capital, that when recognised, was encouraged and granted as deference to those who demonstrated it. Over a long period of time, the Deans at Esteran had *stepped up* to get things done, so their emergence as the collective group of leaders for the school-based initiatives was to be expected. Their plentiful stocks of capital enabled them to *step up* once again, creating further opportunity for others to grant deference to them. With all the distributed forms of leadership identified in the Auckland cases, there was always a mix of authority and

symbolic power, and yet this mix was fluid, often changing within meetings as agenda items and speakers changed.

The mix, however, is conceptually conducive to complexity and tension, due to the different sources of capital that can be accessed across the whole staff and within different groups of staff. If there is a mismatch between what a group of staff expect and experience, then it is likely that differences and tensions will exist. It is here where micropolitics are more likely to surface in the form of passive or overt resistance, as well as any micropolitical strategies employed as a means to covertly, or overtly influence others. Distributed leadership literature to date has been criticised for its lack of engagement with micropolitics and power (Flessa, 2009) and this criticism is justified with distributed leadership research, due to the lack of third and particularly fourth level analysis described earlier.

A conceptual way forward is not to assume that the distribution of leadership equates to a distribution of power, because distribution is not the key element here; rather, access is. The focus needs to be on what deposit of capital is able to be accessed, and then transferred from symbolic capital into symbolic power by individuals and groups, within a context where there are also deposits of authoritative capital associated with organisational roles and teams. It also cannot be assumed that capital associated to one group has the same 'exchange rate' as another group. For instance, this may help explain why the CMT became the preferred curriculum problem-solving forum ahead of the MMT forum. There is another deeper layer at work here, one where there is a form of power that enables different values to be placed on different groups' quantities and forms of capital. This deeper layer is associated with cultural capital that is used to help define meanings. Whoever are the guardians of these meanings are likely to be the ones who will grapple with the paradoxes evident in distributed forms of leadership. This helps understand why the SLT struggled with having too much structure at Penthom. For them a tension existed at the interface of defining organisational roles and the cultural capital that they had afforded fluidity and taking responsible risks as guardians of what was to be valued.

To re-theorise in relation to school day-to-day practice means that third and fourth level analysis is required to bring to light these forms of capital, the sources of authority and symbolic power. Over time, these develop into patterns of practice that become observable as a hybrid mix of organisational and emergent forms of leadership. This mix and critical re-

theorising is not to be confused with official distributed leadership (Hall et al., 2011a; Hatcher, 2005). Official distributed leadership overemphasises influence that has its roots in authoritative capital, rather than other forms of capital. It assumes that influence, particularly in relation to implementing external reforms will flow down through the organisational roles arranged hierarchically in a school. Along the way, those whose roles have larger deposits of authoritative capital, may utilise other forms of capital evident in the school, but ultimately, the overarching distributed form of leadership is delegation, where authority is delegated to a school through the principal to implement the reform. If a deeper understanding of distributed forms of leadership is to emerge, albeit in hybrid configurations, then it is time to stop using the nomenclature ‘distributed leadership’ which has now been captured to some extent as a managerial tool to replace the term delegation and a wider division of labour labelled as leadership.

Conclusion

The mix and fluidity of hybrid configurations, where the hierarchical arrangements of roles and teams blend with more holistic and emergent distributed forms, means it is problematic to conceptualise leadership practice into dichotomies such as leaders and followers, and, formal and informal forms of leadership. These distinctions are overly simplistic if leadership is labelled as a form of influence that is expected and accepted by those who exert it and experience it, given the complexity of day-to-day practice. Even though Spillane’s (2006) distributed perspective relies on leaders, followers and the situation, he still acknowledges, somewhat ironically, that leading and following are interchangeable. Rather, by drawing on a sociological and critical approach, forms of capital illustrate that a lot more is going on and cannot be divided up neatly into an ontology that assumes clear distinctions are possible all of the time. I deliberately say ‘all of the time’, because a distinction may be evident in a moment of time, only to transform into a blurring or different distinction moments later. Therefore, the variable of time is an essential component of this re-theorising, as it is the ‘cornerstone’ to understanding why different deposits of capital exist and are added to or removed over time. Without recognising these deposits of capital, our understanding of why distributed forms of leadership emerge and co-exist within hierarchical arrangements of roles and teams will remain superficial. Therefore, all four levels of the analytical framework are required for this critical re-theorising of distributed forms of leadership.

The central message of this thesis is a rejection of the distributed leadership grand narrative. The re-theorising in this chapter illustrates how authoritative capital co-exists with human, cultural and social forms of capital to form organisational and emergent distributed forms of leadership in hybrid configurations. This leads to a satisfactory theorising of distributed forms of leadership that builds on the complexity recently acknowledged in the field and reflects the reality of day-to-day school leadership practice.

CHAPTER TEN – There is no grand narrative: Conclusion and implications

There is no grand narrative

At the very beginning of this study, I set out with distributed leadership as the focus. Now, six years later I conclude with a rejection of distributed leadership as a way to look at school leadership. Earlier on, by drawing on Reichers' and Schneider's (1990) Evolution of Constructs Model, I positioned distributed leadership at an evaluation/augmentation phase of construct development, where critique and possible re-conceptualisation can occur. Despite claims that distributed leadership has gained official recognition as a solution to enhancing student achievement and staff relations, it has fallen short of revealing the complexity associated with both of these educational ideals (Gronn, 2009a; Robinson, 2009). These claims have tended to be associated with the normative research that is positioned in Gunter's and Ribbins' (2003) Evaluative and Instrumental 'knowledge provinces'. However, there are signs from Leithwood et al. (2009a), who are major promoters and supporters of normative research, that the understanding of day-to-day practice emerging from descriptive studies is "more complex in schools than many distributed leadership advocates have imagined. And normal practice may already be more sophisticated and more adaptive than what some of these advocates are proposing" (p.272). This complexity was reflected in the meta-findings from distributed leadership research studies in Chapter Four, and showed that research needed to follow more of a blended approach that recognised the co-existence of organisational and emergent forms as hybrid configurations of leadership.

A key argument that I have built through this study is that merely identifying and describing sophisticated, adaptive and hybrid configurations of leadership in distributed forms is not enough. We also need to understand why these distributed forms take place. It is here where the field is at the crossroads of construct development. It can dually carry on employing a distributed perspective, like that used in the research of Spillane and colleagues, alongside normative studies that seek to establish causal links between patterns of distribution and other variables, or it can go deeper by drawing on sociological and critical analysis of day-to-day practice. The Auckland cases are an example of taking the latter path at this crossroad and so join a small but growing body of research that reveals why leadership exists in various

distributed forms that continually change due to current and past educative, social, cultural, and political contexts that make each school a unique site of practice.

The distributed forms of leadership identified in the Auckland cases were not directly transferable from one school to the other, due to the forms reflecting the different types of capital that existed beneath the blending of organisational roles with emergent forms of leadership. Gunter and Ribbins (2003) argue that critical analysis needs to be “informed by a theory of power” (p.135). The re-theorising discussed in the previous chapter illustrates how an analysis of types of capital can be used to identify how symbolic power co-exists with authority within hybrid configurations of leadership practice. Central to this analysis, is the inclusion of time as a key variable, because it can be used to prevent research and conceptualisation from being reduced to a present time only, technical-rational perspective, that overemphasises organisational goals and formal structures (Ogawa & Bossert, 1995). Time opens up an understanding as to why and how different types of capital are established over different seasons in an organisation. By drawing on the theorising of Hallett (2007a) and Bourdieu (1990, 2004), the re-theorising of distributed forms of leadership brings together the past with the present through sociological and critical analysis, so that a deeper understanding of how and why day-to-day organisational and emergent forms of leadership practice occur in a school. The subsequent issue, is then, how does all this complexity and variability fit into one construct? The response, based on what has been critiqued in the previous chapters of this study, is that it is not possible. It is time to drop the grand narrative of ‘distributed leadership’ if our understanding of day-to-day leadership practice is to deepen further.

The dropping of this grand narrative will be helped by re-introducing nomenclature that has not had such a high profile as leadership since the turn of the millennium. An example of this is to stop describing work, which has always been distributed across organisations (Timperley, 2005), as distributed leadership. This spread of work is a division of labour across roles that are bestowed with differing degrees of authority to meet the needs of the organisation. Some of the resultant work that arises from this organisational structure in schools is expected to be educational management, where efforts are directed to “the achievement of certain educational objectives” (Bush, 2011). When the need for labour intensifies, work is often pushed down through to others in the organisation and has been described as a wider distribution of leadership, or in one case, “distributed pain” (Grubb & Flessa, 2006, p.535). It appears from my reading of distributed leadership literature that

writers sometimes can circumvent what is perhaps so obvious here. When more work, labelled as leadership, is distributed out onto a wider group of people, it is also a form of delegation. Management and delegation are not terms for academics and policy-makers to shy away from; they are both part of the day-to-day practice in a school. The apparent falling away of these terms has contributed to a 'dressing up' of day-to-day practice with such terms as distributed leadership.

The removal of distributed leadership from the school leadership landscape will not harm or change leadership, management and teaching practice in schools. It may cause consternation and debate amongst academics, but one of the intentions of this study is to reposition the understanding of leadership practice back closer to those who carry it out day after day in schools. That is why instead of promoting a set of distributed forms of leadership, I have focused more on why these forms existed and changed over the 20 months I was in each school. Distributed leadership was not part of their vocabulary, rather they viewed leadership practice as a responsibility, where they bestowed respect onto other individuals and groups over time, and valued the need for dialogue between each other. They expected individuals and groups with greater deposits of authoritative capital to use it if other forms of capital distributed across the school were appropriately utilised as well. Because of this, distributed forms of leadership were apparent as a reflection of the past, and the season or seasons that distinguished each school during 2008 and 2009. No grand narrative of distributed leadership was evident. Rather there were in its place, fluid hybrid configurations of leadership practice across two or more people, where authority co-existed with symbolic power linked to types of human, cultural and social capital.

Implications for the leadership field and school-based research

The broader leadership field

The re-theorising of distributed leadership into hybrid configurations of organisational and emergent distributed forms of leadership with links to authority and symbolic power, creates some implications for ontologies of leadership that no longer fit. Drath et al. (2008) argue that the common and current ontology of leaders, followers and shared goals is too narrow for distributed and shared forms of leadership. The findings of this study support the argument that this current ontology aligns more with organisational forms of leadership, than a hybrid configuration of emergent forms with the organisational forms. If an ontology was to reflect

the themes of the Auckland cases, then it would be responsibility, deference and dialogue. However, due to the limitation of generalising case study findings, a more suitable ontology based on the re-theorising and analytical framework discussed in Chapter Nine, would be:

- emergence;
- organisational roles and teams; and,
- symbolic capital (human, cultural, social, and authoritative).

This ontology is better placed to capture the complexity of day-to-day practice, albeit as hybrid configurations of leadership. As well as doing away with the leader-follower construct that is reflective of theories of leadership that focus on individual leaders, this ontology would also stymie the simplistic dichotomy of formal and informal leadership that privileges organisational forms of leadership over emergent forms. The overlap between the four types of symbolic capital listed above, means that there is no clear-cut division between formal and informal, rather, in practice, there is a blending of the two. Dichotomies tend to oversimplify the complexity of leadership (Yukl, 1999).

The school leadership field

The application of a revised ontology of leadership practice and re-theorising of distributed forms of leadership brings with it some matters for consideration in the school leadership field and where it is heading. There is a range of different opinions from regular authors of distributed leadership as to where the field currently stands and where it should develop next. Spillane and Coldren (2011) argue against developing steps for leaders to follow “with the promise of a pot of gold at the end of the school-improvement rainbow” (p.109), due to the contextual differences of schools. Spillane continues to stand his ground in not wanting to see prescriptive recipes arise from his distributed perspective research. Gronn (2011) has recently shifted from his earlier distributed perspective to embrace more of a hybrid position, where distributed forms are considered alongside other more focused forms of organisational leadership. In his opinion, the uptake of distributed leadership has been to the detriment of other forms of leadership evident in organisations. The depth of description in Spillane’s research, albeit at times uncritical (Flessa, 2009; Maxcy & Nguyen, 2006), and the recent hybrid considerations of Gronn, have contributed to Leithwood et al. (2009a) acknowledging that the ‘bar’ has been lifted for normative researchers due to the complexity of practice that has been made apparent through a distributed perspective, or what is also known as

descriptive research studies. Harris (2009c) however, positions future normative research in a more positive position than Leithwood et al.. She argues that an empirical platform that links distributed leadership with organisational change is now established, and the field to date has demonstrated that impact studies linking distributed leadership to student learning are now possible and long overdue.

Harris is not alone with this normative view of distributed leadership. Mayrowetz et al. (2007) argue that normative studies need to explain “why distributed leadership can end in positive results for schools and students” (p. 95). This point is taken one step further by Robinson (2009), who argues that the supposed benefits of raising student achievement through distributed leadership should be prioritised over staff relations. This study, however, argues that if the complexity of day-to-day distributed forms of leadership is recognised, then the normative quest raised here by Harris, Mayrowetz and Robinson is likely to be out of reach. The alternative for normative researchers is to over-simplify distributed forms into measurable variables that falsely assume generalisability across schools. Subsequently, these large quantitative studies do not pick up the complexity and turmoil that is often evident at the local school level (Hallett, 2010) and the argument that forms of leadership do not directly affect student learning:

Leadership effects on student achievement occur largely because effective leadership strengthens professional community—a special environment within which teachers work together to improve their practice and improve student learning. Professional community, in turn, is a strong predictor of instructional practices that are strongly associated with student achievement.

(Louis et al., 2010, p.37)

Given that this quote is from one of the largest normative studies recently undertaken, it contradicts Robinson’s (2009) claim that benefits to staff relations do not flow through to student achievement. Louis et al. (2010) acknowledge they are becoming sensitive “to the remarkable array of people who exercise formal or informal leadership” (p.13), and argue against unquestionably connecting distributed leadership to major school reforms. This argument is somewhat reflective of Leithwood et al.’s (2009a) acceptance of the complexity that is apparent with distributed forms of leadership. A factor that contributed to Louis et al.’s (2010) acknowledgement of this was their inclusion of school level case studies alongside

large questionnaires as part of their research design. If the growing acknowledgement of the complexity associated with distributed forms of leadership research is not developed further, then distributed forms of leadership will run the risk of being presented as simplified development frameworks, where school leaders are provided with step-by-step guides to distribute and increase leadership throughout the school.

Implications for future research designs

At the end of Part One of this study, I indicated how three other approaches to research were starting to emerge alongside the descriptive and normative studies: blended; alternative; and, political. The use of cases studies throughout the three approaches strengthens the place case study design has in shifting the field forward. This contributes to the argument that a more critical re-theorising of distributed leadership is possible using analytical frameworks such as the one derived through analytical generalisation of the Auckland cases.

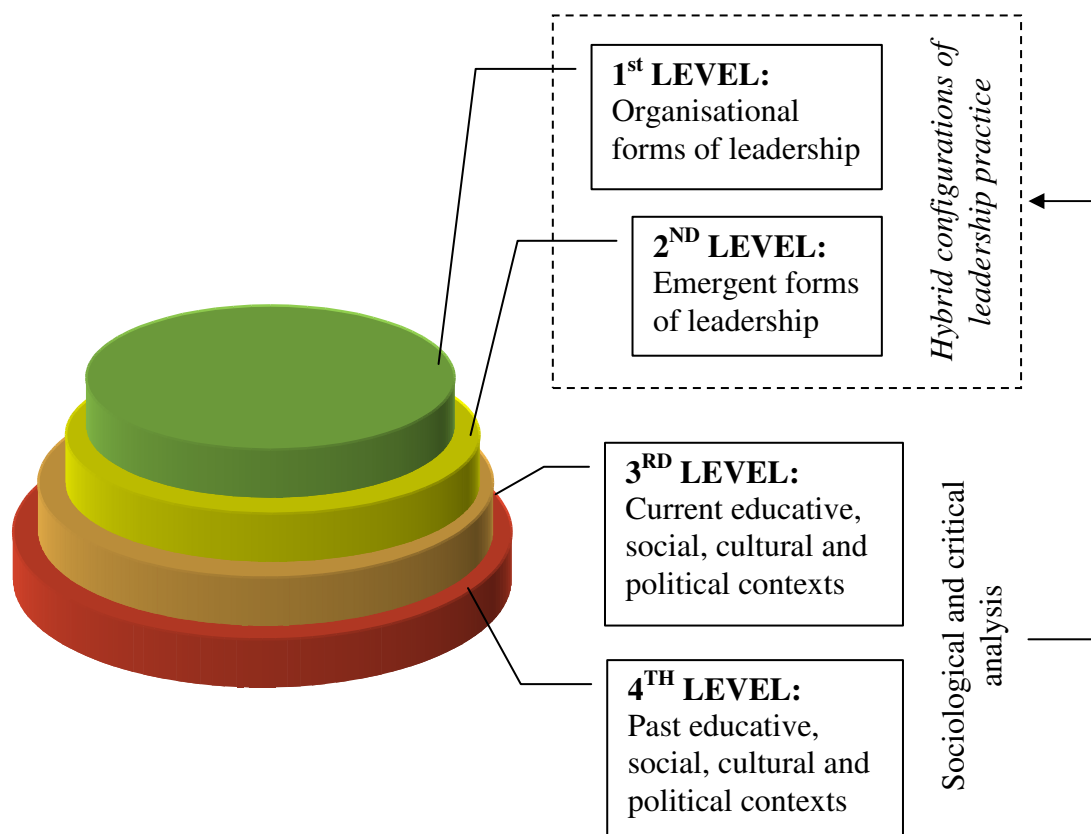


Figure 10.1 – *Analytical framework for distributed forms of leadership research*

The implication of applying all four levels of this analytical framework to future case study designs means that data are collected conducive to sociological and critical analysis. The analytical framework assumes that patterns of practice influenced by historical contexts and associated with distributed forms of leadership, shift over time while data are collected. Capturing these shifts and understanding the past are important components that help identify why distributed forms of leadership exist in different ways from school to school. Therefore, case study designs will need to have some degree of observation and interviews, or focus groups, built into them to collect data situated in the present and the past to enable third and fourth level analysis. When analysing data across the four levels, the perceptions of students, the size of the school, its physical layout, and whether it is primary, middle or secondary, also need consideration.

With future research there will need to be greater reliance on qualitative analysis, so attention is drawn to the contrasts and paradoxes that can help provide new understanding of a social phenomenon (Delamont, 2002) related to organisational and emergent forms of leadership. Due to the key role of the past and understanding the seasons in each of the Auckland cases, the dimension of time becomes an essential component of the research design, both in relation to creating sufficient opportunities to be *in situ*, and to capture participants' stories of the past. Case study designs also need to be multi-level so that group level analysis reveals the interactions that take place and contribute to the establishment of patterns of behaviour that eventually identify distributed forms of leadership. The new *in situ* interactional group analysis, used in the Auckland cases with the co-efficient of variation, can help identify how leadership stretches over those present. What appears essential is that case studies are part of future research designs. They offer:

... a means of investigating complex social units consisting of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding the phenomenon. Anchored in real-life situations, the case study results in a rich and holistic account of a phenomenon. It offers insights and illuminates meanings that expand its readers' experiences. These insights can be construed as tentative hypotheses that help structure future research; hence case study plays an important role in advancing a field's knowledge base.

(Merriam, 1998, p.41)

Recommendations for the broader leadership and school leadership fields

That:

- distributed leadership is removed from the nomenclature associated with leadership;
- hybrid configurations that incorporate organisational and emergent forms of leadership be used as the unit for organisational analysis;
- revised ontologies be developed to replace existing ones that reify organisational forms of leadership over emergent forms;
- researchers and writers of distributed forms of leadership (or any similar term) desist from developing simplistic step-by-step guides for school leaders;
- normative researchers shift from a single reliance on quantitative analysis to mixed methods designs that incorporate case studies of schools;
- case study analysis incorporates the four levels of analysis displayed in Figure 10.1 (p.238) to gain a sociological and critical perspective; and,
- *in situ* interactional group analysis based on the co-efficient of variation be trialled further and compared as a possible alternative to social network analysis which is based only on participants' espoused perceptions of past interactions.

Implications for schools and policy-makers

The findings of this study raise several implications for school leaders and their staff. Distributed forms of leadership or any other similar term, are likely to be acknowledged amongst senior leaders more so than the rest of the staff. The Auckland cases illustrated how little penetration the distributed concept of leadership had made into the busy and complex lives of school leaders and teachers. There is a risk for academics and researchers who immerse themselves with such terms to assume that the terminology is treated the same way in schools. The implications for school leaders and other staff when they are presented with concepts such as distributed forms of leadership, is to ensure that it is 'translated' from abstract conceptualisation to day-to-day practice. For instance, rather than using the term emergent forms of leadership, the terms 'stepping up' and 'taking responsible risks' would suffice if the context were the respective Auckland cases.

School leaders in particular need to be aware of how some research is tailored to fit school improvement and effectiveness approaches that can be used to justify how principals are expected to implement external reforms (Hatcher, 2005). The claim by Harris (2009c) that

distributed leadership has a positive relationship with managing change can be filtered through to school leaders as a simplistic vehicle of internal or external reform. Unless school leaders become aware of the complexities associated with distributed forms of leadership, they will wrongly assume that leadership is theirs to simply distribute to other staff members. Part of the issue is encouraging school leaders to think beyond achieving organisational goals and turning their attention to the forms of symbolic capital deposited across staff, students and parents or caregivers.

A similar issue exists for policy-makers, who according to Harris (2009c), are “anxious” to find out how distributed leadership does or does not impact student achievement. In the performative environment that shapes education, they are more likely to be conditioned to only search out and utilise research that shows how distributed forms of leadership work in a simplistic manner and can be developed. Given the complexity, tensions and paradoxes that are associated with distributed forms of leadership, it is unlikely that these pertinent aspects of practice are incorporated, because they are too fluid and contextually based to be packaged into step-by-step guides of effective leadership practice. The ones that do make it through as a step-by-step guide, such as the Hay Group Education (2004) distributed leadership categories, are then likely to limit school leaders’ and teachers’ understanding of distributed forms of leadership. Because these guides or norms are presented as reputable research, school leaders are less likely to initially question them, and then more likely to eventually reject them because the research was not ‘soaked’ in the world of school leaders and teachers.

If school leaders do engage with critical conceptualisations of distributed forms of leadership, then they need to be open to accepting that it is the role they are in that has a deposit of authoritative capital, and not themselves. Rather, their influence is more likely to be accepted by staff if it is grounded in expertise, their relational style, and the relational trust that is attributed to them by others over time. To what extent this sociological and critical perspective is embedded into official government-backed programmes or postgraduate qualifications of leadership development is unknown. Given that distributed forms of leadership have lacked a theorising that incorporates power and micropolitics, it is highly likely that school leaders in professional development programmes are not exposed to the sociological and critical perspective that sits beneath visible distributed forms of leadership practice.

Recommendations

That:

- school leaders give informed and careful attention to the transferability of research findings into their own school contexts;
- school leaders encourage researchers and academics to connect with the intensity of day-to-day school leadership practice and the terminology that they use;
- careful consideration is given to claims by researchers of what works, particularly if the demands of day-to-day practice are not evident in the presented findings;
- policy-makers desist from the temptation to present distributed forms of leadership as a developmental tool for school improvement; and,
- Providers of school leadership programmes and qualifications ensure that a sociological and critical perspective of distributed forms of leadership is embedded into their curricula.

Overall conclusion

At the start of this study, I justified the need for it by identifying four concerns about distributed leadership. These were in relation to the education policy environment, historical and current leadership theory and research, and the lack of conceptualisation that incorporated power. The critical analysis of the literature, the research, and the leadership practices of two Auckland secondary schools all triangulated to the rejection of distributed leadership as a grand narrative and the reconceptualisation into distributed forms of leadership. The findings of the Auckland cases highlighted how distributed forms often overlapped and could not be separated from organisational roles and the related systems associated with those roles. Hybrid configurations were clearly evident in both schools, and brought with them the paradox of, alignment with autonomy, symbolic power with trust, and relations with micropolitical strategies. Practice that incorporated responsibility, deference, and dialogue, illustrated how the paradoxes could co-exist. The resultant theorising was based on ‘peeling back’ the day-to-day practice to make sense of what lay beneath and shaped distributed forms of leadership. It is at this point, where this study contributes new knowledge to the leadership field. The key to understanding how symbolic power and authority co-exist is to identify the types and amounts of symbolic human, cultural, social and authoritative capital that exist across an organisation, and the important part that deference plays in enabling emergent forms of leadership to emerge in a co-existent state alongside authority

embedded in organisational roles and teams. This contribution is a deliberate step away from the functional and rational approaches of understanding organisations, yet still acknowledges that organisations have structure where authority influences others.

The implication for the school leadership field and its embracing of distributed leadership means the embrace at times is merely trying to clutch at something that does not exist in a form that can be clearly defined, packaged and then applied. The substance for researchers, school leaders, and policy-makers, exists at a far deeper sociological and critical level, though despite the depth, can still be accessed by those who are willing to prioritise educational expertise, the development of their interactional style, and relations of trust for themselves and for others, whether they are adults or students.

The quest has never been to distribute more leadership, as it already exists in places beyond the obvious ones, and can come to the fore irrespective of role. These paraphrased words are not recent. They were written by Mary Parker Follett in her paper titled “The essentials of leadership” back in 1933 (cited in, Graham, 1995). What was true then remains true today.

May our quest instead, be one where we continue to ask how and why leadership can emerge, and for what purpose, so that others benefit and learn as well as ourselves.

Ehara tenei toa i te toa takitahi
Engari ko tenei toa toa takitini

Power does not belong to individuals alone.
Rather, it resides within the whole community.

Māori proverb from Aotearoa (New Zealand)

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APPENDICES

Appendix one – Research studies of distributed leadership in schools

This appendix lists the 61 research studies of distributed leadership used in Chapter Four. The studies listed are according to the five categories used to map the field.

Descriptive and analytical studies used in chapter four (Tables A1.1 and A1.2)

Table A1.1 – *Distributed framework research studies (Spillane et al.)*

| Author(s) | Study |
|---|---|
| <p><i>Distributed Leadership Study</i></p> <p>Spillane (2005) Spillane & Diamond (2007) Spillane, Diamond & Jita (2003) Spillane, Hallett & Diamond (2003) Spillane, Parise & Shearer (2011)</p> <p>Individual case study accounts in Spillane and Diamond's (2007) edited book: Burch (2007), Coldren (2007), Diamond (2007), Hallett (2007a, 2007b, 2010)¹⁷, Halverson (2007), Sherer (2007)</p> | <p>A five year, mixed-methods, longitudinal study that focused on the leadership and management practice of fifteen primary schools in the Chicago region. Eight 'high poverty' schools were case study schools, whereas the other seven were interview only ones. An extensive range of data collecting tools were employed in the case study schools as well as theoretical sampling (Spillane, 2005; Spillane & Coldren, 2011).</p> <p>The first group of references are publications that aggregated and synthesised the findings from the study.</p> <p>The second group listed here are related to more in-depth accounts of individual case study schools.</p> |
| <p><i>Principals' Professional Development study</i></p> <p>Spillane, Camburn & Pareja (2007) Spillane, Camburn, Pustejovsky et al. (2009) Spillane, Hunt & Healey (2009)</p> | <p>A mixed methods study of 52 principals' day-to-day work and changes to their practice from a mid-sized urban school district in the United States. Data were collected through logs, questionnaires to principals and staff, observations, interviews and student achievement data (Spillane & Coldren, 2011).</p> |
| <p><i>Distributed leadership for middle school mathematics study</i></p> <p>Pitts & Spillane (2009) Spillane & Zuberi (2009)</p> | <p>A mixed methods study involving middle schools across four North American States that focused on leadership in the context of mathematics. A range of data collecting tools were used including social network instruments (Spillane & Coldren, 2011).</p> |

¹⁷ Hallett's (2007b) chapter in Spillane and Diamond's edited book *Distributed Leadership in Practice* is positioned here due to the emphasis on using a distributed perspective to understand leadership practice in a manner aligned to those employed by the other case study authors. The other critiques of his case study (2007a, 2010) in relation to symbolic power and turmoil also position his analysis as a critical interpretation of school leadership practice that goes beyond the level of description usually associated with the employment of the distributed perspective in the other case studies. Consequently, I draw on these other critiques of Hallett's (2007a, 2010) in the political studies listed in table A5.

Table A1.2 – *Other analytical and descriptive research studies*

| Author(s) | Study |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Cowie et al. (2011) | An evaluation study of the government sponsored Laptops for Teachers scheme in New Zealand. Data were collected at a national and a local school level. |
| de Lima (2008) | A study of twelve departments across two Portuguese schools that focused on the roles of department leadership and used social network analysis to assess how teacher leadership was practiced and distributed. |
| Firestone & Martinez (2007) | Case studies of four schools are used to explore how district and teacher leaders played complementary roles as the schools collaborated with a university-based programme that aimed to improve science and mathematics teaching. |
| Goldstein (2004) | Study of Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) in one large U.S. urban school district. PAR had undergone a change from a principal-centred summative evaluation of teachers to a peer-based system. |
| Gronn (1999) | Findings from a case study of a leadership couple as substitute for individual leadership. The couple were a school founder and its first principal based in Australia. |
| Møller & Eggen (2005) | Secondary school leadership analysed from a distributed perspective with the data originating from the Norwegian part of the “Successful School Leadership Project”. The fieldwork was based in three schools and included data from interviews and observations over a week. |
| Park & Datnow (2009) | A distributed perspective is used to examine the implementation of data-driven decision-making in school systems. Multiple site case studies were used and involved eight schools from four systems, of which two were public school districts and two were charter management organisations. |

Normative studies used in chapter four (Tables A1.3 and A1.4)

Table A1.3 – *Large-scale normative research studies*

| Author(s) | Study |
|--|---|
| Camburn et al. (2003) | A quantitative study of approximately 100 Elementary schools in the U.S. The study focused on the distribution of leadership to formal roles and new roles generated from 3 Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) programs. |
| Camburn & Han (2009) | A quantitative study that follows on from Camburn et al (2003). It focuses on one of the CSR programmes, America's Choice that focused on literacy. Data from teachers of 31 America's Choice schools are compared to 26 schools not involved in the programme. |
| Heck & Hallinger (2009, 2010) Hallinger & Heck (2009, 2010) | A four year longitudinal and multi-level quantitative study that focused on associations between student achievement, school improvement capacity and distributed leadership. |
| Hulpia & Devos (2009, 2010) Hulpia et al. (2009) | A research project that focused on Belgium secondary school members' commitment to their schools and possible links to distributed leadership. Two phases contributed to the quantitative aspect of the project. The first a questionnaire to 130 principals, the second a questionnaire to a sample of just over 2000 staff. These were complemented by interviews and focus groups in eight schools. |
| Leithwood et al. (2004) | A four year study of ten schools where data were collected over 354 days across the schools. The study focused on the sources and distribution of leadership in relation to the large-scale literacy and numeracy reform initiatives in England. |
| Leithwood et al. (2007) <i>Ontario Study phase one</i> | A study of patterns of leadership distribution in four elementary and four secondary schools based in the same Canadian education district. Data were collected through interviews of 67 staff at the district and school level. |
| Mascall et al. (2009) <i>Ontario Study phase two</i> | Quantitative study of 1,604 teachers that tested associations between forms of distributed leadership and academic optimism. |
| Louis et al. (2010) <i>Six-year "Learning from leadership project" funded by the Wallace Foundation</i> | Comprehensive United States based multi-level mixed methods research of school leadership. Research findings of 180 primary, middle and secondary schools across nine States make up the sampling frame for the school-level part of the project. In all, survey data came from 8391 teachers and 471 school administrators; 581 school staff were interviewed and 312 classrooms were contexts for observations. The five references that follow are part of this project and provide additional commentary. |
| Leithwood & Mascall (2008) | Quantitative study of 2570 teachers from primary and secondary schools that analysed whether or not there were associations between patterns of collective leadership and student achievement |
| Wahlstrom & Louis (2008) | Quantitative findings from the survey data collected from 4,165 teachers from 39 districts in 138 schools. The survey focused on how teachers experienced principal leadership and the roles of shared leadership, professional community, trust and efficacy. |

| | |
|---|--|
| Murphy et al. (2009) | A three year longitudinal case study of an urban middle school that drew on interview and document-based data to illustrate how challenges were overcome to increase the density of leadership. |
| Louis et al. (2009) | Case studies of two high schools as part of the three year longitudinal comparative research. Data were collected through observations and interviews. |
| Anderson et al. (2009) | Case studies of four primary and one junior high school with a focus on the role of the principal with the distribution of leadership. |
| Mulford (2005), Mulford & Silins (2003) | Findings of 'The Leadership for Organisational Learning and Student Outcomes (LOLSO) project from 3,500 year ten students and 2,500 teacher/principal questionnaires conducted in half of the secondary schools in South Australia and all of the secondary schools in Tasmania. |

Table A1.4 – *Small to medium scale normative research studies*

| Author(s) | Study |
|--------------------------|--|
| Angelle (2010) | A single case study of a Middle School in a south-eastern U.S State. The school was purposely selected as an effective model of distributed leadership from an initial sample of eleven schools. |
| Arrowsmith (2007) | Ethnographic case studies of six contrasting English secondary schools. |
| Copland (2003) | A two phase longitudinal study situated in the context of collaborative (BASCR) with a focus on inquiry, distributed leadership and collective decision-making. Phase one collected data across all schools involved in the reform initiative, whereas phase two involved a more depth study of sixteen schools. |
| Franey (2002) | A Principal's narrative account of school improvement. The research was supported by the NCSL in England. |
| Harris (2002) | Case studies of ten schools facing challenging circumstances. The research was funded by the NCSL in England. |
| Harris & Day (2003) | Case studies of effective leadership in twelve schools in England. The research was commissioned by the National Association of Headteachers (NAHT). |
| Harris (2008) | A range of cases of schools situated in England are drawn on to illustrate how leadership structures have altered as an attempt to improve teaching and learning outcomes. |
| Law et al. (2010) | A single site case study of a Hong Kong primary school and its utilisation of school-based curriculum teams. The project rotated team leadership roles in the hope that a new distributed form of leadership would improve team interactions. |
| Mayrowetz et al. (2007) | An examination of distributed leadership reform being implemented across 24 States in North America through State Action Education Leadership Projects (SAELP) funding. An earlier sample of six schools is used to inform the article. |
| Muijs (2007) | Case studies of eight full-service schools in England that explore whether the distribution of leadership is correlated to the schools collaborating with other social service agencies. |
| Penlington et al. (2008) | Case studies of 20 schools involved in the "Impact of School Leadership on Pupil Outcomes" project where distributed leadership was examined as one factor that builds collective responsibility for improving student outcomes. |
| Rutherford (2006) | A four year qualitative case study of a primary school that became a charter school as part of the Edison CSR programme. |
| Wallace (2002) | A study of senior management teams in primary schools. Findings are presented from questionnaires returned from 65 principals across England and Wales and from four subsequent case studies of senior management teams. |

Blended studies used in chapter four

Table A1.5 – *Blended research studies*

| Author(s) | Study |
|---|--|
| Crawford (2003) | A three year case study of one primary school subject to OFSTED special measures in England. |
| Crowther et al. (2009) Crowther (2010) | The findings from five phases of research over a thirteen year period situated mainly in Australia. The phases include the IDEAS project as part of a Queensland school revitalisation project and positions teacher leadership in parallel to principal leadership. |
| Dinham (2005, 2007) | A study of the role of Principals and Heads of Departments in producing outstanding education outcomes. 50 sites from across secondary schools in New South Wales, Australia were selected and believed to be outstanding. Data were collected from principals, staff, students and documents. |
| Gronn (2009b) | A single case study of an Australian secondary school is reported from a “Patterns of Distributed Leadership” project that focused on three schools. The aim of the project was to better understand distributed forms of leadership. |
| Hammersley-Fletcher & Brundrett (2005) | Two samples of primary schools (twelve and ten) were utilised to interview principals and subject leaders to explore their thinking about leadership. The first sample of schools were recommended as ‘forward looking’ schools by their Local Educational Authority (LEA), whereas the second sample were selected from those who volunteered to share their practice in response to a NCSL invitation. |
| Haughey (2006) | A two year study involving 30 primary and junior high school principals and their utilisation of computers as part of their work. The study was based in a district of western Canada. |
| MacBeath (2005) | An exploration of what distributed forms of leadership looked like from the perspective of principals and teachers in eleven schools. The study was sponsored by the NCSL, England. |
| Muijs & Harris (2007) | Case studies of three schools that exhibited developed, emergent and restricted forms of teacher leadership with a focus on decision-making involvement and initiating activities. |
| Ritchie & Woods (2007) | Case studies of eight primary and two secondary schools that were part of a NCSL sponsored research study that focused on leadership development in schools. Degrees of leadership distribution emerged as a theme from the data. |
| Timperley (2005) | New Zealand Government sponsored professional development for literacy leaders in seven schools across four years. The analysis of data was <i>stretched over</i> (Spillane, 2006) the interactions of the principal, literacy leader and teachers. |
| Waterhouse & Møller (2009) | A section of findings from the international Leadership for Learning research project that included 24 schools from across seven countries. |

Alternative studies used in chapter four

Table A1.6 – *Alternative research studies*

| Author(s) | Study |
|----------------------------|---|
| Court (2003, 2004) | Three case studies of New Zealand primary schools' co-principalships and the struggles experienced with the regulations that normalised single principalship in schools. |
| Eckman (2006) | An examination of principal perspectives from 53 public and private schools in the U.S. where a co-principal model is used. |
| Flecknoe (2002, 2004) | A case study of one English primary school and the development of democratic leadership amongst staff and students (2002). Further commentary in relation to challenging orthodox organisational leadership through democratic student leadership is provided (2004). |
| Giles (2006) | Three case studies of how principal leadership in challenging urban elementary schools in the Northeast U.S. facilitated greater parental involvement. |
| Gronn & Hamilton (2004) | An investigation of co-principalship within three Australian Catholic schools. This article focuses on one of the schools where a male and female co-lead the school. |
| Grubb & Flessa (2006) | An examination of ten schools, most situated in California. Each case study provides an account of alternative ways of organising work that is traditionally carried out by a single school principal. |
| McGregor (2007) | Examples of student involvement activity in the Networked Learning Communities project that was an initiative of the NCSL. |
| Mitra (2005) | A three year qualitative study that broadens the concept of distributed leadership to include student voice. The study took place in one Californian high school. |
| Thomson & Blackmore (2006) | Five cases studies of a range of schools that illustrate how the work of the principals had changed through redesign. The five cases respectively illustrate: distributed pedagogical leadership, co-principalship, shared principalship, multi-campus principalship and community-based principalship. |

Political studies used in chapter four

Table A1.7 – *Political research studies*

| Author(s) | Study |
|----------------------------|--|
| Fitzgerald et al. (2006) | A qualitative study of 82 middle leaders from eight schools across England and New Zealand. The leadership of learning was found to exist through all levels of the schools with both formal and informal leaders. |
| Friedman (2004) | A case study of the development of shared leadership in one Massachusetts urban high school. |
| Hall et al. (2011a, 2011b) | Five case studies of a range of secondary schools in England that involved interviews with leaders, teachers and support staff. The aim of the research was to examine and critique distributed leadership as an officially prescribed form of leadership in schools. |
| Hallett (2007a, 2010) | A case study of how a principal failed to implement an accountability model of reform due to the lack of symbolic power deferred on them by teachers. The resultant distress experienced by the teachers resulted in them emerging as a political alliance against the principal even though the principal carried out what was expected by the Board. |
| Johnson (2004) | A study of how five school leadership teams in South Australia countered the politics of managerialism. The five schools were invited from a research project of school-based reform that elicited sanitised and apolitical accounts of practice “in order to break the silence over the micropolitics of school reform” (p.270). |
| Lingard et al. (2003) | A discussion of the findings from the data collected from 24 schools during the Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study (QSRLS). Leadership was one of the issues studied in the research. |
| Lumby (2003) | A discussion of two research projects of colleges in England that highlight the challenges that can arise with a distributed perspective of leadership. |
| Lumby (2009) | Two English and one Welsh Local Authority were the context of this research into partnerships between organisations that aimed to meet the learning needs of 14-19 year olds. |
| Maxcy & Nguyen (2006) | Case studies of two Texan schools that are used to critique distributed leadership frameworks. |
| Scribner et al. (2007) | A social distributed leadership study of two teacher teams that focused on the specific artefact of talk in one Missouri secondary school. |
| Storey (2004) | A detailed case study of how competition between leaders in one English secondary school revealed the frailty of espousing distributed leadership at a rhetoric level. |
| L. Wright (2008) | An examination of principals’ constructions of distributed forms of leadership that critiques Spillane’s distributed perspective of leadership (Spillane, 2006). Thirteen schools principals from across one small district within Alberta where the key informants through the use of focus groups and interviews. |

Appendix two – Phase one observation schedule

<check that my presence and intentions have been made clear>

Observation processes:

Chronological in the field notes will be taken and then written up as a fuller version within 24 hours of the event.

These notes will be informed by the following broad questions:

1. What distributed forms of leadership were evident or espoused?
 - a. What more managerial forms were evident?
 - b. What more Holistic forms were evident?
 - c. How did participants navigate their way through differing forms of distributed leadership?
2. Whose voices were being heard? Were any being denied or challenged? Where were there any silences?
3. Who appeared to be acting as a boundary keeper:
 - a. In terms of social interaction?
 - b. In terms of topic focus?
 - c. In terms of political activity and related decision-making processes?
4. What possibilities for more focused and selective observations have arisen that I could follow up for phase two in relation to:
 - a. The planning and implementation of the *New Zealand Curriculum*?
 - b. Pastoral care practices?
5. How has my presence possibly affected the situation under observation?

Appendix three – Phase two observation schedule

<check that my presence and intentions have been made clear>

<check that all consent forms are signed>

<check if it is appropriate to digitally record the situation>

<check for any questions in relation to the purpose of the observation, how the data will be collected and how participants can check, edit or withdraw information>

Observation processes:

Chronological field notes will be recorded and then written up as a fuller version within 24 hours of the event. The context of the observations is bounded to either of the two contexts for the research as decided to by the school.

These notes will be informed by the following broad questions:

1. What distributed forms of leadership were in use and/or espoused?
 - a. What 'official school' forms were evident?
 - b. What other forms were evident?
 - c. How were they related to student learning?
 - d. How did participants navigate their way through differing distributed forms of leadership?
 - e. How were these differing forms influenced by past practice?
 - f. How were these differing forms influenced by power relations?
2. Whose voices were being heard? Were any being denied or challenged? Where were there any silences?
3. What agendas were:
 - a. Espoused?
 - b. In use/evident?
 - c. Suppressed or potentially dormant?
4. Was any influence evident and how did it emerge:
 - a. In terms of managing social interaction?
 - b. In terms of managing the topic focus?
 - c. In terms of managing political activity and related decision-making processes?
5. What and/or who legitimatised:
 - a. The sources of influence?
 - b. Any patterns of engagement or disengagement?
6. How has my presence possibly affected the situation under observation?

Appendix four – Organisation consent (information letter and form)

GENERAL INFORMATION FORM

December 2007

My name is Howard Youngs. I am currently enrolled as a PhD student in the School of Education at the University of Waikato and seek your help in my research.

The aim of my project is to analyse distributed forms of leadership practice in schools by looking at the way:

- a. the revised *New Zealand Curriculum*, and,
 - b. pastoral care,
- are dealt with in schools.

The idea of Distributed Leadership has become fashionable over the last decade. However my analysis of other research undertaken in this area to date shows that the complexity of day-to-day school leadership practice from a distributed perspective is often not captured; a complexity that I was all too well aware of during my years as a secondary teacher, head of department and deputy principal. Rather than make judgments of school practice, an aim of my doctoral research is to analyse staff understandings of situations where distributed forms of leadership are espoused and/or practiced. I intend to do this by carrying out ethnographic type research, that mainly relies on observation and interviewing, in two large urban secondary schools for approximately 15-18 months. It is important to note that no data will be collected covertly and that my intentions will be transparent to members of the staff.

The research consists of three phases:

- Phase One - Initial introduction (approximately two months);
 - A one hour initial briefing with the Principal and other key gatekeepers so that I start to understand the history, culture, structure and goals of the school in relation to leadership practice of pastoral care and the implementation and planning processes for the revised *New Zealand Curriculum*;
 - Broad descriptive observations approved by the school of formal meetings and informal conversations with staff who agree to engage in informed conversation.
- Phase Two - Participant Observation and Interviewing (approximately 12-15 months);
 - More focused and selective observations of meetings and situations where staff have provided prior signed informed consent;
 - Informal conversations with staff who agree to engage in informed conversations;
 - Formal semi-structured interviews of no more than 30 minutes with individual staff or groups of staff who have provided prior signed informed consent and viewed the interview questions prior to the agreed time of the interview;

- The conversations and formal interviews will be used to substantiate my interpretations and understand participants' understandings of situations that I have observed.
- Phase Three - Follow up and validation (approximately 1 month);
 - A voluntary and anonymous questionnaire of no more than 20 minutes given out to all staff based on the themes arising from phase two;
 - A one hour staff focus group based on the themes arising from phase two of the research. A representative sample of eight staff will be selected from those who were involved in phase two and have consented to be possibly involved in the focus group;
 - The questionnaire and focus group findings will be used to validate and confirm the findings arising from phase two.

I intend to submit my doctoral research before June 2010 and publish aspects throughout and after the doctoral research. Publication could be through national and international educational leadership conferences, peer reviewed journals and chapters of edited books. In all publications the identity of the school and individuals would remain anonymous unless the school explicitly in writing requested that its identity be revealed at any point. All the collected data will be securely kept indefinitely and staff may withdraw themselves from the research until I exit from the school site. Any individual will have the right to view, edit or withdraw any information that they have contributed before the completion of data collection in June 2009; this can be done by seeing me or contacting me personally on 09 8154321 ext 8411.

CONSENT FORM - ORGANISATION

TO: The Principal ofSchool
FROM: Howard Youngs
DATE: dd/mm/yy
RE: PhD Research - Distributed forms of leadership

I have been given and have understood an explanation of this PhD research that will be undertaken by Howard Youngs. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered. I understand that neither any participant names nor the name of my organisation will be used in any publication or dissemination of the research findings; only with explicit consent could the organisation's name be used. I also understand that all the collected data will be securely kept indefinitely and that the organisational access granted to Howard Youngs to undertake this research will be reviewed in April 2008, November 2008 and April 2009.

I agree for School to take part in this PhD research.

Signed: _____
Name: _____
Position: _____
Date: _____

This study has been approved by the University of Waikato School of Education Research Ethics Committee from 18/3/08 to 28/2/10. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Principal Supervisor Professor Martin Thrupp (ph: 09 815-4321 ext 7254). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Appendix five – Phase one group interview questions

<thank the participants and carry out a quick sound check>

<check that all consent forms are signed>

<check for any questions in relation to the purpose of the Initial Briefing, how the data will be collected and how participants can check, edit or withdraw information>

Guiding questions and ‘stems’:

1 How would you describe staff relations in the school?

Has the politics of the staffroom changed over time? Why?

Are there aspects of staff relations that people are intentionally changing or want to change? Why?

In what ways do staff relations enable or restrain leadership across the school?

2 What about the culture of the school more generally, how would you describe that?

Over time how has this been established or changed?

Are there aspects of culture that the school is intentionally moving towards? Why?

Who would be the key shapers of culture in the school?

In what ways does the culture of the school enable or restrain leadership across the school?

3 What about the structure of the school, how would you describe that both in terms of how responsibilities are organised and formal decision-making processes implemented?

Have these structures changed over time? Why?

Are there aspects of these structures that the school is intentionally going to change or are currently changing? Why?

In what ways does the structure enable or restrain leadership across the school?

4 Do you use the term distributed leadership (individually and as a team)?

What do you understand by it?

How did you form this view of distributed leadership?

Are there school-wide views of distributed forms of leadership espoused here?

Would all staff have similar views of distributed forms of leadership?

- 5 What are the school's plans, processes and/or intentions for implementing the *New Zealand Curriculum* over the next 18 months?

What challenges and opportunities can you foresee the revised curriculum having for leadership across the school?

- 6 What leadership practices are emerging in relation to your school based initiative?

What challenges and opportunities exist with leadership practices across the school in relation to this initiative?

<are there any other comments that participants want to make or withdraw>

<are there any questions>

<thank the participants and remind them of the process for checking, editing and withdrawing information from the transcript once it is produced and the process for withdrawing themselves or any further information>

Appendix six – Phase two interview schedule for individuals and groups

<thank the participants and carry out a quick sound check>

<check that consent forms are signed>

<check for any questions in relation to the purpose of the interview, how the data will be collected and how participants can check, edit or withdraw information>

Guiding questions and ‘stems’:

Interview questions will be drawn from the following list. The interview will be digitally recorded.

1. How would you define distributed leadership?
2. How have staff relations changed over the last 15 months?
3. How have school structures and processes changed over the last 15 months?
4. In relation to the school-based endeavour:
 - a. What patterns of leadership have emerged over the last 15 months?
 - b. In what ways have these leadership patterns changed? Why?
 - c. To what extent have you influenced the development of the endeavour with your colleagues and with the students?
 - d. In term 4, staff and students will have an opportunity to provide their views of the endeavour. What specific survey questions do you think should be asked to:
 - i. the staff?
 - ii. the students?
5. In relation to curriculum development and review:
 - a. Have noticed any change in the dynamics of curriculum meetings over the last 15 months?
 - b. To what extent is your individual voice heard?
 - c. Do you say the things you really want to say?
6. To what extent do you think my presence has affected your participation in meetings?

<are there any other comments that participants want to make or withdraw>

<are there any questions>

<thank the participants and remind them of the process for checking, editing and withdrawing information from the transcript once it is produced and the process for withdrawing themselves or any further information>

Appendix seven – Individual consent (information letter and form)

Note: the same format was used for subsequent individual and group interviews in other phases.

ADULT PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FORM

Phase One: Initial briefing

Dear

My name is Howard Youngs. I am currently enrolled as a PhD student in the School of Education at the University of Waikato and seek your help in meeting the requirements of research for this degree. The aim of my project is to analyse distributed forms of leadership practice in schools, using the implementation and planning processes for the revised *New Zealand Curriculum* and pastoral care as contexts for this research.

I request your participation in the following way:

To take part in a briefing session of no more than one hour long that will be recorded and transcribed. The purpose of the briefing session is to help me become more aware of the school's history, structure, culture, plans and general intentions for implementing the *New Zealand Curriculum* and pastoral care practices in relation to leadership from a distributed perspective; all briefing questions will be made available to you at least ten days before the briefing session occurs at an agreed to time and place. During the briefing session I shall also be seeking further guidance and advice as to where I should observe leadership practice in the abovementioned contexts.

I intend to submit my doctoral research before June 2010 and publish aspects throughout and after the doctoral research. Publication could be through national and international educational leadership conferences, peer reviewed journals and chapters of edited books. In all publications the identity of the school and individuals would remain anonymous unless the school explicitly in writing requested that its identity be revealed at any point. All the collected data will be securely kept indefinitely and you may withdraw yourself from the research at any time. You will have the right to edit or withdraw any information that you have contributed before the completion of data collection in June 2009. This can be done by seeing me or contacting me personally on 09 8154321 ext 8411.

I hope that you will agree to take part and that you will find participation and discussion of interest.

Yours sincerely

Howard Youngs

This study has been approved by the University of Waikato School of Education Research Ethics Committee from 18/3/08 to 28/2/10. If you have any questions, complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Principal Supervisor Professor Martin Thrupp (ph: 07 838 4500 ext 4907 or email thrupp@waikato.ac.nz). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

CONSENT FORM – ADULT PARTICIPANTS

Phase One: Initial briefing

TO: Name of participant
FROM: Howard Youngs
DATE: dd/mm/yy
RE: PhD Research - Distributed forms of leadership

I have been given and have understood an explanation of this Initial Briefing which will take no more than one hour and is part of the PhD research undertaken by Howard Youngs. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered. I understand that neither my name nor the name of my organisation will be used in any publication or dissemination of the research findings; only with explicit consent could the organisation's name be used. I also understand that all the collected data will be securely kept indefinitely and that I may withdraw myself from the research at any time before all of the data is collected. I acknowledge that I will have the right to edit or withdraw any information that I have contributed before the completion of data collection in June 2009. This can be done by seeing or contacting Howard Youngs on 09 8154321 ext 8411.

I agree to take part in Phase One (Initial briefing) of this PhD research.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

This study has been approved by the University of Waikato School of Education Research Ethics Committee from 18/3/08 to 28/2/10. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Principal Supervisor Professor Martin Thrupp (ph: 07 838 4500 ext 4907 or email thrupp@waikato.ac.nz). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Appendix eight – Phase three staff questionnaire (Esteran)

1. Introduction

Dear Staff member

Thank you so much for deciding to accept the invitation to complete this on-line questionnaire. By completing one or more questions of this anonymous questionnaire you are providing informed consent to participate in this research that it is part of my PhD on distributed leadership in schools. The questionnaire should take approximately 15-20 minutes to fill out and would need to be completed by Friday 4th December.

I intend to submit my PhD around the end of 2010 and publish aspects throughout and after the doctoral research; a report of relevant findings will also be given to the school early in 2010. Publication could be through national and international educational leadership conferences, peer reviewed journals and chapters of edited books. In all publications the identity of the school and individuals would remain anonymous unless the school explicitly in writing requested that its identity be revealed at any point (individual staff and departments would remain anonymous). All the collected data from the questionnaire will be kept for seven years in a secure location. You will have the right to edit or withdraw any or all of the information that you have contributed through this questionnaire before the 11th December 2009 (this can be done by reentering the electronic questionnaire).

Yours sincerely

Howard Youngs

This study has been approved by the University of Waikato School of Education Research Ethics Committee from 18/3/08 to 28/2/10. If you have any questions, complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Principal Supervisor Professor Martin Thrupp (ph: 07 838 4500 ext 4907 or email thrupp@waikato.ac.nz) or the Associate Supervisor Dr David Giles (ph: 07 838 4831 or email dlgiles@waikato.ac.nz). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

2. Demographic questions

1. How long have you been employed in schools?

Number of years =

2. How long have you been at this school?

Number of years =

3. Gender

☐ Female

☐ Male

4. Please select the descriptors that fit your responsibilities for this year (you may select more than one):

☐ Subject teacher

☐ Year level Dean

☐ Form teacher

☐ Head of Department

☐ Student support (eg Careers, Counsellor, Literacy, Numeracy, SCT)

☐ SMT

5. Please select the meeting groups that you regularly attended this year (you may select more than one):

- ☐ Staff meetings
- ☐ Department meetings
- ☐ Deans meetings
- ☐ Year level form teacher meetings
- ☐ MMT meetings
- ☐ CMT meetings
- ☐ SMT meetings

6. Have you received Restorative Practice training during the last two years?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

3. Rating scale questions

1. Please rate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement.

In our school student achievement is strongly related to:

| | DISAGREE | | | | | AGREE |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| A wider distribution of leadership | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| A strong focus on Restorative Practice | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| A strong focus on Academic Counselling | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| A strong focus on pedagogy | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| A strong focus on the learning areas of the new curriculum | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| A strong focus on the key competencies of the new curriculum | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Student attendance | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

2. Please rate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement.

| | DISAGREE | | | | | AGREE |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I often personally respond positively when volunteers are asked to lead and/or coordinate | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I look to those with expertise to take the lead | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I look to those with Management Units to take the lead | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I expect our students to have a voice | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I expect our students to take the lead | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

3. Please rate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement.

I am likely to influence the following groups when decisions need to be made that are relevant to that group (please leave any lines that are not applicable to you blank):

| | DISAGREE | | | | | AGREE |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Students | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Subject teachers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Year level Deans | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Heads of Departments | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Form teachers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Student support staff (eg Careers, Counsellor, Literacy, Numeracy, SCT) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| SMT | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

4. Please rate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement.

I am likely to be influenced by the following person or groups when decisions need to be made that are relevant to that group (please leave any lines that are not applicable to you blank):

| | DISAGREE | | | | | AGREE |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Students | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other subject teachers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| My year level Dean | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| My Head of Department | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Form teachers in my year level | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Student support staff (eg Careers, Counsellor, Literacy, Numeracy, SCT) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| A SMT member | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

5. Please rate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement.

I am likely to say exactly what I think to any of the following groups when decisions need to be made that are relevant to that group (please leave any lines that are not applicable to you blank):

| | DISAGREE | | | | | AGREE |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Staff meetings | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Deans meetings | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Form teacher meetings | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Department meetings | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| MMT meetings | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| CMT meetings | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

6. Please rate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement (please leave any lines that are not applicable to you blank):

| | DISAGREE | | | | | AGREE |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I fully understand the purpose of Restorative Practice in the school | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I fully understand the purpose of Academic Counselling in the school | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I am very aware of how other schools carry out Academic Counselling | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I find it straightforward to access relevant student achievement data | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| As a subject teacher I am very aware of how the year 11, 12 and/or 13 students are achieving in my subject | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| As a subject teacher I am very aware of how the year 11, 12 and/or 13 students in my classes are achieving in other subjects | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| A subject class is an appropriate context to speak to students about their targets | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Form class is an appropriate context to speak to students about their targets | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| As a Year 11, 12 or 13 form teacher I am very aware of how my form class students are achieving in all their subjects | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| The number of students I need to talk to in relation to Academic Counselling is too high | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| The targets set for Year 11, 12 and 13 students this year have been too easy | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I have been able to have a sufficient number of meetings with students in my form class about their targets for this year and subject choices for next year | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

7. Please rate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement (please leave any lines that are not applicable to you blank).

| | DISAGREE | | | | | AGREE |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I have a major direct influence on my subject class students' motivation to learn at school | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I have a major direct influence on students' motivation to learn at school who are not in my subject classes (eg form class, work as a Dean, student support, RP etc.) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I have a major direct influence in preparing my subject class students for NCEA assessments | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I have a major direct influence in preparing students for NCEA assessments who are not in my subject classes (eg form class, work as a Dean, student support, RP etc.) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I have a major direct influence in helping students in my subject classes choose their subjects for next year | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I have a major direct influence in helping students choose their subjects for next year who are not in my subject classes (eg form class, work as a Dean, student support, RP etc.) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I have a major direct influence in helping students in my subject classes decide what to do next year if they are likely to leave school | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I have a major direct influence in helping students who are not in my subject classes decide what to do next year if they are likely to leave school (eg in form class, work as a | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Dean, student support, RP etc.)

8. If you wish to please make any further comments about how Academic Counselling could be improved for next year.

Appendix nine – Phase three staff questionnaire (Penthom)

1. Introduction

Dear Staff member

Thank you so much for deciding to accept the invitation to complete this on-line questionnaire. By completing one or more questions of this anonymous questionnaire you are providing informed consent to participate in this research that it is part of my PhD on distributed leadership in schools. The questionnaire should take approximately 15-20 minutes to fill out and would need to be completed by Friday 4th December.

I intend to submit my PhD around the end of 2010 and publish aspects throughout and after the doctoral research; a report of relevant findings will also be given to the school early in 2010. Publication could be through national and international educational leadership conferences, peer reviewed journals and chapters of edited books. In all publications the identity of the school and individuals would remain anonymous unless the school explicitly in writing requested that its identity be revealed at any point (individual staff and departments would remain anonymous). All the collected data from the questionnaire will be kept for seven years in a secure location. You will have the right to edit or withdraw any or all of the information that you have contributed through this questionnaire before the 11th December 2009 (this can be done by reentering the electronic questionnaire).

Yours sincerely

Howard Youngs

This study has been approved by the University of Waikato School of Education Research Ethics Committee from 18/3/08 to 28/2/10. If you have any questions, complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Principal Supervisor Professor Martin Thrupp (ph: 07 838 4500 ext 4907 or email thrupp@waikato.ac.nz) or the Associate Supervisor Dr David Giles (ph: 07 838 4831 or email dlgiles@waikato.ac.nz). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

2. Demographic questions

1. How long have you been employed in schools?

Number of years =

2. How long have you been at this school?

Number of years =

3. Gender

☐ Female

☐ Male

4. Please select the descriptors that fit your responsibilities for this year (you may select more than one):

- ☐ Subject teacher
- ☐ Year level Dean
- ☐ MfS mentor
- ☐ Tutor teacher
- ☐ Administrative staff member
- ☐ Head of Learning or Department
- ☐ Student support (eg Careers, Counsellor)
- ☐ SLT

5. What year levels have you taught this year? (please move onto the next question if you do not teach any classes)

- ☐ Years 7 and/or 8
- ☐ Years 9 and/or 10
- ☐ Year 11
- ☐ Year 12
- ☐ Year 13

6. Please select the meeting groups that you regularly attended this year (you may select more than one):

- ☐ Staff meetings
- ☐ Department meetings
- ☐ Deans meetings
- ☐ Year level tutor teacher meetings
- ☐ MfS mentor meetings
- ☐ HOL meetings

7. Were you a MfS mentor last year when it first got started?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

3. Rating scale questions

1. Please rate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement.

In our school student achievement is strongly related to:

| | DISAGREE | | | | | AGREE |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| A wider distribution of leadership | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| A strong focus on MfS | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| A strong focus on pedagogy | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| A strong focus on the learning areas of the new curriculum | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| A strong focus on the key competencies of the new curriculum | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Student (learner) attendance | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

2. Please rate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement.

| | DISAGREE | | | | | AGREE |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I often personally respond positively when volunteers are asked to lead and/or coordinate | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I look to those with expertise to take the lead | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I look to those with Management Units to take the lead | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I expect our students (learners) to have a voice | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I expect our students (learners) to take the lead | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

3. Please rate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement.

I am likely to influence the following groups when decisions need to be made that are relevant to that group (please leave any lines that are not applicable to you blank):

| | DISAGREE | | | | | AGREE |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Students (Learners) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Subject teachers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Year level Deans | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| MFS mentors | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Heads of Learning and/or Departments | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Tutor teachers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Student support staff (eg Careers, Counsellor) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| SLT | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

4. Please rate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement.

I am likely to be influenced by the following person or groups when decisions need to be made that are relevant to that group (please leave any lines that are not applicable to you blank):

| | DISAGREE | | | | | AGREE |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Students (Learners) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Other subject teachers | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| My year level Dean | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| MFS mentors | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| My Head of Learning and/or Department | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Tutor teachers in my year level | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Student support staff (eg Careers, Counsellor) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| A SLT member | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

5. Please rate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement.

I am likely to say exactly what I think to any of the following groups when decisions need to be made that are relevant to that group (please leave any lines that are not applicable to you blank):

| | DISAGREE | | | | | AGREE |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Staff meetings | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Deans meetings | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| MfS mentor meetings | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Tutor teacher meetings | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Department meetings | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| HOL meetings | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

6. Please rate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement (please leave any lines that are not applicable to you blank):

| | DISAGREE | | | | | AGREE |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I fully understand the purpose of MfS in the school | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I find it straightforward to access relevant learner achievement data | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| As a subject teacher I am very aware of how the learners in my classes are achieving | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| As a subject teacher I am very aware of how the learners in my classes are achieving in other subjects | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Learners in my classes place expectations on themselves to learn | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| MfS has helped learners in my subject classes become more motivated to achieve | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| As a tutor teacher I am very aware of how my tutor class learners are achieving in all their subjects | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I have had sufficient training as a MfS mentor | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| As a MfS mentor I am very aware of how my group of learners are achieving in all of their subjects | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| The targets set for Year 11, 12 and 13 learners this year have been too easy | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| As a MfS mentor I have been able to have a sufficient number of meetings with my group of learners throughout the year | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| As a MfS mentor learners always respond to my invitations to meet with them by turning up | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I am very likely to be a MfS mentor next year | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

7. Please rate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement (please leave any lines that are not applicable to you blank).

| | DISAGREE | | | | | AGREE |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I have a major direct influence on my subject class learners' motivation to learn at school | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I have a major direct influence on my MFS group of learners' motivation to learn at school | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I have a major direct influence on learners' motivation to learn at school who are not in my subject classes or MFS group (eg tutor class, work as a Dean, student support etc.) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I have a major direct influence on my subject class learners' preparation for NCEA assessments | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I have a major direct influence in preparing my MFS group of learners' for NCEA assessments | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I have a major direct influence in preparing students for NCEA assessments who are not in my subject classes or MFS group (eg tutor class, work as a Dean, student support etc.) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I have a major direct influence in helping students in my subject classes choose their subjects for next year | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I have a major direct influence in helping students in my MFS group choose their subjects for next year | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I have a major direct influence in helping students choose their subjects for next year who are not in my subject classes or MFS group (eg tutor class, work as a Dean, student support etc.) | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I have a major direct influence in helping students in my subject classes make decisions about next year if they are planning to leave school | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Continued on following page.

I have a major direct influence in helping students in my MfS group make decisions about next year if they are planning to leave school

☐☐☐☐☐☐

I have a major direct influence in helping students make decisions about next year who are not in my subject classes or MfS group and are planning to leave school (eg tutor class, work as a Dean, student support etc.)

☐☐☐☐☐☐

I fully understand what the requirements for University Entrance are

☐☐☐☐☐☐

8. How often should a MfS mentor meet with a student (learner)? (please select the best answer)

- ☐ Each week
- ☐ Every two weeks
- ☐ Every three weeks
- ☐ Once a month
- ☐ Once a term
- ☐ Once a year

Please add any further comment if you wish to

9. When is the best time to for a MfS mentor to meet with a student (learner)?

- ☐ Tutor time
- ☐ Class time
- ☐ Morning break
- ☐ Lunch time
- ☐ Before school
- ☐ After school

Other (please specify). For instance should a mentor have half of their students situated in their own tutor class or all at the same level?

10. Please add any other suggestions to how MfS could be improved.

Appendix ten – Phase three student questionnaire (Esteran)

Hi, thanks for taking the time to read this and possibly complete this questionnaire. My name is Howard Youngs and I have been looking at how school leadership develops in your school as part of my PhD research. I am particularly interested in what you think of Academic Counselling and how you think this may be helping your learning at school.

I would like to invite you to complete this questionnaire and hand it in to your form teacher. If you don't want to complete this questionnaire or feel uncomfortable about doing so, that is fine, just place it into the large envelope when it is passed around. When I collect in all of the completed questionnaires I will be writing up the findings as part of my research and also will let the school know what is going well and what could be improved with Academic Counselling from your viewpoint. You also need to know that this questionnaire has been checked and approved by the University of Waikato Education Research Ethics Committee so that it is okay for you complete if you wish to do so. The data from the questionnaire will be kept for seven years in a secure location.

When you've finished the questionnaire please place it into the large envelope when it gets passed around the class at the end. You do not need to answer every question.

Please DO NOT write your name or any teachers' names anywhere on this sheet

Please complete the gaps for questions 1 – 3.

1. I am in Year _____ (11, 12 or 13)
2. I have been at this school for _____ years
3. To the best of my knowledge **last year** I completed about:

_____ credits at Level 1, _____ credits at Level 2, _____ credits at Level 3

Please circle the correct answer for questions 4 – 6.

4. Gender: FEMALE MALE
5. I think I will be coming back to school next year: TRUE FALSE
6. I know how many credits I have achieved so far this year: TRUE FALSE
7. If you answered TRUE for question 6, how many credits? _____

*Please place an **X** in one box so that it shows how much you disagree or agree with each statement for questions 8 – 19.*

| | Disagree | | | | | Agree |
|--|----------|--|--|--|--|-------|
| 8. I understand the purpose of Academic Counselling | | | | | | |
| | Disagree | | | | | Agree |
| 9. I know what my targets are for this year | | | | | | |
| | Disagree | | | | | Agree |
| 10. I know how to find out how many more credits I need to achieve this year to reach my targets | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------|--|--|--|--------------|--|
| | Disagree | | | | Agree | |
| 11. It looks very likely that I will reach my targets for this year | | | | | | |
| | Disagree | | | | Agree | |
| 12. My targets for this year have been too easy | | | | | | |
| | Disagree | | | | Agree | |
| 13. I have had meetings at least once a term with my form teacher about my targets for this year | | | | | | |
| | Disagree | | | | Agree | |
| 14. I knew early enough in the year what my targets should be | | | | | | |
| 15. The following people have had a major influence on my motivation to learn at school this year (<i>place an X in a box for each type of person</i>) | | | | | | |
| | Disagree | | | | Agree | |
| My subject teachers | | | | | | |
| My form teacher | | | | | | |
| My Year level Dean | | | | | | |
| Principal or Deputy Principal | | | | | | |
| Students who are friends | | | | | | |
| My Parents and/or caregivers at home | | | | | | |
| A Head of Department | | | | | | |
| Careers advisor and/or counsellor | | | | | | |
| | Disagree | | | | Agree | |
| 16. I have regularly attended all my classes this year | | | | | | |
| | Disagree | | | | Agree | |
| 17. I place an expectation on myself to learn in class | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| 18. The following people have had a major influence in preparing me for NCEA assessments this year (<i>place an X in the box for each type of person</i>) | Disagree Agree | | | | | |
| My subject teachers | | | | | | |
| My form teacher | | | | | | |
| My Year level Dean | | | | | | |
| Principal or Deputy Principal | | | | | | |
| Students who are friends | | | | | | |
| My Parents and/or caregivers at home | | | | | | |
| A Head of Department | | | | | | |
| Careers advisor and/or counsellor | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| 19. The following people have had a major influence in helping me make decisions about either what subjects I shall take next year or what I should do if I am planning to leave school (<i>place an X in a box for each type of person</i>) | Disagree Agree | | | | | |
| My subject teachers | | | | | | |
| My form teacher | | | | | | |
| My Year level Dean | | | | | | |
| Principal or Deputy Principal | | | | | | |
| Students who are friends | | | | | | |
| My Parents and/or caregivers at home | | | | | | |
| A Head of Department | | | | | | |
| Careers advisor and/or counsellor | | | | | | |

20. If you wish to, in the box below briefly explain how staff at the school could better help you set and achieve your goals (e.g. who would be the best person to talk to and when in the school day?).

Thanks very much for completing this questionnaire. Please place it into the envelope when it comes around.

Appendix eleven – Phase three student questionnaire (Penthom)

Hi, thanks for taking the time to read this and possibly complete this questionnaire. My name is Howard Youngs and I have been looking at how school leadership develops in your school as part of my PhD research. I am particularly interested in what you think of Mentor for Success (MfS) and how you think this may be helping your learning at school.

I would like to invite you to complete this questionnaire and hand it in to your teacher. If you don't want to complete this questionnaire or feel uncomfortable about doing so, that is fine, just place it into the large envelope when it is passed around. When I collect in all of the completed questionnaires I will be writing up the findings as part of my research and also will let the school know what is going well and what could be improved with (MfS) from your viewpoint. You also need to know that this questionnaire has been checked and approved by the University of Waikato School of Education Research Ethics Committee so that it is okay for you complete if you wish to do so. The data from the questionnaire will be kept for seven years in a secure location.

When you've finished the questionnaire please place it into the large envelope when it gets passed around the class at the end. You do not need to answer every question.

Please DO NOT write your name or any teachers' names anywhere on this sheet.

Please complete the gaps for questions 1 – 3.

1. I am in Year _____ (11, 12 or 13)

2. I have been at this school for _____ years

3. To the best of my knowledge **last year** I completed about:

_____ credits at Level 1, _____ credits at Level 2, _____ credits at Level 3

Please circle the correct answer for questions 4 – 7.

4. Gender: FEMALE MALE

5. I know who my MfS mentor is this year: TRUE FALSE

7. I know how many credits I have achieved so far this year: TRUE FALSE

8. If you answered TRUE for question 7, how many credits? _____

Please place an X in one box so that it shows how much you disagree or agree with each statement for questions 9 – 19.

| | Disagree | | | | | Agree |
|--|----------|--|--|--|--|-------|
| 9. I know what my targets are for this year | | | | | | |
| | Disagree | | | | | Agree |
| 10. I know how to find out how many more credits I need to achieve this year to reach my targets | | | | | | |
| | Disagree | | | | | Agree |
| 11. It looks very likely that I will reach my targets for this year | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------|--|--|--|--|--------------|
| | Disagree | | | | | Agree |
| 12. My targets for this year have been too easy | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------|--|--|--|--|--------------|
| | Disagree | | | | | Agree |
| 13. My targets for this year have really helped me to achieve | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------|--|--|--|--|--------------|
| | Disagree | | | | | Agree |
| 14. My MfS mentor made regular contact with me this year | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------|--|--|--|--|--------------|
| | Disagree | | | | | Agree |
| 15. I always turned up to meet my mentor when asked to | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------|--|--|--|--|--------------|
| 16. The following people have had a major influence on my motivation to learn at school this year (place an X a box for <i>each</i> type of person) | | | | | | |
| | Disagree | | | | | Agree |
| My subject teachers | | | | | | |
| My MfS mentor | | | | | | |
| My Year level Dean | | | | | | |
| Principal or Deputy Principal | | | | | | |
| My Tutor teacher | | | | | | |
| Students who are friends | | | | | | |
| My Parents and/or caregivers at home | | | | | | |
| A Head of Learning or Department | | | | | | |
| Careers advisor, youth worker and/or counsellor | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------|--|--|--|--|--------------|
| | Disagree | | | | | Agree |
| 17. I have regularly attended all my classes this year | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------|--|--|--|--|--------------|
| | Disagree | | | | | Agree |
| 18. I place an expectation on myself to learn in class | | | | | | |

| 19. The following people have had a major influence in preparing me for NCEA assessments this year (place an X in a box for <i>each</i> type of person) | | | | | | |
|---|----------|--|--|-------|--|--|
| | Disagree | | | Agree | | |
| My subject teachers | | | | | | |
| My MfS mentor | | | | | | |
| My Year level Dean | | | | | | |
| Principal or Deputy Principal | | | | | | |
| My Tutor teacher | | | | | | |
| Students who are friends | | | | | | |
| My Parents and/or caregivers at home | | | | | | |
| A Head of Learning or Department | | | | | | |
| Careers advisor, youth worker and/or counsellor | | | | | | |

20. How often do you think it is best to meet with your mentor?
(circle the best answer)

EACH WEEK

EVERY TWO WEEKS

EVERY THREE WEEKS

ONCE A MONTH

ONCE A TERM

ONCE A YEAR

21. When do you think is the best time to meet with an MfS mentor?
(circle the best answer)

TUTOR TIME

CLASS TIME

MORNING BREAK

LUNCHTIME

BEFORE SCHOOL

AFTER SCHOOL

22. I will most probably be returning to school next year: TRUE FALSE

23. I understand the requirements for University Entrance: TRUE FALSE

24. The following people have had a major influence in helping me make decisions about either what subjects I shall take next year or what I should do if I am planning to leave school (*place an **X** in a box for **each** type of person*)

| | Disagree | | | Agree | | |
|---|----------|--|--|-------|--|--|
| My subject teachers | | | | | | |
| My MfS mentor | | | | | | |
| My Year level Dean | | | | | | |
| Principal or Deputy Principal | | | | | | |
| My Tutor teacher | | | | | | |
| Students who are friends | | | | | | |
| My Parents and/or caregivers at home | | | | | | |
| A Head of Learning or Department | | | | | | |
| Careers advisor, youth worker and/or counsellor | | | | | | |

25. If you wish to, in the box below briefly explain how MfS and your mentor has best helped you:

26. If you wish to, in the box below briefly explain how MfS and things a mentor can do could be improved:

Thanks very much for completing this questionnaire. Please place it into the envelope when it comes around.

Appendix twelve – Summary of Esteran and Penthom student data

Esteran College

Table A12.1 – *Esteran College Year 11-13 student perceptions of influence*
(n=304, 60%) [Y11, n=130, 60%; Y12, n=89, 52%; Y13, n=85, 77%]

| Students' motivation to learn | | Students' preparation for NCEA | | Students' decision-making | |
|---|------|--|------|---|------|
| Source of influence | Mean | Source of influence | Mean | Source of influence | Mean |
| Students who are friends | 3.65 | Students' subject teachers <i>Y11 (3.49) v Y13 (4.27)</i> <i>Y12 (3.70) v Y13 (4.27)</i> | 3.78 | Parents and/or caregivers at home <i>Y12 (3.30) v Y13 (4.00)</i> | 3.59 |
| Parents and/or caregivers at home | 3.56 | Parents and/or caregivers at home | 3.29 | Students who are friends | 3.17 |
| Students' subject teachers <i>Y11 (3.10) v Y13 (3.95)</i> <i>Y12 (3.37) v Y13 (3.95)</i> | 3.42 | Students who are friends | 3.26 | Students' subject teachers | 2.76 |
| Students' Form Teacher | 2.63 | Students' Form Teacher <i>Y11 (2.63) v Y12 (1.92)</i> | 2.36 | Students' Form Teacher | 2.38 |
| Students' Year level Dean <i>Y11 (2.58) v Y13 (1.83)</i> <i>Y12 (2.70) v Y13 (1.83)</i> | 2.40 | Students' Year level Dean <i>Y11 (2.52) v Y13 (1.73)</i> | 2.20 | Careers Advisor and/or Counsellor <i>Y11 (1.67) v Y13 (2.81)</i> <i>Y12 (2.04) v Y13 (2.81)</i> | 2.11 |
| Heads of Department <i>Y11 (1.63) v Y13 (2.90)</i> <i>Y12 (2.16) v Y13 (2.90)</i> | 2.15 | Heads of Department <i>Y11 (1.57) v Y13 (2.95)</i> <i>Y12 (1.99) v Y13 (2.95)</i> | 2.10 | Students' Year level Dean | 1.89 |
| Careers Advisor and/or Counsellor <i>Y11 (1.47) v Y13 (2.59)</i> <i>Y12 (1.85) v Y13 (2.59)</i> | 1.90 | Careers Advisor and/or Counsellor <i>Y11 (1.27) v Y13 (2.02)</i> | 1.57 | Heads of Department <i>Y11 (1.47) v Y13 (2.18)</i> | 1.77 |
| Principal or Deputy Principal | 1.10 | Principal or Deputy Principal | 1.11 | Principal or Deputy Principal | 0.92 |

One-way ANOVA tests were carried out at the 0.05 level of significance to determine any statistical differences between year levels 11, 12 and 13. These differences are presented in italics with the mean for each year level provided. Students in their final year of school generally perceived that subject teachers had a greater influence in comparison to year 11 and 12 students. The ANOVA tests also revealed that Careers Advisors and Counsellors influenced Year 13 students more than Year 11 or 12 students and that in year 13 Heads of Department were perceived as having more influence on students' motivation to learn at school, their preparation for NCEA assessments and the decisions students needed to make for the following year of school when compared to Year 11 and 12 students.

Penthom High School

Table A12.2 – *Penthom High School Year 11-13 student perceptions of influence*
(n=216, 40%) [Y11, n=43, 20%; Y12, n=116, 62%; Y13, n=57, 43%]

| Students' motivation to learn | | Students' preparation for NCEA | | Students' decision-making about their next year | |
|--|------|---|------|---|------|
| Source of influence | Mean | Source of influence | Mean | Source of influence | Mean |
| Students' subject teachers | 3.55 | Students' subject teachers | 4.03 | Parents and/or caregivers at home | 3.76 |
| Parents and/or caregivers at home | 3.55 | Parents and/or caregivers at home | 3.32 | Students who are friends | 3.28 |
| Students who are friends | 3.44 | Students who are friends | 3.14 | Students' subject teachers | 2.76 |
| Students' Form Teacher <i>Y11 (3.23) v Y12 (2.18) and Y11 (3.23) v Y13 (2.40)</i> | 2.45 | Students' Form Teacher <i>Y11 (3.10) v Y12 (1.93)</i> | 2.27 | Students' Form Teacher | 1.69 |
| Students' Year level Dean | 1.98 | Students' Year level Dean | 2.02 | Careers Advisor and/or Counsellor <i>Y11 (1.10) v Y13 (2.11) and Y12 (1.34) v Y13 (2.11)</i> | 1.50 |
| Student mentor | 1.91 | Student mentor | 1.92 | Students' Year level Dean | 1.50 |
| Heads of Department <i>Y12 (1.53) v Y13 (2.40)</i> | 1.87 | Heads of Department <i>Y12 (1.56) v Y13 (2.25)</i> | 1.81 | Student mentor | 1.44 |
| Principal or Deputy Principal | 1.55 | Principal or Deputy Principal | 1.52 | Heads of Department | 1.31 |
| Careers Advisor and/or Counsellor | 1.40 | Careers Advisor and/or Counsellor <i>Y12 (1.15) v Y13 (1.80)</i> | 1.31 | Principal or Deputy Principal | 1.12 |

The differences evident in the ANOVA tests carried out at the 0.05 level of significance are presented in italics with the mean for each year level. The ANOVAs revealed that Careers Advisors and Counsellors influenced Year 13 students more than Year 11 or 12 students in two of the three areas and that in year 13 Heads of Department were perceived as having more influence on students' motivation to learn at school and their preparation for NCEA assessments and when compared to Year 12 students.