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Pepperdine University  
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

A SMALL BUSINESS CASE STUDY OF FOCUSED AND DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP  
HYBRIDITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Siphokazi Ntetha

December 2018

Eric Hamilton, Ph.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

Siphokazi Ntetha

under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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## DEDICATION

To South Africa, my beloved country.

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## ABSTRACT

There is convincing evidence that effective leadership is a major contributing factor to small business growth and success. However, attention to leadership focused on founding CEOs abounds at the expense of exploring the distribution of leadership across an organization. This study explored the hybridity of focused and distributed leadership enactment in a fast-growing small business situated in South Africa. The first objective was to form a holistic view of how the members of the organization lead, incorporating leadership focused on key individual leaders and that which is shared and distributed amongst and between others. The second objective was to contextualize leadership hybridity to the South African culture and demands of fast business growth. The third objective was to explore how leaders transform as they navigate the terrains of focused and distributed leadership. The overarching goal was to propose a holistic leadership hybridity framework that appreciates these complexities. A qualitative single case study research design guided the study. The case study database was created from in-depth interviews with leaders and followers, focus group interviews, participant observations of organizational activities, and the review of two documents. Themes emerged to suggest that there is harmonious leadership hybridity that occurs through both the behaviors of critical individual leaders at the top (notably, the CEO) and those emerging from outside of formal structures through distributed leadership across multiple leadership actors and factors. The South African culture of ubuntu seems to support post-heroic leadership but does not exclude acknowledging that growing a business involves a collection of heroic acts. And lastly, leaders and followers who performed leadership within hybridity (i.e., those that can fluidly move between being a leader or a follower) benefited from enhanced self-regulation, amongst other psychosocial benefits. The

insight gained from this study could inform leadership development initiatives that are more effective in growing leaders and small businesses in Southern Africa.

*Keywords:* distributed leadership, leadership hybridity, ubuntu, leader-follower fluidity

## Chapter One: Introduction

### **The Hybridity of Leadership: A Theoretical Consideration**

The essence of organizational leadership is the influence of individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared organizational goals (Yukl, 2012). Conventionally it involves followers benefiting from the efforts of exceptional leaders who exhibit heroic qualities that contribute to success (Bass, 2008; Bryman, 1996). Effective leaders, for example, display visionary (Bennis & Nanus, 1985), charismatic (House, 1977), and transformational (Bass, 1985) qualities, which followers would be helpless without (Wilson, 2016). Emerging post-heroic discussions argue that the idea of leadership residing only in a single individual or a selected few is incomplete (Fletcher, 2004). Within the post-heroic leadership paradigm is an understanding of leadership as a shared practice amongst multiple actors and factors (Conger & Pearson, 2003; Spillane, 2006), as well as a social and interactive process (Marion & Uhl-bien, 2016) that is distributed through a network of influence (Gronn, 2002) across a complex organizational system.

Distributed leadership is one of many new concepts within this paradigm (Badaracco 2001) that reframe leadership as a collective practice that is fluid and emergent between interacting leaders, followers, and aspects of situations over time (Gronn, 2002; Spillane, 2006). Scholars and practitioners enthusiastically receive this approach to the point of creating opposition between those who believe leadership is focused (on the individual leader) and those who hold the post-heroic view of leadership. The question emerges, does a distributed understanding then replace traditional individualistic leadership approaches (Gronn, 2009)? Recent empirical investigations by Gronn (2008; 2009; 2011) and others (e.g., Bolden, 2011; Coleman, 2011; Collinson & Collinson, 2009; Storey, 2007) have found both focused and distributed leadership co-existing in different patterns and degrees within the organization. This hybrid or blended presence of

leadership patterns present the “apparent dichotomies between heroic and post-heroic perspectives [...] as mutually-compatible and equally-needed for leadership effectiveness” (Collinson & Collinson, 2009, p.9). Collinson and Collinson (2009) argue that it might be in the opposites of direction (e.g., focused leadership) and delegation (e.g., distributed leadership) where one might find the basis of effective leadership. The hybridity of leadership is a recent notion which Gronn (2008) has described as “rudimentary theoretical inferences” that could constitute the future of distributed leadership. It is an invitation to think differently about leadership, and to think beyond the individual unit of analysis which is predominant in leadership studies, without alienating our idea of individual leadership.

While this study may encourage interesting theoretical discussions of the emerging notion of the leadership hybridity, I intend to further situate leadership within a context for a fuller and embedded understanding. Research suggests that a more holistic perspective of leadership calls for careful consideration of the social and cultural context in which leadership happens (Alvesson, 2011; Uhl-bien & Ospino, 2012). Alvesson (2011), expands on this argument:

Leadership calls for not just a theoretical definition but a close consideration of what a particular group means by ‘leadership’ and how it relates to ‘leaders’ and ‘leadership.’ For different groups ‘leadership’ has different meanings and value [...]. Organizational culture, [...] or a broader occupational/industrial/societal sector, [and] societal cultures are connected with and put imprints on organizational conditions (Jones, 2005) and ideals and standards for leadership (p. 152).

When organizational members are seen as essentially human beings that are social and communal (Mangaliso, 2001), one could also argue that ‘leadership as ideology, discourse, institutionalized practice’ is very much a societal phenomenon (Alvesson, 2011, p. 160).

However, the enduring leadership perspective, whereby leadership is presented as an objective thing done by ‘leaders’ to ‘followers’ within a contextual void, is problematic (Wilson, 2016). Some authors even argue that our conventional understanding of organizational leadership as heroic stems from unchallenged individualistic and essentialist cultural assumptions from the West (Alvesson, 2011; Mangaliso, 2001; Muchiri, 2011; Sinclair, 2007; Wilson, 2016). This argument calls for the need for leadership research in non-Western contexts to examine the socio-cultural influences or values in determining leadership emergence, development, and effectiveness (Bolden & Kirk, 2009; Muchiri, 2011; Uhl-bien & Ospino, 2012). The current study is situated in the macro-societal context of sub-Saharan Africa, and the organizational context of small business growth.

### **Leadership Situated in the Sub-Sahara African Context**

Second, this study also directs our attention to the context of small business growth. With literature emphasizing the importance of leadership to organizational effectiveness and success (Avolio, 2003; Bass, 2007; Hernez-Broome & Hughes, 2004), Gordon and Yukl (2004) stress the need to better understand what kind of leadership is particularly useful to the contemporary and turbulent environment of new small businesses that are continually growing, transitioning, and emerging. Small business growth presents tensions that necessitate changes in leadership (Lichtenstein & Plowman, 2009). As a small business grows into a new configuration (i.e. what complexity scholars refer to as emergence), often in a fast-paced, organic, and chaotic fashion (Cope et al., 2011), leadership needs to be distributed throughout the organization rather than being focused only in a specific individual such as founding CEO (Lichtenstein & Plowman, 2009). While attention has been mostly on the leadership of the founding CEO, there is evidence



that both the founding CEO and the entrepreneurial team contribute to small business growth and success, which supports the hybridity argument.

Beaver (2003) describes founders as exceptional individuals with high levels of influence. At the inception stage of the business, it is often the founding CEO who sets a compelling vision that usually stems from his or her creative energy. The founding member/s play multiple roles simultaneously, and organizational members saw the CEO as the heroic leader holding the business together. Ensley et al. (2006) present evidence on how empowering leadership styles of the CEO (such as transformational leadership) are essential for leading new ventures to growth and success. Other studies stress that, due to the need for clear goals and direction at the beginning of a business, there is a need for transactional and directive leadership (e.g., Arham, 2014; Hashim, Ahmed & Zakaria, 2012; Yang, 2008 ). Regardless of the chosen leadership style, research suggests that the effectiveness of individual leadership contributes to small business growth.

From a distributed perspective, the rise in studies focused on entrepreneurial teams emphasizes the importance of the collective talent and skills of the executive or top management team in business success (Cope et al., 2011; Ensley et al., 2003; Reich, 1987). These findings suggest that it is not only the efforts of the solo founder that lead to small business survival and success — the emergence of the post-heroic leadership paradigm, which suggests that leadership is a group practice that works through and within relationships, rather than only through individual action (Bennett et al., 2003; Gronn, 2000; 2002; Spillane, 2003) support these results. Distributed leadership, for example, has been found to contribute to small business growth (Cope et al., 2011). As the business grows in complexity and size, founding entrepreneurs face with the dilemma of protecting their business (which might result in the enactment of focused or

individual leadership) or letting go of control because it becomes increasingly unfeasible for them to continue playing all leadership roles simultaneously. Choosing to distribute business responsibilities can be guided through the notion of a more distributed leadership enactment (Cope et al., 2011). However, one should note that a distributed view of leadership does not deny the importance of the founding CEO.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Research consistently suggests that effective leadership contributes to the survival and success of small businesses. An ongoing debate continues as to whether it is the solo efforts of the founding hero or the collective talent, energy, and commitment of many leaders that lead to this success (e.g., Cope et al., 2011; Reich 1987). In the current study, this debate frame through the dichotomous frame of focused/ individual leadership and distributed leadership. While there is some empirical support for both focused leadership (e.g., Ahmed & Zakaria, 2012; Arham, 2014; Hashim; Yang, 2008) and leadership distributed or shared amongst entrepreneurial teams (e.g., Cope et al., 2011; Ensley, Person & Pearce, 2003) contributing to small business growth, not a lot is known about the harmony between these seemingly opposing approaches. It is also unclear how the interaction between the ‘heroic’ CEO and entrepreneurial team occurs (Cope et al., 2011), neither do we know how both approaches together can grow and evolve a small business in a sub-Saharan African context with unique cultural dynamics.

While individual leadership studies abound, distributed leadership studies remain underexplored, and even less so in small businesses situated in South Africa where culture could influence leadership enactment. Very recent insights on hybrid or blended leadership come from unintended findings from a handful of studies in the education sector (e.g., Coleman, 2011; Collinson & Collinson, 2009; Storey, 2007). These recent discoveries require further empirical

exploration. Moreover, the lack of contextualization remains a longstanding issue in leadership studies. Leadership seen through relational and constructionist perspectives, the socialization and culture within the context that leadership is happening cannot be divorced from its meaning. Following this line of thinking, we can assume that the culture of Ubuntu in South Africa mediates the interaction between focused and distributed leadership.

### **Purpose Statement and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study will be to distill the enactment of both focused and distributed leadership behaviors that contribute to the success of a growing small business in South Africa and explore the influence of culture. The study seeks to build a hybrid framework that appropriates leadership in the context of a small and fast-growing business in South Africa.

The primary research question driving this study is:

1. How is leadership focused and distributed in the fast-growing small business?

This question recognizes the relational nature of leadership processes from both an individual and group quality. From an individual leadership perspective, the focus will be on exploring enacted leadership styles and how the culture of the organization and aggressive business growth influences the enactment of these styles. From a distributed leadership perspective, the study will explore how spontaneous collaboration, intuitive working relations, and institutionalized leadership practices take place, which forms part of the concerted action of distributed leadership (Gronn, 2002). The secondary questions focus on the emergent nature of leadership within a changing context of emerging/growing small business and culture:

2. How does culture influence the hybridity of leadership enacted in the small business?
3. How are individual leaders changed during the shifts between focused and distributed leadership?

## **Significance of the Study**

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are argued to be the backbone of many countries and the cornerstones of communities worldwide (Former US President Obama speech in Seattle, 2010; SA President Ramaphosa South African Broadcasting Corporation Interview, 2016). They contribute significantly to innovation, job creation, and inclusive economic growth and development (Fuller, 2003; Rogerson, 1999; OECD, 2017; World Bank, 2000). SMEs have also contributed to the alleviation of poverty, particularly in emerging economies. In South Africa alone, SMEs account for roughly 37% of the gross domestic product (SATSA, 2017). While unemployment rates rise from 25% to 27% as the formal sector continues to shed jobs (OECD, 2017), SMEs contribute about 60% of jobs nationwide (National Treasury Research, 2012). With the economy heavily relying on thriving SMEs, supporting their survival and growth has become a national priority in South Africa (National Small Business Act, 1996; 2003). While there is a general rise in startup activity, the failure rate of SMEs in South Africa is relatively high compared to other emerging economies in Africa (OECD, 2017). Many have cited the lack and neglect of leadership and management skills as an underlying inhibitor to growth and success (Beaver, 2003; Clover & Darroch, 2005; Lekhanya, 2015; Perry, 2001).

A study that explores how focused and distributed leadership approaches can work together to achieve success in growing small businesses is significant for several reasons. First, researchers have often studied individual leadership, with distributed leadership replacing the idea of a single heroic leader. Seeking harmony between these opposing leadership approaches creates a more holistic understanding of the leadership construct. The rise in studies highlighting the need for post-heroic leadership has opened possibilities for new definitions of leadership, including the birth of hybrid leadership (Gronn, 2009), which has been shown to reveal and

recognize other units of analysis in leadership beyond the single actor. Secondly, the dynamic of small business growth provides a conducive context to situate hybrid leadership. A distillation of the different leadership patterns that occur during growth could help emerging small business leaders know which behaviors are effective as the business dynamically evolves. Third, knowledge of hybrid leadership can improve decision-making regarding building an executive leadership team. The study, therefore, has implications for leadership recruitment and development practices and policies for small businesses. The notion of distributing leadership, therefore, allows for founders to lead as a collective to grow the business by de-monopolizing leadership. As a newer and perhaps more empowering concept, distributed leadership seems more appealing because it challenges traditional leaders to share power with ‘followers’ who at times could also participate in leadership. In essence, it shifts leadership from an individualistic role to an inclusive practice, where more people can be heroes (Spillane, 2004).

### **Limitations and Assumptions of the Study**

There are limitations to observe and assumptions made in the case study. First, based on a handful of hybrid leadership studies in the education sector, and the evidence of both founding CEOs and entrepreneurial teams in SMEs, the study makes a bold assumption that both individual and distributed leadership is present in the current small business under investigation. This assertion could be wrong. However, the flexibility of a qualitative research design allows for emergence from the study context to change the study direction. Second, due to only analyzing one case organization in South Africa, there is limited generalizability of the findings within the scope of SMEs, and perhaps within South Africa. The study can only make an analytical generalization of the constructs studied about the hybridity of leadership phenomenon. Third, studies of leadership in Africa (e.g., Bolden & Kirk, 2009) make an argument for an

Afrocentric perspective on leadership. The study assumes that this perspective is present in the current case based on face value preliminary observations when selecting the instrumental case to best explore the phenomena under investigation. Regardless of whether Afrocentrism is present, the study is more interested in how participants distinctly describe their culture and how that reflects in the leadership enacted. Fourth, this study also assumes that there are leadership behaviors that are unique to South African organizations and societies, and will play a prominent role in any hybrid leadership model that attempts to understand leadership in the African context. The framework is applied contextually.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Leadership:* A form of social influence.

*Heroic leadership:* A traditional leader centric paradigm where leadership resides in a few individual leaders who are responsible for leading.

*Post-heroic leadership:* A paradigm of leadership approaches that emphasize leadership as shared and distributed, relational, and creating an outcome of collective learning.

*Focused/individual leadership:* A traditional leadership perspective focused on leadership being a role played by a single, heroic actor which falls within the heroic leadership paradigm.

*Distributed Leadership:* A post-heroic leadership perspective focused on collective achievement, social networks, and the importance of teamwork and shared influence.

*Leadership Hybridity:* An emerging paradigm to leadership for mixed leadership patterns between focused and distributed leadership to coexist.

*Afrocentrism:* Also Afrocentricity or Africology. A broad term referring to a cultural worldview that reflect African values, history, and evolution.

## **Summary**

Effective leadership contributes to successfully sustaining and growing small businesses. As small businesses evolve and grow, they increasingly stimulate the economy. This growth is particularly true for the South African economy. There is a lack of knowledge on how leadership contributes to small businesses growth and general neglect of empirical explorations of effective leadership models in context. While we understand that leadership exists to help the organization succeed, we need to understand further what kind of leadership is suited to assisting small businesses to thrive. This is measured, in this case, through handling the complexity and tension of business growth.

Allowing hybrid leadership to guide the study casts a capacious net to research what effective leadership looks like. It includes the exploration of different forms of leadership patterns. Both individual leaders and collective leadership exist independently and interdependently in small businesses. This study seeks to shed light on how individual and collective leadership can coexist. The study will explore how the CEO, the executive team, and work teams can lead interdependently with each other to achieve and manage growth, and attempt to understand the process of distributing and focusing access to leadership.

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

### **Introduction**

The three sections in this chapter have an overarching purpose to provide background of what we already know about focused leadership and distributed leadership, as well as to situate this knowledge within the context of small business and Southern Africa. Section A includes a discussion about the changing and elusive nature of leadership through changing times. It includes an exploration of the accustomed, leader-centric paradigm, the post-heroic leadership paradigm, and recent developments in the hybridity of leadership. Section B takes a deep dive into the study of leadership and culture with a particular focus on the context of sub-Saharan Africa, where the proposed study is situated. Section C looks at the unique context of small and medium-sized enterprises, with a focus on dynamic business growth as a key organizational performance indicator that leadership is influencing. In line with heroic and post-heroic leadership shifts, the chapter discusses the individual CEO as the hero, the entrepreneurial team as the hero, and concludes with a discussion on the leadership of emergence in small businesses.

### **Section A: Leadership Through Shifting Paradigms**

The public has long been captivated by the idea of leadership (Northouse, 2015). Interest in leadership reaches back at least two thousand years and has grown quite significantly over this last century (Wilson, 2016). Regardless of the time spent on understanding leadership, it still remains an elusive, and at times contested concept (Grint, 2005). In agreement, Meindl and colleagues state that:

It has become apparent that, after years of trying, we have been unable to generate an understanding of leadership that is both intellectually compelling and emotionally satisfying. The concept of leadership remains elusive and enigmatic. (Meindl et al., 1985, p. 78).



The elusive nature of leadership is further highlighted when attempting to unpack what good or effective leadership looks like in today's tumultuous world (Bolden, 2009). This suggests that our understanding of effective leadership is largely influenced by the changing world of work (Grint & Jackson, 2010), and currently, the nature of the 21st century work and social life (Uhl-bien & Arena, 2016), which has been described as increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (Stiehm & Townsend, 2006) or 'permanent white waters' (Vaill, 1996). The concept of 'permanent white waters' describes today's social and organizational life as a) full of surprises, b) featuring costly consequences, c) 'messy', d) chaotic, and e) producing novel and recurrent problems. Comparably, Grint (2005) refers to these problems as 'wicked'. Wicked problems are produced when there is increasing uncertainty about the solutions to the problems. They can be defined as "more complex, rather than just complicated – that is, they cannot be removed from their environment, solved, and returned without affecting the environment. Moreover, there is no clear relationship between cause and effect. Such problems are often intractable." (Grint, 2005, p. 14). Furthermore, many aspects of our societal and organizational lives have happened at a large and fast scale (Friedman, 2005; Stiehm & Townsend, 2002; Vaill, 1996). In *The world is flat*, Friedman (2005) discusses some of these recent changes, which included the rise of knowledge power; advances in technology such as the Internet, globalization, techno-enabled workflows; and different nations becoming dominant in the economy in a world that is becoming more interconnected. Consistent with Friedman's (2005) description, Vicere (2002) asserts that a networked economy has emerged, requiring an economy that is now built on relationships and not control. Over the last two decades, these changes have become the 'new normal', yet still create a lot of confusion, frustration, and stress for the general population (Vaill, 1996). This is especially true for business leaders who are paid higher salaries to come up

with the innovative solutions and raise shareholder value (Mintzberg et al, 2002; Sinclair, 2007; Vaill, 1996).

Because leadership cannot occur outside of context (Bolden & Kirk, 2009; Day, 2001; Grint, 2005; Grint & Jackson, 2010), this new era of change has implications on how leadership is conceived and practiced (Wilson, 2016). Grint (2005) and Grint and Jackson (2010) suggest that wicked problems require a kind of leader that can be comfortable with not knowing, and can engage and ask questions through a more collaborative, ongoing process. Vaill (1996) argues that today's complex, interdependent, and unstable systems require continual imaginative and creative initiatives and responses by *all* those living and working in them. The novel problems emerging in a new context calls to question the effectiveness of leadership and leadership development practices that are applied today (Grint, 2015; Day, 2000; Mintzberg, 2006; 2004; Vaill, 1996). However, while there may not be complete agreement on what effective leadership is, the value of leadership appreciates with time (Wilson, 2016). While these discussions continue, the inability to completely define leadership has not diminished the call for more effective leadership (Bolden et al., 2008). More so, it is seen as the answer to most organizational problems (Currie, Boyett and Suhomlinova, 2005). Leadership is often viewed as crucial to overcoming challenges facing organizations and societies at large (Bass, 1985; Kotter, 1996; Kouzes & Posner, 2007; Northouse, 2007; Yukl, 2000). Furthermore, leadership seems to play a role in creating better futures (Day, 2001). This chapter reviews how the changing work environment necessitates changes in what is deemed as effective leadership.

### **The Accustomed Leader-centric Paradigm.**

A few influential theories which collectively fall within the heroic leadership paradigm have shaped our accustomed understanding of leadership even today (Wilson, 2016). Within this

paradigm, leadership is something done by leaders to followers (Bolden, 2009). And at the core of this paradigm is the assumption that leadership is the property of an individual leader who is often seen as a hero and excels through innate traits, behaviors, and skills.

**Trait approaches.** During the mid 21st century, the starting point for understanding leadership was the great man theory, which positioned leaders (who were usually male) as being born with exceptional characteristics or traits (Northouse, 2015). The trait approach sought to find what distinguished great leaders in the social, political, and military sphere from the rest (i.e. the followers; Bass, 1990). After 124 studies, Stogdill (1948) found that an average individual in a leadership role differed in intelligence, alertness, insight, responsibility, initiative, persistence, self-confidence, and sociability to an average group member. He also found that the effectiveness of great leaders who possess these traits can be affected by what the situation required (Northouse, 2015). This study was followed by others such as Mann (1959) and Lord et al. (1986), who focused on a masculine and dominant personality as a differentiating factor. Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) believed that leadership traits could be innate or learnt, and Zaccaro (2002) shined a light on the importance of social intelligence. A review of literature on trait studies found that the list of traits from various researchers is broad with very little convergence. Table A below adapted from French & Raven (1962) is illustrative of this point.

**Style and behavioral approaches.** The style and behavior approaches are similar to the trait approach in that they are also leader centric, but differ by focusing on how the leader behaves rather than on underlying characteristics and traits. McGregor's (1960; 1973) seminal works on Theory X and Y pioneered interest that led to a wave of leadership styles. McGregor (1973) believed that leaders take fundamental views about humans in organizations.

Table 1

Leadership Traits and Characteristics

Stogdill (1948)	Mann (1959)	Stogdill (1974)	Lord, DeVader, & Alliger (1986)	Kirkpatrick & Locke (1991)	Zaccaro, Kemp, & Bader (2004)
<i>Intelligence</i> <i>Alertness</i> <i>Insight</i> <i>Responsibility</i> <i>Initiative</i> <i>Persistence</i> <i>Self-confidence</i> <i>Sociability</i>	<i>Intelligence</i> <i>Masculinity</i> <i>Adjustment</i> <i>Dominance</i> <i>Extroversion</i> <i>Conservatism</i>	<i>Achievement</i> <i>Persistence</i> <i>Insight</i> <i>Initiative</i> <i>Self-confidence</i> <i>Responsibility</i> <i>Cooperativeness</i> <i>Tolerance</i> <i>Influence</i> <i>Sociability</i>	<i>Intelligence</i> <i>Masculinity</i> <i>Dominance</i>	<i>Drive</i> <i>Motivation</i> <i>Integrity</i> <i>Confidence</i> <i>Cognitive ability</i> <i>Task</i> <i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Cognitive abilities</i> <i>Extroversion</i> <i>Conscientiousness</i> <i>Emotional stability</i> <i>Openness</i> <i>Agreeableness</i> <i>Motivation</i> <i>Social intelligence</i> <i>Self-monitoring</i> <i>Emotional intelligence</i> <i>Problem solving</i>

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Theory X sees followers as resistant to being led, needing to be controlled, and punished. Theory Y sees followers as needing to be empowered and provided with enough support for them to succeed on their own. The latter is a more positive assumption about humans and the leader is more participatory in style, while the former is rather pessimistic and negative, and the leader is more autocratic or directive in style. Many other leadership theories differentiate between leaders that focus on the tasks, production, and structure, and those who focus on the people, relationships, and teams. Task behaviors contribute to accomplishing goals by providing

structure and relationship behaviors by helping followers work effectively as a team. The leadership grid is widely representative of how this approach is used by managers in an organizational setting. According to this model, effective leadership is seen as being able to focus on both tasks and people in a complementary way. An updated version of this model is depicted in Figure A below. According to Northouse (2015), the style approach expands our understanding of leadership beyond personality and traits by exploring what leaders actually do in a given situation. However, it remains unclear what universal style is applicable to all situations, and the link between style and performance remains inconclusive (Bryman, 1992; Yukl, 1994).

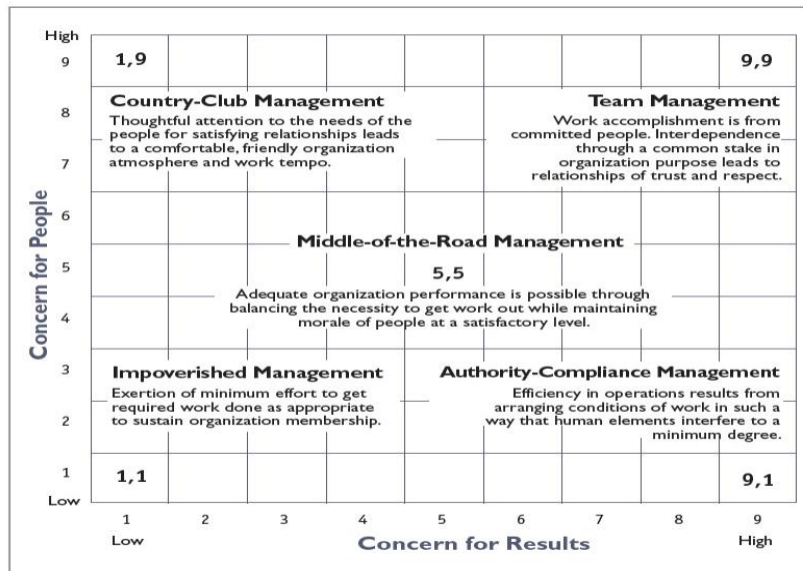


Figure 1. The leadership grid. Reprinted from “Leadership: Theory and practice” by Northouse (2009). Copyright 2010 by Sage Publications Inc. Used with permission.

**Situational and contingency approaches.** The emergence of situational and contingency approaches re-emphasized that leadership styles and behaviors are largely influenced by the situation or context in which it lies. The main premise of situational theories is that different situations necessitate different kinds of leadership. Fiedler’s (1964, 1967) contingency model, for

example, proposed that there is no single best way to lead. Fiedler was primarily concerned with matching styles to situations. The factors of a situation, according to him, included leader-member relations, task structure, and position power, and, similar to the style theories, Fiedler (1967) differentiated between task and relationship oriented leaders. Favorable situations are those with good leader-member relations, well-defined tasks, and strong positional power. Leaders who are task-oriented are more effective in both very favorable and less favorable situations, and those who are relationship-oriented are effective in moderately favorable situations (Northouse, 2015). In a similar vein, Hersey and Blanchard (1969, 1977, 1988) proposed that situational leadership differed from Fiedler by proposing that a leader could temper their style based on the competence and commitment of their followers. As competence and commitment matured, they argue, the leader shifts his style from directive to one of coaching, supporting, and delegating. The figure below depicts the four different leadership styles (S) against the development level of the subordinates (D). When development levels are high (i.e. subordinates are high in competence and commitment), the leader is most effective when applying delegating and supporting styles. When development levels are low, the leader is most effective when applying more directing and coaching styles of leadership. Situational leadership is considered practical and intuitively sensible. It also emphasizes the need for the leader to be flexible to different situations in order to be effective (Northouse, 2015).

**New leadership approaches.** The *new leadership* approaches seem to signal a more recent way of conceptualizing leadership, which gives more attention to the charismatic and affective elements of the leader (Northouse, 2015). The most recognized models within this approach are transformational leadership (Bass, 1985), charismatic leadership (Conger, 1989), and visionary leadership (Wesley, 1989). The new leadership approaches continue to center on

the role of the leader (often assumed to be a manager) and not on the influence process (Parry & Bryman, 2006). Central to new leadership approaches is the emphasis on vision, the charisma of the leader to motivate subordinates, and the idea of leaders as instruments of change (Harrison & Leitch, 1994).

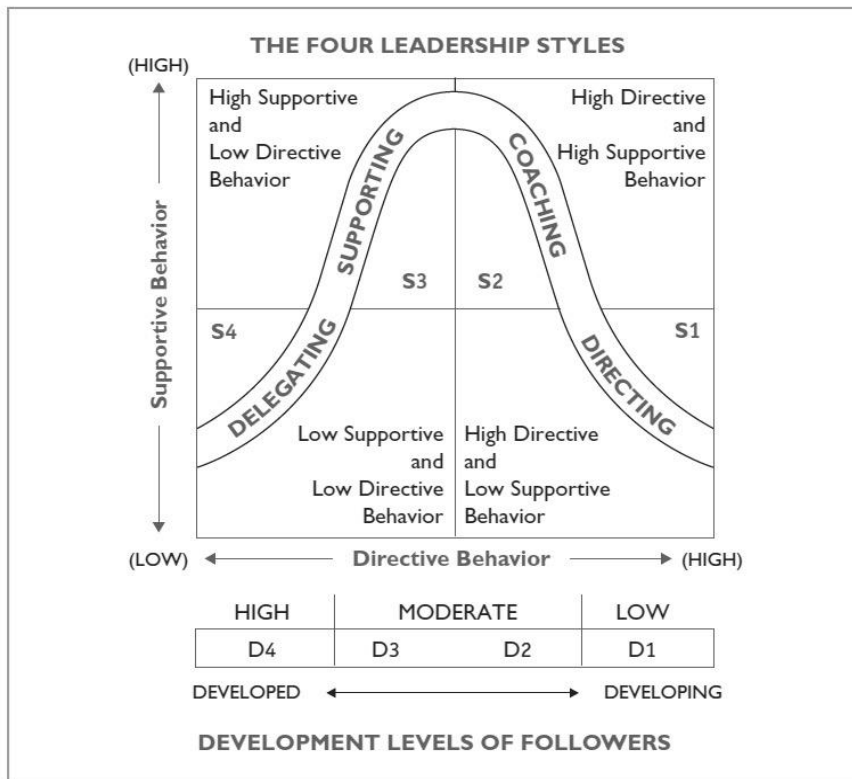


Figure 2. The situational leadership model by Hersey and Blanchard (1969, 1977, 1988), adapted by Northouse (2009). Reprinted from “Leadership: Theory and practice” by Northouse (2009). Copyright 2010 by Sage Publications Inc. Used with permission.

New leadership approaches are founded on more an optimistic view of followers that want to be empowered. Within this mold, leadership is about how to inspire voluntary followership and influence people to achieve personal and organizational goals (Robbins and Coulter, 2005; Northouse, 2015).

The most popular new leadership model is transformational leadership. It emerged out of

a work environment that contained employees that needed to be inspired and empowered during times of uncertainty (Northouse, 2015). He further notes that:

Transformational leadership is a process that changes and transforms people. It is concerned with emotions, values, ethics, standards, and long-term goals. It includes assessing followers' motives, satisfying their needs, and treating them as full human beings (p. 171).

In conceptualizing transformational leadership, Burns (1978) contrasts between transactional and transformational leadership. Transactional leaders lead through social exchange. For example, transactional business leaders offer financial rewards for productivity or deny rewards for lack of productivity. Transformational leaders, on the other hand, stimulate and empower leaders to achieve their own extraordinary goals (Bass & Riggio, 2005).

Transactional and transformational leadership can be conceived through the full range of leadership factors model (Bass, 1985, 1990; Bass & Avolio, 1993, 1994, cited in Northouse (2015). This model includes factors of transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire leadership and is depicted in Table B below. From this model, transformational leadership includes four factors. First, *idealized influence* or *charisma* describes leaders who are strong role models for their followers through a strong ethical code, a compelling vision, building trust, and invite voluntary followership through mesmerizing qualities. Second, transformational leaders have *inspiration motivation* through great communication of a shared vision and of expectations from followers. The third factor, *intellectual stimulation*, describes leaders who encourage innovation and creativity in their followers and provides room for them to challenge the status quo. The fourth factor of transformational leadership is *individualized consideration*. Transformational leaders create a supportive climate that fosters self-actualization for followers.



In a way, transformational leaders empower followers to become leaders (Bass & Riggio, 2005). In contrast, transactional leadership is explained by factors 5 and 6, which center on leaders who rely on *contingent rewards*, and *management by exception*, respectively.

Table 2

Leadership Factors

Transformational Leadership	Transactional Leadership	Laissez-Faire Leadership
Factor 1 Idealized influence Charisma	Factor 5 Contingent reward Constructive transactions	Factor 7 Laissez-faire Nontransactional
Factor 2 Inspirational motivation	Factor 6 Management-by-exception Active and passive Corrective transactions	
Factor 3 Intellectual stimulation		
Factor 4 Individualized consideration		

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This type of leader focuses on gaining agreement on what needs to be done and the reward thereof. Subsequent to this agreement, the transactional leader will monitor deviation from the agreement and use corrective criticism and feedback. Derived from the French phrase *laissez-faire*, which means *hands off*, the final factor simple describes the absence of leadership.

Literature on the accustomed, heroic perspective, suggests that leadership can be described as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (Northouse, 2004, p. 3). Yukl (2006) similarly proposes that:

Most definitions of leadership reflect the assumption that it involves a social influence process whereby intentional influence is exerted by one person over other people to guide, structure, and facilitate activities and relationships in a group or organization (p. 3).

Traditional views of leadership center on heroic actions exercised by a few individuals at the top with institutionalized authority and power to provide answers to problems and control situations (Fletcher, 2004; Grint, 2005, Sinclair, 2007; Wilson, 2016). Most of these approaches are a variant of Carlyle’s ‘Great Man Theory’ in the 1841 that was based on the premise that leadership is something done by individuals with particular traits that encourage others to follow them (Collinson, 2011; Wilson, 2016). The leader-centric paradigm also includes newer theories, such as transformational and charismatic leadership, that follow more progressive ways of inspiring followership than those of earlier theories (Wilson, 2016). At the origins of leadership science, followers are seen as passive and helpless at the leadership of great men, and while the move to ‘transformational leadership’ (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985) in the 1980s and 1990s went some way to recognize the need to engage followers on their needs, its emphasis on vision and charisma possibly did more to reinforce than to challenge the image of the heroic leader (Yulk, 1999).

While this approach may serve its purpose, the concern with the leader-centric paradigm is that it proves an incomplete picture of leadership when it centers on leaders being a few individuals (who are often male and white) in managerial positions (Collinson, 2010; Crevani et

al., 2007; Sinclair, 2007; Wilson, 2016). Another critique of traditional heroic leadership is the implicit (and sometimes explicit) disempowerment of followers who are seen as passively responding to being led (Collinson, 2010; Fletcher, 2004; Sinclair, 2007; Wilson, 2016). Furthermore, today's complex and ambiguous working environment has proven difficult to predict, control and manage (Grint, 2005; Petrie, 2012; Vaill, 1996; Vicere, 2002). In an interconnected and knowledge intensive world that is in continual flux (Friedman, 2005; Vicere, 2002), there is rising uncertainty about the solutions to the problems (Grint, 2005; Kegan, 1994; Petrie, 2012), and hero leaders alone cannot provide readily available solutions (Crevani et al., 2007; Fletcher, 2004; Grint, 2005; Petrie, 2014; Senge, 1990). Mintzberg (2006) further argued that heroic leadership has created a wedge of disconnection in the workplace that makes leadership ineffective in a world that demand more connectedness and engagement. From the literature reviewed, it appears that the realities of the 21st century working environment have exhausted the reliance on conventional leadership approaches that we are accustomed to (Clarke, 2013; Higgs, 2003; Uhl-Bien, Marion & McKelvey, 2007) and have led to an exploration of more powerful ways of thinking about and doing leadership. This has led to approaches that center on leadership being more participatory, team-based, and inclusive, and have collectively been described as the post-heroic paradigm.

### **The Emerging, Post-heroic Leadership Paradigm.**

The emergence of the post-heroic notions of leadership offers a new direction to conceptualizing leadership. Critical leadership studies, the constructivist or interpretative scholars, and the relational leadership movement have pioneered the emergence of this paradigm. Critical scholars highlight the importance of power and gender in leadership (Collinson, 2011; Fletcher, 2004; Sinclair, 2007). They often expose the inherent power dynamics in leadership

that leadership studies often overlook or take for granted (Wilson, 2016). Research and theory on leadership tends to be void of the power discourse that is inherent in leading others (Sinclair, 2007). Power discourse brings to the surface issues of abuse of power, ethics and morals, and other power related dynamics (Collinson, 2015; Wilson, 2016). Fletcher (2004) argues that in addition to power, leadership appears ungendered, which in part implies that women can't lead, as the idea of a great leader is still plagued by the ancient 'great man' views of leaders being male (Fletcher, 2004; Sinclair, 2007). Wilson (2016) further includes the absence of culture and race, where leadership largely remains a western and white concept. The constructionist school of thought deviates from the traditional leader centric paradigm, by positioning leadership as a co-constructed process (Arena & Uhl-bien, 2016; Grint, 2005; Grint & Jackson, 2010; Kegan & Lahey, 2001). In this view, leadership does not exist as a sterile concept but as something that affects both how social systems operate and, as a result, the lives of people within them (Bolden, 2008). Therefore, from a constructivist perspective, what we define as leadership cannot be divorced from how it is situated. Grint (2005) notes that:

Leadership involves the social construction of the context that both legitimates a particular form of action and constitutes the world in the process.[...] The reintroduction of the proactive role of leadership in the construction of context, not in the sense that individual leaders are independent agents, able to manipulate the world at will, as in Carlyle's 'Great Man' theory, but in the sense that the context is not independent of human agency, and cannot be objectively assessed in a scientific form (p. 147).

The relational leadership scholars offer a more inclusive approach to leadership that recognizes the contribution of a wide range of actors as well as contextual and systemic factors in shaping leadership practice (Bolden, 2008). This approach is twofold. The first views relationship-based

leadership as centered on individuals (e.g. leaders and followers) and their perceptions, intentions, behaviors, personalities, expectations, and evaluations relative to their relationships with one another. The second constitutes leadership as a new phenomenon that is socially constructed and distributed, not as accumulated and stored by individuals, but as ongoing multiple constructions made in meso spaces between individuals and an active, open, and complex social system (Uhl-bien, 2006). The view seems to overlap with the constructionist perspective described by Grint (2005).

The post-heroic paradigm is supported by other areas of studies that include but are not limited to human relations and organizations as social systems. The social exchange theory (e.g. Festinger, 1954), law of the situation (Follet, 1924), management by objective (Drucker, 1954), and participatory goal setting theory are a few influential theories. More are outlined in Table B below. Work on interpersonal dynamics in the workplace (Mayo, 1933) suggested that workers did not only need a command and control perspective in order to perform, but needed to be motivated from a deeper understanding than their fundamental human needs. The social exchange theory (Festinger, 1954; Homans, 1958; Thibaut & Kelly, 1959) is based on the premise that influence processes are embedded in social interactions which spread beyond appointed leaders (Pearce & Conger, 2003). The concept of law of the situation proposed that, rather than simply following the formal leader in all situations, one should follow the lead of the person with the most knowledge regarding the situation at hand (Pearce & Conger, 2012). Management by Objectives and Participatory Goal Setting theory put forth that organizations are more effective when both managers and subordinates work together to co-create and meet the objective (Drucker 1954). This research has been linked to participatory goal setting, where subordinates take part in defining their objectives.

More recent contributions within the post heroic leadership paradigm can also be found in distributed leadership (Gronn, 2002), engaged management (Mintzberg, Simons, Basu, 2002; Mintzberg, 2006), shared leadership (Pearce and Conger, 2003), participatory leadership (Bass, 1990), servant leadership (Greenleaf, 2004; Hale and Fields, 2007), quiet leadership (Collins, 2001; Rock, 2007), relational leadership (Arena & Uhl-bien; 2016), collaborative leadership (Jameson, 2007), community leadership (Ricketts and Ladewig, 2008), and co-leadership (Alvarez and Svejenova, 2005; Sally, 2002). Post-heroic leadership scholars have therefore (re)conceptualized leadership as: a) a set of shared practices that can be performed by all people at all levels (Collinson & Tourish, 2015; Fletcher, 2004; Sinclair, 2007); b) a participatory, multi-directional, and relational process (Arena & Uhl-bien, 2016; Uhl-bien, 2006) and c) an ongoing meaning making process (Grant & Jackson, 2015; Grint, 2005). A few notable theories within this paradigm are discussed below.

**Quiet and servant leadership.** A sharp turn from the accustomed superhuman leader is the emergence of quiet and servant leadership, which contrast the dramatic, larger-than-life effects of the transformational leader. Servant leadership is based on the premise that:

Becoming a servant-leader begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve [...] then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. He or she is sharply different from the person who is leader first, perhaps because [they lack] the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions (Greenleaf, 2004, p. 6).

This approach has become popular within religious, community, and non-profit organisations, but has had limited impact on the commercial sector (Northouse, 2015). In a similar vein, quiet leadership has re-emerged to highlight the influence exerted by less visible leaders. As early as the 6th century, a Chinese philosopher Tao wrote,

A leader is best when people barely know he exists. Not so good when people obey and acclaim him. Worse when they despise him. But of a good leader, who talks little, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say, we did it ourselves. (Bolden, 2009, p. 40).

Building on this idea, Mintzberg (2004) argues that too much leadership is as problematic as too little leadership. He describes quiet leadership as:

about thoughtfulness rooted in experience. Words like wisdom, trust, dedication, and judgment apply. Leadership works because it is legitimate, meaning that it is an integral part of the organization and so has the respect of everyone there. Tomorrow is appreciated because yesterday is honored. That makes today a pleasure [...] Indeed, the best managing of all may well be silent. That way people can say, 'We did it ourselves.' Because we did. (Mintzberg, 1999, p. 63).

**Team leadership.** The study of leadership in organizational groups and teams began in the human relations movement on collaborative efforts at work, which opposed the individual efforts previously advocated by scientific management theorists (Northouse, 2015). Studies suggest that effective organizational teams contribute to greater productivity, a more effective use of resources, better decisions and problem solving, better-quality products and services, and greater innovation and creativity (Parker, 1990, cited in Northouse, 2015). This has been further highlighted through global studies that suggest that, as the 21<sup>st</sup> century progresses with increased rapidity and complexity, knowledge work is highly dependent on organizations' ability to lead highly functioning teams (Pearce & Conger, 2012; Porter & Beyerlein, 2000). The more traditional perspective on leadership in teams is centered on the individual leader skills, abilities, behaviors, and attributes (e.g., charisma) that are thought to directly positively influence team

processes and performance, and give little attention on the leadership that emerges and is drawn from the team (Day, Gronn, & Sales, 2004). Zaccaro and Klimoski (2002) notion of the interface between leadership and team processes suggest a multilevel nature of team leadership. The first level refers to when leadership processes influence team performance or how team processes influence leader effectiveness. The second level is when leadership and team processes are “inextricably integrated such that the boundaries of each set of processes become fairly indistinct” (Zaccaro & Klimoski, 2002, p. 6). Emerging from the latter is a more complex concept of team leadership capacity as an outcome (Day, Gronn, & Sales, 2004; 2006).

O’Conner and Quinn (2004) note that team leadership, viewed as the property of the whole system rather than that of an individual leader influencing the group, becomes a product of the connections or relationships among the parts. Creating a collective social identity of ‘we’ rather than ‘I’ allows for different forms of leadership to emerge, and creates additional possibilities for participating in leadership (Day, 2000). While the concept of leadership being distributed beyond a single individual may appear new, Gibbs (1958) stated more than half a century ago that “leadership is probably best conceived as a group quality, as a set of functions which must be carried out by the group” (p. 884). This type of leadership is largely influenced by the social context of organizations which is often “intense, dynamic, multifaceted, ambiguous, information-rich, and communication-dependent” (Day et al., 2006, p. 212). Acknowledging that team leadership can occur in various forms, the authors agree that there is the opportunity to better understand issues associated with how team leadership can exist but not completely replace the contributions of individual leaders in building overall capacity for leadership (Day et al., 2004). This issue is similar to that of hybridity, which will be discussed in greater length later.



**Shared leadership.** Another well recognized approach in the post-heroic paradigm is shared leadership. Pearce and Conger (2012) define shared leadership as “a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both” (p. 13). According to Pearce and Sims (2000):

When certain group characteristics (such as ability of group members, group size, maturity, and familiarity), task characteristics (such as urgency, complexity, and the need for creativity and interconnectivity), and environment characteristics (such as support systems and rewards) are adequately in place, a form of shared leadership is prone to arise. As the characteristics of the group, the task, and the environment vary, so may the form of shared leadership change from situation to situation (p. 219).

Congruent to other post-heroic leadership approaches, shared leadership challenges the individual leader-centric perspective. It argues that this conventional approach focuses excessively on top leaders and says little about informal leadership or larger situational factors (Pearce & Conger, 2012). Shared leadership is a social process that requires its own competencies, distinct from vertical leader competencies, including: engaging in lateral influence as an expectation of performance; accepting responsibility for providing and responding to leadership (influence) from peers; and therefore developing skills as both leader and follower (Pearce & Sims, 2000). The three shifts represented in shared leadership include

- Leadership being distributed and interdependent;
- Leadership being embedded in social interactions that are less hierarchical in nature; and
- Leadership as mutual and collective learning that leads to shared understanding and positive action (Pearce & Conger, 2012).

Empirical studies have found that shared forms of leadership are positively associated with effectiveness amongst teams of undergraduate students (Avoilio, 1991). They are also apparently a more useful predictor of change management team effectiveness than those of appointed team leaders (Pearce & Sims, 2000), are a useful predictor of team dynamics and perceived effectiveness amongst virtual teams (Pearce, Yoo, and Alavi, 2012, cited in Pearce & Conger, 2012), and are a contributor to the effectiveness of entrepreneurial teams in small and emerging ventures (Ensley, Pearson, & Pearce, 2004). Moreso, Hooker and Csiksentmihyli (2012) suggest that “sharing leadership roles and responsibility has the effect of increasing the opportunities for flow, intrinsic motivation, and optimal experience among group members and for the group as a whole” (p. 220).

Pearce and Conger (2012) note that while this new direction of shared leadership is promising, there are the difficulties in applying it in organizational practice: First, while attempting to make this shift, organizations still turn to formal leaders to create less hierarchical organizations. Second, shared leadership tends to ‘disappear’ in organizational discourse. Perhaps this could be assigned to a lack of in language that recognizes ‘non-heroic’ actions as leadership actions. Third, organizations and career are still competitive spaces organized around the principles of individual achievements and meritocracy. People therefore tend to spend a great deal of time distinguishing their individual accomplishments from others. These paradoxes open new discussions on how to make systematic shifts in organizations and systems that want to share leadership.

**Distributed leadership.** Distributed leadership is considered one particular form of shared leadership theory that has become popular in recent years (Bolden, 2008). Gronn (2002, p. 7) describes it as “emergent work-related influence”. Bennett and colleagues (2003) add that

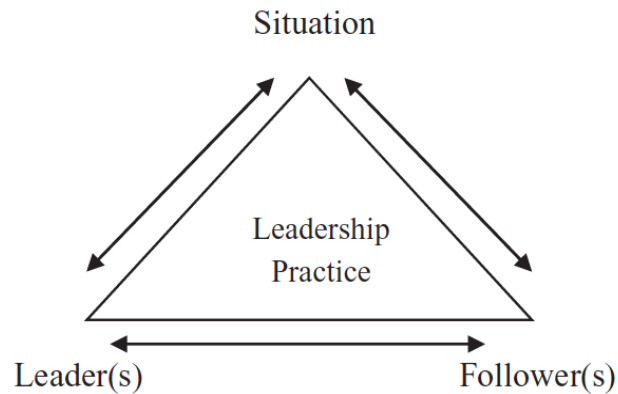
distributed leadership is not something ‘done’ by an individual ‘to’ others, or a set of individual actions through which people contribute to a group or organization ... [it] is a group activity that works through and within relationships, rather than individual action. (Bennett et al . 2003, p. 3). They further outline three important components of distributed leadership: First, that leadership is an emergent property of a group or network of interacting individuals. Second, that there is openness to the boundaries of leadership (i.e. who has a part to play both within and beyond the organization). Third, that varieties of leadership expertise are distributed across the many, not the few. Leadership from a distributed perspective is seen as fluid and emergent, rather than as a fixed phenomenon (Gronn 2000, p. 324). Gronn (2002) offers a new and multiple unit of analysis that spans beyond the individual, and focused approach. He further differentiates between distributed leadership as numerical action and as concertive action.

Numerical action is the most common understanding of distributed leadership in literature (Gronn, 2002). It refers to the sum of the attributed influence of an organization which is dispersed among some, many, or maybe all of the members. The numerical or multiple leadership opens the possibility that all organization members may be leaders at some stage. Concertive action on the other hand refers to a more complex and multiplicity of group action (Gronn, 2002). Gibbs (1954) also agrees with this holistic form of distributed leadership. Gronn (2002) adds that there are at least three forms of concertive action in the distribution of leadership; (a) spontaneous collaboration, (b) intuitive working relations, and (c) institutionalized practices. Spontaneous collaboration occurs through occasions in which two or more individuals who would not regularly work together pull together their resources to solve an emergent problem. An anticipated situation such as a crisis, or regular situation that varies in scope, complexity, and scale, could prompt spontaneous collaboration for the stretching of leadership to

occur (Spillane et al., 2006). These occasions provide opportunities for brief bursts of synergy, which may be the extent of the engagement or the trigger for ongoing collaboration (Gronn, 2002). Intuitive understandings are known to emerge over time when two or more organizational members rely on each other and develop a close working relationship (Gronn, 2002). In this instance, leadership occurs as a shared role between organizational members to capitalize on their opportunities for reliance on others (e.g. by balancing each other's skill gaps) or because they are constrained to do so (e.g. due to overlapping role responsibilities). Intuitive working relations are also comparable to intimate interpersonal relations (e.g., successful marriages and friendships), when two or more members act as a joint working unit within an implicit framework of understanding (Gronn, 2002). Lastly, institutionalized practices represent a form of distributed leadership that affects organizational structures and design. This refers to organizations creating enabling environments for distributed leadership to occur. Enduring organizational structures (such as committees and teams) are put in place to facilitate collaboration between individuals (Bolden, 2011).

Spillane et al. (2004; 2006) also makes notable contribution to our understanding of distributed leadership. And while there are many overlaps with Gronn (2002), Spillane's conception comes with an emphasis on leadership as a practice that includes three interacting components of the leader, follower, and situation. Spillane et al. (2004, p. 5) note that leadership is "stretched over the social and situational contexts" of the organization and also extend the notion to include material and cultural 'artefacts' (language, organizational systems, physical environment, etc.). This perspective does not discount the value of the individual leader in the leadership practice. The difference from the traditional perspective is that the leader role is fluid. The leader could sometimes be the follower, and the follower could sometimes be a leader both

participating in leadership as a shared practice (Gronn, 2000; 2002; 2008; 2009; Spillane et al., 2004).



*Figure 3.* Distributed leadership as a leadership practice created by the interaction between leaders, followers, situations. Reprinted from “Towards a theory of leadership practice: a distributed perspective”, by Spillane et al., *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 36(1), 3-34. Copyright 2004 Taylor and Francis Online. Reprinted with permission.

Spillane and colleagues state that distributing leadership is a result of

- collaborated distribution – where two or more individuals work together in time and place to execute the same leadership routine;
- collective distribution – where two or more individuals work separately but interdependently to enact a leadership routine; and
- coordinated distribution – where two or more individuals work in sequence in order to complete a leadership routine.

Spillane (2006) also captures the dimension of time to show the changing nature of leader-follower relationships over time and changing situational context.

Bolden's (2011) comprehensive review of distributed leadership in organizations also includes frameworks from Leithwood et al (2006) and Macbeth et al (2006). The table below shows points of convergence and the novelty of the four frameworks. A novel component of distributed leadership highlighted by Macbeth (2005) was the importance of trust and other affective elements of distribution. He further states:

Distribution clearly implies an ability to relinquish one's role as ultimate decision maker, trusting others to make the right decisions. A belief in the potential and authority of others, listening with the intent to understand, negotiation and persuasion are the levers that allow trust to gain a foothold and leadership to be assumed and shared (Macbeth, 2005, p. 355).

In a similar way, Leithwood et al. (2006) also propose shared values and beliefs that support the emergence of different forms of distributed leadership which they refer to as planful alignment, spontaneous alignment, spontaneous misalignment, and anarchic misalignment. For example, Leithwood et al. (2006) found that spontaneous alignment (which is congruent to Gronn's (2002) "spontaneous collaboration" and Spillane's (2005) notion of "parallel performance") is underlined by shared values and beliefs such as "gut feelings" as the basis for good decision making; trust in the motives of one's leadership colleagues; idealistic beliefs about the capacities of one's leadership colleagues; commitment to shared organizational goals; and cooperation rather than competition as the best way to promote productivity within the organization (p. 62). The majority of empirical distributed leadership studies are in the education sector, particularly exploring school and university leadership. Harris and Spillane contend that there is increasing evidence globally that distributed leadership makes a positive difference to organizational outcomes and student learning (2008). In agreement with these findings, Leithwood and

colleagues find that leadership practices including but not limited to distributed leadership practices (outlined in Table C) improve student achievement.

Table 3

### Distributed Leadership Frameworks

Gronn (2002)	Leithwood <i>et al.</i> (2006)	MacBeath <i>et al.</i> (2004)	Spillane (2006)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Spontaneous collaboration</i>: where groups of individuals with differing skills, knowledge and/or capabilities come together to complete a particular task/project and then disband.</li> <li>• <i>Intuitive working relations</i>: where two or more individuals develop close working relations over time until 'leadership is manifest in the shared role space encompassed by their relationship' (p. 657).</li> <li>• <i>Institutionalized practice</i>: where enduring organizational structures (e.g. committees and teams) are put in place to facilitate collaboration between individuals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Planful alignment</i>: where, following consultation, resources and responsibilities are deliberately distributed to those individuals and/or groups best placed to lead a particular function or task.</li> <li>• <i>Spontaneous alignment</i>: where leadership tasks and functions are distributed in an unplanned way yet, 'tacit and intuitive decisions about who should perform which leadership functions result in a fortuitous alignment of functions across leadership sources' (Harris <i>et al.</i>, 2007, p. 344).</li> <li>• <i>Spontaneous misalignment</i>: where, as above, leadership is distributed in an unplanned manner, yet in this case the outcome is less fortuitous and there is a misalignment of leadership activities.</li> <li>• <i>Anarchic misalignment</i>: where leaders pursue their own goals independently of one another and there is 'active rejection, on the part of some or many organizational leaders, of influence from others about what they should be doing in their own sphere of influence' (p. 344).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Formal distribution</i>: where leadership is intentionally delegated or devolved.</li> <li>• <i>Pragmatic distribution</i>: where leadership roles and responsibilities are negotiated and divided between different actors.</li> <li>• <i>Strategic distribution</i>: where new people, with particular skills, knowledge and/or access to resources, are brought in to meet a particular leadership need.</li> <li>• <i>Incremental distribution</i>: where people acquire leadership responsibilities progressively as they gain experience.</li> <li>• <i>Opportunistic distribution</i>: where people willingly take on additional responsibilities over and above those typically required for their job in a relatively ad hoc manner.</li> <li>• <i>Cultural distribution</i>: where leadership is naturally assumed by members of an organization/group and shared organically between individuals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Collaborated distribution</i>: where two or more individuals work together in time and place to execute the same leadership routine.</li> <li>• <i>Collective distribution</i>: where two or more individuals work separately but interdependently to enact a leadership routine.</li> <li>• <i>Coordinated distribution</i>: where two or more individuals work in sequence in order to complete a leadership routine.</li> </ul>

*Note.* Reprinted from "Distributed Leadership in Organizations: A Review of Theory and Research", by Bolden (2011). Copyright 2011 British Academy of Management and Blackwell Publishing Ltd. Reprinted with permission.

Outside of the education sector, Gronn (2008) found that, by de-monopolizing leadership and potentially increasing the sources and voices of influence in organizations beyond just one leader, distributed leadership has helped widen the span of employee and member participation (Gronn, 2008). Distributed leadership also offers a powerful post-heroic representation of leadership well suited to complex, changing and interdependent environments (Spillane, 2006). However, the need for more empirical studies outside of the education sector is also widely acknowledged (e.g. Bennett et al., 2003; Bolden, 2011; Gronn, 2002; 2008).

While rigorous contributions have been made to develop our understanding of distributed leadership, it is not without its shortcomings. Bolden (2011) notes that there is insufficient consideration of power dynamics in which distributed leadership is situated. In agreement, Hatcher (2005) further notes that, while leadership may be distributed, access to power and resources is often not, creating a problem (Cited in Bolden, 2011). Another limitation in exploring distributed leadership is how studies are still confined within traditional boundaries. For example, most distributed leadership studies rely on reports from formal individual leaders (mostly school principals), which limits the exploration of other forms of informal and emergent leadership (Bolden, 2011). Moreover, a collective approach to leadership within a context that struggles to shed the traditional, leader centric perspectives leaves the everyday heroes and heroines that contribute to leadership unrecognized (Bolden, 2011). After a comprehensive review of distributed leadership, Bennett et al., (2003) also suggest points of improvement for future research on distributed leadership. These include exploring the influence of social and cultural contexts on distributed leadership, the impact of different degrees of emphasis on variables such as control and autonomy, and the role of organizational structure and individual agency. Similarly, on the note of agency and power, Spillane et al. (2006) ask the following



questions: How is leadership experienced by those involved as it unfolds? How is personal agency constrained and/or enhanced through access to and control of resources and other sources of power?

**Emergent leadership, social capital, and complexity.** A review of post-heroic leadership literature also suggests a shift away from leadership only residing in assigned roles, towards emergent leadership. Common ground, which is largely what has been reviewed in Section A of this chapter, is that a leader is deemed a leader when assigned in an organizational structure and position that deems *him* one. The idea of emergent leadership, on the other hand, acknowledges that influence does not always come from an official leadership position (Northouse, 2015). Forti (1998) found that individuals who scored high on self-efficacy were most likely to emerge as leaders (Northouse, 2015).

Marion and Uhl-Bien (2001) highlight that most existing approaches to leadership theory “remain grounded in the premise that leadership is interpersonal influence” (p. 391). Uhl-bien (2007) further states:

Leadership should be seen not only as position and authority but also as an emergent, interactive dynamic – a complex interplay from which a collective impetus for action and change emerges when heterogeneous agents interact in networks in ways that produce new patterns of behavior or new modes of operating. (p. 299)

The shift from leader to leadership is a shift from a focus on human capital to social capital, respectively. Human capital refers to the leader’s currency, while social capital refers to a collective currency. In defining leadership from a post-heroic leadership perspective, Bolden (2009) draws out common and significant themes describing leadership as (a) a process (b) of social influence (c) to guide, structure and/or facilitate (d) behaviors, activities and/or

relationships (e) towards the achievement of shared aims.

### **The Hybridity of Leadership: Can Both Coexist?**

Post-heroic leadership has often been presented as an alternative to heroic leadership (Gronn, 2009). When it emerged (Gibbs, 1958), distributed leadership was in an oppositional relationship with individually focused leadership (Cited in Gronn, 2011). Collinson and Collinson (2009) argue that these binaries of looking at leadership are problematic, as their empirical study found a more blended leadership practice amongst higher education leaders. Consistently, while the idea of distributed leadership has received much attention and acceptance, empirical studies tend to imply that distributed leadership alone does not fully explain how leadership happened (Bolden et al., 2008). Gronn (2008) confirms that it appears that shifting organizational situations require different forms and degrees of both individual leadership and distributed leadership. A study that explored university leadership in the UK, Bolden et al (2008) found that, despite a reported desire for ‘post-heroic’ leadership, disproportionately high levels of influence were exerted by formal leaders within the organization. It was also noted, however, that substantial ‘horizontal’ leadership influence was exhibited by people in informal roles, as well as emergent and distributed leadership within and by groups. This research (supported many more) suggested that a more complex configuration that was neither solely focused nor distributed, but both occurred. Ironically, Peter Gronn, one of the pioneers of distributed leadership who has written quite extensively on the subject (see Gronn, 2000; 2002; 2004; 2008; 2009; 2011; 2016), also acknowledges two growing concerns in the study of distributed leadership (Gronn, 2016). First was the disconnect between researchers who aimed to study distributed leadership, but defaulted to focusing primarily on individual leaders (such as school principals). Second was the substitution error, where there was no

justification for replacing individual leadership with multiple forms of leadership. Gronn (2016) further notes:

Surely a revised unit of analysis had to be able to encompass a spectrum of possibilities identifiable between the two polarities of individual leadership and collective leadership. Such possibilities were likely to comprise combinations of both of these forms, with all of the likely variations positioned at points on the spectrum, according to the empirically documented proportions of each (p. 169).

He therefore argues that leadership is not exclusively distributed, but a hybrid configuration of both individual and inclusive forms of leadership.

Gronn (2011) discusses the notion of hybridity at length, leading to the conclusion that leadership reconstruction can emerge out of creative hybridity, which is “an energy field of different forces” (p. 441). Gronn (2016) explains that

Leadership configurations are likely to be mixed in manifestation (i.e. degrees of individualism and collectivism), structure (informal and formal, emergent and designed) and membership (degrees of constancy and fluidity), and that their continuity or discontinuity varies through time (p. 169).

Table 4 below summarizes the hybrid configuration of leadership that is argued by Gronn (2011; 2016). Gronn (2011) further suggests that there is evidence for multiple patterns of leadership hybridity. The first refers to hybridity that occurs within different individual leadership preferences. Similarly, Collinson and Collinson (2009) refer to this hybrid pattern as blended leadership. They suggest that there are dynamic tensions and interplay between seemingly opposing binaries in what we expect from our leaders (Collinson & Collinson, 2009). They found that:

Although employees across all seven colleges valued distributed and shared leadership, they also expressed a preference for aspects of more directive and ‘firm’ leadership, valuing leaders who were detached enough to appreciate the big picture, but also close enough to be approachable and ‘down to earth’ (p. 374)

Table 4

Hybrid Configurations of Leadership

	Focused Leadership	Distributed Leadership
Manifestation	Individualism	Collectivism
Structure	Formal	Informal
Location	Assigned	Emergent
Membership	Constancy	Fluidity

*Note.* The data in this figure are from arguments made by Gronn 2016 about Hybrid Configurations of leadership.

Consistent with this view, Cameron et al. (2006) further echo that effective leaders tend to be ‘simultaneously paradoxical’, integrating factors usually seen as competing, contradictory and even incompatible. They encourage leaders to rethink apparent opposites by replacing ‘either/or’ with ‘both/and’ thinking. Kaplan and Kaiser (2003; see also Kaplan, 2006) also support this point as they argue that effective leaders are those who have the versatility to move freely between apparently opposing leadership practices. Highlighting the need for leaders to be both ‘forceful’ and ‘enabling’ and both ‘strategic’ and ‘operational’, they found that employees consistently regarded versatile managers as the most effective leaders in their organizations.

The second pattern of hybridity involves employees who worked across the boundaries of their roles and could subsequently permeate leadership spaces and identities (Gronn, 2011). This highlights the shifting nature of the structures and membership of leadership illustrated in the table above. Hybridity in this case allows shifts from formal to informal leadership enactment, and constant/stable to fluid leadership enactment. A study in Australia found that participating in short term projects comprised of temporary teams allowed for emergent project-based leadership (Gronn, 2011).

The third pattern refers to “hybrid practice as a mix of orchestrated and emergent leadership” (Gronn, 2011, p.443). In support of this, Bolden et al. (2008) found that university leadership consisted of;

Devolved and delegated decision making, numerous individuals acting alone or collaboratively within and across levels, tension-free role blending by staff who were content to augment their academic identities when managing research, but also experiences of role-tension and conflicting identities when those same staff tried to blend academic allegiance and commitment with management in areas other than research, utilization of teams and committees, co-leading relationships between professional managers and academic heads (p. 263–266).

Consistent with the findings from Collinson and Collinson (2009), Bolden et al (2008) found an emphasis on the need for both top-down and bottom-up university leadership. Possible hybrid configurations noted by Gronn (2011) further include:

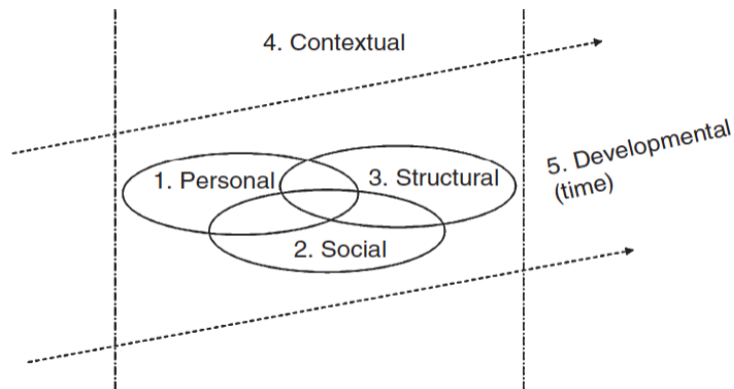
- hybrid practice as simultaneous multiple individual leaders and co-leading pairings (example in Spillane et al., 2007);
- hybrid practice as project teacher team leaders, their teams and other leaders (e.g.

Timperley, 2005);

- hybrid practice as expert–teacher leader collaboration to influence teachers (e.g. Firestone & Martinez, 2007); and
- hybrid practice as shared teacher leading contingent upon a focused leader (e.g. Leithwood et al., 2007). He further notes that this list is extensive but not exhaustive of possible hybridity of leadership practice (Gronn, 2011).

Bolden, Petrov, and Gosling (2008) develop a multilevel model (Figure E below) to map the different hybrid configuration of leadership practice found in higher education. It illustrated how leadership is accomplished through the (a) personal elements (personal characteristics of the individual leader, human capital); (b) social elements, (networks of influences, social capital); (c) structural elements ( includes organizational systems, processes and structures, particularly those relating to finances, human relations, information technology, strategic planning and even the physical environment); (d) the contextual dimension of leadership (including organizational culture, history and priorities); (e) developmental needs (the ongoing and changing developmental needs of individuals, groups and organizations). Crossvergence has been a form of leadership hybridity that has been underexplored within this emerging paradigm. A ‘crossvergence’ of leadership perspectives occurs when studying leadership in cross cultural contexts (Kamoche, 2011; Ward et al.,1999). This is particularly relevant in the context of an increasingly globalized and diverse world of work. Extending the work of Theory X and Theory Y, Theory Z is a great hybrid example of Western and Eastern management principles converging. While not strictly a leadership framework, Theory Z makes certain assumptions about employees that has some bearings on how leadership happens. The theory assumes that employees (a) want a work-life integration with a family culture; (b) have a strong desire for

affiliation to and belonging in the organization; (c) have a sense of cohesion amongst other employees; (d) can be trusted under good management (Ouchi & Price, 1978; Ouchi, 1981).



*Figure 4.* Hybrid configurations of leadership practice model. Reprinted from “Tensions in Higher Education Leadership: Towards a Multi-Level Model of Leadership Practice” by Bolden, Petrov, and Gosling (2008). Copyright 2008 Blackwell Publishing Ltd. Reprinted with permission.

Type Z organizations have both the elements of consensual decision making (which could be associated more to a post-heroic paradigm) and individual responsibility (which could be more of a heroic paradigm behavior). The Eastern components of the theory could also overlap with an ubuntu related leadership borne out of Africa, which will be discussed in more detail later on in this chapter.

The idea of hybrid leadership configurations has some implications on leadership study. The first is that rather than seeking to describe particular styles of leadership in isolation, researchers would be advised to map the multiple hybrid forms of leadership that occur within a particular context over time. Second, it necessitates a shift from exploring how leadership should be enacted (often associated with labels such as distributed, transformational or authentic) to a

focus on empirical accounts of how leadership is accomplished in context through the interaction of vertical, horizontal, emergent and other forms of relational influence. In two case studies, Bolden and Petrov (2014) found that a range of leadership actors can be identified in small businesses. They found that these leadership actors map across both distributed leadership forms and hierarchical/formal leadership. However, it is the interaction between these forms and manifestations of leadership that produce the observed effects rather than any of them in isolation. Third, Drath et al. (2008) suggest that the tripod language of ‘leaders’, ‘followers’ and ‘shared goals’ is inadequate in a hybrid situation, as any or all of those categories may remain ambiguous or contested. In agreement, Bolden and Petrov (2014) note that, whilst the success of strategic initiatives may often be attributed to formal senior leaders, they are only accomplished thanks to emergent, informal, and shared leadership by people on the ground. Describing these initiatives as examples of ‘distributed’ or ‘shared’ leadership is similarly inadequate, as it fails to explain what is distributed or shared, to whom, how, where, when, and why (Drath et al., 2008). In guiding future studies on hybrid leadership configuration, Bolden and Petrov (2014) suggest asking questions such as ‘who were the main actors’, ‘how did they engage with one another’, ‘what structures and processes supported this’, ‘how did the organizational context (including dynamics of power, politics and language) impact on the leadership process’, and ‘how did these dimensions shift and change over time’ (p. 415). Bolden and Petrov (2014) conclude that the value of such an approach may be in sensitizing us to the questions we need to ask, the kinds of practice we seek to develop, and a means for assessing the causes of success and/ or failure.

## **Section B: Leadership and Culture**

Leadership is typically defined in general terms with the attempt to find a universal



definition that is applicable to varied contexts (Alvesson, 2011). The tendency to conceive leadership in acontextual terms is arguably the biggest downfall in leadership studies (Grint, 2005). From a social reality perspective, to assume that the vast diversity of relations, situations, and cultural contexts in which the practice of leadership occurs can be contained in a single definition or broad categories such a transformational and transactional is highly problematic (Alvesson, 2011). Jackson and Parry (2008) note that the *Collins English Dictionary* defines context as both a part that contribute to a whole full meaning, and the conditions and circumstances that are relevant to an event, fact, etc. This meaning of context in relation to leadership suggests that when you change the context, the meaning, and what we see as the effectiveness of leadership also changes (Osborn, Hunt, & Jauch, 2002).

Recent post-heroic conceptions of leadership as a social and relational concept draw a closer association between leadership and culture (Alvesson, 2011). Schein (1992) defines the culture of a group as a:

Pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems (p.12).

Therefore, if leadership is a complex social process in which the meanings and interpretations of what is said and done are negotiated (Alvesson, 2011; Grint, 2005), culture is already intricately embedded in leadership, and leadership is essentially a cultural activity (Jackson & Parry, 2008). Alvesson (2011) goes to the extent of saying that the terms culture and leadership in the above definition could be interchanged. It is therefore problematic how little culture and context are mentioned in leadership studies (Alvesson, 2011; Grint, 2005; Jackson & Parry,

2008). In context, leadership is suffused with values, language, beliefs, rituals, and artefacts (Jackson & Parry, 2008) at the organization and at other levels.

Leadership studies that have shed light on the influence of the organizational context acknowledge seven components: organizational strategy and mission, its human capital, its core processes, its lifecycle, structure, its culture, and its climate (Jackson & Parry, 2008). At an organizational level, culture “provides shared rules governing cognitive and affective aspects of membership in an organization, and the means whereby they are shaped and expressed” (Alvesson, 2011, p. 153). The few studies that explore leadership and culture tend to look at how organizational culture influences leadership. Very little emphasis is placed on how individuals influence culture (Jackson & Parry, 2008). Organizational founders, for example, have a dominant effect on organizational culture (Jackson & Parry, 2008). Using a social construction perspective to leadership, it is previously discussed how the context or situation is actively constructed by the leader, leaders, and/or decision-makers (Grint, 2005). And from a distributed leadership perspective, Spillane et al. (2006) propose that situation or context does not simply “affect” what school leaders do as some sort of independent or interdependent variable, it is constitutive of leadership practice.

**Cross- cultural leadership.** With the rise of globalization, interest has shifted away from organizational culture towards the challenge of leading organizations that operate in different national contexts and cultures (Jackson & Parry, 2008). Thomas and Inkson (2004) refer to the need for cultural intelligence for globalized organizations. This includes (a) knowledge of culture and cross-cultural fundamentals that go beyond basic etiquette; (b) being mindful to the cross-cultural situations encountered; and (c) develop behavioral skills based on the reading of your cross-cultural situation. A notable cross-cultural model is Hofstede’s national cultural

dimensions, which distinguishes national cultures on the following six cultural dichotomies (Hofstede, 2010). First, individualism and collectivism refer to the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups. Second, uncertainty avoidance refers to a society's tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity. Third, power distance is the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. Fourth, masculinity and femininity refers to the distribution of competitiveness, assertiveness, materialism, ambition and power (masculine); and value on relationships and quality of life (feminine), long term and short term orientation, and indulgence and restraint refer to the extent to which member in society try to control their desires and impulses (Hofstede, 2010). Hofstede's work has been criticized for being North American centric and reductionist. While attempts have been made to broaden this perspective through partnering with researchers from other countries, it is crucial to note that researchers themselves are a product of a particular culture which creates an additional methodical problem (Guthey & Jackson, 2011; Jackson & Parry, 2008).

The GLOBE study present another attempt at exploring cross cultural leadership studies that we conducted by at least 160 investigators over 61 cultures across the globe (House et al., 2004) to explore the impact of cultural variables on leadership and organizational processes, and the effectiveness of these processes. With some overlap with Hofstede's work, they outline nine cultural dimension, which include: Future Orientation, Gender Egalitarianism, Assertiveness, Humane Orientation, In-Group Collectivism, Institutional Collectivism, Permanence Orientation, Power Concentration versus Decentralization and Uncertainty Avoidance. While the GLOBE study found some variation in what different culture saw as effective and ineffective leadership, there was also great overlap between different countries (Guthey & Jackson, 2011). As with

Hofstede's work, the GLOBE study is considered to oversimplify and reduce the complex phenomenon of culture to national categories that are culturally diverse in their own right (Parry & Jackson, 2008). The studies assume that national cultures are homogenous, however Jepson (1996) emphasizes that cultural interactions often take place in several intersecting contexts, including not only the national context but also organizational, hierarchical, departmental, and individual contexts (cited in Guthey & Jackson, 2011).

Wilson (2016) presents more charged arguments in relation to leadership studies in general, which bears a lot to consider for the topic of leadership science and culture. In a historical account of leadership studies, she notes that what we know as leadership is a product that is situated in western culture and science. She further argues that the origins of leadership thought in the West stem from a culture that was largely individualistic, white, and masculine. In agreement, Grint (2005) notes that the history of leadership science of the west still dominates our current understanding of leadership. This is also echoed by Nkomo (2011), as she notes that the prefix 'American' is suppressed when we speak of leadership theory, which presents an error when one group is studied (North American samples), and this knowledge is generated to represent the whole concept of leadership. It is also argued that even the notion of 'global leadership' that has emerged to explore universal competencies and skills for an increasingly globalized world is problematic since it still perpetuates perspectives from economically stronger, more developed regions (Hickel, 2017). Emergent Global North and Global South perspectives to leadership have thus emerged in attempt to differentiate western knowledge from non-western knowledge. The North-South divide includes a socio-economic and political divide. The Global North includes regions such as United States, Canada, Western Europe, and developed parts of Asia, and the Global South includes Africa, Latin America, and developing

Asia, including the Middle East (ref). While Global-North perspectives of leadership abound through an outside in approach to 'global leadership', perspectives from developing regions are scarce (Blunt and Jones, 1997; Mintzberg, 2006; Muchiri, 2011). This calls for a move away from the etic approach, which attempts to generalize leadership theory by looking at cultures from outside the ones they are studying, and toward a more 'emic' approach that endeavors to understand the culture from within the culture they are studying and fostering a more indigenous approach (Guthey & Jackson, 2011; Mintzberg, 2006).

**Leadership in Sub-Saharan Africa.** A study by Jackson (2004) represents an emic approach to studying leadership in the global South region of Africa. He introduces the notion of 'locus of human value' in distinguishing an antithesis between an instrumental view of people in organizations that perceive people as a means to an end and a humanistic view of people which sees people as having a value in their own right, and being an end in themselves (Jackson, 1999). Leaders in Sub-Saharan Africa were described as valuing a more humanistic approach to people. This was confirmed by Bolden and Kirk's (2009) study where they found a desire for more inclusive and participatory forms of leadership that value individual differences, authenticity and serving the community. Bolden and Kirk (2009) also observed that leadership, as a process, could be widely dispersed within organizations and communities, drawing on the contributions of numerous people and largely shaped by the cultures and structures in which they operated. In addition, Jackson (2004) found that the key values that inform leadership in Sub-Saharan Africa include sharing, deference to rank, sanctity of commitment, regard for compromise, and consensus, and good social and personal relations.

The values espoused above are closely associated with the notion of ubuntu that is commonly referred to when describing leadership in Africa. Although it is important to note that

Africa is very heterogeneous and cannot be treated as an aggregated region (Kamoche, 2011; Kamoche et. al, 2015; Jackson, 2004), the presence of the national culture of ubuntu is a grounding philosophy of valued leadership in many parts of Africa (Bekker, 2008; Bolden & Kirk, 2009; Brubaker, 2013; Kamoche, 2011; Malunga, 2009; Pouvan, et al., 2006). Mangaliso (2001) describes ubuntu as "humaneness – a pervasive spirit of caring and community, harmony and hospitality, respect and responsiveness – that individuals and groups display for one another" (p. 258). Similarly, Mbiti (1989) emphasizes the importance of connectedness and community. He states that:

An individual within a community that has ubuntu is fully conscious of their own being, responsibilities, and privileges in relation to other people and the greater whole. There is an awareness that what happens to the individual, happens to the whole, and what happens to the whole, happens to the individual (p.106).

The emphasis on community is consistent with Mintzberg's (2006) argument that organizations are communities of human beings, not of human resources. He proposes the term 'communityship' to describe how leadership is about building community through a sense of engaged management and care. Ubuntu as a philosophy is founded on the values of survival, solidarity, compassion, respect, and dignity. Survival is expressed through sharing resources in a community with mutual concern for existence and thriving. Notably different from individualistic cultures, ubuntu sees survival as having concern for others as a way of being (Pouvan, et al., 2006), in spite of difficulties or scarcity (Brubaker, 2013). Solidarity understands the self in a communal and collective context. Bekker (2008) differentiates between solidarity and interdependence, stating that, while interdependence is about individuals depending on each other, solidarity sees the self in communion with others. Compassion within ubuntu involves a

deep conviction about the interconnectedness of others (Pouvan, et al., 2006), and sacrificing one's own interest to help others (Mbigi, 1996). Malunga (2009) states that this kind of compassion is coupled with the notion of peace making, which is driven by the principles of reciprocity, inclusivity, and a sense of shared destiny. The last two values, respect and dignity, are often viewed together. They refer to acknowledging the individual, and the well-being of others and of humanity as a whole. It includes a deep appreciation of other people's ability to make a contribution to life (Mangaliso, 2001).

The study of ubuntu as a leadership construct in organizational literature is fairly new and underdeveloped (Mbigi, 1996). A model is devised (Mbigi, 1996) and revised (van der Colff, 2003) in an attempt to conceptually illustrate how ubuntu informs leadership in Africa. Ubuntu related leadership dimensions include: communal enterprise, leadership legitimacy, value-sharing, collectivism and solidarity, continuous integrated development, interconnectedness, respect and dignity (see Table below for descriptions). This view offers a reconstruction of leadership describing it as a (a) responsibility that all people, at any level in the community can hold; (b) operates with self-awareness; (c) an inherently relational process; and (d) in the service of the community (Bolden & Kirk, 2009). Given the importance of value sharing, which includes shared ownership of opportunities, responsibilities and challenges, dialogue is central to describing the practice of ubuntu related leadership (Malunga, 2009). Researchers refer to 'indaba' to describe a system of dialogue for handling and resolving complex issues or conflict and hearing the concerns that may arise within a community that has ubuntu (Horwitz, Kamoche & Chew, 2002; Karsten & Illa, 2005; Nzimakwe, 2014). Decision-making within an indaba tends to be iterative and inclusive (Horwitz, Kamoche & Chew, 2002), and elevates the importance of building and reinforcing relationships, and generating shared meaning above the efficiency and

accuracy of communication and language (Karsten & Illa, 2005; Mangaliso, 2001). As an emerging perspective and model, ubuntu and ubuntu related leadership are not without critique. The first is about whether ubuntu is a universally humanistic perspective (Nussbaum, 2006; van der Colff, 2003) or indigenously African (Mbigi, 1997; 2000; Ramose, 1999). Another critique is that ubuntu related leadership is over popularized with very little empirical evidence (Brubaker, 2013).

<b>Ubuntu Leadership Dimension</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Communal enterprise</b>	Leaders see themselves as part of a team, utilizing diverse strengths drive a compelling vision
<b>Leadership legitimacy</b>	Leaders are transparent, accountable, elders, and role models
<b>Value sharing</b>	
Organizations are communities that create fertile ground for individuals to be empowered as leaders	
<b>Collectivism and solidarity</b>	Leaders build synergies were communities and teams participate in learning and leading together
<b>Continuous integrated development</b>	All people are developed as leaders
<b>Interconnectedness</b>	Leaders share values, visions, and goals
<b>Respect and dignity</b>	People are recognized as human first. In order to receive dignity, leaders need to give it

*Figure 5.* Ubuntu-related leadership dimension

While Ubuntu related leadership is usually regarded as a ‘post-heroic’ and inclusive perspective to leadership; this is challenged by the contradiction of leadership legitimacy being deferred to elders and chiefs in the community (Nzimakwe, 2014). Similarly, others go to the extent of saying that the shadow side of ubuntu is a form of totalitarian communalism, suggesting a strong heroic and us versus them stance (Swartz and Davies, 1997). Lacking agreement to this, others have appreciated the solidarity that ubuntu brings to the forefront



(Pouvan et al., 2006). An ubuntu related leadership in relation to effectiveness is also questioned; one view is that ubuntu brings outdated values that are a hindrance to efficiency (Hailey, 2008), while Ncube (2011) argues that the complexity, turbulence, and extraordinary changes of the 21st century have contributed to rapid disintegration of good governance and ethics, which require an ubuntu type of leadership that is based on morally inclined human characteristics and values. Bolden and Kirk (2009) note that the notion of ubuntu offers a powerful frame of reference and a way of talking about the interdependence of social actors within the leadership practice that bridges the 'individual' and the 'collective' (p. 14). They suggest that the study of an ubuntu related leadership could make theoretical contributions to the relational view of leadership within the emerging post-heroic paradigm.

In addition to discussions on indigenous approaches to leadership studies such as the lens of ubuntu, there is also some mention post heroic leadership approaches, and discussion of leadership hybridity in the African contexts. After reviewing 60 years of research, Fourie et al (2015) find that progress in the scholarship on leadership in Africa has been made. This is also supported by Muchiri (2011) who reviewed leadership research particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Both reviews emphasis the importance of a social constructivist approach in studying leadership in order to situate leadership knowledge within African contextual realities that are fairly diverse within and across African countries (Fourie et al., 2015; Muchiri, 2011). A constructionist approach is complementary to this view, drawing from the earlier discussion on how leadership changes when the context changes, as well as on, Grint's (2005) argument about situated leadership. To further illustrate this point, a recent study by Grant (2017), for instance, notes that distributed leadership has great normative power in the South African context due to the democratic dispensation shift from post-colonial and apartheid rule. While there is no

agreement whether the terms democratic and distributed leadership could be used interchangeably, Grant (2017) finds that distributed leadership occurs differently in a democratic context that encourages an inclusive and participatory leadership practice. More researchers further echo that distributed leadership is seldom presented neutrally in the South African literature (Naicker and Mestry 2013; Williams, 2011), instead it is attributed with a positive charge (Maton 2014) and promoted as the right way to lead. Nonetheless, scholars note that further research is essential before claims can be made to show that distributed leadership makes a positive difference to organizational performance and improved learner outcomes in an emerging democracy such as South Africa (Grant 2010; Naicker and Mestry 2013; Bush and Glover 2016).

Moreover, the topic of hybridity in knowledge production has yielded great interest in the African context (Jackson, 2004; Kamoche, 2011; Nkomo, 2011; Yousfi, 2014). In a study conducted in Tunisia, Yousfi (2014) illustrates how hybridity emerged when a North American management model was applied. She found that the Tunisian employees resisted changes when their indigenous values were impacted by foreign management practices. However, to implement new practices, Tunisian workers reinterpreted them in the local cultural context, thus the transformation of these practices has involved an integration of identity construction, local power dynamics and local cultural frameworks of meaning. From a different perspective, Jackson (2004) believes that leadership enactment in Africa is already hybrid in nature, embedded in a complex, multilayered social, cultural, and historical context. Jackson (2004) eloquently states:

Africa's history, even before the slave trade, is one of cross-cultural interaction and often antagonistic dynamics [...], normally within systems of power relations [...].

Modern organizations in Africa still contain these diverse cultural elements: ideas and

practices as well as people. Not only is an understanding of these dynamics necessary, but also a reconciling, integrating and synergizing of disparities contained within dynamics are essential to management and organization development efforts in Africa (p. 3).

Thus, while some argue for indigenous and Afrocentric approaches to leadership such as ubuntu with its emphasis on interdependence and inclusivity, with the hope to liberate themselves from colonial and post-colonial thinking (e.g. Mangaliso, 2001; Mbigi, 1997), there is question around (a) how this Afro-centric knowledge can be (re)discovered, (b) how it can be captured and conveyed and, (c) the extent to which it will resonate with the lived experience of modern and diverse Africans across and beyond the continent (Bolden & Kirk, 2009). The notion of leadership hybridity offered by Jackson (2004), is not one of mimicking Western practices or attempting a return to idealized notions of indigenously African leadership, but rather offers a means for adaptation and change. This view is congruent to Gronn's (2016) description of hybridity offering creative tension for a more complex understanding of leadership in practice.

### **Section C: Leadership in Small Businesses**

**The context of small business emergence.** Leitch et al (2009) note that while most leadership research has been situated in corporate contexts, there has been much less attention given to issues of leadership in the context of small and medium-sized enterprises. Some believe that this is problematic since small businesses present a unique context for leadership. The entrepreneurial settings provide a context that has been described as highly organic, non-formalized simple structures (Mintzberg, 1979), in which the occurrence of leadership is influenced differently. A significant contextual character of small businesses, as opposed to established corporations, is the notion of rapid business growth, or what others refer to as *emergence*

(Greiner, 1972; Levie & Lichtenstein, 2010). Cope et al. (2011) further note that small businesses emerge in an ambiguous and chaotic manner. Research on small business growth suggests that, as the business grows, founders need to transition from being entrepreneurs to leaders (Cope et al., 2011). Furthermore, founders need to adopt different leadership practices, styles, and behaviors during different stages of business growth (Greiner, 1972). The issue of growth and emergence in small businesses can be understood through Levie and Lichtenstein (2010) comprehensive review of 100 studies. Their main argument is that the stage or developmental model of small business growth is overly simplistic and not representative of the dynamic and complex nature of how small businesses grow.

Levie and Lichtenstein (2010) propose a dynamic state model of growth which views small businesses as complex adaptive systems. The authors describe a dynamic state as a network of beliefs, relationships, systems, and structures that converts opportunity tension into tangible value for an organization's customers/clients, generating new resources that maintain the dynamic state (Levie and Lichtenstein, 2010, p. 256).

Elements of a dynamic state approach (see figure G below) first include defining a *dynamic state*: essentially, the firm is an energy conversion system (Slevin & Covin, 1997) that organizes resources into products or services, providing value for its customers (Ardichvili et al., 2003), thus, leveraging a business opportunity. Secondly, the strategy for value creation chosen by the firm is enacted by its *business model* (Afuah, 2004; Zott & Amit, 2007): the activities, the resources, the collaborations, and the strategic positions necessary to capitalize on the opportunity. The business model itself is derived from the organizing activities, strategic decisions, and organizational processes that reflect the emerging *dominant logic* of the firm. The source of tension lies at the origin of every dynamic state, in the form of opportunity tension.

Opportunity tension is thus the perception (co-creation) of an untapped market potential and the commitment to act on that potential by creating value. A process theory of emergence can explain how entirely new dynamic states can come into being. Entrepreneurs can generate a new cycle of opportunity tension that extends the potential capability of their organizations by reformulating its dynamic state (Lichtenstein & Plowman, 2009). The dynamic state approach moves away from outlining a number of set growth stages to a focus on a much more relevant question to managers of entrepreneurial firms, namely: How can a given dynamic state and its associated business model viable in changing conditions? (Cited in Levie & Lichtenstein, 2010).

**Leading in small business growth/emergence.** One plausible solution to the posed question of growing small business lies in the ability of the individuals within the business to manage the emergence of the business. It is argued that founding teams have no option but to lead because there are very little standard operating procedures or organizational structures to fall back on when creating a firm from scratch (Bryant, 2004). In support of this argument, Ensley et al. (2006) state that the leadership behavior of top management entrepreneurial teams is likely to have a greater and more direct impact on organizational effectiveness in small businesses than in larger and more established organizations, making entrepreneurial ventures a particularly important context in which to examine the effects of leadership. Two sources of leadership in small business emerge from the literature, the first from the founding CEO, and the second from the entrepreneurial team. Most leadership research in small businesses tends to position the founding CEO as the hero. This positioning is consistent with the leader centric, focused leadership paradigm that is discussed at length in the first section of this chapter. In support of claim of the CEO as hero, Cope et al. (2011) note that founding CEOs especially at the beginning stages of the business tend to play multiple roles. Furthermore, the business is also

conceived and formed out of their creativity and their vision (Beaver, 2003). Beaver (2003) continues to note that founding CEOs are often exceptional individuals. This description is identical to Yukl's (1999) heroic understanding of leadership.

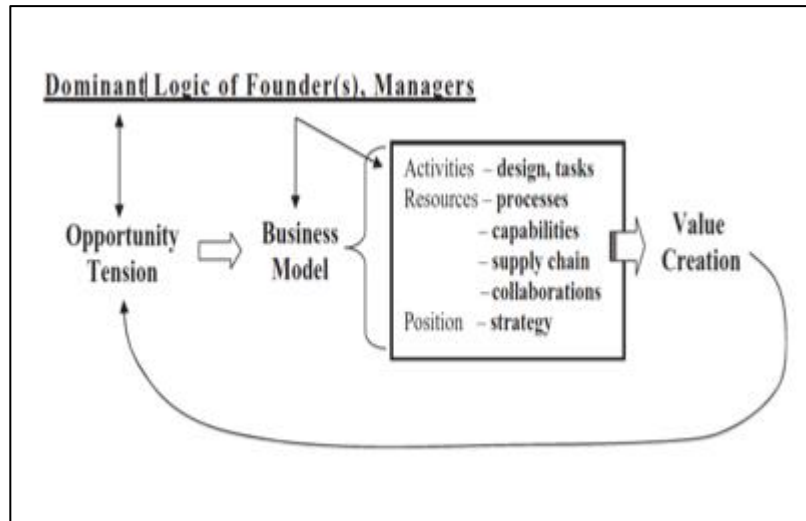


Figure 6. A dynamic approach to business growth. Reprinted from “A Terminal Assessment of Stages Theory: Introducing a Dynamic States Approach to Entrepreneurship by Levie & Lichtenstein (2010). Copyright 2010 Baylor University. Reprinted with permission.

Ensley and colleagues note that there is evidence for both transformational (e.g. Baum et al., 1998) and transactional (e.g. Arham, 2014; Hashim, Ahmed & Zakaria, 2012; Yang, 2008) leadership styles leading to small business growth and effectiveness (Cited in Ensley et al., 2011). This suggests that from a focused leadership perspective, both empowering and directive styles contribute to leader effectiveness and high growth in small businesses. This is consistent with Collinson and Collinson's (2009) findings of blended leadership in higher education noted earlier. The rationale for blended styles of leadership was that directive leadership stemmed from the need for order and clear goals, and transformational leadership stemmed from the need for commitment and empowerment of organizational members (Ensley et al., 2011).

The second source of leadership in small business is the entrepreneurial team. Founding

teams are relatively neglected in literature in comparison to the fascination with hero entrepreneur approach (Ensley et al., 2006). Research on post-heroic forms of leadership such as distributed leadership (Gronn, 2002) and shared leadership (Pearce & Conger, 2006) discussed earlier, is comparable to research on entrepreneurial teams. In an article titled *Entrepreneurship reconsidered: The team as the hero*, Reitch (1987) celebrates the role of collective entrepreneurship in forming, growing and sustaining small businesses. He acknowledges how the new economic paradigm requires workers at all levels to continue to discover opportunities from improvement and innovation (Reitch, 1987). Ensley et al. (2003) found that shared leadership also plays in facilitating the process of developing shared strategic cognition that contributes to a unified vision of the small business. A study by Cope et al. (2011) found evidence that it is the entrepreneurial teams rather than the solo founding CEO that is likely to generate greater growth. They further argue that the distribution of leadership appears to relate to a distribution of resources and social capital, plurality of experience, and enhanced capability for sense-making and problem-solving. In agreement, results from Ensley et al. (2006) found that shared leadership accounted for an additional 14% and 20% of the variance in new venture performance when compared to dimensions of individual or focused leadership.

Lichtenstein and Plowman (2009) argue that conventional notions of leadership do not fully explain small business emergence and growth. They argue that the growth of small businesses can be better explained by the dynamics of emergence than by specific organizational members. Rather than leadership being within a CEO, it emerges throughout the organization as positive influence, novelty, and outcomes. They devise a model referred to as leadership of emergence based on complexity science, which explains how complex adaptive systems like organizations emerge and evolve (Anderson, 1999). Complex Adaptive Systems Theory [CAST]

is a framework for explaining the emergence of system-level order that arises through the interactions of the system's interdependent components. The CAST view suggests that rather than being “in” someone, leadership – understood as the capacity to influence others – can be enacted within every interaction between members. Leadership is seen as a dynamic process of influence that can occur anywhere at any time in a system (Yukl, 2006). Much of the raw influence in the system arises beyond the traditional leader–follower dyadic roles. This is similar to the post heroic concepts and approaches such as informal leadership (Kickul & Neuman, 2000; Wheelan & Johnston, 1996), emergent leadership (Hollander, 1985), inclusive leadership (2009), and distributed leadership (Gronn, 2002; Spillane, 2003). This does not diminish the role of the formal leadership, but positions formal organizational leaders as a constituent of leadership practice that involves a lot of other actors depending on the conditions of emergence. In a case study of three case studies, Lichtenstein and Plowman (2009) found that there are four conditions for emergence (i.e. in this case business growth) to occur: the presence of a dis-equilibrium state, amplifying actions, recombination/self-organization, and stabilizing feedback. Moreover, Lichtenstein and Plowman (2009) found some leadership behaviors that influence these conditions, and subsequently contribute to the emergence of organizations from one dynamic state to another. These behaviors include:

- generate dis-equilibrium by disrupting existing patterns (through embracing uncertainty, surfacing conflict and creating controversy, encouraging relational space for rich interactions ),
- amplify actions by encouraging novelty (through allow experiments and fluctuations and supporting collective action),
- recombination/“Self-organization” through sense making and sense giving (also through



creating correlation through language and symbols, recombine resources, leaders are role models), and

- stabilizing feedback through integrating local constraints. This approach presents a meso-leadership model that explores leadership not within people or as a result of context, but influencing the spaces between individuals and context (Lichtenstein and Plowman, 2009).

This approach overlaps with the relational leadership (Uhl-bien, 2006) discussed earlier because both are guided by complexity science.

### **Summary**

This chapter has reviewed research that explores and contrasts focused and distributed leadership, describes the subsequent emergence of the inherent hybridity of leadership, unpacks fundamental principles, concepts and dynamic of studying leadership in sub-Saharan Africa, and discusses the nature of small businesses growth and emergence in relation to focused and distributed leadership. Guided by this background and context, this research attempts to create a holistic understanding of the hybridity of leadership within the underexplored context of a fast growing small business in South Africa. The next chapter will provide the proposed methodology of how hybridity takes place in a single case study.

## Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology

### **Introduction**

The research end goal for this study is to build a holistic frame for understanding the enactment of leadership hybridity in a small business case. This chapter describes the research methods applied to achieve this goal and to primarily answer three research questions:

- (a) How is leadership focused and distributed in the fast growing small business?
- (b) How does culture influence the hybridity of leadership enacted in the small business?
- (c) How are individual leaders changed during the shifts between focused and distributed leadership?

Framed from a constructivist paradigm, this qualitative study emphasized the meaning and understanding of the participants involved. The chapter will describe the case study strategy of inquiry used, the methods used to collect the data which included in-depth interviews, focus group interviews, participant observation, and the study of documents. It concludes with a discussion of the trustworthiness and ethics of the research study.

### **A Qualitative Research Design**

Creswell (2009) describes a research design as “the plan or proposal to conduct research, which involves the intersection of philosophy, strategies of inquiry, and specific methods” (p. 5). The design of qualitative research is emergent, iterative and ongoing (Creswell, 2009; Maxwell, 2005; Merriam, 2014). An emergent research design involves research procedures that can evolve over the course of the study in response to what is learnt (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative research serves to understand the meanings people have constructed, and how people make sense of their world and experiences (Merriam, 2014). The researcher is the primary tool for collecting data using an inductive method of inquiry that produce findings that are in-depth and rich in understanding (Boeije, 2010; Creswell, 2009; Maxwell, 2015; Merriam, 2014). An inductive

method is suitable for exploring new and underexplored research areas (Creswell, 2009) such as the hybridity of leadership, which we know very little about (Gronn, 2011; 2016).

### **A Social Constructivist Philosophical Worldview**

Creswell (2009) suggests that “individuals preparing a research plan make explicit the larger philosophical ideas they espouse” (p. 5). An overarching social constructivist paradigm where the purpose of the research is to describe, understand and interpret (Merriam, 2014) guides this study. The social constructivist worldview is often closely associated (and at times used interchangeably) with interpretivism and social construction (Mertens, 1998; Merriam, 2014). Social constructivists believe that individuals develop subjective meaning of their experiences that are largely influenced by culture (Mertens, 2010), and researchers that adopt this philosophy believe that they do not find knowledge out there (which is mostly a positivism stance); they instead construct it with the research participants (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 2014). This study was therefore emergent and flexible in design to allow for these constructions to occur through a social and interactive research process (Maxwell, 2015). A social constructivist approach to the research is also aligned with the argument appearing in the previous chapter about the importance of immersing the study of leadership in context and culture, in order to expand and gain a more holistic understanding of how leadership is enacted. The process of a constructivist qualitative design allowed for an inductive inquiry (Creswell, 2014) into the participant’s understanding of the patterns of leadership that emerged in the case organization. The focus was on inductively generating theory that was strongly reliant on the participant’s setting and experiences (Creswell, 2009).

## **A Case Study Strategy of Inquiry**

The study follows a case study research methodology. Simply put, “a case study is an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system” (Merriam, 2014, p. 40). “Qualitative understanding of cases requires experiencing the activity of the case as it occurs in its context and in its particular situation” (Stake, 2006, p, 2). A key theme in the Chapter 2 literature review involves the crucial role that context and situation occupies in studying newer forms of leadership, which is one of the reasons why this methodology was effective in exploring the research inquiries.

The single most differentiating factor of a case study from other research methods is that research occurs within a bounded system (Merriam, 2014). While the current case is within a bounded system of an organization in the form of a small business, a case could also be a person, program, group, community, institution, specific policy, or event (Merriam, 2014; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009; 2014). Case study research allows researchers to explore a variety of complex issues particularly when human behavior and social interactions are central to understanding a topic of interest (Merriam, 2014; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2014), and has been widely used in understanding organizational phenomena (Myers, 2001), and specifically small businesses dynamics (e.g. Graebner & Eisenhardt, 2004).

In defining case studies, Yin (2014) emphasizes the nature of inquiry (i.e. scope, process, and methodological characteristics) as being empirical, and the importance of context to the case. Stake (2006) similarly emphasizes the particularity and complexity of the case, and the researcher coming to understand its activity within important circumstances. Merriam (2014) proposed three unique qualities of case study methodology:

1. They provide a thick description of the phenomenon under study.

2. They use a heuristic approach that illuminates new meaning, extends current meaning, or confirm what is already known about a particular setting.
3. They produce concrete knowledge that is grounded in context as opposed to abstractions, developed through the participant's understanding, generalizable to a particular population.

Stake (1993) differentiates between three types of case studies: intrinsic, instrumental and collective. An instrumental case study is selected for this study to provide insights and develop an emerging theory of leadership hybridity that has been highlighted by Gronn (2011; 2016) and Bolden (2009). In instrumental case studies, “the case is often looked at in depth, its contexts scrutinized, its ordinary activities detailed because it helps us pursue the external interest” (Stake, 1993, p. 237). The varied data collection tools which will be discussed further along in this chapter will support this in-depth inquiry. In theory development, a case study strategy acknowledges that the case is always an open system with internal and external factors contributing to the study circumstance (Stake, 2006). External to the case are also the political context, history, educational context, and relevant research (Stake, 2006). For example, the second research question considers how the external macro culture of ubuntu, described in chapter two, influences the internal organizational culture and the emergent leadership patterns.

The current study can also be described by Yin (2009) as a single case as opposed to a multiple case study. Yin (2009) outlines several rationales for using a single case design. First, it is used to represent a critical case in testing a theory through challenging, confirming, and extending it. Second, it is used to explore a unique case. Third, a single case design captures the circumstances of a commonplace situation. Fourth, it is useful in revelatory cases. Finally, single cases are useful for longitudinal studies to see if conditions change over time. This single case

study is selected mainly because at face value, the current case presents a unique story of leadership hybridity that the study is trying to refine and extend in theory.

Moreover, the design of the case study can be rather unstructured, which requires the researcher to address choices in a principled way (Myers, 2001). Yin (2014) stresses the need to consider two critical design steps: defining the case and bounding the case. The current case is selected through theoretical sampling. Theoretical sampling simply means that cases are not selected randomly, but rather through determining that an underlying theory supports its use as being particularly suitable for illuminating and extending relationships and logic among constructs (Eisenhardt & Gaebner, 2007). Theoretical sampling was applied because the objective is to replicate or extend the emergent theory. This type of sampling is also used to fill theoretical categories and provide examples for polar types (Eisenhardt 1989). The sampling in this case study therefore seeks information richness and selected the case purposefully rather than randomly (Crabtree and Miller, 1992, cited in Myers, 2001). The current case is a fast growing small business located in Johannesburg, South Africa. It is selected for the study because it reflects signs of both focused and distributed leadership enactment. Moreover, the selected small business has and is currently experiencing fast growth which illuminates the context of business emergence which is an inquiry expressed in the first research question. Lastly, the current setting is chosen because it situates leadership within a sub-Saharan culture, an underexplored point of inquiry mentioned in the problem statement, and covered in the second research question.

Furthermore, guided by Gronn's (2002) argument for expanding the unit of analysis in the study of leadership beyond the individual leader (e.g. the CEO), the study also adopted an embedded case study design to pay attention to subunits and contrasts within the case (Hartley

1994). Though the leadership hybridity perspective that guides the study, the understanding is that leadership capacity does not only reside in formal leaders (who are usually managers in the organization). Leadership is seen as a network of influence within a dynamic system and shifting situations. Thus, for greater representation of the leadership practice, multiple levels of participants were selected: including one CEO, five managers (who hereon are referred formally as ‘leaders’), six subordinates/lower level employees (who hereon are referred formally as ‘followers’), the top management team of eight leaders, and a work team of five followers that has been in the organization the longest and can provide more contextual and historical view of the organization’s leadership. In total, 11 participants will be interviewed one on one, some of whom also participated in the two focus groups.

In summary, a case study as a strategy of inquiry was chosen for the current study because:

- (a) It is empirical in nature. Study into the hybridity of leadership is very recent, and is predominantly highly theoretical (Gronn, 2008). A case study strategy will help build an empirical and contextual understanding of this phenomenon.
- (b) It provides a bounded system for exploring an emerging theory. At face value, the current case organization presents a unique enactment of both effective individual/focused leadership and distributed leadership patterns as the organization grows. It is therefore believed that distilling the uniqueness of the current case can expand our understanding leadership hybridity in small business.
- (c) Its embedded design allows for multiple units of analysis in the study of leadership. Gronn (2002) and other advocates of distributed leadership (e.g. Bolden, 2009) have criticized traditional leadership research to focus predominantly on one unit of analysis,

the individual leaders. An embedded case study design allows for other units of analysis to be explored, including teams.

### **Data collection Procedure and Tools**

**IRB approval.** The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Pepperdine University serves to monitor research conducted on human subjects to ensure that safety and rigor are employed in the conduct of research according to U.S. federal regulations. A proposal was submitted to the IRB to seek approval to conduct the study. The IRB reviewed the proposal and flagged areas to modify which I addressed. Once satisfied with the proposal, the IRB issued an approval letter which allowed the researcher to begin the process of formally negotiating entry into the case, selecting participants and beginning data collection procedures.

**Negotiating entry.** Upon ethical approval, the researcher sought entry into the case organization using a letter that was emailed to the CEO. This letter included: The purpose of the study, why the site was chosen, what time and resources are required, what will be accomplished at the site, timelines for all research activities, what potential there is for the researcher's presence to be disruptive and how that will be managed, what the organization will gain from the study, and how you will use and report the results (Creswell, 2009). The timeline proposed to the CEO included research activity spanning over three weeks' period from 5 March 2018 to 23 March 2018, but due to IRB only approving the study on the 21 March 2018, data was collected between 23 March 2018 to 9 April 2018. The sequence of research activity is outlined in Figure F below.

**Selecting participants.** Potential in-depth interview participants were identified using an organogram. As argued earlier, the aim was to include both leaders and followers in the study.



The selection of focus group participants also used the organogram to identify the top management team and a work team.

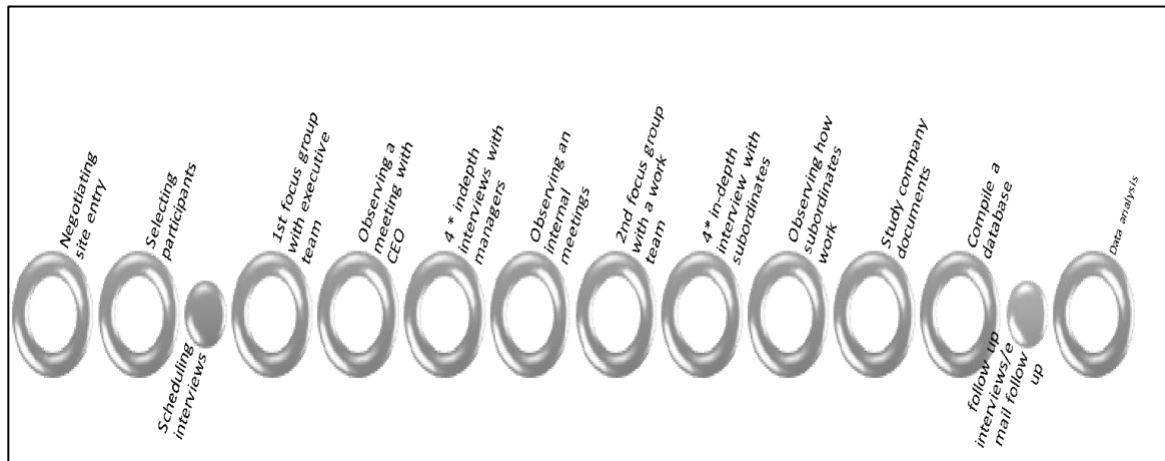


Figure 7. Planned sequence of research activity

Once a list of participants was compiled, a recruitment script was emailed to them.

Inclusion to the study is based on

- Having been employed by the company for more than six months.
- Accepting invitation to participate in the study
- Provides consent and signs informed consent form
- Available to participate in the interview time scheduled (45 mins)

The researcher compiled a master list of those who accept the invitation to participate, and meet the inclusion criteria. Only the researcher had access to this list. After each interview, the researcher coded the participant as either leader (e.g. 1m) or follower (e.g. 1s). This code helped to protect data that would reveal the participant's identity, and was only be known by the researcher.

**Informed consent.** Once participants accepted the invitation, an informed consent form was sent to the participants prior to the interview for them to familiarize themselves with the nature of the study, how the data will be collected, how anonymity will be upheld, and the extent

of confidentiality that can be provided. A printed version was brought to the interview for the participant to ask further questions and sign. This was scanned, and a copy was sent to the participant at the end of the interview. The first point of contact with participants began with informal visits to the site to become familiar with the context, organizational members to be included, the activities, and to schedule interviews and plan observations (as advised by Merriam, 2014). This was then followed by more intense and targeted data collection methods and tools that are discussed below. Most interviews and observations were conducted in the organization's offices and/or other spaces that met the participants' comfort to speak freely, practicality, and confidentiality requirements. Emails were used to follow up and confirm understanding from initial interviews.

**Interviews.** Interviews allow targeting the direct sources for insights (Yin, 2009). The study used two types of interviews: In-depth/intensive interviews and focus group interviews. In-depth interviews are commonly used by qualitative researchers to gain unique and important knowledge about the social world that can be understood and shared through the participant's point of view (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). They rely on a good partnership between the interviewer and the participant, and the researcher's ability to be natural and conversational, to build rapport with the participants, to listen actively, and to ask open-ended questions (Bauer & Gaskell, 2000; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Research question three which explores the shift between focused and distributed leadership calls for negotiating inter-subjectivity with participants as they reflect on how the shifts between focused and distributed leadership enactment changes them. This shift often involves an exchange in power and dissonance between a participant may see as ideal leadership (e.g. heroic) and what may be seen as weak, or even be seen as a lack of leadership (e.g. distributed) (Collinson & Collinson, 2009). Kvale (1994)

suggests using a form of dialogical inter-subjectivity within the interview as a privileged space for conversation and negotiation of meaning between the researcher and participant which helped.

Yin (2009) further recommends five case study skills which could be applicable to qualitative researchers in general: The researcher should be able to ask good questions and interpret answers, be a good listener, be adaptive and flexible, have a firm grasp of the issues being studied, and be unbiased by preconceived ideas. The aim is to gain issue-oriented and rich data from the perspective of selected individuals. In-depth interviews were guided by an interview guide developed using the theoretical framework and some from some of the recommendations for future research in leadership hybridity and distributed leadership discussed in chapter two. An interview guide (Merriam, 2014) is also referred to as a topic guide (Bauer & Gaskell, 2000), or a protocol (Creswell, 2009; Yin, 2009). Bauer and Gaskell (2000) further state that “a good topic guide will create an easy and comfortable framework for discussion, providing a logical and plausible progression through the issues in focus” (p. 40). The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed.

A focus group is an interview on a topic with a group of people who have knowledge of the topic (Cited in Merriam, 2014). Participants were purposively selected to include people with valuable insights on the topic to be explored. Patton (2002) further guides:

Unlike a series of one-on-one interviews, in a focus group participants get to hear each other’s responses and to make additional comments beyond their own original responses as they hear what other people have to say. However, participants need not agree with each other or reach any kind of consensus. Nor is it necessary for people to disagree. The object is to get high-quality data in a

social context where people can consider their own views in the context of the views of others (p. 386).

The social context provided by focus group interviews is a condition that helped us to explore the dynamism between individual and distributed leadership patterns within the organization. Two focus groups were conducted, one with the top management team, and the second with a work team. The social condition of the focus group helped to illuminate the follower's and leader's perspectives that parallaxes the view of leadership in the case. Similar to the one-on-one interviews, the two focus group interviews were guided by the same topic guide, audiotaped, and transcribed. Once the audio recording was transcribed, the audio- recording were deleted, and the transcription are stored in a secure cloud location. No email address or names will be identifiable on the transcription except the code. All interview data, including any paper notes used in the study, were coded, scanned, transcribed, and will be stored in a secure cloud location for three years.

**Participant observation.** Yin (2009) describes participant observation as a special mode of observation in which the researcher assumes a role or roles within the case study situation and participates in the events being studied. It provides an insider view and an opportunity to gain access to events and groups that would not otherwise gain as a researcher. Merriam (2014) states that observation is a research tool when it is systematic, addresses a specific research question, and is subject to the checks and balances in producing trustworthy results. One way to become a careful, systematic observer is to learn to pay attention to the details of your surroundings. Merriam (2014) recommends using a guide that stipulates the notes to be taken during observations. The observations of the current study included the physical office setting, the participants, activities and interactions (this illuminated leader-follower relations and

transitions), conversations, subtle factors (such as nonverbal communications, the significance of words used), and lastly my own behavior as the participant in the observations. Field notes on these observations were written at the end of the day by means of keeping a journal.

The researcher spent more time as a participant than an observer. Participant observation is used because: Firstly, an observer looking in will be better able to notice things that have become routine to the participants themselves. Secondly, observations are used to triangulate emerging findings to increase the credibility of the study. Third, a participant observer will be able to see things firsthand and use their knowledge and expertise in interpreting what is observed rather than relying on once removed accounts from interviews. Using the criteria outlined by Merriam (2014) the researcher participated in three main observations:

- The strategic orientation week: This was 5 days where the whole company came together to set goals for 2023. Each day was dedicated to setting strategic and SMART (Specific, measurable, ambitious, realistic, and time-bound) goals per department, led by different department leads.
- A client pitch meeting: The CEO and a department lead were presenting an innovation and digital campaign proposal to one of their newer corporate and multi-national client.
- After hours collaborations: The researcher discovered that the current case organization had a culture of working long hours, and in one of the interviews, it was mentioned how many spontaneous collaborations occurred during that time, which was key to the study.

**Study of documents.** Atkinson and Coffey (1997) refer to documents as ‘social facts’ which are produced, shared, and used in socially organized ways (p. 47). Both printed and electronic documents were used as a “stimulus for paths of inquiry” (Patton, 2002, p. 143) that can be further pursued through observation and interviewing. The study made use of the case

organization's documents which included:

- Client Feedback Survey Report: This is an in-depth report of the client's experience feedback of the case organization.
- Team Leadership Psychometric Report: This is a summary analysis of the top management team on psychological assessments such as Myers Brigg Type Indicator, Cognitive Processing Profile, Baron Emotional Quotient, and the Leadership Circle.

The aim was to paint a fuller picture of how leaders and followers in the organization interact and what informed that. The documents also presented a different and almost slightly more 'objective' point of view on the case organization. themselves in different situations which illuminates the inquiry of the second research question. It may answer questions related to the organization's context, culture, success, etc. These are all important consideration in the study of the hybridity of leadership.

**Data analysis.** Data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously in qualitative research (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2014). As the data is collected, the researcher made sense of it, and this parallel process played a role in directing the researcher on where to look next, and who to interview next. Therefore, the data collected from interviews, observations, and documents were analyzed as soon as it was collected to help direct the researcher's attention and to refine or verifying hunches (Merriam, 2014).

The researcher collected and analyzed the data to answer the three research questions across the various data sources. Table F below describes the data to be collected in relation to the research questions.

Table 5

## Research Questions and Data Source

Research Question	Data source
1. How is leadership focused and distributed as the organization grows?	Focus group interviews In-depth interviews Participant Observations Company Documents
2. What is the role of culture in the hybrid patterns of leadership enacted in the organization?	Focus group interviews Participant Observations Company Documents
3. How are individual leaders changed during the shifts between focused and distributed leadership?	Focus group interviews In-depth interviews Participant Observations

Merriam (2014) recommends having a system to manage and organize the data throughout its collection. Coding is a crucial component of data analysis. Merriam (2014) describes coding as “some sort of shorthand designation to various aspects of your data so that you can easily retrieve specific pieces of the data” (p. 173). At this point, data from all sources, which include the interview transcripts, observation field notes, documents, and records was compiled into what Yin (2008) refers to as a case study database. This comprehensive database was analyzed holistically to get an overall story from the data.

Guided by Boeije’s (2010) spiral of analysis framework, the data was analyzed using opening coding, axial coding, and theoretical coding. According to Boeije (2010), opening coding is a good first step to segment the data into large categories of what the researcher sees as relevant or meaningful. The embedded design of the case study adds another level of complexity at this stage as the data will also be organized from different points of view. The researcher often asked herself “what are the followers saying about leadership?” and “what are the leaders saying

about leadership?”, “what are areas of convergence and divergence also amongst the different data sources between interviews, observations and documents?”. This added multilayers to the story, even from the open coding stage.

After major categories are deduced, axial coding was applied to focus on the core phenomenon that is emerging and to interpret the story the data is telling. The spiraling and iterative nature of qualitative analysis allows for the researcher to go back to the data to recreate categories relevant to the core phenomenon. Analysis of the first question for example may look out for how leadership is enacted in the business particularly situated to business growth. For example, the researcher looked at relationships between leadership styles, leading together, and the context of fast-growth or emergence here. Moreover, analysis also looked at how comparable the views of the same question between leaders and followers. The researcher here would often ask: How do the leader and followers views differ or converge on this particular phenomenon of leadership?

Lastly, the emerging phenomenon is further organized through theoretical coding. At this stage, I made sense of the data through the theoretical frameworks of leadership of emergence, focused leadership, distributed leadership, and leadership hybridity described in chapter two. The analysis at this stage involved the researcher asking questions like “how does this add or disconfirm what we already know about distributed leadership?” or “How does this extend on our understanding of leadership hybridity?”. An example of the coding process is outlined in Table below using the first research question which is:

*RQ 1. How is leadership focused and distributed in the fast growing small business?*



Table 6

Three Steps Coding Process Example

Coding Phase	Analysis Function	Example
<i>Open Coding</i>	To create tentative categories for chunks of data that summarize what the researcher sees happening	Visionary leadership ; leading together; transformational leadership; empowered to lead; sharing responsibilities; growing the business together; navigating ambiguity; experimental leaders
<i>Axial Coding</i>	To identifying relationships among the open codes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A shared vision to grow the business</li> <li>- People empowered differently determined by their formal leader or follower role</li> <li>- Shared leadership responsibility occurs amongst ‘core’ executives</li> <li>- Both followers and leaders are free to experiment with new ideas</li> <li>- Both followers and leaders are growing quickly through fast business growth</li> </ul>
<i>Theoretical Coding</i>	To connect emerging codes and categories to theories of focused and distributed leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Distributed leadership occurs for particular projects (and spontaneous collaboration play a big part of it)</li> <li>- Distribution of leadership occurs when CEO wants a particular skill</li> <li>- Strong CEO <i>Visionary leadership</i> is used to inspire others towards growth and becoming leaders</li> </ul>

In developing a model from the case study, the study used inductive exploration and

discovery present in thick descriptions of the case from the different data sources, while also using deductive techniques to refine what is already understood from the theoretical foundation of leadership hybridity in relation to what was emerging. Charmaz (2006) explains the relevance of coding in the context of building a theory or model as “the pivotal link between the collected data and developing an emergent theory [or model] to explain these data” (p. 46). Through the different levels of coding, I defined what was happening in the data and grapple with what it meant. Once the study reached its point of saturation, the combination of data insights constituted the findings of the study, which will be represented in the form of a leadership hybridity framework in chapter five.

### **Trustworthiness of the Qualitative Study**

**Trustworthiness of the researcher.** The researcher was the key instrument of data collection and analysis in qualitative research (Boeije, 2010; Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 2014). And while the researcher could not be neutral or objective (Creswell, 2009), there are strategies that can be applied to contribute to trustworthiness. The first is to acknowledge biases. The researcher is a leadership development practitioner and holds certain views about what effective leadership looks like. She has a preference for the distributed leadership approach to leading organizations over a focused leadership approach. It was therefore important for the researcher to go through ongoing reflexivity about her interpretation of the data, and keep the participants’ voices authentic and represented as their own in the findings. Secondly, triangulation is another strategy that increased the credibility of the researcher as a research instrument. This involves comparing and contrasting the data sources and methods in the case study database, and going back to her participants to check if the transcripts represented them authentically.

Moreover, Yin (2009) believes that because case studies are about contemporary human

affairs in real life contexts, the researcher followed the highest ethical standards to protect the humans involved. To conduct the case study with the utmost sensitivity and care, Yin (2009) makes suggestions, two of which this study employed:

- Gaining informed consent from all persons participating in the study. This includes informing them about the nature of the study and soliciting their voluntary participation.
- Protecting participants through privacy and confidentiality, and expressing the limits of confidentiality in a focus group situation. This is particularly important because managers and subordinates will be interacting within the study. Only those who are willing to participate in the study will be included. Participants will also be notified that they can withdraw their participation at any point in the study. Moreover, participants codes (e.g. participant 1m) were used to protect the participants identity.

### **Trustworthiness of the Results**

**Credibility.** Internal validity deals with the extent to which the research findings match reality (Merriam, 2014). The idea of achieving validity in general is problematic through a constructivist and qualitative approach because the essence of this worldview and research design is that reality is multiple and constantly changing. The ethical goal instead was to capture people's constructions of reality in a credible way (Merriam, 2014). As mentioned earlier, the study made use of triangulation to increase credibility. As described in its design, the study plans to use multiple data collection methods, multiple sources, and different but comparable patterns of leadership theories to make sense of the data. Moreover, respondent validation where the researcher asks feedback from some participants on the emerging findings was another strategy

used to increase credibility. Respondent validation helped the researcher check her own biases and avoided misinterpretations (Merriam, 2014).

Yin (2009) provides three strategies for improving construct validity: Using multiple sources of evidence, having key informants review the case study report, and maintaining a chain of evidence. To adhere to these strategies, the study used intensive interviews, focus group interviews, observations, and organizational documents to contribute to producing rigorous results. I also requested the CEO of the organization to review and provide his feedback on the case study report. The comprehensive case study database will help maintain records of the data that has been analyzed.

**Consistency.** Reliability refers to the extent to which the study can be replicated to achieve similar results (Creswell, 2009). This measure is also problematic in qualitative research and the social sciences because it assumes that human behavior is static, whereas “the social world is assumed to be in flux, multifaceted, and highly contextual” (Merriam, 2014, p. 222). Merriam (2014) further argues that the most relevant question for qualitative research is whether the results are consistent with the data collected. Two strategies for increasing consistency include the creation of the case study protocol (i.e. the interview guide), and development of a case study database, both of which has been described in depth earlier.

**Transferability.** External validity is concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations (Merriam, 2014). External validity or transferability will be low in this study because one case is not sufficient to reject or disprove general propositions (Yin, 2009). My goal with this case study is to expand and refine an understanding of hybrid leadership patterns as a small business forms a new configuration. Therefore, findings contribute to an analytical generalization, rather than a statistical one which could contain

lessons that could perhaps be transferred to the extent of other small businesses with similar contextual conditions.

## Chapter Four: Findings

### Introduction

Leadership studies have predominantly looked at leadership focused on individual leaders that occupy formal positions. Only recently do accounts of post-heroic leadership, such as distributed leadership, emerge, mostly as a replacement of focused leadership. The purpose of the current study is to explore leadership hybridity as a new concept that seeks harmony between both focused and distributed leadership. The study situates this concept in a South African culture and the context of a fast growing small business which has unique conditions for the enactment of leadership. The following research questions informed the study:

- (a) How is leadership focused and distributed in the fast growing small business?
- (b) How does culture influence the hybridity of leadership enacted in the small business?
- (c) How are individual leaders changed during the shifts between focused and distributed leadership?

This chapter responds to these questions and presents the findings from data collected through 11 in-depth interviews, two focus group interviews, the researcher's observations in the organization, and the study of organizational documents.

**The case organization.** The study employed a single case study methodology of a small business in Johannesburg, South Africa. This is a creative agency dedicated to supporting client organizations drive business growth through brand centered innovation. It was founded in 2013 by a group of young black African entrepreneurs who are passionate about exploring digital innovation and creativity in business, which was something unique in South Africa at the time. This organization is described on their website as “an innovation ecosystem that combines people, theories, global and local ideas, art, technology, stories, news and experiences to

innovate for their clients”. Started by five founding members, this small business today provides world class consulting services to large multinational corporations, and is completely black-owned and managed. This has particular socio-economic and political relevance in South Africa, a country with a long history of economic exclusion through the legacy of Apartheid and post-Apartheid challenges for the black population. Since inception, the business has tripled in annual growth revenue every financial year since and has grown in size from an initial five founding entrepreneurs to 20 permanent employees. Their projections for the next five years suggest further growth of their business in size, revenue, space, profitability, and complexity. The study is therefore situated within this dynamic state of growth that is being navigated by organizational leaders and followers.

**Participants.** Data was collected from a total of 17 participants ( $N = 17$ ) across 11 in-depth interviews and two focus group interviews. While the organizational structure is rather flat, eight of the participants could be identified higher up on the hierarchy (They could be referred to as formal leaders) and nine of the participants are at lower levels (They could be described as formal followers). All participants were black and came from varying cultural backgrounds. There were eight females and nine males in total, with 75% of formal leaders being male. Participants also tenured between 6 months to 5 years (founding year) in the business with their age ranging from 24 years to 35 years old. Participants job roles varied within the creative and digital marketing space. The demographics table below organizes this data.

**Data collection.** This study employed a single case study research design where data was collected from one organization (but across multiple levels) which was instrumental to understanding focused and distributed leadership in the context of fast dynamic small business growth. Data was generated between 21 March 2018 to 9 April 2018

Table 7

## Participant Demographics

#	Code	Tenure	Gender	Job role	Formal Leader	Formal Follower
1	1m	Founding member	male	Chief Executive Officer	√	
2	2m	Founding member	male	Finance and Operations Manager	√	
3	4m	3 years	male	Accounts Manager	√	
4	5m	9 months	female	Social Media Manager	√	
5	6s	18 months	female	Accounts Manager		√
6	7s	2 years	male	Accounts Manager		√
7	8s	Founding member	male	Creative lead		√
8	9s	1 year	female	Research Analyst		√
9	15s	4 years	male	Accounts Manager		√
10	16s	18 months	female	Administrator		√
11	17m	Founding member	female	Business Development Lead	√	
12	14m	6 months	female	Accounts Director	√	
13	3m	Founding member	male	Digital Lead	√	

(Continued)



#	Code	Tenure	Gender	Job role	Formal Leader	Formal Follower
14	10m	6 months	male	Content Manager	√	
15	11s	1 year	female	Community Intern		√
16	12s	1 year	female	Social Media consultant		√
17	13s	6 months	male	Digital Technician		√

In-depth interviews were conducted with 11 participants of five leaders and six followers. Two focus group interviews were conducted with the leadership team and the digital studio work team consisting of only followers. While the initial plan was to have the both the leaders and followers of the work team participate in the second focus group interview, it proved difficult to get insights from followers with their leaders present because of the team dynamics at the time. And because I had interviewed the two leaders in the team, I wanted to hear more from the followers and therefore made the decision to continue with just them. Nonetheless, I noted this observation for it to inform my analysis of the findings. In addition to focus group interviews, data was also collected through participant observation. The researcher noted observations from the organization's strategic orientation week workshops, attended a pitch meeting with the organization's client and two leaders in the business, and thirdly, observed interactions after-hours in the office. Lastly, data was also collected through the study of document. In particular, the researcher used a client feedback survey and the leadership team psychometric report. Audio recordings were transcribed after each interview. This was instrumental to do at the beginning to

assess how participants answered the interview questions and if further probes were needed to make clarifications. The final interview schedule included the following questions:

Table 8

Interview Questions

Research Questions	Corresponding Interview Questions
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe your experience of leadership in your organization?</li> </ul> <p>Probes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Who have been the main leadership actors and how do they positively influence the organization?</li> <li>b. How has this shifted and changed over time in the organization?</li> <li>c. How has fast business growth affected leadership/influence in the organization?</li> <li>d. What has been some of the leadership behaviors that has propelled the company through business growth?</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How would you describe your individual leadership style?</li> <li>• If leadership could be seen as a group quality, what would it look like in your organization?</li> </ul> <p>Probes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss spontaneous collaborations</li> <li>• Discuss intuitive working relationships</li> <li>• Discuss Institutional practice: What structures and processes support this?</li> <li>• What is usually distributed or shared, to whom, how, where, when, and why?</li> </ul>

(Continued)

Research Questions	Corresponding Interview Questions
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How would you describe your organization’s culture ?</li> <li>• How does your organizational culture influence how leadership happens in your organization?</li> </ul> <p>Probes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. How does it lend itself to focused and/or distributed leadership?</li> <li>b. How does leaders affect the culture of the organization?</li> </ol>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you transition from follower-leader or leader-follower?</li> <li>• What do you notice about yourself when you co-lead with others?</li> <li>• Probe: How are you changed?</li> </ul>

Microsoft Excel was used to create a case study database which included data that was coded from transcripts, the researcher’s field notes from observations, and the study of two organizational documents. The different data sources supported the trustworthiness of the data collection through triangulation. Themes emerged from the codes and will be used to discuss the three research questions.

**Presentation of findings**

The interview questions above were asked to all participants in in-depth and focus group interviews which included a mixed sample of followers and leaders to ultimately explore the three research questions. The findings are presented in the form of themes that emerged from the interview questions. While these themes were highly interwoven in response to the main research questions, they will be organized by interview questions. In addition to participant responses,

findings also stemmed from document analysis and participant observations from the researcher which will be interlinked in support of the themes. The table of themes below illustrates a summary of themes per interview questions stemming from research questions which are presented in more depth thereafter.

Table 9

Summary of Themes

Research Question (RQ)	Interview Question (IQ)	Theme
1. How is leadership focused and distributed in the fast growing small business?	1. Describe your experience of leadership in your organization?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1a: Fast business growth creating chaos and complexity which exposes leadership gaps.</li> <li>- 1b: There are key leadership actors who emerge to influence the organization in different ways.</li> <li>- 1c: There is opportunity to lead and leadership is emerging outside of formal roles</li> </ul>
	2. How would you describe your individual leadership style?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2a: Both leaders and followers are in the process of learning leadership</li> <li>- 2b: The leadership style is deeply mediated by trust.</li> <li>- 2c: Most leadership styles could be located in the post-heroic paradigm.</li> <li>- 2d: Directive leadership styles interact with more collaborative styles overtime.</li> </ul>
	3. If leadership could be seen as a group quality, what would it look like in your organization?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3a: Distribution of leadership is haphazard and reactive.</li> <li>- 3b: Spontaneous collaborations have historically been used for collective sense making in the business.</li> <li>- 3c: Leadership is exclusively distributed amongst the top management team who are founders and have strong and long term friendships.</li> <li>- 3d: The organization's open plan space design is effectively in service of distributing leadership.</li> </ul>

(Continued)

Research Question (RQ)	Interview Question (IQ)	Theme
2. How does culture influence the hybridity of leadership enacted in the small business?	4. How would you describe your organization's culture ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 4a: The culture is in transition as the business is growing creating a disoriented feel.</li> <li>- 4b: There is a strong bond around being black together in South Africa.</li> <li>- 4c: The culture is embedded in an Afrocentric of doing things.</li> <li>- 4d: The organization is youthful, vibrant, and disruptive in nature.</li> <li>- 4e: There is a good mix of soft and hard business qualities.</li> </ul>
	5. How does your organizational culture influence how leadership happens in your organization?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 5a: There is a strong relationship between culture and leadership.</li> </ul>
	6. How do leaders affect the culture in the organization?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 6a: Leaders have heart creating a warm culture.</li> <li>- 6b: There is a sense of ubuntu that creates deep respect in the company.</li> <li>- 6c: Leaders are open and accommodating creating a culture where people have autonomy.</li> <li>- 6d: New leaders coming into the organization disrupt the status quo.</li> </ul>
3. How are individual leaders changed during the shifts between focused and distributed leadership?	7. How do you transition from follower-leader or leader-follower?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 7a: There is a natural leader-follower transition when the overall approach is to be of service.</li> <li>- 7b: Leaders need to exhibit intentional behaviors that facilitate leader-follower fluidity.</li> <li>- 7c: The transition is supported by a discursive environment that supports a strong feedback mechanism.</li> <li>- 7d: Followers and leaders approach leadership as a learning opportunity that involves a lot of mistakes and failures.</li> <li>- 7e: Having established rapport with each other facilitates the leader-follower transition.</li> </ul>
	8. What do you notice about yourself when you co-lead with others?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 8a: There is a lightbulb moment driven by deep empathy, self-reflection, and self-awareness which leads to enhanced self-regulation.</li> <li>- 8b: There is a gradual movement from fear, to letting go of control, to acceptance.</li> <li>- 8c: Raised pride and esteem in self and other's leadership capability.</li> </ul>

## Research Question 1

The primary RQ guiding the inquiry of this study asks: How is leadership focused and distributed in a fast growing small business situated in South Africa?

1. Describe your experience of leadership in your organization?

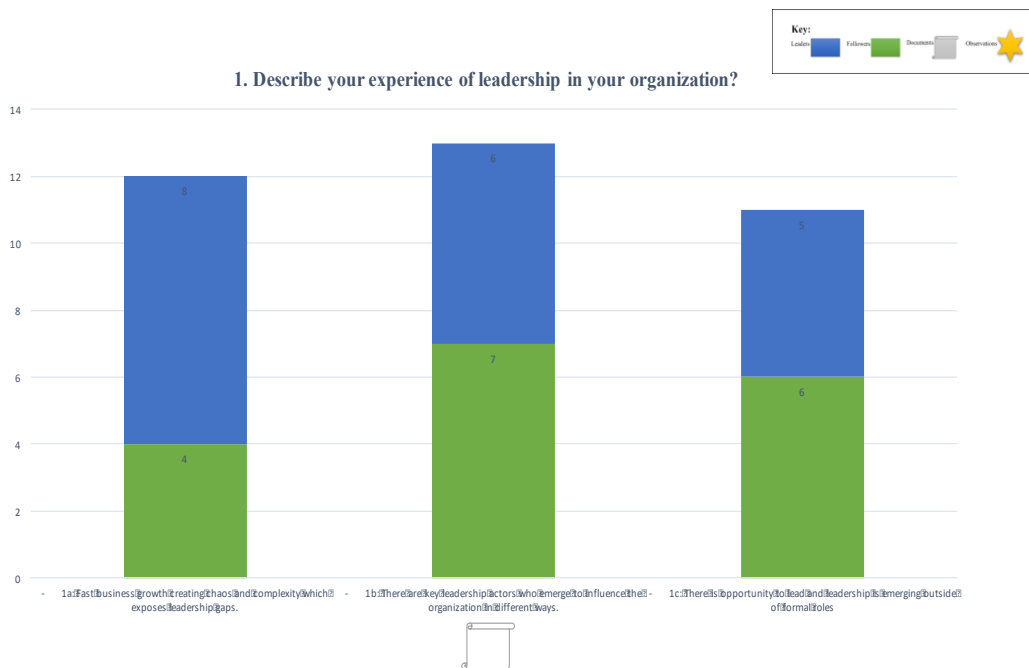


Figure 8. Interview question 1 results distribution

**Theme 1a: Fast business growth creating chaos and complexity which exposes leadership gaps.** This theme sets the tone by describing the context of fast business growth and how that is affecting how leadership is happening in the organization. 85.7% of participants who identified as leaders acknowledge that the business is undergoing dynamic growth and that it is forcing all organizational members to emerge as leaders. Participant 1m expands, “Growth has been fast. In fact I would of liked it to be a little slower because what you get is leadership gaps, and the business forcing you to become someone”. Fast business growth almost guarantees that a lot of mistakes will happen as the business undergoes constant pressure to respond and learn fast

in order to survive. This finding was also supported by the client report with clients mentioning how fast the business was growing and the gaps and concern they had about the company needing to develop fast in order to meet their client's needs.

**Theme 1b: There are key leadership actors who emerge to influence the organization in different ways.** Participants report that there are formal leaders who influence the organization from their positions. The four main leadership actors were identified and described by 76% of participants interviewed below, and some of the descriptions had great overlap with their personality profiles from the MBTI assessment when studying the Leadership Team Psychometric report.

- The CEO, the main strategist, decision-maker and visionary – which is congruent to his MBTI type as an ENTJ (Extroverted, Intuitive, Thinking, Judging), who are often described as ‘natural born leaders’.
- The Finance Director, quietly creates order and structure – This was consistent with his ISTJ (Introverted, Sensing, Thinking, Judging) personality from the MBTI, a type that has strengths such as being calm, practical, responsible, and efficient.
- The Digital Lead, leads with passion for his digital craft, and excitement for creative projects, which brings the most business to the company - it is very common ENTPs (Extroverted, Intuitive, Thinking, Perceiving), to enjoy moving from project to project in search for thrill and creativity.
- The Accounts Manager, creates disruption and chaos for change – also an ENTP, who are known for creating robust debaters which at times create disorder and conflicting ideas to the forefront.

Moreover, within this group of main leadership actors, the CEO is perceived as the ultimate hero with superior knowledge, best decision-making capability, and the one who is expected to give direction when the business is under pressure. A few participants echo this:

- “People freeze under pressure. They look up to the CEO for direction, and for him to be the final decision maker” (Participant 1m)
- “A lot of our success can be attributed by our CEO open and coaching leadership style” (Participant 4m)
- “Our CEO is very influential and obviously his leadership is top. (Researcher: What do you mean by that?) I mean he thinks different. He's got a strategic mind. That's something that I'm still trying to learn to have so there are a lot of questions that I come to him for guidance” (Participant 5m).

**Theme 1c: There is opportunity to lead and leadership is emerging outside of formal roles.** This theme reports that the fast business growth provides opportunity for everyone to step up as leaders to fill growing gaps. In addition to formal leadership, 65% of participants’ state that leadership is also occurring from within teams through initiating tasks, being proactive depending on experience an exposure, and people showing up more strongly to influence situations. Participant 4m further expands:

As the business grows there are more people to lead whereas before there was sort of less of that but now you'll see there's a lot more---which I think is positive. [...] You recognize that there are leadership gaps like certain positions aren't there or there's a lack of someone to do this particular thing. For example, at an early stage, though Participant 8s was a critical person in designing and making those decisions, when the gap appeared, to say "look but



there's a need for a creative and someone to lead the creative processes. It was OK, there's a gap there and someone stepped in”.

This was also observed during the strategic orientation week. While most strategy in organizations is usually set by top management team, this week of organization strategy workshops included all organizational members and encouraged them to lead certain streams.

2. How would you describe your individual leadership style?

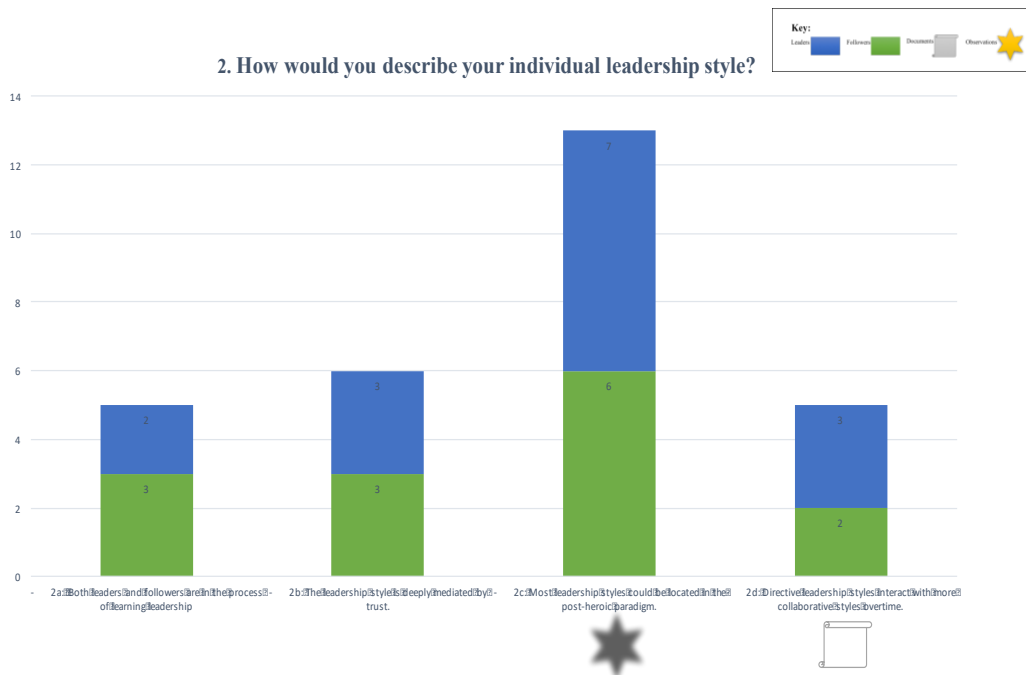


Figure 9. Interview question 2 results distribution

**Theme 2a: Both leaders and followers are in the process of learning leadership.** While only 29% participants were able to mention their leadership styles, the remaining struggled to articulate a definite style. Instead, they admitted that leadership was a learning process for them and that they were still figuring it out. This was due to little years of leadership experience, with two follower participants stating that they does not see themselves as a leader. This was well articulated by participant 1m stating “everyone is growing into their roles, no one is fully naturalized into their positions, no one has been a leader for so and so years, so we’re all still

learning how are and how to lead”. This was echoed by participant 17m, “I don’t know if I have a style, I’m still in the process of figuring it out, it’s a trial and error situation”.

**Theme 2b: The leadership style is deeply mediated by trust.** Three leader participants expressed that their leadership style was dependent on the trust shared between followers and other leaders. Participant 2m (a leader) states: “I must say, it depends on whether I trust a person. If I do, I will let someone run with it, but if I don’t, I will be a task master, and micro-manage”. This was consistent with an account from Participant 6s, a follower, who represented two other followers,

But that's generally because Participant 4m trusts me so much, the bulk of the work sits with me and then is not distributed to anyone else. I don't mind doing the work. I'm here to work, but I just think it's unfair on the other people that are in the team. They aren't learning to lead at the same pace I am.

**Theme 2c: Most leadership styles could be located in the post-heroic paradigm.** 76% accounts of those who did describe their leadership styles used very post-heroic language to do so. Some of the descriptions from both leaders and followers included the following:

- “I tend to lead from the back” (Participant 4m)
- “I think my style is inclusive and collaborative, I’m working on my empathy to improve relationships” (Participant 5m)
- “I could describe my style as a quiet kind of leadership” (Participant 2m)
- “I think my style acknowledges that you need all participants. You know how wolves lead a pack? You need to sometimes lead from the back because there are people sometimes that actually know what they're doing and I believe that's why they're here so it isn't really my job to determine how e.g. creativity translates” (Participant 8s)

- “It’s like an uncle at the back of a bicycle, pushing you along, making sure you learn”  
(Participant 15s)

**Theme 2d: Directive leadership styles interact with more collaborative styles overtime.**

Three participants who identified as leaders, particularly those who were also founding members note that at the initial stages of the business, their leadership styles centered around wanting control which came from a strong need to protect the business. Participant 2m states, “It’s about trying to keep the lights on, so you want to protect the business until you can trust that people will step up”. Moreover, participant 1m’s visionary and strategic style as the principal founder is still very active in the business but is now also coupled with stronger coaching, discursive, and collaborative leadership behaviors to support the emergence of other leaders in the business.

Participant 1m further states:

I think I have a very clear picture of where the organization is going and what needs to happen, and the trick now is getting people involved in driving it forward without me being front and center. [...] So I have a lot of dialogue with the guys, I’m trying to stretch people, making sure we are all learning faster

These elements of his leadership were echoed in his Leadership Circle profile within the psychometric report document which revealed that he was quite collaborative and relationship focused in his leadership, while also in a healthy balance adept at focusing on the tasks.

Although, he identifies as an ENTJ, the Leadership Circle report also noted very little need for control in his leadership approach.

3. If leadership could be seen as a group quality, what would it look like in your organization?

**Theme 3a: Distribution of leadership is haphazard and reactive.** The five participants report that while leadership is distributed, it could be more proactive and more efficiently structured. Leadership is often shared in reaction to a problem, and often when people are under pressure, or when the organization is going through a crisis. During that chaos, people’s leadership capabilities are often over-stretched and require an individual leader (often the CEO) to pause the situation and facilitate the distribution of leadership. Participant 5m states, “It happens a lot [referring to spontaneous collaborations, a component of distributed leadership], and I’m not sure if it’s a good or bad thing.

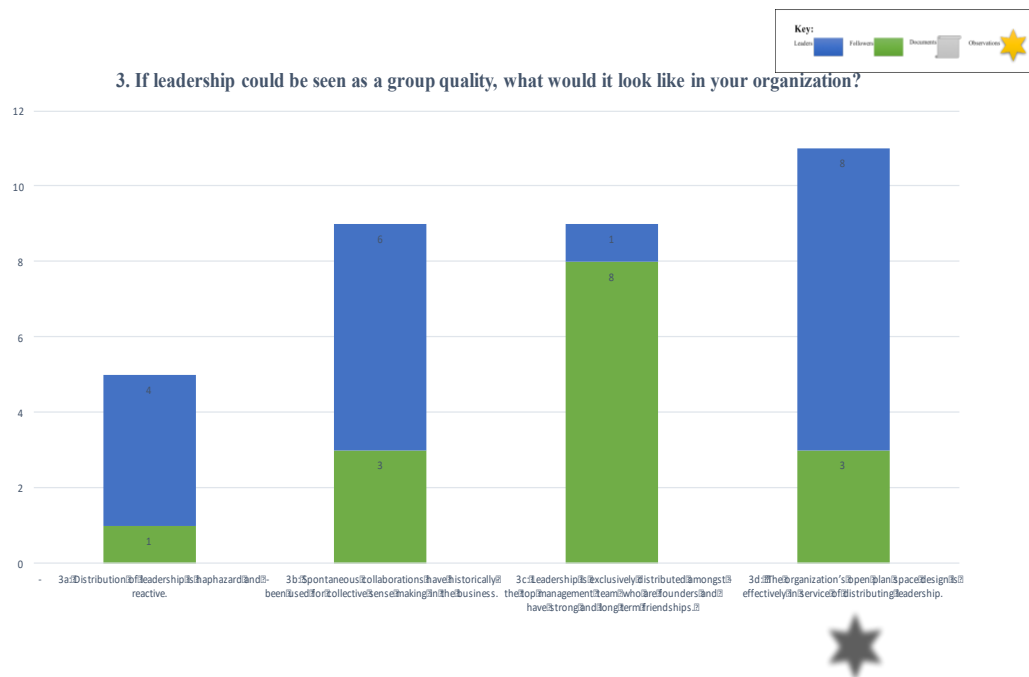


Figure 10. Interview question 3 results distribution

It’s usually in reaction to a problem, and it feels kind of unhealthy”. This is congruent to a statement from participant 1m “It [spontaneous collaborations] could be more proactive”. The researcher also witnessed this haphazardness which spanned into after-hours times of ongoing sense-making and sense-giving as the team de-brief on the pressures of the day and how to tackle the problems they were having with a client.

**Theme 3b: Spontaneous collaborations have historically been used for collective sense making in the business.** All four founding members note that spontaneous collaborations have been their way of working in the company since the business' beginning stages. Participant 2m expressed how "spontaneous collaborations have carried the organization since five years ago, when they first started out". Three out of four founders further state that spontaneous collaborations have been their way of creating collective sense making and sense-giving in a culture that favors robust discourse with each other. This was further supported by three follower participants. As a creative agency, this usually occurs via people huddling over briefs that come in from clients and going through the creativity process together to come up with the best solution for their clients. Two leaders further note that everyone is open to make sense of situations without the hindrance of hierarchy and formal processes. This is encapsulated through the following statement from Participant 1m,

Everyone can do something that is critical to the business. Everyone can touch something that is usually ring-fenced for seniority. Everyone can influence... Sometimes you need to come into a situation and bring calm, sometimes you need to be a sense maker but it's that... that's expected of everyone.

**Theme 3c: Leadership is exclusively distributed amongst the top management team who are founders and have strong and long term friendships.** While most (6 of 8) leaders generally believe that there is opportunity and expectation for shared leadership stated above and also through the leadership team focus group, four followers in in-depth interviews note that leadership is concentrated at the top. It is also noted that these managers share strong friendship ties which portrays a 'boys club' exclusivity that alienates them from others, and makes it difficult for leadership to trickle down. This was further echoed in the followers focus group

interviews. This exclusivity is further aggravated by a longstanding founder's culture of working late which the researcher noted was where intuitive working relations and spontaneous collaborations occur most naturally and frequently. Participant 6s states:

The founders are friends, so they will intuitively work together. And also they also just happen to be part of MANCO and that means they'll work even more together. If

Participant 1m wants something he's more likely to ask Participant 4m than me if the four of us are in a meeting together.

Participant 15s respectively further expresses:

It's very top heavy, which is weird for a small business. It feels like a long trickle down" One leader acknowledges that it's easier to share leadership when you have a trust relationship (such as a friendship), he poses the question "while essentially people have autonomy in the organization, how do you distribute relational things such as trust?" (Participant 4m)

**Theme 3d: The organization's open plan space design is effectively in service of distributing leadership.** Five leader participants express that the organization's open plan design is one shining example of distributed leadership through institutional practice and structure. This is also supported by the researcher's observation of the office which is open plan, has glass walls, has little spaces for privacy with the exception of the sound proof boardroom and finance office. The office is dominated by a large central space referred to as the 'Collaboration Space', and has constant loud chatter and lively debate.

Participant 4m states, "we've created a collaboration area (see Figure 8) which is a space where people are meant to be intuitively doing just that [i.e. spontaneously collaborating]". Furthermore, six participants, 50% leaders and 50% followers also state how the open plan design allows one to tap into conversations and gives anyone who hears mistakes being made a

shared responsibility to act and correct. Participant 4m states, “You’re an earshot of hearing someone make a mistake and it becomes your responsibility to speak up. It is an expectation and people are provided with the resources to do so”.

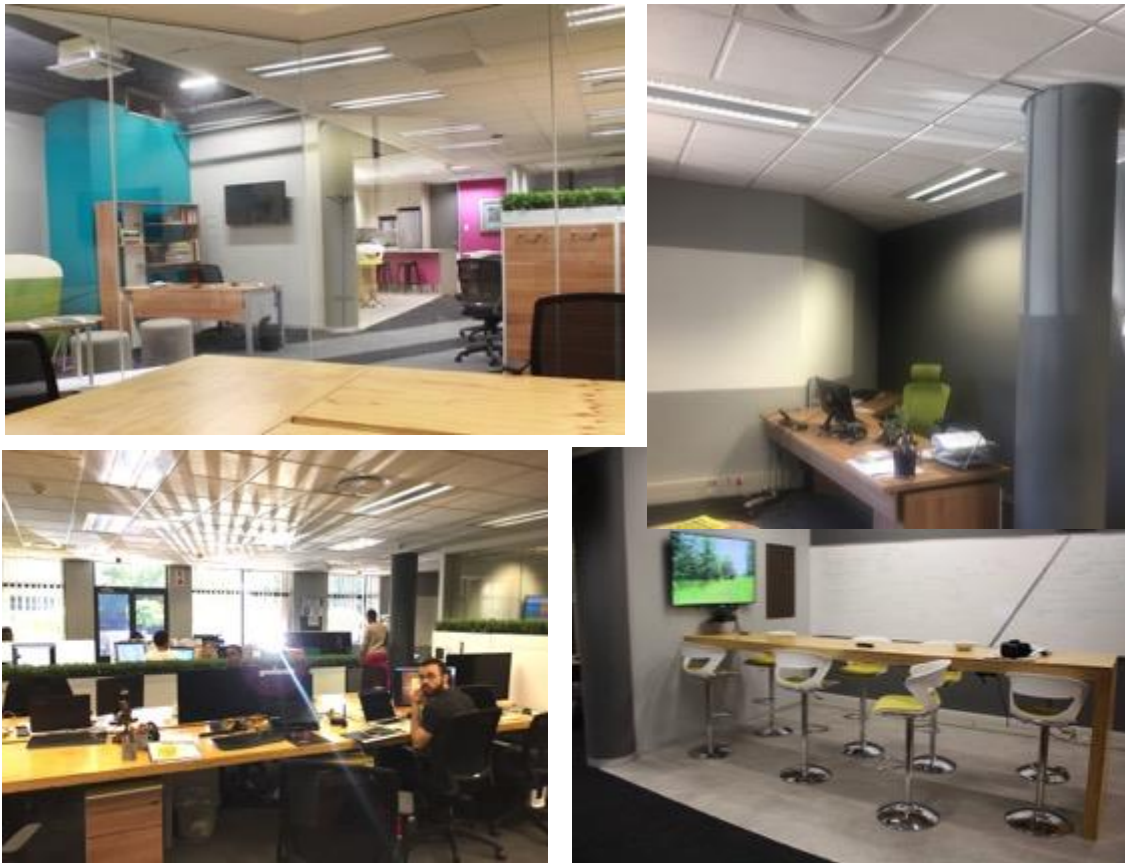


Figure 11. Office space design

## Research Question 2

The secondary research question is; *how does culture influence the hybridity of leadership enacted in the small business?* The following themes were generated per corresponding interview questions.

4. How would you describe your organization’s culture ?

**Theme 4a: The culture is in transition as the business is growing creating a disoriented feel.**

Three leaders and two followers note that the current culture is changing and feels rather fragmented and not fully identifiable.

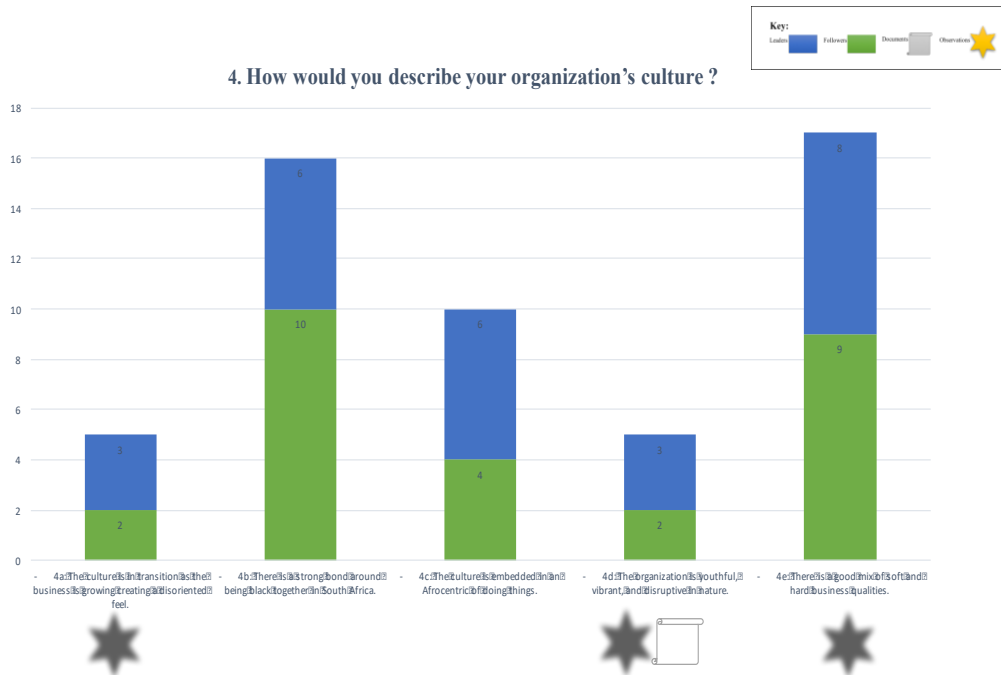


Figure 12. Interview question 4 results distribution

While Participant 5m (who has only been with the company for 6 months) notes that there is something that differentiates the company, she also referenced that she just can't put her finger on it. She further states,

[...]They were very unique in the sense that they stood for something. I just don't know what that something is but it's there. It's not set in stone, it's not evident and it's not thrown in your face, and I think that's something that it should be if it's an identifier.

This finding is also supported by the researcher's observation of strategic orientation week where one of the topics was an intentional rebranding and repositioning of the company's internal and external feel.

**Theme 4b: There is a strong bond around being black together in South Africa.**



Eleven participants (6 leaders, 5 followers) in in-depth interviews referenced how being black was a big part of who they are as a company and that came with a sense of pride and empowerment rather than a deficiency. Having said that, participants acknowledge the politics of being black in South Africa. Participant 1m shares,

Everyone has this story of how they were undermined or marginalized in places where there were white people in management in organization. And everyone comes here and they go, wow my opinion matters and I'm black and no one is asking me why. This is all just based on the quality of what I'm saying and the quality of what I'm producing. I think that galvanizes us a lot as a collective.

Similarly and in addition to that, being black is also about proving that they are amazing at what they do, which requires going the extra mile most of the times. This theme was echoed by three leaders and five followers in the two focus groups. Participant 8s supports it by stating:

We have to be 20 times better than anyone out there. In that sense there's that fight to prove that we're here, we are black, and we can do this. That's the one thing I can say trickles down quite strongly especially if you're client facing because you feel like you have to prove yourself almost all the time in the work that you produce.

**Theme 4c: The culture is embedded in an Afrocentric of doing things.** While being black and African are related, the participants made a distinction between the two. Ten participants (6 leaders, 4 followers) expressed how being African was in their organizational guiding principles and embedded in their ways of working. When probed about what this meant, Participant 15s expressed, “I think being African is rooted in deep empathy and to a certain degree I feel as if the organization is empathetic even with how we deal with each other”.

A sense of empathy was echoed by all ten participants. Another key descriptor of being African centered around seeing and treating each other as human first, being accepting of each other, and creating a sense of family and home in the organization. Participant 2m states how “fundamentally at a human level there is acceptance of each other” and participant 17m (who has been socialized as black American) further states, “At the core, our differentiator is that we are empathetic and this place is home. That is very Afrocentric for me”.

**Theme 4d: The organization is youthful, vibrant, and disruptive in nature.** The average age in the organization is 27, and the business has only been operating for five years. This youthfulness brings forth a vibrancy and creativity that is not only identified by themselves internally (in five accounts), but also endeared by their clients. The client survey feedback referenced how the organization is dynamic and uses out of the box creativity (Client Feedback Survey document, 2017). Expanding more on this theme, Participant 16s states,

We’re a little crazy, there’s crazy characters, which also makes it free to be yourself. We use music a lot for creativity, and there are a lot of laughs. We laugh a lot, and love to have fun working.

Moreover, all five participants acknowledged that the youthful culture can be disruptive, especially because it comes with a lot of inexperience.

**Theme 4e: There is a good mix of soft and hard business qualities.** All 17 participants contributed to this theme. Participant 4m states,

We have a culture of laughs, people laugh a lot, diffusion through humor, that happens in the business. The thing is also, we're very serious, I think we also come off as serious, like right now. It's very fun but it has its moments but also people are wanting to overachieve. It's a very serious culture too.

Furthermore, while the organization culture was described as ‘fun’, ‘relaxed’, ‘warm’, ‘welcoming’, ‘caring’, and ‘interpersonally savvy’, it was also described as ‘tasks focused’, ‘evidence based’, ‘not afraid to have difficult conversations’, ‘overachieving’, ‘working long hours’, ‘intellectually strong’ and ‘argumentative’. This could also be represented in the figure below:

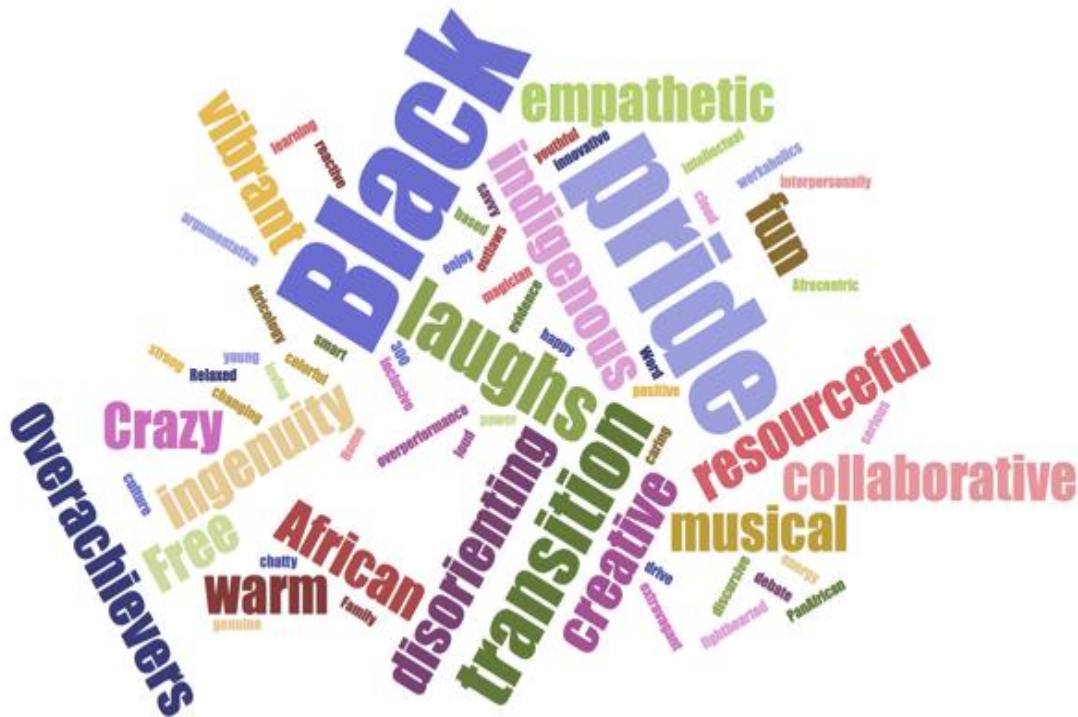


Figure 13. How culture is described in the organization

5. How does your organizational culture influence how leadership happens in your organization?

**Theme 5a: There is a strong relationship between culture and leadership.** Prompted by the researcher’s probes, a few “Because we are ... we are ...” statements from six leaders and three followers reference the interrelationship between leadership and culture represented in the table below:

**5. How does your organizational culture influence how leadership happens in your organization?**

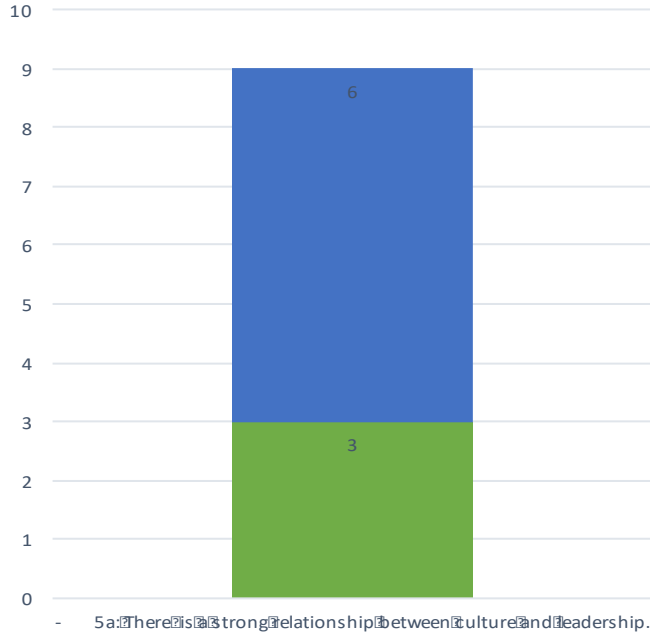


Figure 14. Interview question 5 results distribution

Table 10

The Interaction of Culture and Leadership

Culture descriptions	Leadership enactments	Evidence
Because we are young, African, and black...	...our influence is naturally disruptive in the industry.	(Participant 10m)
Because we are African...	... we are collectivist in our leadership.	(Participant 5m)
		(continued)
Culture descriptions	Leadership enactments	Evidence

Because we are black African...	, our leadership is inspirational and comes with a strong sense of purpose.	(Participant 1m)
Because we are black South Africans and have been previously marginalized...	... there's a transparent road to becoming a formal leader in our business	(Participant 1m)
Because we are African...	... our leadership is naturally more collaborative, distributed, and we listen more.	(Participant 15s, 6s, 5m, 1m)

6. How do leaders affect the culture in the organization?

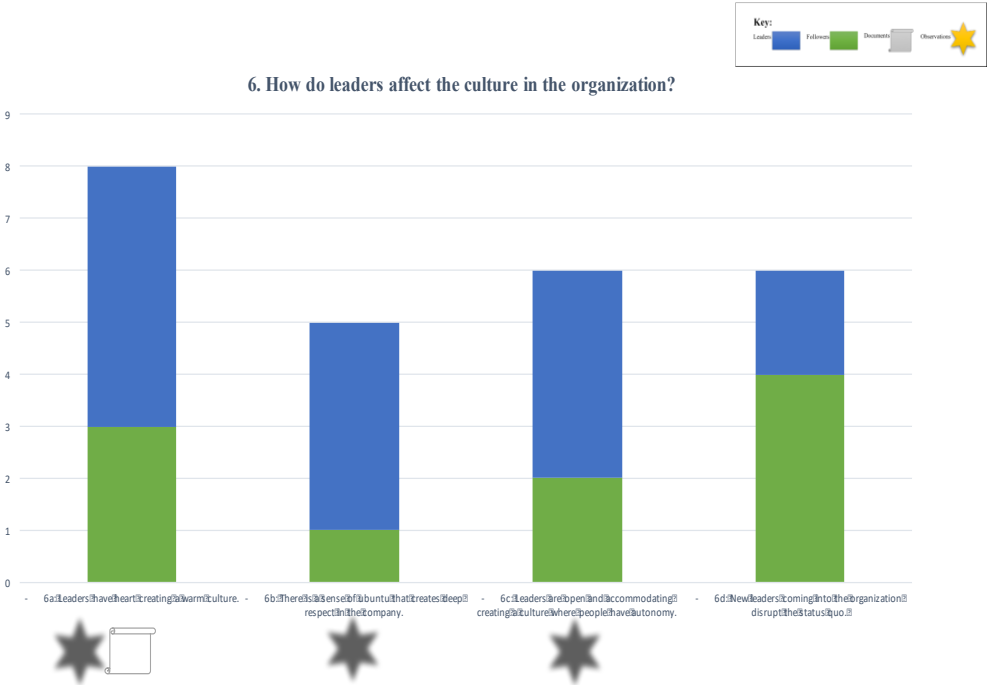


Figure 15. Interview question 6 results distribution

**Theme 6a: Leaders have heart, creating a warm culture.** A key finding across different data sources (including the client meeting) was how the CEO sets the tone of interaction with warmth. This theme was supported by accounts from three leaders, five followers, an observation made by the researcher, and evidence in the documents studied. The client feedback states how

the founding CEO greets people with hugs, and the researcher noted how everyone in the organization is fond of giving hugs. This seemed to be evident in other formal leaders, as participant 6s notes, “I’ve seen how Participant 4m is working on his empathy, he comes and gives you a hug when he sees that you’re having a bad day”. Participant 2m echoes the warm culture by stating, “I think I’m a kind and open guy. A client was saying the other day after spending a whole day in our office – Wow, I’ve never seen so much traffic in a Finance office”.

**Theme 6b: There is a sense of ubuntu that creates deep respect in the company.** This theme occurred in four instances (3 leaders, 1 follower) in in-depth interviews. In addition, Participant 10m in the focus group notes,

Every leadership situation is approached with a certain respect. I keep thinking of the word “ubuntu” which is very hard to describe. It’s being a human at the end of the day and I’ve actually heard it a couple of times when we’ve disagreed or we’re discussing something and someone will say “but remember, we’re people first.”

Moreover, ubuntu was also represented by a culture of listening and humility. The researcher in the observations noticed how participants engage with each other, which mapped very closely with how ubuntu has been described in literature.

**Theme 6c: Leaders are open and accommodating creating a culture where people have autonomy.** These theme is evidenced in five in-depth interviews (2 followers, 3 leaders), the leadership team focus group, and through observations of participants. Participant 1m states, “At [the organization], you are free to walk in at 9am and leave at 3:30pm, but you have a responsibility to make sure your work is done [...] It’s what you do with that autonomy”. Sometimes the openness of leaders is interpreted as being lax, and it creates a culture of not

calling people out who are out of line, and people are become too relaxed. Participant 6s, a follower notes that,

If the CEO is lax, everyone is lax. [...]. People walk in here any time between 9 and 11 because he does the same and also because he's so relaxed, he'll never call somebody out for being late. I can't even imagine him doing that thing. I've actually had an experience where I watched him try to do it and it was so ineffective.

In a focus group, participant 1m also referenced how autonomy is both a perk and a responsibility:

It's almost like building accountability also for inaction which is super interesting for me because while we provide opportunities and people have autonomy, they sometimes turn into gaps. You've left a leadership vacuum; no one takes it.

This sentiment was echoed by participant 3m in the focus group,

In a situation someone will go, I'm going to take this opportunity and I'm going to go with it whether it's going to be tough, whether I'm going to be at the end waving the flag and there's victory or not.

**Theme 6d: New leaders coming into the organization disrupt the status quo.**

With a strong recruitment drive, new leaders are coming in with their own styles of leading which is different from the historic culture. Four participants indicated that this creates a disruption which could be seen as both a conflict and an opportunity to be better. When asked about the main leadership actors and their style of influence, Participant 1m includes the effects of a new leader on the organizational culture:

[Participant 10m] has been my favorite addition to the team from a leadership perspective. He's such a hectic ESTJ [referring to the structured and methodical aspect of

his Myers Briggs Type Indicator personality profile], he really forces situations to a head, which is something I've wanted because, yes while we're in a creative, sort of discursive space someone's like "here's the process. What happened? I don't know how it got to this point." It really forces people into different conversations that aren't natural to them but are critical, so I've absolutely loved that. So there's more of what I call healthy conflict because he's here. I think it's healthy. It's not crazy.

But it seems like change does not come naturally, founding members are finding it difficult to change their old ways or working. In support of this, Participant 6s mentions the following,

Change doesn't happen overnight. There have been meetings and things where we're like, "OK, they're going to try." It's hard and I can see it is because it's always easier to just go back to what you're used to. Especially because they're remaining, those people, I think it would be better or work better if in implementing these things for the new employees, they themselves then implemented them. If you're going to implement 9-5 for the new employees but you still stay till 3 am, it's counter-intuitive. You're still being your old self but you're trying to implement new ways.

In total, this theme is evidenced in four participants in in-depth interviews (two leaders, two followers), and further echoed in the focus group by two additional followers.

### **Research Question 3**

The final research question is, *How are individual leaders changed during the shifts between focused and distributed leadership?* It explores how leaders and followers negotiate leader-follower transitions that occur when leadership moves from a few formal leaders to other emergent leaders, some of whom are formally followers in the organization. The themes are presented below through two interview questions.



7. How do you transition from follower-leader or leader-follower?

**Theme 7a: There is a natural leader-follower transition when the overall approach is to be of service.** Both followers (44 %) and leaders (50%) generally agree that the transition from leader to follower and follower to leader flows naturally because they believe that their work is to serve clients. This theme also came out strongly in the observation of the participants with the client. An attitude of serving puts getting things done in the forefront, rather than being stuck on traditional organizational roles.

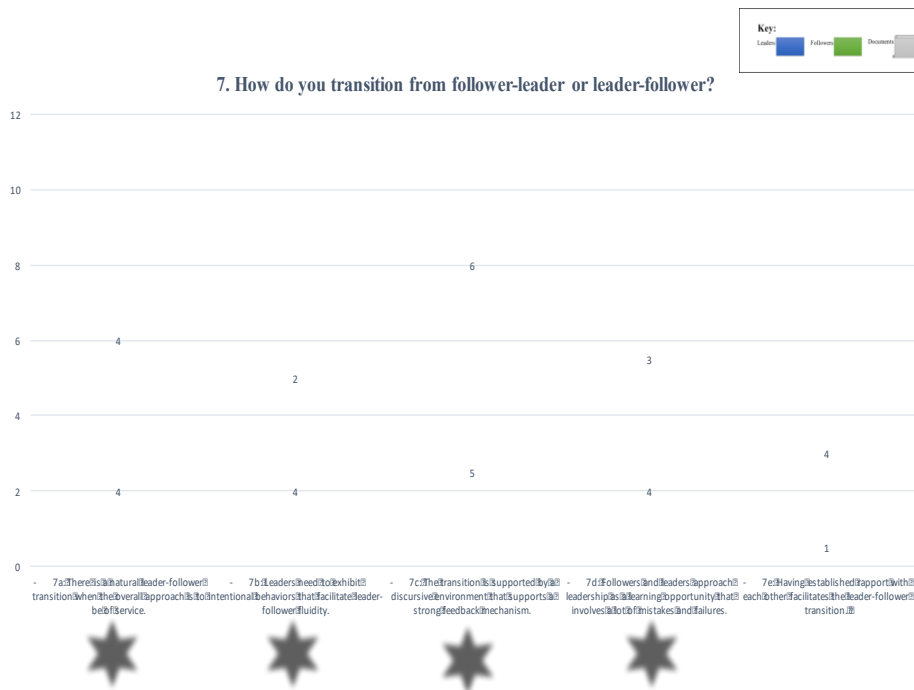


Figure 16. Interview question 7 results distribution

Participant 8s states, “You’re serving the person you’re leading anyway” and “[...] it becomes a non-issue” (Participant 5m), “[...] because at the end of day, things need to get done” (Participant 6s). This view was also shared in the leadership team focus group with Participant 3m stating, “Then transition then doesn’t come so difficult to think of yourself as being led as well because you’re a servant most of the time”. Participant 4m further emphasizes that “It’s

more about both leadership and followership. I would argue, it is more about catalyzing or getting processes started and then letting processes run". An affirming observation made in the client pitch meeting was how although there was stronger personality between the two (the ENTJ over the ENTP), the leader-follower roles were often blurry between in the meeting as they moved back and forth trying to relate to the client and serve the client's needs.

**Theme 7b: Leaders need to exhibit intentional behaviors that facilitate leader-follower fluidity.** This theme emerged from two observations, two leader interviews, and four followers in a focus group. When asked about how he moves from leader to follower, Participant 1m notes that,

It's important for me to acknowledge that sometimes, because people won't take it naturally when I'm in the room so I have to sometimes deliberately go "hey guys, remember I'm not the leader right now in this meeting.

While observing him and Participant 3m (both formally leaders) in a client pitch meeting, Participant 1m often caught himself jumping into vacant leadership spaces, and made it a point to correct himself by intentionally giving the other leader the opportunity to lead the meeting by saying phrases such as "I'll allow [Participant 3m] to take us through this section and answer your questions". Moreover, what also came out from that observation was how even though the Participant 1m gave leadership to Participant 3m, there was a need for him to 'save the situation' or manage risks, which he did both through enriching or emphasizing understanding or asking leading questions. Asking leading questions was echoed by two other leaders in the in-depth interviews with the addition of more facilitative leadership behaviors such as a) repeating phrases such as "I am here to be of service to you" or "I'm your consultant" (Participant 4m) in order to embed the fluidity, b) being intentional to leave room for leaders to emerge and taking a

step back, c) taking the time to pause and mentally prepare for the person, and d) embedding empowering policies, flat structures and developmental frameworks that enable leader-follower fluidity.

**Theme 7c: The transition is supported by a discursive environment that supports a strong feedback mechanism.** This was a major theme evidenced from six leaders, five followers, and some observations. The theme describes how the discursive culture in the organization supported follower-leader transition through the ability to give each other feedback. The open style of the CEO of the organization has set the tone for people to share what they think and for everyone to be open to feedback. Organizational members are often given the platforms to express their views freely. This was evident in their strategic orientation week that was observed where all employees informed and took responsibility to set and run projects for their five year 2022 vision, this was also evident in an after-hours observation as the researcher watched how they de-briefed from a day which had gone absolutely wrong. This was theme also came out strongly in the follower's focus group. Participant 14s reflects on how the feedback he got from a team debrief helped him:

It's a scary responsibility to have all these big things fall on me. Even with the f\*\*\* up with one of our clients and we were de-briefing, trying to figure out what went wrong, I could then see, oh this is where I messed up. [] It's a way of learning and also understanding...because sometimes we need to write our own job description and need to do our own sense making. But it is scary. It helps because we talk about these things and grind them out.

**Theme 7d: Followers and leaders approach leadership as a learning opportunity that involves a lot of mistakes and failures.** This theme is about leadership being about

learning, and is supported by four followers in a focus group, and three leaders in in-depth interviews. Participant 1m mentions how approaching leadership as a learning opportunity is largely influenced by their young age and inexperience:

I think everyone is growing into their roles. I think just because of our age, no one can say they're completely naturalised in their roles. Like, where I can say I have been a Head of Digital for this many years or a Head of Creative for this many years. I can't say I've been a CEO for that long. So you know it means in some way, the business is already saying to you, there's someone you need to become and there's a challenge to learn.

The learning theme is also echoed in the follower's focus group, where four participants believed that the transition is negotiated with self and secondly, with those you are now faced to lead, by taking ownership and taking charge of spaces where you are indispensable (and needed) because of your knowledge or skill. Two participants (Participant 11s and Participant 13s) mentioned how it takes preparation and get clarification on what is required of you. Participant 11s further states that she often has to re-assure herself to so that she can be more courageous when taking on the leader's role. She states:

“need to motivate [speaks of herself in the third person] in my private space and tell myself, you are now a leader and not a follower and this is what you need to do, get yourself in the groove [] because although I am not leading anyone right now, I am learning to show up as a leader and know that even if I fail, this is another opportunity to grow.

Participant 11s further mentions how learning also involves the ability to be comfortable with failure by stating, “another thing that's helped me is getting comfortable with uncomfortable situations especially things like making mistakes, and like not getting it right sometimes”. While

most follower agree on leadership being a learning opportunity, not all participants shared the same perspective around failure. Participant 12s expressed:

- I tend to avoid things like that, anything that has potential to f\*\*\* up, I'm not trying to get close to that, nah. But when I tried it the one time when my manager wasn't around and she came and thanked me, I was so happy to get her back. Thing is, my leadership skills are subtle, it's in the background, because I don't want it to come back to me.

**Theme 7e: Having established rapport with each other facilitates the leader-follower transition.** This theme stems from Participant 4m statement of “you know, it's really about establishing trustworthy relationships. The was echoed by three other participants, with Participant 5m mentioning that leader-follower transitions are facilitated by “ease of relationship and trust” and Participant 6s stating that “I've had a long relationship with [Participant 1m], and as much as he's my leader and I learn from him, I give him advise too”. Furthermore Participant 2m notes the importance of transparency in building rapport and allowing oneself to be led as a leader. He states,:

Initially when we started [the business] I just wanted to make sure that there aren't any big secrets between the two of us. Let me understand what it is that you want to do and I will let you know where I am coming from, and I'll give you advice based on what my view of sight is, but with transparency I'll also trust your vision and goal that you're trying to get us to.

This was also echoed by a participant 5m in the focus group:

I think also building trustworthy relationships with the people that you lead and the people that you are led by. It goes a long way in helping ease the nerves and the stress of whether it's going to go good or bad. I think leading through a trustworthy relationships

alleviates a lot of anxiety. Because we're both aligned and we know exactly what it is we're working towards and what is at stake and what we have to get across the line.

In total, there are five accounts of this theme, four from leaders and one follower during in-depth interviews, and support from an observation of a client pitch.

8. What do you notice about yourself when you co-lead with others?

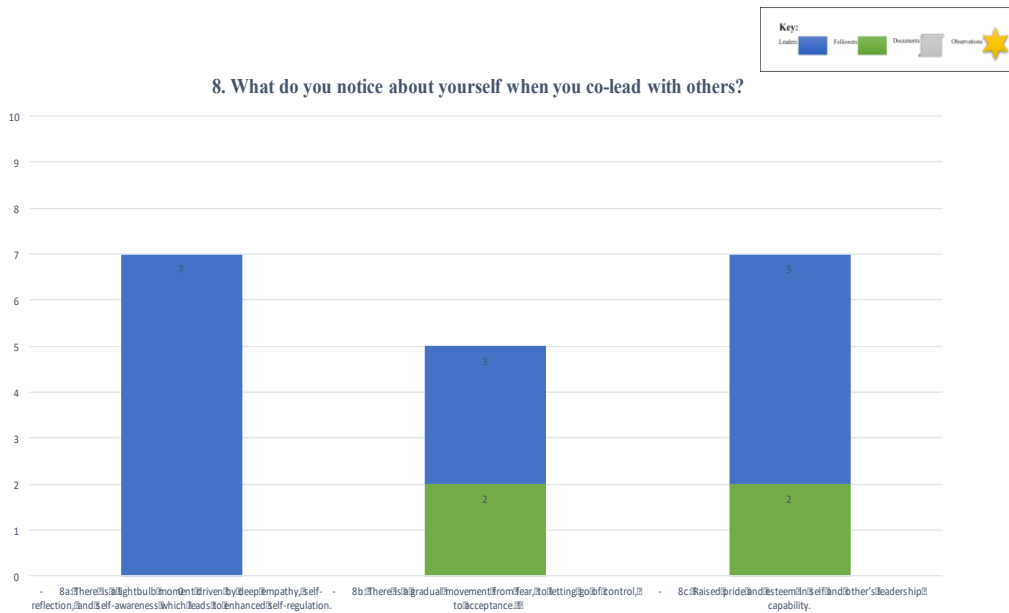


Figure 17. Interview question 8 results distribution

**Theme 8a: There is a lightbulb moment driven by deep empathy, self-reflection, and self-awareness which leads to enhanced self-regulation.** This theme is evidenced by seven of eight leaders that were interviewed in the study. When leaders find themselves in a following role, they mention how they get a chance to “see the business from a different perspective” (Participant 1m), “get to step in unfamiliar shoes” (Participant 5m), and “learn from both leader and follower perspectives” (Participant 3m). Furthermore, Participant 4m notes,

There's that empathetic space even with myself to say, "Oh, this is how you learn" and then reflection is a big one. It's a learning that's happening, and recognizing of weaknesses and strengths. Like, something I'm recognizing is that "Oh sometimes I'm unclear, or maybe I prefer to work with females, why is that?"

Another point on reflection was made by Participant 2m to say,

I tend to reflect a lot also on what the person might need for them to lead. [...]I think one of the biggest things that I'd give him [referring to his subordinate] for example is also access to budget. The access to having the card with him when he needs to go buy things etc. I think one of the things that I realize with him is that he loves power and I think the card and him being able to go to the store and just buy and come back to the office with all these things, gives him that sense of "yes, I am the IT guy. If you have anything come to me". Then I reflect on how to manage that, understanding that he's also on his own growth trajectory.

Participant 2m further expands on enhanced self-regulation:

I become more self-aware. I'm very self-aware in terms of understanding when and where I'm needed and when I'm needed as what. There's a lot of self-regulation that happens naturally within me after those experiences. The changes come when they come because you need to know when to speak up sometimes, you need to know when to be firm and you need to know when to be a little bit softer. You need to know when to literally be a subordinate. Especially when you see that "I think that this might be a little bit out of my depth of understanding.

Noticing how leaders become more self-regulated in co-leadership is also supported by

Participant 4m expressed:

I think one, I become more observant of the spaces I would occupy or would want to occupy. So if we are in a WhatsApp group with a client and the client sends a message "Hey team,

where is this etc.?" Naturally I wouldn't actually go in and respond. I would leave it hanging. And sometimes then it's also then speaking to someone saying "Please respond to this..." So I notice myself moving or getting out of the way more.

**Theme 8b: There is a gradual movement from fear, to letting go of control, to acceptance.** Three leaders in their in-depth interviews and two followers in a focus group support this theme. On fear, Participant 1m states:

I'm just afraid of the fact that a young person might leave the company and say that their experience was bad and I would be like "What do you mean? I've provided the managers with this and that etc." It's just really scary. Especially, to have young bright lights in your hands and you're just afraid to diminish them in any way. I am also conscious of how corporate environments tend to do that. I try to acknowledge people at a human level and show them that I'm happy they're here and energized by their presence but I'm not always going to be so connected to you that I know what your day to day struggles are.

Participant 4m echoes the element of fear, coupling it with feeling a sense of discomfort. He continues to say that in situation where he is forced to let go of control he gets to a point of acceptance where he says:

It's cool you go and do that. There's also acceptance that there's certain conversation that I won't be in that she'll [referring to a co-leader] have. Of course there's a fear of missing out but you have to accept it and you also have to support it. It's about that [...]. There's nothing that's hidden, you can always ask.

This is further emphasized by a statement by Participant 15s

I really do believe that we've got a fantastic team. I believe in every individual that's in that room and I also trust that they are given that power or that the power sits with them



at that particular moment because they're the rightful person to do so. Even if it's scary, I've come to accept that.

**Theme 8c: Raised pride and esteem in self and other's leadership capability.** This theme occurred three times in in-depth interviews with leaders, and was further conveyed by two followers in the focus group. Participant 9s reflects on her experience of leading as a follower and mentions feelings of raised self-esteem and confidence afterwards: "I feel like okay, if I have done it once, I can do it again, and maybe next time they'll be a greater responsibility like going to see the client". Said differently by participant 1m, he compares the feeling to that of a proud father who has allowed his toddler to walk:

I am filled with extreme pride and joy when I see other people lead. [] The moment where my son was learning how to walk was kind of a critical to my view of leadership. This person has the biological tools to walk but because they're wobbling and they're not getting it right. You're always just imagining them bashing their heads on the floor and how it's all going to happen but they won't learn how to walk unless you leave them and that was the most scary feeling. I do feel the same sense of fear professionally. Like, are you going to be able to handle being in that situation but I know that I have let go. And then when they walk, it happens enough times that you go, "wow, this person walks" and I think it's knowing that people have what it takes or trusting that they have what it takes which allows you to give it them. If you think your child's not going to walk. What is it that you're not trusting? That they don't have legs? They don't have balance? Of course they do. They just need practice.

## **Introduction**

This research was designed to explore the interaction of focused and individual leadership enacted in a fast-growing small business situated in South Africa. The aim was to uncover and ascertain how these seemingly contradicting forms of leadership located in heroic and post-heroic leadership paradigms respectively, can co-exist both within and in service of dynamic small business growth. Moreover, this thesis had the aim of exploring how the influence of culture both from an organizational and national perspective informed leadership enactment. The following research questions articulate the points of inquiries:

1. How is leadership focused and distributed in the fast-growing small business?
2. How does culture influence the hybridity of leadership enacted in the small business?
3. How are individual leaders changed during the shifts between focused and distributed leadership?

Through a qualitative, single case study design, these research questions have are answered through in-depth interviews, focus group interviews, document analysis, and participant observations. Chapter four unpacks the findings in themes. This chapter discusses the key findings related to existing knowledge on leadership for small business growth, focused and distributed leadership, culture and leadership, and the recently emerging literature on leadership hybridity.

## **Discussion of Research Questions**

**How is leadership focused and distributed in the fast growing small business?** The study found that fast-growing small business brings about the dynamic of constant chaos, pressure, and rising complexity. This finding broadly aligns with the idea of VUCA (Stiehm & Townsend, 2002) and permanent white waters (Vaill, 1996), described in chapter two. The current research

suggests that when the business deals with chaos and high-pressure situations, the CEO comes in to pause, redirect, organize, and encourage people to step into exposed leadership gaps. The participants referred to the CEO as playing an orchestra type of role. This insight seems to reflect what Gronn (2011) refers to as a hybrid leadership practice of orchestrated and emergent leadership described in chapter two. The findings also reveal that individual leaders apply different (and at times contrasting) leadership preferences. For example, leaders in this study were described as ‘tough and other times warm,’ ‘collaborative and in other situations taking charge,’ and ‘fun and relaxed, and when needed, serious and overperforming.’ This phenomenon is what Collinson & Collinson (2009) refer to as blended leadership which occurs within the opposing preferences of behaviors exhibited by a single leader. These findings challenge the notion that leaders have stable and one-dimensional leadership styles and actions, as suggested in our accustomed, heroic perspective to leadership.

In support of distributed leadership in small businesses, Ensley et al. (2006) argue that the leadership behavior distributed across the top management entrepreneurial teams is likely to have a more significant and more direct impact on organizational effectiveness than that of the founder alone. Most distributed leadership scholars share the belief that distributed leadership is better than focused leadership. Some authors (e.g., Wilson, 2016) go to the extent of arguing that focus, heroic leadership is obsolete in today’s VUCA world. The current findings are at odds with this strict and binary reasoning. It seems as though while there was a range of leadership actors involved in the practice of leading this small business, the founder played an integral, orchestrating role in influencing how other forms of leadership emerged. The organization was driven by both traditional leaders as arranged by the organizational structure, and by followers who assumed leadership when the gap arose. Given the growing attention to post-heroic

leadership, studies may be quick to believe that distributing leadership is the new, improved, and the only route to effective leadership.

Contrary to that, the current study seems to suggest that followers might like and almost automatically rely on a hero leader (outside of themselves) to look to for direction, particularly during VUCA times. In criticism of heroic leadership, Wilson (2016) argues that transformational leadership reinforces heroism. In the current study, instead of focused, heroic leadership being replaced by distributed, post-heroic leadership, the study found that focused, heroic leadership was still facilitative in dealing with chaotic work situations. Furthermore, while leaders like the founding CEO played a heroic role, he often moved between both commanding and collaborative behaviors and was intentional about creating other leaders in the process of leading. Thus, it appears that the complex dynamic system of small business growth needs both heroic leadership and post-heroic leadership patterns.

In exploring post-heroic, distributed leadership through the lens of Gronn (2002), via spontaneous collaborations, intuitive working relations, and institutional practice, the study found that distribution of leadership often happens haphazardly and reactively. Spontaneous collaborations, for instance, were useful for creating collective sense-making but were often in reaction to a crisis. The latter part was similar to Spillane et al. 's (2006) observations of spontaneous collaborations, which usually occurred when people pull together their resources to solve an emergent problem, such as a crisis. According to this research, spontaneous collaborations played a collective sense-making and sense-giving role. From Levie and Lichtenstein (2009), we understand that sense-making and sense-giving contribute to self-organization and recombination within the process of growing a business. The current finding suggests that spontaneous collaborations are a route to sense-making and sense giving. One can,

therefore, infer that spontaneous collaborations contribute to sense-making and sense giving within crises of a growing business. Another vital element was the haphazardness by which spontaneous collaborations occurred. The study used the distributed leadership framework offered by Gronn (2002), which did not include planned or coordinated spontaneity. Other models have made room for this, such as Leithwood's (2006) reference to planful alignment, formal distribution (Macbeth, 2005), and coordinated distribution (Spillane, 2006). In retrospect, it seems as though having a coordinated element to distributed leadership may be necessary to make it less disorientating and more efficient to the business.

Another element of distributed leadership according to Gronn (2002) is intuitive working relations. The current findings point to friendships playing a vital role in distributing leadership. While this was on par to descriptions by Gronn (2002), the findings noted that the management team who were friends from the start of the business could efficiently distribute leadership amongst themselves, but this distribution did not trickle down to the rest of the organization and created exclusivity. Therefore, while findings back up the assertions by Gronn (2002), they also reveal that friendships could have a restraining effect on the distribution of leadership. The issue, in this case, is further compounded by the fact that shared friendship is amongst the top management team. If intuitive working relations happen only amongst friends, this exclusivity seems to reconfirm the problem that has been expressed about focused leadership only occurring amongst a selected few. This dilemma challenges the extent to which intuitive working relations based on friendships distribute leadership across beyond and across friendship groups.

The final element of distributed leadership according to Gronn (2002) is institutional practices. The current case employed this form of distributed leadership through having an open space office design. Similarly, Bolden (2011) found that the physical environment facilitates

collaboration between individuals. More so, the open space design was reported to create space for tapping into conversations they wouldn't have been able to in a traditional office space. This finding seems to follow closely on the 'leadership of emergence' work of Levie and Lichtenstein (2009) that suggests that 'non-linear', rich interactions create a relational space (which the case organization refers to as their 'collaboration space') for dynamic feedback loops to occur, which was a crucial leadership element that drove vigorous business growth. Mainly, the study might suggest that distributing leadership through open space office design contributes to the conditions that influence the leadership of small businesses.

In summary, in the context of fast, small business growth or what Levie and Lichtenstein, (2009) refer to as 'serial business emergence,' leadership happens in the form of multiple leadership patterns:

- (a) focused leadership on the founding CEO and other individual managers,
- (b) distributed leadership amongst the interaction of top management teams,
- (c) emergent leadership from followers who actively step into leadership roles depending on the situation or challenge presented by the dynamics of business growth. The third research question near the end of this section discusses this point in greater depth.
- (d) team leadership (other than the top management team)

**How does culture influence the hybridity of leadership enacted in the small business?**

The study found that the case was experiencing instability in the business because things were changing at a swift rate due to business growth. This instability (which included the addition of new organizational members, role expansions, introducing more structured business processes, etc.) contributed to both new and old organizational members being confused about the culture of their organization. Not a lot of literature on how new and fast-growing small businesses have

disorientating cultures in transition. Looking at how the business changes with growth, and how the hiring of new leaders and members challenges the status quo, this was not a surprising finding. The unique part is how the current case reconciled the sense of cultural disorientation through implementing a culture transformation process that was an inclusive process of collectively redefining and reimagining who they are, how they do things, and where they were going. The implementation of these outcomes also distributed some leadership responsibilities to members willing to own and drive specific rebranding processes in the business. Thus, the process of recreating a culture in the organization influence a mostly distributed leadership enactment.

As they attempted to describe their current culture, both followers and leaders of the organization shared similar descriptions. These included; sharing a strong bond of being black in South Africa, the organization having an Afrocentric way of doing things, and the youthfulness and vibrant nature of the business. In their recommendations for future research, Bennet et al. (2003) and Bolden (2011) suggest exploring the influence of social and cultural contexts leadership. This study has examined how an espoused African culture influences the leadership enacted. From the literature reviewed, we understand that being African seems to have multiple meanings. It is therefore essential to first understand how the current case perceived being African. The study found that being African was deeply rooted in Ubuntu. At the core of Ubuntu were mutual respect and deep empathy in how people treated each other as humans first — behaviors such as listening, being genuine, celebrating and struggling together, dealing with crises in collaboration, trusting each other, and being hospitable evidenced this. The finding on treating each other as human first is similar to findings of a study that looked at leadership in organizations within the Sub-Saharan where Jackson (1999) found that these organizations saw

humans as having value in their own right. This insight is also echoed by Mintzberg's (2006) argument to shift our view from seeing employees as human resources to human beings within a community. This humanistic view seems to be different to how the West describes organizational cultures (Nkomo, 2011), but complements the work of Ouchi and Price (1978) in the Japanese organizations that operated on humanistic and social customs.

Furthermore, the study can support the argument that culture “provides shared rules governing cognitive and affective aspects of membership in an organization, and the means whereby they are shaped and expressed” (Kunda, 1992, cited in Alvesson, 2011, p. 153) and that leadership is suffused with values, language, beliefs, rituals, and artifacts (Jackson & Parry, 2008). The finding that being African results in an Afrocentric way of doing things in the business, further supports this argument. The organization is often referred to as a family or community where people belonged and treated each other in a familiar way. Although the participants were diverse in their background of being black (they spoke different indigenous languages, a few participants came from other countries in Africa, and one participant is American), there is a shared culture evidenced in the organization's value system.

The present study also finds a strong relationship between leadership and culture, which echoes the point that leadership does not exist as a sterile concept but as something that affects both how social systems operate and, as a result, the lives of people within them (Bolden, 2008). In the study, we learn how being black and African influenced the enactment of collectivist and inclusive forms of leadership. We also learn how their youthful and vibrant culture contributed to an unrefined, yet shared kind of leadership where no one person had the leadership rights. This nature of leadership reflected a contrasting view to organizations that have older and more



established leaders. The findings also indicate that contributed to openness to recreating a leadership that worked for them.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that being African also lends to a more collaborative, distributed, and discursive type of leading. Similarly, Bolden and Kirk's (2009) study in sub-Saharan Africa found that Africans desire more inclusive and participatory forms of leadership that value individual differences, authenticity and serving the community. The arguments made thus far suggest that

- (a) leadership and culture are related,
- (b) culture influences leadership enactment, and
- (c) leaders influence culture.

Congruent to what was found by Jackson and Parry (2008), the current study seems to agree that organizational founders have a significant effect on organizational culture (Jackson & Parry, 2008). Participants mention how the founding CEO approaches people with his heart. In examining his style, I find this kind of leadership influencing the warm culture experienced in the organization. For example, the researcher observed in many instances how the CEO tends to greet people (including clients) with hugs, which is a habit that people throughout the organization have generally adopted. The hearty behavior of the founding CEO has contributed to creating a warm organization, which is a trait about the case organization that their client's also appreciated.

In general, the findings seem to suggest that either an African organizational culture of ubuntu results to a more distributed form of leadership or African leaders come with a sense of collective and distributed leadership. This finding could be a new articulation of how ubuntu-related leadership associated with distributed leadership. However, there is caution around this

argument. As mentioned earlier, in times of crisis and chaos, people rely on a hero leader to guide them on how to influence situations effectively and solve complex problems, which lies more within focused, heroic leadership paradigm. At this point, one could argue that African cultures are associated in some way with distributed leadership, but contain within them, also heroic appreciation to leadership.

**How are individual leaders changed during the shifts between focused and distributed leadership?** The last research question explored the personal changes within leadership hybridity which occur via Gronn's (2016) notion of leader-follower fluidity. Gronn (2016) argued that in a changing situation, there are times when leaders become followers and followers become leaders. Firstly, the study found that holding an attitude of being of service played a catalyzing role in leader-follower fluidity. Given that this case was a client-serving business, both leaders and followers saw themselves as ultimately serving their clients, and within that frame, the transition from leader to follower or follower to the leader was somewhat natural to their business. It seems that servicing to client puts less emphasis on getting things done through the traditional roles of leader or follower, but the need for everyone to be responsive to client needs. This habit seemed to seep into how people acted within the organization as well.

Secondly, the study found that individual leaders are facilitators of leader-follower transition. This finding suggests that leaders need to be intentional about exhibiting certain behaviors to facilitate leader-follower fluidity. In many cases, the leader had to initiate or intentionally cue leadership from followers. This finding seems to align to a pattern noted by Gronn (2011) referred to as shared leading contingent upon a focused leader. Also, the current study offers evidence for hybridity including the models of simultaneous multiple individual leaders and equal co-leading pairings (Gronn, 2011). What was somewhat unique in this case was that co-

leading pairings were not balanced, the CEO had to intentionally draw other leaders into leadership roles such as providing their expert understanding, solving complex client problems, and organizing other leadership actors and factors. This leadership pattern was especially true in pressure prompted and chaotic situations. Macbeth (2005, p. 355) argues that “distribution implies an ability to relinquish one’s role as ultimate decision maker, and trusting others to make the right decisions.” The finding of the CEO as heroic points to him encouraging others to lead but still having to be the ultimate decision-maker on critical business decisions. There is strong evidence of trust acting as a catalyst to leader-follower fluidity in the finding that distributed leadership is deeply reliant on trustworthy relationships. More specifically, the study uniquely suggests that having established rapport, where there is relatability amongst leadership actors facilitates leader-follower transitions. In this study, the findings also indicate that the successful distribution of leadership involves leaders who provide the necessary resources to lead. While Hatcher (2005) found that access to power and resources is often not distributed in 'distributed leadership' (Cited in Bolden, 2011), this study finds some evidence of the opposite. Perhaps this could be attributed to the small business context and accessibility of the finance manager and CEO in a flatter structure, as opposed to the work context Hatcher (2005) which explored leadership in a public school with more complex and bureaucratic structures.

The finding of leader-follower transition relying on intentional leader behaviors, in essence, argues that hero leaders (such as CEOs) must go through the fundamental process of offering leadership to others (including relinquishing power and control) during the shifts of focused to distributed leadership. Moreover, it seems like what the founding CEO does in the distribution process is fundamental to the success of leader-follower fluidity. One could, therefore, argue that

influential individual leaders (such as CEOs) play a mediating role between leader-follower transitions.

Contextual factors also affected leader-follower fluidity. The study found that having an organizational environment that was discursive and supportive of strong feedback loops for learning aided leader-follower transitions. This finding builds on the work on ‘learningful’ work environments (Drucker, 2014). It also supports the arguments that see leadership as collective and mutual learning (Drucker, 2014; Pearce & Conger, 2012), and sense-making (Grint, 2005). The uniqueness, in this case, is that learning is not only related to leadership in general terms but is an enabler of leadership hybridity. Leader-follower fluidity is enhanced by both followers and leaders seeing leadership as a learning process and opportunity. From Bennet (2003), we learn that a critical component to distributing leadership is to be open the boundaries of leadership. From the current findings, an extension to this argument is that openness, particularly to leadership fluidity, is facilitated by approaching leadership as learning.

A critical question that hasn’t receive a lot of attention in the literature is how the hybridity of leadership is experienced by those involved as it unfolds (Spillane et al., 2006). The current study asks, how are the leaders changed during the shifts between focused and distributed leadership? The findings offer three key results of leader-follower transitions;

(a) There is a lightbulb moment driven by deep empathy, self-reflection, and self-awareness which leads to enhanced self-regulation,

(b) There is a gradual movement from fear, to letting go of control, to acceptance, and

(c) There is raised pride and esteem in self and other’s leadership capability. Macbeth (2005) is one of the few authors that mentions something slightly similar to this. He argues that

primarily, it involves a belief in the potential and authority of others and listening with the intent to understand.

One could, therefore, argue that leaders who can transition to be followers learn how to enhance their self-regulation as they learn to occupy spaces differently. Thus, if self-regulation is a psychological component that makes better leaders (Northouse, 2015), one might infer that leadership hybridity contributes to a more optimized form of leadership.

### **Proposing a Holistic Leadership Hybridity Framework**

**Applying findings to the leadership practice model.** One of the key objectives of this study outlined in chapter one was to offer a holistic framework to map how hybrid leadership configurations occur. The discussion of leadership hybridity in chapter two includes a discussion of a leadership practice model by Bolden, Petrov, & Gosling (2008) which frames some elements of leadership hybridity within the frame of leadership practice. Overall, the model includes elements that can be comparable to the current study assertion that leadership involves a multiplicity of interrelating and corresponding components between focused and distributed leadership in context. In their framework, the authors argue that five interrelated leadership factors or elements work together to form and inform the holistic practice of leadership (Bolden, Petrov, & Gosling, 2008) in organizations. These five elements will be discussed briefly in the context of specific current findings as a way to build on this framework from what we have learned from the current case.

(1) Personal elements of leaders. Congruent to findings by Bolden, Petrov, and Gosling (2008), there was evidence in this study which pointed to influence coming from varying individual leader's philosophies, styles, and behaviors. The personal elements of leaders (particular that of the founding CEO) has the power to set an influential tone throughout the

whole business. The top management team's leadership style, in particular, was referenced as having a strong influence in the business. This finding suggests certain leadership actors or individual leaders have more influence than others. There is overwhelming evidence that the leadership of the founding CEO has a major influence on small businesses (e.g., Ensley et al., 2006). Also, the study seems to suggest that the personal elements of the leaders differ from leader to leader, and can even include somewhat opposing leadership behaviors within a leader.

(2) Social elements and networks of influence. Bolden, Petrov, and Gosling (2008) refer to the importance of social capital and social identity in performing leadership in universities. In the current study, we learn that social identity represented in being black and African creates a bond that contributes to a collective force of influence within and outside the business.

Furthermore, the social capital of a strong unit of black people facilitated shared ways of working and a strong sense of trust amongst organizational members. Identifying as black African also created a shared story that had a galvanizing effect on informal networks within the business leading toward a shared broad purpose which was to prove to the world that young, black, Africans can build a thriving business with social impact.

(3) Structural elements. According to Spillane et al., (2004), structural elements include processes and structures, particularly those relating to finances, human relations, information technology, strategic planning, and even the physical environment. The findings provide evidence for the importance of finances (which broadly includes other resources) and the physical environment conducive to the leadership practice. Having an open space office design was an integral part of distributed leadership in the business. It created inclusivity, transparency, facilitated discursive dialogue across the organization, and produced collective sense-making and sense-giving for anyone physically present in the office. The second structural component

referred to finances by way of leaders in the study understanding that distributing leadership came with sharing the necessary resources to followers who sporadically stepped in as leadership actors in situations that required them to do so. This finding was consistent with Bolden et al. (2008) finding that without direct access to resources, academic leaders were powerless in decision making. From these assertions, one might extend to say that structural elements, in particular resources, contribute heavily to the individual agency for a follower to leader transitions.

(4) The contextual dimension of leadership. Studies suggest that the external context (e.g., social, political, cultural), as well as those contextual factors internal to the organization (e.g., organizational culture, history, and priorities), are a big part of leadership practice (Cited in Bolden, Petrov, Gosling, 2008). The context of the current study seems to build on the literature on context and leadership. The findings suggest that being a black African owned and led the organization in South Africa is essentially political. It appears that the external socio-economic and political landscape of South Africa is affecting organizational leadership. A participant states, “We want the world to see that we are capable and awesome and that we also happen to be black.” This commonality is perhaps at the core of their purpose and results in putting in an extra effort and drawing from the willpower to overachieve to prove that point. Secondly, contextual factors internal to the organization, such as the organization’s history also played a role. The habit of working long hours and engaging in spontaneous collaborations still permeates the leadership culture and expectation. This could be positive in that spontaneous collaborations distribute leadership, but negative when working late creates an unhealthy work-life balance amongst leaders.

(5) The developmental needs of individuals, groups, and organizations. The current findings suggest that leaders and followers see leadership as personal development and an opportunity for growth. It finds that as the small business grows, the people within them are also stretched to grow into leadership roles. This element of leadership suggests that there could be a close relationship between the individual, group, and organizational development, as also supported by Bolden, Petrov, and Gosling (2008) and Day (2000) in emphasizing leader development (human capital) and leadership development (social capital). What could be learned from this analysis is that organizational forces from fast and dynamic business growth have a reciprocal effect with leadership practice? It seems as though that on one end, small business growth exposes leadership gaps and somewhat forces leadership development to occur both on an individual and organizational level, and on the other end, one might also argue that leadership practice through the complementary hybridity of focused and distributed leadership contributes to fast, small business growth.

**Proposing a leadership hybridity framework.** Learning from the framework mentioned above that attempts to explain leadership practice in Higher Education in the UK, the following section draws on the current findings to propose a framework on how leadership hybridity occurred in the small business case studied in South Africa. The major elements of the of the framework include 1) context, 2) focused leadership, 3) distributed leadership, 4) leadership hybridity, 5) leadership hybridity enablers, and 6) leadership hybridity results. The evidence of these emergent elements have been presented in detail in chapter four and discussed earlier in this chapter. This section will draw from the current findings to show how these leadership elements interact as broad categories within leadership practice through this study.



(1) Context. This element of the leadership hybridity framework includes fast, small business growth and emergence, internal and external organizational culture, the changing nature of work turbulence, and other organizational and leadership actors and factors such as the organization's history, the addition of new leaders, etc. The study argues that these contextual factors played a contributing role in leadership enactment. The study found how contextual factors create tensions (also echoed by Bolden, Petrov, Gosling, 2008), both from a dynamic small business growth perspective (as also echoed by Levie and Lichtenstein, 2010), and from an African culture of ubuntu perspective, which builds on the assumptions of Bolden & Kirk (2009) broader literature. Unique to the study is realizing the intransigence of context from leadership. For example, the literature and theory reviewed for this study will inform and frame what the study finds, and the language it uses to articulate arguments. Thus, when the context is acknowledged or made more salient, it is convincing from the study that leadership is bound to have nuance from context to context, which challenges the idea of universal specificity when it comes to the practice of leadership.

(2) Focused leadership. This element of the leadership hybridity framework includes the leader's style and behaviors that could be heroic such as directing people in the midst of chaos, and could be post-heroic such as including others in growth strategy creation and implementation, and being collaborative through the leader instigating collective sense-making and sense giving to explore new and complex problems. While most studies tend to view focused leadership as purely heroic and disempowering to followers (e.g., Fletcher, 2004; Sinclair, 2007; Wilson, 2016), the current study uniquely finds heroic leadership necessary and effective in rising chaos and complexity. Further, the findings uniquely expose how focused leadership includes post-heroic behaviors (such as being collaborative and discursive) that are

complementary to distributing leadership. Overall, one could argue that the focused leadership paradigm given new lens and articulation greatly overlaps with distributed leadership as illustrated in the figure below.

(3) Distributed leadership. This insight brings us to an analysis of distributed leadership within the context of this framework. Conceived through Gronn's (2002) theory that includes spontaneous collaborations, intuitive working relations, and institutional practices. Distributed leadership occurred in the organization using constant debate and discourse for collective sense-making and learning (spontaneous collaboration), strong friendship ties for co-leading at the top management level in particular (intuitive working relations), and open-space office design (institutional practice). The findings also emphasize the importance of 'coordinating' spontaneous collaborations to make this form of leadership more efficient and useful to the business. I have also discussed how these three distributed leadership activities have a strong reliance on the leadership of the founding CEO or other influential individual leaders. This is also represented in the overlap with focused leadership in the framework.

(4) Leadership hybridity. This element constitutes the different patterns of focused and distributed leadership intersections, such as the interaction of the heroic leader and emergent leaders from informal roles to deal with crises (Gronn, 2016). It also included hybrid practices of simultaneous individual leaders co-leading (Gronn, 2016), but often unequally by way of one leader enabling the other, which was unique to this study's findings. It also involved instances of followers transitioning into leaders for the specific situation such as when they were the expert. Lastly, hybridity occurred also through the interaction of different leader preferences which could at times seem to contradict; this is what Collinson & Collinson (2009) refers to as blended leadership. Essentially in the quest of leadership optimization, the argument the framework

makes is that focused, and distributed leadership can share common ground, referred to as leadership hybridity, that represents the harmony between the two seemingly contradicting paradigms of leadership.

(5) Leadership hybridity enablers. These enablers explain how leaders and followers negotiate role transitions and catalyze fluidity of leading in changing situations. This could involve for instance how intentional leader behaviors facilitate followers to transform as leaders to influence a particular situation. It could also involve environments that promote discourse and feedback, and attitudinal factors such as approaching people and situations with a serving attitude. The study offers the following specific enablers of leadership hybridity:

- o Approaching leadership with the attitude of being of service.
- o Leaders need to exhibit intentional behaviors that facilitate fluidity.
- o Creating a discursive environment that supports a strong feedback mechanism.
- o Approaching leadership as a learning opportunity that involves being kind to mistakes and failures.
- o Having established rapport with each other as leadership actors.

6) Leadership hybridity results. This aspect represents some outcomes of how leaders are changed during leader-follower transitions. One example of this is evidenced in the findings is how leaders benefit from enhanced self-regulation after experiencing leadership hybridity. The study found the following specific results of leadership hybridity:

- o There is a lightbulb moment driven by deep empathy, self-reflection, and self-awareness which leads to enhanced self-regulation.
- o There is a gradual movement from fear, to letting go of control, to acceptance.
- o Raised pride and esteem in self and other's leadership capability.

The premise of the framework is that context plays a permeating and complementary role in leadership practice. Within changing context is both focused and distributed leadership that occurs independently and interdependently which forms some common ground of leadership hybridity in multiple patterns. This hybridity is enabled by various factors and actors and influences specific outcomes in leaders such as self-regulation and an enhanced belief in another's capability to lead. The figure below illustrates this reasoning.

### **Implications of Findings**

**On the growing science and theory of leadership.** The current study has made three convincing contributions to the literature on focused and distributed leadership hybridity since research in these three areas is relatively new and the related literature, particularly around distributed leadership is still limited. Firstly, it has suggested through a framework of how understanding leadership enactment holistically involves baring the harmonies between focused and distributed leadership. While most scholars tend to oppose the two, or might want to choose one over the other, the study suggests that both enactments are present in organizations, and they can complement each other. Secondly, the study explores the inherent interaction between contextual factors and leadership enactment.

Most studies struggle to not only acknowledge this intrinsic relationship but also little has been understood about how both constructs interact with each other. This neglect becomes highly problematic in non-western cultural contexts such as South Africa where the social and cultural realities provide some novelty to our understanding of leadership (Nkomo, 2011). Placing the South African culture amongst leadership hybridity has offered lessons on how aspects of the culture inform a more distributed leadership enactment, yet leaves room for focused leadership as well.

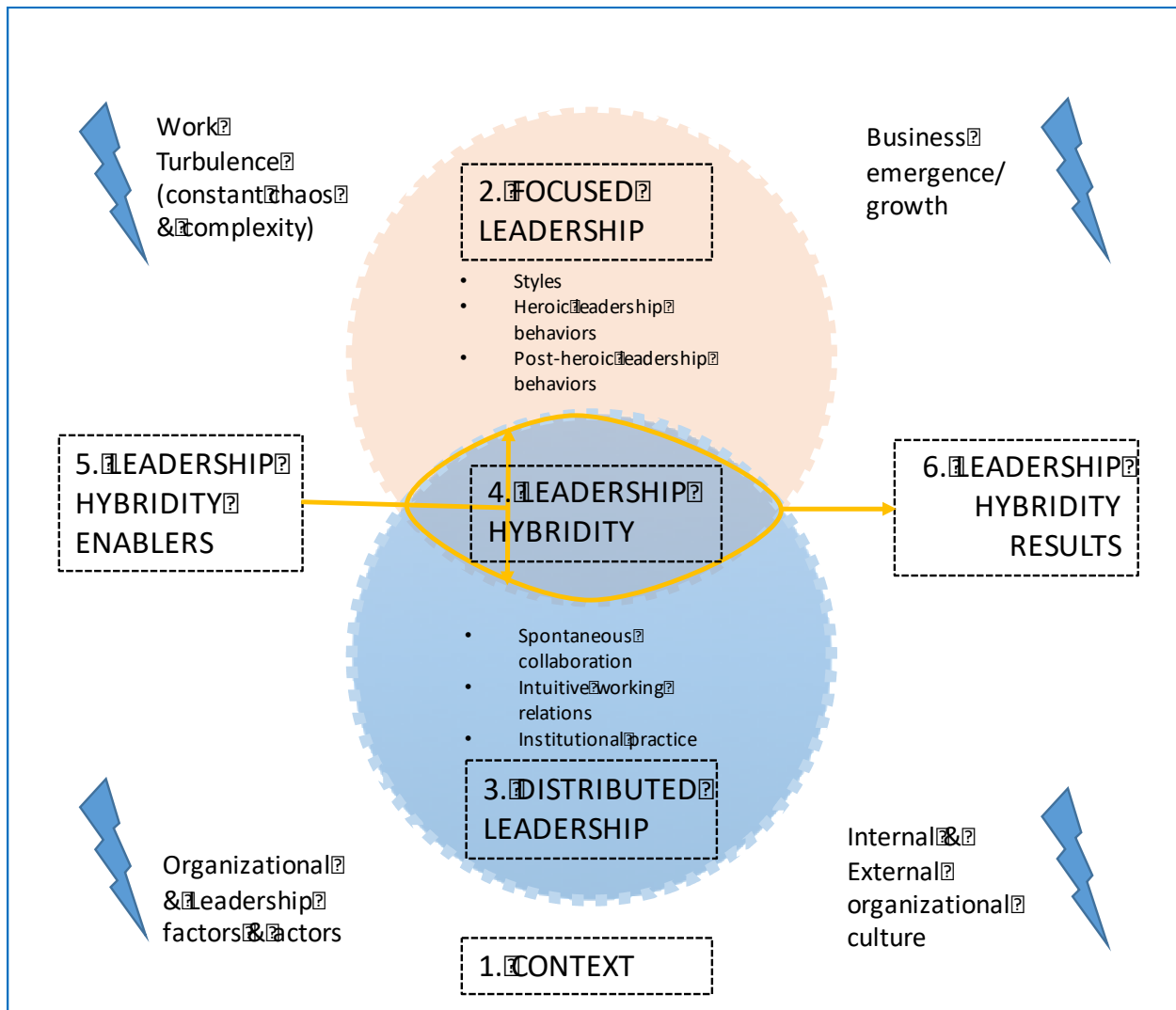


Figure 18. Proposed Leadership Hybridity Framework

This research challenges traditional cultural studies that suggest that African cultures are purely collaborative and inclusive, and provides a more accurate dynamic leaning on the concept of hybridity. Furthermore, in the context of business growth, the study suggests hybrid leadership behaviors that in essence help small businesses grow through managing emergence and complexity. The study has shown distributed leadership avenues to achieve dynamic business growth and has suggested particular heroic leadership behaviors to support this. Thirdly, the idea of leadership hybridity is relatively new (Gronn, 2016), and while most studies have come across it by accident via exploring distributed leadership, this study has been intentional about it in its

design. This intention has allowed the exploration of aspects specific to hybridity and has been able to offer some enablers and results of leadership hybridity. On research design and methodology. Firstly, the biggest problem in studying leadership has been the overemphasis of a single unit of analysis on the individual leader, and the lack of multiple levels of analysis to include a more extensive network of leaders and followers (Gronn, 2016; 2011). Through applying an embedded case study design which pays attention to subunits and contrasts within the case (Hartley 1994), the study has been able to include both followers and leaders, and groups at different levels of the organization where influence could also be situated. The study found that emergent leadership and team leadership in addition to formal leadership focused on individual leaders all occurred to help grow the business. Secondly, different data sources that helped with triangulation inform the findings in chapter four. The parallax between the researcher looking at the findings from three perspectives, namely two different types of interview data, documents, and participant observations improved the trustworthiness of the results. This parallax view would suggest that having diversity in data sources and an embedded case study design may be critical methodical factors in exploring hybridity.

**On leadership practice and application.** The current study offers suggestive evidence for leadership hybridity in small business. From a leadership development perspective, this would suggest a necessary shift from an overemphasis on developing heroic leadership (Mintzberg, 2006). The idea of leadership hybridity has the following implications for leadership development:

- (a) supporting individual leaders (such as CEOs) to develop post-heroic leadership competencies,

(b) shifting the mindset of organizational members that leadership is something that is only done by people in formal positions, to one that is open to multiple truths about leadership (including one about leadership being something that followers also participate in), and

(c) building distributed leadership capacity in business.

The study seems to suggest that an organization could better manage or coordinate activities such as spontaneous collaboration in the organization. From a policy perspective, the study echoes the findings that leading is something new that entrepreneurs are learning. While national and regional support for small business is there, the focus is on more tangible factors such as how to raise financial resources and how to go to market. A study found that there is very little attention placed on building leadership capacity in small business (OECD, 2017). With the current findings we learn that while leadership is present in small business, there is a lot of opportunities to grow, and effecting leadership support from a policy level could influence how support infrastructures for small business emphasis and provide leadership capacity building.

Transferability and broader applicability. The design of single case study qualitative research is not meant to achieve broad generalizability (Yin, 2009). This study explores the relatively new term of leadership hybridity in a very defined and bounded system (Merriam, 2014). However, the application of these results could be used for broader analytical transferability (Yin, 2014), as they have confirmed and extending thinking around leadership hybridity, heroic leadership, and post-heroic leadership. This chapter has discussed some congruence in the current findings with previous research in leadership hybridity and distributed leadership which are relatively new ways of thinking about leadership. And while contexts may differ, one might, with caution, conjecture some applicability of these results beyond the current study population.

For example, the influence of the culture of ubuntu on leadership hybridity found in this study has overlaps with other perspectives such as Theory Z (Ouchi, 1987), inclusive leadership (Hollander, 2010), and other relational theories of leadership discussed in chapter two.

Furthermore, some authors argue that Ubuntu is also evident outside of Africa (Nussbaum, 2003; van der Colff, 2003), and that it holds leadership capacity that can lead to effectiveness in any organization outside of Africa (Karsten & Illa, 2005; Malunga, 2009; Mangaliso, 2001; Nzimakwe, 2014; van der Colff, 2003). Using this logic, one might argue that the proposed leadership hybridity framework about how leadership happens in a small business influenced by ubuntu, could be similar in another context such as the United States where Nussbaum (2003) found instances of Ubuntu. The close overlap between the proposed model of hybridity and Bolden & Petrov's (2014) model of leadership practice compared above achieves a broader analytical transferability. While the contextual dynamics of the two studies differ; the current research is situated a small business in South Africa, and Bolden and Petrov's (2014) in higher education institutions in the UK, the broader categories of what was vital to participants about leadership significantly overlap. The current framework thus offers a provocation for further discussion of these terms and has a crucial cultural element to add to the broader conversation on leadership hybridity. Lastly, one can safely assume that successful small businesses growth is a universal indicator of organizational success. From the literature reviewed (e.g., Cope et al. (2011) and Ensley et al., (2014) and the findings of the current study, one can assume that most successful small businesses can navigate the chaos and complexities of growth. The present results on leadership behaviors that grow small businesses, such as providing feedback through sense giving and sense-making processes offered by the distribution of leadership can be applied to other fast-growing small businesses.



**Recommendations For Future Research.** The researcher would recommend the following strategies to expand on the complexity of the study for future research:

- Test the leadership hybridity framework with other case organizations.
- Expand the population to include different kinds of organizations including a Western and non-Western comparison to explore the complexity of the relationship between leadership and culture.
- Design research exploration purely focused on distributed forms of leadership through either participant observations, ethnography, or action research over extended periods.
- Conduct a longitudinal study to compare how leadership hybridity changes with business growth over time.
- Explore the multiple leadership hybridity patterns in more depths including but not limited to understanding (a) the conditions that allow it, (b) who and what is involved, (c) how to optimize it for business growth.

### **Concluding Remarks**

At the conclusion of the study, the researcher's thoughts gravitate towards the statement 'I am because we are,' the essence of ubuntu (Tutu, 2002). While Ubuntu cannot be assumed to be unique to South Africa or other parts of Africa, exploring leadership within an espoused ubuntu context, offers leadership a unique articulation and understanding. This statement could arguably provide space for the hybridity of leadership as it has occurred in this small business. The 'I' in the statement acknowledges individualistic notions of leadership and the 'we,' more collective notions of who we are as humans, leading together. This view corresponds to a statement made by Bolden and Kirk (2009) after their study in Southern Africa:

Ubuntu offers a powerful frame of reference and a way of talking about the

interdependence of social actors within the leadership practice that bridges the ‘individual’ and the ‘collective’ (p. 14).

In the study, the researcher has learned that while being preoccupied with the differences between individual and collective forms of leadership, we might miss the inherent harmony between them. The findings of the study allow heroism to find a more positive place in the practice of leadership, beyond self-interest and control, and towards believing in and supporting others’ potential to lead. The key learning here is the need to go beyond the binary of either focused or distributed leadership but focused and distributed leadership. And while the idea of post-heroic leadership or distributed leadership is new and seductive, in a world that has problematized power (Wilson, 2016), we cannot deny that the idea of a hero still romanticizes the world. More so, the world needs heroes, and this study argues that there can be many of them, creating an interconnected network of influence and positive change. This line of thinking opens up a multiplicity of emergent leadership patterns that could be essential in stimulating the optimization of leadership effectiveness in general.

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## APPENDIX A

### Informed Consent Form

#### PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

#### *Graduate School of Education and Psychology*

### INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

#### A SMALL BUSINESS CASE STUDY OF FOCUSED AND DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP HYBRIDITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Pepperdine University, because you are an employee at your organization. Your participation is voluntary. You should read the information below, and ask questions about anything that you do not understand, before deciding whether to participate. Please take as much time as you need to read the consent form. You may also decide to discuss participation with your family or friends. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form. You will also be given a copy of this form for your records.

#### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of the study is to understand how leadership is focused and distributed in your fast growing organization as it grows, and how both national and organizational culture has an influence on how leadership is enacted.

#### **STUDY PROCEDURES**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in in-depth interviews, focus group interviews.

- The study will begin with focus group interviews: The first group interview will be with the top management team, and the second will be work team with a mix of managers and lower level employees. Both will last about 45 minutes, and will occur at the site offices.
- You will also be invited to participate in In-depth interviews: These are one-on-one interviews with semi-structured questions about your individual leadership and how you see leadership happening in your growing organization. This will last about 60 minutes and will occur in your offices or at a mutually convenient place.
- In between interviews, the researcher will also be involved in some organizational activities (such as meetings), in order to observe additional emerging leadership



behaviors in the organization.

- Field notes will be taken at the end of an observation, interviews will be recorded and transcribed. All data will be coded- pseudonyms will be used to protect your identity, and data will be stored in a secure location.

### **POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

There are very little potential and foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study. The study discusses relations and dynamics between followers and leaders which has potential to get uncomfortable. You may be triggered negatively when they think of a particular leadership issue or an experience of cultural significance. Furthermore, in a focus group situation, the researcher cannot assure full confidentiality. However, you are free to withdraw your consent to participate at any point. The alternative to participation in the study is not participating which does not affect your employment relationship in any way. I will keep the records of this study anonymous as far as permitted by law. Data will be coded and pseudonyms will be used to protect your identity and views. Post the sessions, the researcher will offer de-briefing sessions and coaching interventions to you it is required because of any discomforts experienced during the study.

### **POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

While there are no direct benefits to the study participants, there are several anticipated benefits to society which include:

- Findings are likely to inform the design of a contextualized leadership development framework for fast-growing small businesses in South Africa.
- Effective leadership contributes to the viability and success of small business that can make increasing contribution to the economy.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

I will keep your records for this study anonymous as far as permitted by law. However, if I am required to do so by law, I may be required to disclose information collected about you. Examples of the types of issues that would require me to break confidentiality are if you tell me about instances of child abuse and elder abuse. Pepperdine's University's Human Subjects Protection Program (HSPP) may also access the data collected. The HSPP occasionally reviews and monitors research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research subjects.

The data will be stored on a password protected computer in the principal investigators place of resident. The data will be stored for a minimum of three years. The data collected will be coded, and only identified according to whether you are a manager or lower level employee. The

interview recording will be transcribed, coded using pseudonyms, and recording will be destroyed.

### **PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

Your participation is voluntary. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

### **ALTERNATIVES TO FULL PARTICIPATION**

The alternative to participation in the study is not participating. Your relationship with your employer will not be affected whether you participate or not in this study.

### **EMERGENCY CARE AND COMPENSATION FOR INJURY**

If you are injured as a direct result of research procedures you will receive medical treatment; however, you or your insurance will be responsible for the cost. Pepperdine University does not provide any monetary compensation for injury

### **INVESTIGATOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION**

I understand that the investigator is willing to answer any inquiries I may have concerning the research herein described. I understand that I may contact us if I have any other questions or concerns about this research.

### **RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT – IRB CONTACT INFORMATION**

If you have questions, concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant or research in general please contact Dr. Judy Ho, Chairperson of the Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board at Pepperdine University 6100 Center Drive Suite 500 Los Angeles, CA 90045, 310-568-5753 or [gpsirb@pepperdine.edu](mailto:gpsirb@pepperdine.edu).

### **SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT**

I have read the information provided above. I have been given a chance to ask questions. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

**AUDIO/VIDEO/PHOTOGRAPHS** *(If this is not applicable to your study and/or if participants do not have a choice of being audio/video-recorded or photographed, delete this section.)*

- I agree to be audio/video-recorded /photographed (remove the media not being used)*
- I do not want to be audio/video-recorded /photographed (remove the media not being used)*

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

**SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR**

I have explained the research to the participants and answered all of his/her questions. In my judgment the participants are knowingly, willingly and intelligently agreeing to participate in this study. They have the legal capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research study and all of the various components. They also have been informed participation is voluntarily and that they may discontinue their participation in the study at any time, for any reason.

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Person Obtaining Consent

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

## APPENDIX B

### IRB Approval of Study



Pepperdine University  
24255 Pacific Coast Highway  
Malibu, CA 90263  
TEL: 310-506-4000

#### NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

Date: March 21, 2018

Protocol Investigator Name: Siphokazi Ntetha

Protocol #: 18-01-711

Project Title: A SMALL BUSINESS CASE STUDY OF FOCUSED AND DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP HYBRIDITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

School: Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Dear Siphokazi Ntetha:

Thank you for submitting your application for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). We appreciate the work you have done on your proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations 45 CFR 46.101 that govern the protections of human subjects.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit an amendment to the IRB. Since your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite the best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete written explanation of the event and your written response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the IRB and documenting the adverse event can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* at [community.pepperdine.edu/irb](http://community.pepperdine.edu/irb).

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all communication or correspondence related to your application and this approval. Should you have additional questions or require clarification of the contents of this letter, please contact the IRB Office. On behalf of the IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Judy Ho, Ph.D., IRB Chair