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DISCURSIVE LEADERSHIP: EXPLORING THE “BLACK BOX” CHALLENGE IN
TRANSCULTURAL LEADERSHIP STUDIES

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

May 2019

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"BLACK BOX" CHALLENGE IN transcultural LEADERSHIP STUDIES

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ABSTRACT

The increasingly globalized U.S. workforce includes significant numbers of adult immigrants integrating into the North American professional sphere. As such, it is important to have concrete ways to study and interpret different cultures' thinking about teamwork, and their models of enacting shared leadership and communication in a multicultural context. Since 2006, hundreds of millions in federal grant funding has been invested in university-based language and culture programs focused on training government personnel and heritage populations in the languages and cultures of the Middle East and Central and Southeast Asia. Little is known about the performative strengths and challenges of the culturally diverse project teams that so often staff these grant programs. Asian and Middle Eastern immigrants' understanding and definitions of constructs like leadership, authority, and teamwork, are not well represented in contemporary leadership studies scholarship. Given this, there are few actionable best practices to implement when leading or working in and among culturally diverse teams.

To address this issue, the study analyzed and compared 12 participants' perceptions on the nature of leadership, authority, teamwork, and communication in both their cultures of origin and in their experiences in the U.S. It also examined participants' workplace discourse produced in the performance of group decision-making tasks.

The study entailed analyzing video and audio recorded (a) one-on-one qualitative interviews and (b) group decision-making meetings —with and among Arabic, Afghan, Chinese, and Persian language and culture instructors participating in a federally funded teacher-training program at a public university in the southwestern United States. Interview data were analyzed qualitatively, focusing on participants' cultural definitions

of leadership, authority, teamwork, and professional communications. The group meetings were studied using discourse analysis techniques; the quantitative discourse analysis results were compared with themes that emerged from the qualitative interviews.

The results strongly suggest culture's ability to constrain or liberate individuals' and groups' productive participation in team interactions. The discourse data reinforced several important qualitative findings —and also suggested practical implications for leading culturally diverse teams. The overall findings affirm the utility of discourse analysis as a method for studying transcultural leadership, while also highlighting the non-monolithic nature of world cultures.

DEDICATION

For Leonora, Santiago, and Mateo. As much as this is a product of the mind, it is also very much a product of your hearts. For all the unwavering love, support, and encouragement you have shown me throughout this long process, and always, I cannot offer enough gratitude. I will never stop trying to show you what an amazing gift you all are to me. You have my deepest love, always.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Understanding and communicating across cultures has been an itch I have been trying to scratch for most of my life. When I was 14 years old, an exchange student from Colombia moved into the house next door to me. For a boy growing up in a town of about four thousand people in rural western Michigan, this was a watershed moment of linguistic and cultural awakening. I had begun studying Spanish in school a couple of years prior, and since my new neighbor's English was not always up to the task of helping her either understand things fully or getting her point across, I began to see first-hand how my still nascent language proficiency could be of value in the real world. When we had our first fight, however, it was not language that broke down; it was culture.

The situation I describe above, of relationships built on the use of language, and challenged by the mysteries of culture, repeated numerous times in my life since. In both the professional and personal spheres, communicating effectively across cultures has been both my heartfelt imperative, and an occasional Achilles heel. For this reason, perhaps beyond all others, I have spent the past several years working on this project. I hope the investment of time, energy, and passion is evident.

Of course, I am far from the only person who has made significant investments in this project. I need to begin by offering profound thanks to my committee members. Fred Galloway, Ed.D., has been my advisor from the very start of my time in the program. Through hiatuses, readmissions, and many a real life twist and turn along the way, Fred has been a mentor and a friend on all fronts, academic, personal, and professional. I owe a great deal of my progress and relative success in this program to Fred's genuine and supportive approach to teaching, advising, and most recently co-chairing my dissertation

committee. The truly unique thing about Fred is that he never fails to account and advocate for his students' wellbeing in a personal sense. As gifted as he is in the academic domain, it is this persistent care for his students as real people that has struck and influenced me the most in my nearly a decade of work with him. Fred, for all these things, as well as the ones I have certainly failed to mention here, I thank you with all my heart.

Of similar influence and support has been Bob Donmoyer, PhD. I was a student in three courses with Bob, and I was positively blown away in each case by his impressive command of all things scholarly, as well as the great pride and care he takes in being an excellent teacher. Of even greater impact, at least for me personally, was Bob's tremendous commitment and skill as a reader and reviewer of my coursework. I have never sent a draft of my work to Bob without receiving detailed, insightful commentary and suggestions on how to improve and clarify my writing and, by extension, my thinking. Better yet, when the feedback Bob gave was complex, he never failed to make time to meet face to face. These sessions were always helpful, and most often I would leave feeling inspired and empowered to do my best work. Bob, thank you for everything. You have made my experience in SOLES and DLS one of the most positive growth experiences of my life.

Studying culture and its relationship to leadership would have not been possible for me without the guidance and support I have received from Afsaneh Nahavandi, PhD. Afsaneh's own work is significant in the field, and I am profoundly grateful for the opportunity I have had to not just read her work, but to discuss it with her in person. It is truly incredible to me that I have also been fortunate enough to be one of her teaching

assistants in a Masters-level Organizational Theory course, to present with her at conferences, and to work as part of the *Individual Cultural Mindset Inventory* (ICMI) project under her leadership. Afsaneh, your generosity and collaborative spirit are among the strongest I have encountered in my nearly two decades of graduate studies. Like so many other students who have had the great good fortune to know you, I owe you so much that I will never be able to repay. I only hope to take advantage of every opportunity to emulate your example that should come my way. Thank you, Afsaneh.

Using discourse analysis to study leadership and culture was something I knew I was interested in, but the “how” of it was daunting to me until I encountered the scholarly work of Robyn Walker, PhD, and her colleague Jolanta Aritz, PhD. When I read their co-authored book, *Leadership Talk: A Discourse Approach to Leader Emergence*, my eyes and mind were abruptly opened. It was like a ray of hope for my aspirations to do a project like this one. Anyone who has ever wanted to undertake a methodologically novel or ambiguous dissertation project will understand that I am in no way exaggerating. When I saw that both Robyn and Jolanta were on the faculty at the University of Southern California, I reached out to express my admiration for their work and to see if they would be willing to meet with me. Not only did they agree to meet, but Robyn generously offered to read my work, even my essays for coursework, and I was fortunate and honored that she accepted my request to participate on my committee. Robyn, thank you for your openness and amazing generosity and support. It is a real pleasure having the chance to work with you. I hope I have begun to do it justice.

Beyond my committee members, I owe so much gratitude to the faculty and staff of the University of San Diego’s School of Leadership and Education Sciences and

Department of Leadership Studies, both past and present. My experiences in this program have been among the most meaningful of my life, and I owe so much of that to all the incredible people with whom I have had the chance to work these past nine years. I offer special thanks to Terri Monroe, Zachary Green, Paula Cordeiro, Lea Hubbard, George Reed, Christopher Newman, Beth Garofalo, Heather Gibb, and Emma Mackey. I have almost certainly left someone out, but I absolutely owe you all a huge debt of gratitude for the depth and quality of my academic and interpersonal experiences in this program.

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One LARC colleague I must particularly thank is Mat Schulze. Many working graduate students are fortunate to have a boss who is supportive of their studies. To have a boss who provides enthusiastic scholarly mentoring, support, and who actively helps you integrate dissertation writing into your daily routine is simply uncommon. For the read-throughs, the scheduled meetings during the workday, the inspirational ideas, and the direct help with bending Microsoft Word to my will, I will always be grateful. Thank you, Mat, for being exactly what I needed, exactly when I needed it.

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Of course, the greatest inspiration and support for this work came from my family. I need to start by recognizing the parents and brothers of my partner, Leonora Simonovis. I am so fortunate to have these high-achieving, affectionate, generous, resilient people in my life. Muchísimas gracias Leonor, Nelson, Alejandro y Juan por todo lo que hacen, y todo lo que han hecho por nosotros. I hope this work is one that you would consider “de primera.”

At last, I must thank my wonderful partner and friend, and our two beautiful boys, for their vital role in helping me reach the finish line. Santiago, thank you for asking from time to time how this whole thing was going. As a father, it never occurred to me before that one of my children would ever be genuinely interested in my work. You continue to amaze and impress me as you grow into a very special young man. Mateo, thank you for reminding me, usually when I needed it the most, that sometimes you just have to stop what you are doing and have a little fun. You embody the spark that I needed when the flames sometimes got low.

Leonora, whether I needed a proofread, a sanity check, a morale boost, or just a few hours to gather my thoughts and hammer out just one more paragraph or page, you always found a way to give me what I required, and more. Making this journey with you is more rewarding than I could have ever imagined. I could not ask for a better, more loving partner or friend. I can say without an iota of doubt that I would not have been able to do any of this if it were not for you. I am so grateful that I did not have to make the attempt. I cannot wait to see what we will accomplish together next.

PREFACE

Since April 2008, I have worked as the Managing Director of a federally funded world languages and cultures education center housed at a public university in the southwestern United States. While the center receives significant infrastructural support from the university, the vast majority of its funding derives from federal grants and contracts. Successful performance of the terms of the grants and contracts is vital to the center's short- and long-term survival.

Upon beginning this job I was quickly made aware of global cultural complexity on a level I had not previously considered. I am embarrassed to admit that I had assumed a leadership role in an organization dedicated to the teaching and learning of Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTLs) in the United States, Arabic and Persian among them, and yet I did not speak any such languages. I did not even really understand the basic differences between Arab and Persian cultures. As I quickly discovered, the differences can be quite significant, as are the challenges associated with navigating those differences in a workplace setting. Such transcultural diversity, and the attendant communication challenges it can engender, has definitely put successful grant-funded project performance at risk in my time working at the center.

Early on in my role as Managing Director, I relied heavily on my brief but intense previous supervisory experience in a U.S.-based private sector K-16 educational enterprise that runs summer and fall reading enrichment programs. During my time there, I encountered and followed a classically North American model of teamwork and individual achievement under a mindset that the work always comes first and that interpersonal differences can be acknowledged but ultimately should be put aside in the

professional sphere. Moreover, the key to success in this organization was open, honest, often very direct communication between team members, supervisors, students, and parents.

In my new job as Managing Director of the university center, one of the first challenges I faced was assembling a high-functioning Afghan language and culture team that would provide top-notch pre-deployment training to U.S. military personnel. The greatest obstacles involved were the lack of existing curriculum and materials for teaching Afghan languages, as well as the individual team members' relative inexperience with education in the Western context. In keeping with my understanding of U.S.-based management practices, I led open discussion sessions with the group about the objectives of creating quality curriculum and adhering to team-teaching best practices. I then advised them to do their best and to let me know if they had questions or challenges on which they required my help. From there I largely left it to them to sort out how they would go about achieving their goals. Initially I did not even designate a formal team lead, figuring that adult professionals would not need to be told who among them was "in charge" in order to at least get started on their work. While that revealed my naiveté and relative inexperience as a leader, I believed then that there was no good reason why it should not work.

But I was wrong in my assumptions, as I frequently found that these "teams" often worked together for weeks with very little to show for it, and/or that some form of rivalry and infighting had become so vigorous as to require my intervention. In between bouts of mediation and frustration, I often wondered if some people who come to the U.S. from other cultures just did not understand that there are different dynamics at play in this

culture, or if they knew but simply could not, or preferred not to, change their behavior.

My initial interest in this study came from the communicative differences I observed among and within different cultural groups, particularly when compared with what I understood to be the general U.S. norms. When I saw communication breaking down between two Middle Eastern colleagues, whether from the same nation of origin or not, I frequently sought the “insider” knowledge of a trusted colleague from Afghanistan. Although he made every effort to help me understand what I was seeing, more often than not his response boiled down to some version of “it is just (our) culture.” The dissatisfaction I experienced at this answer, combined with my increasing knowledge about leadership, authority, and group relations gained through my doctoral coursework at SOLES, fueled my curiosity and led me to refine the research questions that guide this study. It also led me to look for ways to more systematically study and understand the underlying discursive dynamics in my own culturally diverse workplace.

One program that offers a unique opportunity to explore transcultural discourse in the context of real, professional working teams is STARTALK. Funded through the National Security Agency, STARTALK offers select universities and other educational institutions federal grants to conduct summer language teacher training and K-16 language learning programs, particularly in languages like Arabic, Persian, Dari, and Chinese. My center has been fortunate to receive STARTALK funding for teacher and student programs fairly consistently since 2008. However, grantees must re-compete for funding each year, which means that funding from one year to the next is never a guarantee. For this reason, I chose to integrate the data collection for this study with a program evaluation I helped design and execute for the center’s summer 2016

STARTALK teacher training program. I did this in cooperation with the program's co-directors. The STARTALK program co-directors and I identified the articulation points between the teacher training program's dual focus on content-based language instruction and tenets of learner centeredness and my research interests related to differing transcultural definitions of leadership, authority, teamwork, and effective communication practices.

Together we developed an interview guide for one-on-one conversational interviews, all of which were conducted by me, with participating STARTALK teacher trainees who opted into the evaluation via an informed consent form. We also devised two video-recorded group decision-making activities for the purpose of conducting discourse analysis on group interactions within and across cultures. I have an intense interest in discourse analysis and sociolinguistics in general as an additional lens onto individual and group behavior, particularly as it connects to people's stated perceptions and beliefs about said behavior. Finally, we created and deployed a Likert scale survey designed to gauge participants' level of satisfaction with the leadership and teamwork they experienced in the group decision-making meetings and in the workshop overall.

These three interventions were indirect measures of the participants' understanding and enactment of, in particular, the workshop's central theme of learner centeredness in curriculum and education. Learner centeredness has parallels to the push-pull of leadership with and without formal authority, teamwork, and communication, in that it requires a teacher, a leader, who puts the interests of followers ahead of her own, to re-think traditional roles and change behaviors that may be tied to deeply held beliefs about those roles.

The plan was always to use any data collected as part of the 2016 STARTALK program evaluation for the purposes of this study, which is why informed consent forms were collected for all participants. If I had waited to collect data until after I had defended my dissertation proposal and received advance IRB approval, it would have put the entire project at risk, as there would have been no guarantee of my center receiving funds to conduct a similar STARTALK teacher training program in 2017 or thereafter.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds increasingly comprise the globalized United States (U.S.) workforce. It can be argued that teams that include people from non-U.S. backgrounds working in a U.S. context, particularly if it is very different from their culture(s) of origin, make for a heterogeneous, or multicultural, entity in and of themselves. As such, it is more important than ever to have concrete methods to study and understand transcultural ways of thinking about teamwork, as well as the various ways that different cultures understand and enact such things as teamwork and shared leadership in a multicultural context (Walker & Aritz, 2014).

A number of scholarly studies have suggested that even mildly diverse groups can experience performance-inhibiting communication challenges (Earley & Gibson, 2002; Earley and Mosakoski, 2000; Franklin, 2007; Jehn, Northcraft, & Neale, 1999; Ravlin, Thomas, & Ilsev, 2000). But even with findings such as these, the performance attributes and vectors of individuals and groups from other world cultures living and working in the U.S. context are still not well understood. Thus, it is necessary to more fully explore the extent to which varying degrees of heterogeneity, particularly of the cultural variety, present significant hurdles, as well as the kinds of challenges they may create for effective group performance.

There are, however, additional complications associated with adults from other countries and cultures coming to work in U.S. professional contexts, particularly if those contexts are scholarly or academic in nature. Recent scholarship on the evolving culture of U.S. workplaces indicates that there are increasing expectations that individual

employees function effectively as part of loosely structured teams in environments lacking in rigid hierarchy (Halvorsen, 2013; Adler *et al.* 2008; Gee *et al.*, 1996; Harvey, 1989). Indeed, Halvorsen (2013) explicitly stated that, over the past couple of decades, there has been a marked shift away from the firmly role and task-oriented bureaucratic hierarchies of the past toward more “participatory practices and teamwork in a flexible relation to the ever changing organization” (p. 274). Recent scholarship also makes it clear that team members’ communicative and collaborative capabilities are important in these contemporary, flatter organizational models (Halvorsen, 2013; Iedema & Scheeres, 2003; Sarangi and Roberts, 1999). As such, teamwork and the communication that happens within and among teams and leaders is increasingly the fulcrum point for organizational success or struggle.

Beyond the interactions between peers in a working team, a better understanding of the communications that teams direct toward an organization’s leadership is also vital. An individual’s ability to transition from communicating as a colleague within a team, to communicating “up” as a subordinate, or follower, to a boss or leader figure is also important in the contemporary workplace, to the point of being an indispensable capacity in 21st century workers. As Kellerman (2008) describes, in today’s organizations, “the line that separates superiors from their subordinates is often blurred” (p. xxi). In her book, *Followership: How followers are creating change and changing leaders*, Kellerman reviews the work of Zeleznik, (1965), Kelley, (1992), and Chaleff, (2003) on the topic of followership/subordinancy. In Kellerman’s review, a clear trajectory emerges in which, over time, leaders have an increasingly favorable view of certain types of

followers; those who act more like leaders even without any formal designation or assigned status.

Most of the above is based in, and researched from, a predominantly Western, North American perspective that does not fully take into account the increasing cultural diversity in the U.S. population. As Kellerman (2008) herself has written, “To be a follower in Asia is different from being a follower in South America” (p. 84). I would extend that logic to include leadership, authority, teamwork, and workplace communication as phenomena that may differ significantly across cultures. It seems fair then to question the applicability to an ever more globalized workforce of Western definitions of phenomena such as teamwork and open workplace communications, irrespective of established hierarchy. Recognizing and questioning the capacity of U.S. culture writ large to understand and reconcile its philosophical and practical differences with other world cultures is, however, not a new challenge.

This study analyzes and compares participants’ personal perceptions/stances on the nature of leadership, authority, teamwork, and communication as they operate in both their culture of origin and their culturally diverse working teams in the U.S. It also examines the discourse they produced in their workplace interactions with one another in the performance of group decision-making tasks. The hope is that a better understanding will begin to emerge of how cultural difference can influence interaction and collaboration in multicultural teams and organizations. The research site was a summer world language camp and teacher professionalization program conducted on the campus of a public university in the southwestern United States. The program, funded in large part through the National Security Language Initiative (NSLI) and via the STARTALK

program out of University of Maryland, represented a unique convenience sample opportunity for the carrying out of this research while also presenting an internal program evaluation opportunity. In order to better understand the nature of NSLI and STARTALK in the context of this study, a bit of recent historical context is needed.

In 2006, then-President George W. Bush announced the National Security Language Initiative (NSLI), the intent of which was to develop the foreign language skills of American students, especially in “critical-need” languages such as Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Hindi, and Persian. Per program “Fact Sheet” websites (<http://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2006/58733.htm>), NSLI’s “three broad goals” are to: (a) increase the number of Americans studying critical languages, starting as early as kindergarten; (b) increase the number of Americans reaching professional levels of proficiency in critical languages; and (c) increase the number of teachers of critical languages and the amount and quality of resources available to them. The NSLI umbrella of federally funded programs includes: STARTALK, Title VI/Fulbright Hays, National Security Education Program (NSEP), and State Department programs such as Critical Language Scholarships (CLS), and NSLI-Youth, both of which focus on sending K-12 and college-age students on overseas study trips. The scope and intended impact of these programs are unabashedly ambitious. For the purposes of this study, and in order to avoid an overly diffuse emphasis, I will focus on the mission of STARTALK and NSEP programs, and, as explained in more detail below, the specific practice of STARTALK programs.

Per its website, (<http://www.nsep.gov/content/mission-and-objectives>), NSEP programs seek to “develop a much-needed strategic partnership between the national

security community and higher education, addressing the national need for experts in critical languages and regions.” This translates into government funding for critical foreign language and culture programs housed at institutions of higher education delivered to current and prospective federal government employees, ranging from active duty infantry Marines to high-level government attaché officers working as ambassadorial support emissaries in countries around the globe. Similarly, STARTALK’s website (<https://startalk.umd.edu/public/about>) states that its broad mission is “to increase the number of U.S. citizens learning, speaking, and teaching critical need foreign languages.” STARTALK and NSEP programs integrate and bridge the work of the U.S. Departments of Education, State, and Defense. These programs have expended billions of federal dollars since 2006 in the pursuit of NSLI goals. While that investment is but a small fraction of the overall U.S. federal budget, it is still significant and worthy of review and scrutiny beyond program reports and internal evaluations.

The present research leverages STARTALK’s combination teacher training/student camp programs. The goal of STARTALK programs is to expand and improve the teaching and learning of strategically important world languages that are not now widely taught in the U.S. STARTALK programs offer opportunities for universities to host language teacher professionalization workshops, K-16 student language “camps,” and programs that combine both of these aspects, actively training and mentoring the teachers that work with the students in the language “camps.”

As stated previously, the majority of NSLI programs, especially those funded through STARTALK, NSEP, and Title VI/Fulbright Hays, are administered on the campuses of U.S. institutions of higher education. Also, as their stated missions suggest,

they tend to employ high numbers of people whose culture of origin is not North American, but rather Asian, African, or Middle Eastern. I have seen in my own experience, as the program director for STARTALK, Title VI, and various NSEP programs on a university campus, and I have also heard from my counterparts at other institutions, that project staff members on these federal grant programs are often put into collaborative teams without the clear establishment of an internal hierarchy, or simply on the basis of grouping them by region, nation, and/or language “of origin.” As such, these language-teaching teams often operate without a formally designated team “lead,” and are largely, if not completely, comprised of employees originally from Middle Eastern, African, and/or Asian cultures.

According to House and Javidan (2004) and their GLOBE study findings, the deeply held and espoused understandings of effective teamwork and collaboration practices of many Middle Easterners, Asians, and Africans differ significantly from those of North Americans. Although many of these teachers may be anything from just superficially to profoundly familiar with the North American professional culture paradigm, that does not mean they will have internalized it or have it inform their behavior (Hall Haley & Ferro, 2011; Brown, 2014). By extension, simply organizing such personnel into working groups or teams without first establishing a clear hierarchy and/or practical expectations as to how communication is to be handled in service of the work may not be a functional approach. As the GLOBE studies strongly suggest, leadership as a construct does vary significantly across global cultures.

Statement of the Problem

Asian and Middle Eastern immigrants' understanding and definitions of constructs like leadership, authority, and teamwork, are neither well represented nor well defined in contemporary leadership studies scholarship. Furthermore, there are almost no actionable best practices to implement when leading or working in and among culturally diverse teams. Although there is ample survey-based research on transcultural differences in terms of formal authorities reporting on culturally driven behavioral preferences in select professional sectors (Hofstede, 2002; House & Javidan, 2004), there is almost no literature that gives ordinary people of Asian and Middle Eastern origin the opportunity to express, for themselves, what they understand leadership, teamwork, and effective professional communication to mean, both in theory and in practice. Nor is there abundant research on the cultural challenges that immigrant workers, in particular, face in adapting to their new context.

Through its federal grant programs, the National Security Language Initiative creates team environments where people from Asian and Middle Eastern culture along with U.S supervisors have to work on various training programs. Since its authorization in 2006, the National Security Language Initiative (NSLI) has allocated over a billion dollars in funding to institutions of higher education around the country in the form of competitive grants and contracts. These programs are intended to increase overall national readiness and capacity in "critical" languages such as Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Hindi, and Persian. Program activities include scholarly and action research, development of teaching and learning resources, teacher professional development, and language learning programs for K-16 populations, as well as government personnel.

One NSLI-funded program in particular, STARTALK, brings K-16 students, often heritage speakers of a critical language, and teachers, both practicing and aspiring, together for summer language “camp” programs. The staff of these programs tends to be quite diverse, as the ideal STARTALK program combines a teacher training and student camp component, as well as multiple languages groups (Arabic, Persian, Dari, and Chinese, for instance). Programs are most often directed by university faculty members who can act as program principal investigators and overall project directors, but who may not necessarily be first language speakers or representative members of the programs’ languages and culture(s). The program administrative and instructional staff, however, are often temporary contractual employees brought in from local immigrant and/or heritage language and culture communities of regions such as Asia, Africa, and the Middle East.

By their very nature, STARTALK programs exemplify the kind of culturally diverse work environment described in the previous section. They are also a “third space” (Bhabha, 2004) in which other world cultures’ behavioral norms are injected into the context of the U.S. academic workspace. Furthermore, as federal grant-funded programs, STARTALK projects tend to be organized and executed on very short (two to three months) advance time frames. This most often means that the already less-formal U.S. academic research project context becomes even flatter and more team-oriented as many individuals must work in harmony, independent but supportive of each other. Indeed, even if organizational hierarchies are put in place among the program staff, there is often insufficient time for them to be reinforced, resulting in functionally “flat” teams. While this may be commonplace in the U.S. professional context, the question very much

remains as to whether or not people from other world cultures are able to function, and feel relatively comfortable, working in and with these Western terms.

Under NSLI, significant federal funds have been, and continue to be, spent on programs that employ Asian and Middle Eastern natives to provide critical language and culture training and education to U.S. government personnel and/or K-16 populations in the United States, as is the case with STARTALK. Developing a better understanding of how key personnel teaching in these programs understand leadership, teamwork, and effective communication is vital in order to gauge how efficiently these programs may, or may not, be functioning and where there are areas for improvement. These are high-stakes contexts, directly involving the international preparedness and security of the current and future U.S. workforce, as well as the education of future generations. Improving our understanding of culture's real role and impact in professional working teams does not seem optional.

Purpose of Study

Despite the sharp increase in immigration to the U.S. over the past two decades, reported as approximately 50%, from 30 to 45 million between 2000 and 2018 (<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/immigrant-population-over-time?width=1000&height=850&iframe=true>), there is relatively little scholarly research examining the challenges that immigrants face integrating themselves successfully into U.S. workplaces. Indeed, per multiple keyword searches including the terms “immigrant/challenges/workplace/U.S.,” the majority of recent scholarly research and reporting on immigrant integration into various sectors of U.S. society understandably focuses on Hispanic populations and the impacts their increasing presence in the U.S. has

on them (Schapiro *et al.*, 2018), K-12 schools , medical (Singer & Tummala-Narra, 2013), and social services contexts (Pine & Drachman, 2005; Lin *et al.*, 2018). While these are undoubtedly important issues where ongoing academic research is needed, a noticeably large gap exists as it relates to non-Hispanic immigrants and more professionalized sectors such as postsecondary education workplaces. Almost no research combining qualitative interviews and quantitative discourse analysis has been conducted for the purpose of understanding the interaction between immigrants' cultural perspectives on working in the U.S. context, and their actual discursive performance while doing so.

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the growing body of scholarly research on discursive practices in transcultural leadership and teamwork situations, and to further explore the “black box” problem in leadership and transcultural studies. A secondary purpose of this study beyond the exploration of culture's role and impact in professional working teams, is to serve as a proof of concept for the potential robustness of combining qualitative interviews with quantitative and qualitative discourse analysis methods in studying and understanding the challenges that exist, both in transcultural and organizational leadership terms, for immigrant populations working in the U.S. As already outlined, not only does most research not focus on the challenges immigrants face, instead emphasizing the challenges they create for various U.S. sectors, but almost no research, outside of that conducted by Walker and Aritz (2007, 2011, 2014), employs quantitative discourse analysis as a way to study the confluence of leadership, teamwork, and transcultural communication dynamics.

In recent years, an approach now referred to as discursive leadership has gained traction and recognition for the novel kinds of data it produces and the (socio)linguistic bent it adds to the study of leadership in action, as well as the counterpoint it offers to the more traditional trend of cognitive/psychological leadership studies. A simple definition of discursive leadership by Walker and Aritz (2014), conceives of it as leadership that is “constructed in the moment through communication in context” (Chapter 1, Table 1.3). According to Fairhurst (2007) discursive leadership is principally focused on how language functions in pragmatic terms, how and what kinds of leadership are exercised in different contexts and present moments of social interaction, as well as any historical and cultural factors that shape it.

Writing about his own model, Contingency Theory, Fiedler (1993) described it as having a “black box” problem. Fiedler’s research had produced solid data that predicted task-motivated leaders being effective in both extremely favorable and extremely unfavorable situations, as well as data about relationship-motivated leaders being successful primarily in moderate contexts. What he did not have was data that helped him understand the “how,” the “what,” or the “why” of it. What did these leaders do or say that made them effective or not? In Fiedler’s research, as with the black box construct, you see what goes in (leader traits and/or styles; the context in which he/she will lead), and you see what comes out (measurable performance outcomes, respondent reports about the leadership enacted and results achieved), but you are never able to see what discrete events happened inside to create those outcomes.

I would argue that most any subsection of the field of cognitive/psychological leadership studies has a similar “black box” challenge, especially if its reliance is largely

on capturing research participants' and/or researchers' (re)constructions of what they observed or experienced with respect to leadership in a past or ongoing situation. These are projective endeavors that, although valuable, still fall short of directly measuring the act of leadership itself, and remain the prevalent approach to both scholarly and popular leadership studies. In fact, analysis of the titles of all the "regular" articles in *The Leadership Quarterly* for 2016 to February 2019 (excluding those from "special" and review issues that had a particular thematic focus or reviewed the research of others), shows the most frequent words to include ethical, relationship, creative, transformational, authentic, influence, relationship, exchange, and teams. The first few highest frequency terms in that list reflect the ongoing fixation on so-called "new" leadership phenomena of ethical, transformational, and authentic leadership approaches. The final two terms, "exchange" and "teams" are of particular interest, and their prevalence further supports the notion that leadership scholarship could benefit from more research that directly observes teams and teamwork in action, as opposed to participants' reconstructions of it via their own internal meaning making and recollection.

The challenge in this study goes beyond enhancing scholarly understanding of transcultural perspectives on and enactments of leadership, authority, teamwork, and communication. It also grapples with the concept and construction of discursive leadership (Fairhurst, 2007) as compared with the more established domain of cognitive/psychological leadership studies. A large proportion of leadership scholarship involves qualitative or quantitative characterizations of what study participants believe to have happened or to be happening from a leadership standpoint in a given context. This certainly has value, and my purpose is not to decry that data or the methodologies that

gather and analyze it. Rather, my intention is to highlight and justify the need for an additional type of data to complement what exists and further flesh out the larger picture. For a discursive leadership scholar, Fairhurst (2007) writes, there is “a difference between studying *actual* interactional processes... and studying *reports* of such processes” (Chapter 1, para. 24). In Fairhurst’s view, the former is a truly constructivist approach, whereas the latter is akin to what Cronen (1995) referred to as a kind of mental theater, in which the energy and effort we spend in “projectively” making sense – summarizing and inferring intent- of our perceptions of interactions can cause us to lose touch with the authentic experiences themselves. As such, Fairhurst (2007), and Walker and Aritz (2014), make strong arguments for using discourse analysis methods to study leadership and human interaction as directly as possible, without the overarching frames of the inferred essences of the participants’ psychological attributes and traits that many other leadership studies theories tend to have as their central focus.

This study analyzes and compares participants’ personal perceptions/stances on the nature of leadership, authority, teamwork, and communication. It seeks to better understand how participants have experienced the same phenomena in both their culture(s) of origin and in the U.S. It also examines the discourse produced in their workplace interactions with one another in the performance of group decision-making tasks. The hope is that a better understanding will begin to emerge of how cultural difference can influence interaction and collaboration in multicultural teams.

The following research questions guide the study:

1. How do foreign-born individuals working in a U.S. context define constructs such as leadership, authority, teamwork, and effective workplace communication, both from their culture of origin, and their current U.S. cultural, perspective?
2. To what extent is there a shared/common understanding of leadership, authority, teamwork, and effective workplace communication among diverse members of a multicultural team?
3. How do foreign-born individuals working in the U.S. interact discursively with one another when put into mono- and multi-cultural teams that lack a designated formal authority?
4. What interaction(s) are able to be observed between foreign-born individuals' stated definitions of leadership, authority, teamwork, and effective workplace communication, and their enactment of them as observed in group decision-making tasks?

Having introduced the context for my study, along with an articulation of the knowledge problems, purposes, and questions underlying my research, I will now turn to an in-depth exploration and discussion of the relevant scholarly literature.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In this chapter, I review scholarly literature of particular relevance to my study's chosen themes of language, culture, leadership (and related phenomena such as teamwork and communication), and discourse analysis. I begin by describing the recent decline of sustained world languages and cultures study among U.S. undergraduates, and the impact this decline is having on related areas in higher education overall. From there, I turn to sections in which I discuss the relevant research on culture as an instructional objective and as a research topic. I also dedicate a section to the long-standing Western cultural and intellectual biases that are prevalent in contemporary leadership studies, wherein I also highlight recent scholarship that pushes back against these biases to varying degrees of effect. I then move to review literature that outlines some of the issues in the field of leadership studies, focusing in particular on the "black box" challenge some scholars, myself included, often find leadership studies to face. Finally, I will look at the scholarship focused on applying discourse analysis methods in the leadership and cultural studies domains, before offering some concluding thoughts.

Declining Study of World Languages and Cultures in the U.S.

The teaching and learning of languages other than English (LOTEs) in institutions of higher education in the U.S. continues to undergo a transformation now nearly two decades in the making. The most commonly taught languages of the 20th century, Spanish, French, and German, continue to be among the top 15 "most commonly taught" languages in the U.S. as defined by the Modern Language Association of America (MLA), but the numbers and trends for the rest of the commonly taught, and less

commonly taught languages (defined by MLA as any language outside the top 15) continue to shift in ways that are worth noting.

Over the past decade, according to the three MLA censuses that have been completed in 2009, 2013, and 2016, drawing on enrollment information from more than 2,500 institutions of higher education, only one language among the 15 most commonly taught has a net enrollment percentage increase during that time, Korean. The list includes unsurprising languages such as Spanish, French, German, and Italian. It also includes potentially unexpected languages such as Arabic, Russian, Japanese, Korean, Chinese, and American Sign Language (ASL), as well as a couple of variants (modern and biblical) of Hebrew, Latin, and Ancient Greek. Of all those languages, only Korean has not seen a decline in enrollments over the past decade. In fact, most of the languages listed here have seen percentage enrollment declines in the double digits, after experiencing nearly a decade of steady growth from 2001 onward (Looney & Lusin, 2018)

This overall steep decline in the number of U.S. college and university students studying languages other than English is noteworthy for at least two reasons. The first reason is that foreign languages are very frequently, and increasingly over the past decade, chosen as a second major or minor undergraduate degree component by students whose primary major is business, medicine, or engineering (Pitt & Tepper, 2013; Looney & Lusin, 2018). So, it does not seem unreasonable to interpret this information as a sign that contemporary U.S. undergraduate students see foreign language study as either not useful to them, thus the enrollment declines, or only useful as a supplement to their primary course(s) of study. The second reason that declining language course enrollments

are significant is that language courses are often the most accessible, reliable source of non-Western cultural learning and growth for the businesspeople, doctors, engineers, and civil servants of tomorrow. In short, less U.S. students learning languages other than English may very well mean less U.S. students who willingly participate in the structured, academic study of non-U.S. cultures.

Indeed, recent study abroad figures for U.S. undergraduates reflect a parallel trend of students increasingly turning to short-term study abroad experiences as a preferred way of “internationalizing” their education. As a recent U.S. State Department report on undergraduate study abroad activity shows, three (United Kingdom, Ireland, and Australia) of the top ten study abroad locations for U.S. students were places where English is also the primary, majority language (<https://studyabroad.state.gov/value-study-abroad/study-abroad-data>). The other countries in the top ten, Italy, Spain, France, Germany, China, Costa Rica, and Japan, do offer an impressive spectrum of world language and culture families, which would seem promising were it not for the parallel trend of U.S. undergraduates who do choose to go abroad increasingly (60%) favoring short-term (less than eight weeks) summer study abroad over the traditional, longer-term semester or full academic year abroad options (down to 5% and 3% respectively). With (im)migration and global integration trends suggesting that linguistic and cultural diversity are strongly on the rise in the U.S. workplace, schools, and residential communities, the simultaneous reduction in both the breadth of world languages study and the depth of study abroad experiences among U.S. undergraduates does not seem to be in alignment with the realities of the increasingly globalized nation and world.

If less and less U.S. undergraduate students are studying languages, it would not be unreasonable to expect that there would be less overall learning about world cultures, cultural differences, and effective transcultural communication available in the college and university curricula. Leaders and scholars within academe are already signaling both the challenge and the urgent need for more, and better, education about culture(s), with particular focus on improving students' capacity to function effectively both within and across different cultural paradigms. The central thesis is that transcultural education efforts within U.S. institutions of higher education are currently both underdeveloped and unduly diffuse (Kruse, Rakha, & Calderone, 2018; Shalala *et al.*, 2015). It is this question of underdevelopment and diffusion in the teaching of culture within higher education to which I will now turn.

Culture as an Instructional Objective

As I have stated previously, there has recently been a strong consensus among academic leaders and scholars that the curricular and infrastructural capacities for teaching culture and transcultural competence in the higher education setting are in need of both bolstering and elucidation (Kruse, Rakha, & Calderone, 2018; Shalala *et al.*, 2015; Bezrukova, Jehn, & Spell, 2012; Sue, 1991). It is evident, at least on the campus of the large state university where I work, that university faculty and administrators are in active agreement that a marked increase in curricular focus on culture and transcultural competence is necessary. Over just the past few years, new majors, minors, and a variety of certificate programs have been created in various colleges on campus, which shows that the efforts to augment access to increased transcultural understanding are already underway. A look at the diversity among these new programs, however, continues to

highlight the questions of if and how greater clarity can be achieved in the teaching of culture and transcultural competence.

To offer some examples, the Linguistics department in the College of Arts and Letters recently received approval to offer a major called “Language, Culture, and Society.” While its core courses are understandably focused on culture and society through the lens of language and linguistic inquiry, there is also an obvious emphasis on developing students’ understanding of cultural identities, their own and those of others, and offering them tools for interpreting and responding to diverse cultural practices with greater knowledge and skill. At the same time, in the College of Education, a new Minor in Cultural Proficiency was recently approved. Among its four stated goals are: increasing students’ capacity to participate effectively in global society, increasing participation and involvement between different cultural groups, greater creativity in problem-solving within a diversity of cultural perspectives, and cultivating learners’ understanding of how cultural identities (their own and others’) are constructed and claimed.

Beyond these major and minor programs are undergraduate certificate offerings. The College of Extended Studies offers a program in cross-cultural competence for educators, which is open to both matriculated and non-matriculated student populations, and plans are underway for additional certificate programs in both the College of Arts and Letters and the Business College. Such a broad and sweeping response to the recognized need for more tightly focused (trans)cultural curricula in higher education is clearly one part of the solution proposed by Kruse, Rakha, and Calderone (2018), in that it does increase disciplinary approaches to transcultural competence development, and

thereby learner access to them. It does not, however, appear to adequately respond to the challenge of diffuseness in the field of (trans)cultural studies. Indeed, even within more specific domains, such as healthcare, education, and business, this problem of diffuseness in teaching and learning about cultures, how to assess related learning outcomes, and how to give learners meaningful opportunities to both think and work across cultural boundaries, is evident and well-documented.

In her article, “Threshold Concepts and Culture-As-Meta-Context,” Nahavandi (2016) offered a compelling review of culture as it is conceptualized and “covered” in the business and management curriculum in the U.S., and finds that it “is scattered across the curriculum often without a unifying theme” and that “a piece is frequently lacking” (p. 798). These statements are strikingly reflective of the situation I described above regarding the recent and ongoing efforts to emphasize culture and transcultural studies in the undergraduate curriculum at the university where I work. As we will see in the next section, this diffusion, or lack of unity, in the approach to teaching and assessing transcultural topics and skills in the U.S. undergraduate curriculum is also present in the prominent scholarly research to date on culture and transcultural issues.

Culture as a Research Topic

The idea that culture directly impacts the way people function and behave across contexts (private, professional, public, etc.) owes much to Edward T. Hall’s work, *Beyond Culture*, (1976), as well as to Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck’s *Variations in Value Orientations*, (1961). Taking a heavily anthropological approach, combined with elements of psychoanalysis, Hall used historical cases and personal anecdotes to describe cultural difference and variation in terms of a given society’s location along a bipolar

continuum of more “high” versus “low” context cultures. More high context, or “HC,” cultures (Southeast Asia, The Middle East, and Latin America) pay greater attention to non-verbal and environmental cues. More low context, or “LC,” cultures (Northern Europe and North America) require continuously explicit, often verbal, articulation of conditions, norms, and expectations. Hall’s work did not attempt to speak to the phenomena of leadership, authority, or teamwork, *per se*. It was, however, among the first scholarly works to portray variance among global cultures as a straight line between two points in binary opposition to each other.

Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck’s (1961) scholarship preceded Hall’s, and focused on the basic questions that inform human attitudes and behaviors. Part philosophy, part anthropology, their work was also a precursor, in more conceptual terms, to that of Geert Hofstede (1980, 2002), in seeking to describe different societies’ overall “orientation” in terms of their location on continua among a variety of dimensions like time, environment, sociability, behavior, and basic nature, or character.

Hofstede’s (1980, 2002) five cultural dimensions, which were developed and validated via a large data pool of over 116,000 quantitative survey responses from 72 countries, extend Hall’s work by providing further, continuum-based granularity and introducing questions about leadership and group dynamics. For Hofstede, national cultures are described by location between two poles along five dimensional continua: identity (collectivism/individualism), hierarchy (large/small power distance), gender (femininity/masculinity), truth (strong/weak uncertainty avoidance), and virtue (long-/short-term orientation).

These bipolar dimensions purportedly aid in more finely identifying areas of convergence and divergence among world cultures, as well as in reflecting the mental models or programs that inform peoples' collective understanding of contextual phenomena and the perceived appropriateness of different actions within them. It is worth noting that at no point in Hofstede's expansive data collection protocol were respondents asked to define constructs in their own words or to provide their own anecdotes to explicate their understanding of terms. It is further worth noting that there is some measure of disagreement among scholars and practitioners as to the usefulness of Hofstede's theory, suggesting culture is more complex than Hofstede's theory recognizes.

Kellerman and Rubin's (1988) edited volume *Leadership and Negotiation in the Middle East*, examines the phenomena of leadership and negotiation in the context of "critical cases," or well-known crises that have transpired in several Middle Eastern countries, focusing on the attitudes and actions of the leaders and prominent political figures involved. The focus here is on leadership and authority as enacted by the "great people," who were vested with formal authority in those given situations, rather than on the larger populace. None of the chapters feature any type of direct qualitative inquiry, but rather a more second-hand combination of document and historical analysis.

In their well-known GLOBE study, House and Javidan *et al.* (2004) presented the quantitative survey findings from approximately 17,000 managers from 62 countries. The questions focused on participants from different global regions choosing their preferred leadership styles from a predetermined list. GLOBE scholars also developed nine dimensions of world cultures: uncertainty avoidance, power distance, institutional collectivism, in-group collectivism, gender egalitarianism, assertiveness, future

orientation, performance orientation, and human orientation. These dimensions stemmed from their own research findings as well as those of Hofstede (1980), among others.

GLOBE's findings, while vast and well validated, are based almost exclusively on quantitative, Likert scale type responses that do not allow respondents to use their own words to explain how they really understand and define leadership and authority.

It is also important to note, however, that all the above scholarship focuses on international populations operating within their home cultural context. As Clyne (1994), House and Javidan *et al.* (2004), and Hofstede (2002) all indicate, increased global (im)migration and intercultural business collaboration require more research that focuses on how international individuals and groups function, and can best adapt their preferred styles, within non-native cultural contexts. A more recent publication, *The Culture Map*, by Erin Meyer (2014), offers an interesting perspective on how to address these challenges.

Meyer (2014) collected her data via qualitative interviews with middle managers from a variety of national cultural backgrounds. Meyer interviewed these middle managers about their perceptions of the preferences in their national culture(s) of origin regarding eight different dimensions: communicating (low versus high context), evaluating (direct versus indirect negative feedback), persuading (principles-first versus applications-first), leading (egalitarian versus hierarchical), deciding (consensual versus top-down), trusting (task-based versus relationship-based), disagreeing (confrontational versus confrontation averse), and scheduling (linear-time versus flexible-time). The central idea that Meyer suggests is that, using the findings of her qualitative data on these topics, a "culture map" consisting of plot charts for two or more national cultures can be

created. These plot charts are intended to allow members of multicultural groups and teams to see where their cultural preferences are likely to lie relative to those of other group/team members.

There are, however, some apparent issues with Meyer's write up of her work. First, she does not describe her methodology in great detail, other than to indicate that she interviewed multiple representatives (middle managers, as she terms it) of each of the cultures she includes in her book, and also relied on the input of a number of colleagues who she regards as expert cultural informants. Drawing from these qualitative efforts she describes the emergence of a "normative pattern" (p. 19), recognizing that all the responses on a given scale (scheduling, for instance) for a given culture fall within a statistical distribution, but the majority would cluster around a single point of cultural consensus that is adequately representative of the normative position of the "average" person from one of the cultures studied. Meyer's claim, ultimately, is that the visual representation of cultural relativity embodied in her culture maps provides the crucial perspective that people (largely businesspeople) need in order to operate successfully in culturally diverse contexts.

A similar construction to Meyer's culture maps could have been created from both Hofstede's (2002) cultural dimensions and the House and Javidan *et al.* (2004) GLOBE studies. Both of these sweeping studies, however, preferred to rely on absolute value indices of studied cultures on their bipartite dimensional scales. In this sense, Meyer's work represents an important philosophical and pragmatic step forward. As Meyer (2014) wrote, "...when examining how people from different cultures related to one another, what matters is not the absolute position of either culture on the scale but

rather the relative position of the two cultures” (p. 22). Meyer’s call to her readers to visualize and act upon tenets of cultural relativity is a progressive and necessary step forward in the trajectory of transcultural leadership and communication studies. As with any approach, however, it is not without its limitations.

There is an underlying issue with the interview- and survey-based cultural and leadership studies research approaches, and bipolar cultural model development when it comes to transcultural differences and competencies. The problem is that these approaches implicitly assume, or ask scholars and practitioners to believe, that a given culture’s leadership constructs, whatever they may be, are monolithic and largely static in nature. In particular, it takes for granted that data collected via qualitative interview and/or survey response on any given date will hold true for extended periods into the future without further purposeful elicitation, measurement, triangulation, and analysis. They can also carry some inherent biases that imply a hierarchy, if not an outright hegemony of Western values, that also requires further examination and problematizing.

Western Cultural and Intellectual Bias in Leadership Studies

Halvorsen (2013) cites literature (Adler *et al.*, 2008; Gee *et al.*, 1996; Harvey, 1989) that speaks to the past couple decades’ shift in the Western professional/organizational culture landscape away from role/task-oriented bureaucratic hierarchies toward more “participatory practices and teamwork in a flexible relation to the ever changing organization” (p. 274). It is also clear that team members’ communicative and collaborative capacities are even more important in these new, flatter, organizational models (Halvorsen, 2013; Iedema & Scheeres, 2003; Sarangi & Roberts, 1999), making teamwork, and talk within and among teams, the fulcrum point for much

of an organization's success or struggle. Increasingly, organizations and teams themselves are understood as discursive constructions, projected and created from the discourse(s) generated within the organization (Cooren *et al.*, 2006; Halvorsen, 2013; Putnam & Nicotera, 2010; Taylor & Van Every, 2000). Although the assumptions that underlie this flattening of organizational structures in the U.S. are likely valid only when applied to U.S. natives working together in culturally homogenous groups, they may be misapplied to more heterogeneous teams comprised wholly, or in part, of people who have immigrated from other world cultures to work in the U.S. Even as the West continues to (re)define itself, it does not yet show signs of taking the rest of the world's traditions into account in meaningful ways.

Transcultural leadership scholars increasingly recognize the highly problematic implications of Western-dominated scholarship and dialogue around leadership and cultural studies. As early as Hofstede's (1980) article, *Motivation, leadership, and organization: Do American theories apply abroad?*, there has been at least some portion of scholarly attention directed at raising awareness about the flawed assumption that U.S. and Western ideals of leadership are universally held. Much more recently, an entire book-length volume (Chin, Trimble & Garcia, 2018) has been dedicated to demonstrating how North American and Western European models and definitions of leadership, and other related constructs such as authority, teamwork, and communication, not only are not universally held, but in fact have well-formulated, but highly differentiated, counterparts in other countries and regions of the world.

Even prior to their 2018 edited volume, Chin and Trimble (2015) were already making the case for the non-transferability of traditional western models of leadership.

Not only do they make it clear that classically U.S. ideals of leader behavior (aggressive, conflictive, dominant, self-centered, and status-conscious) do not travel well, they also argue that the rapidly diversifying U.S. culture is no longer a good fit for those previously reified, if not always well-loved, traits. In *Global and Culturally Diverse Leaders and Leadership*, Chin, Trimble, and Garcia (2018) compiled a collection of essays that seeks to challenge an academic research tradition around culture(s) and leadership that they described as “ethnocentric, gender-biased, and bound by time and place” (p. xxvi). Included among the essays are narratives and case studies that highlight and describe “new” models of African, Chinese, Indian, Indo-European, and Muslim leadership approaches.

Guramatun-huCooper’s (2018) chapter on African leaders as examples of the Western model of trait theory (Zaccaro et al., 2004; Zaccaro 2007) does offer an optimistic and inclusive perspective on leadership, and leadership development, outside the U.S. and Western contexts. While highlighting the existence of strong leadership examples in the contemporary African context is compelling, in this case it is also reliant almost solely on anecdotal interpretation and the overlay of Western leadership/identity constructs onto African leaders and their actions.

In their chapter on the communal philosophies of Ubuntu and Confucianism as African and Chinese counterpoints to the prevalence of Western individualism in leadership studies, Elkington and Tuleja (2018) seek to explain and elevate the two non-Western philosophies of human interaction. They state the importance of this endeavor in terms similar to Guramatun-huCooper’s, citing the unduly limited leadership and organizational relations perspectives available within a Western-dominated research

landscape. While both the Ubuntu and Confucianism sections do a noteworthy job of highlighting the durability and relevance of ancient philosophies in the contemporary African and Chinese societies, the section on Confucianism is particularly significant. In it, Elkington and Tuleja (2018) discuss the importance of Confucianism's more dialectic approach compared with the recent prevalence of dichotomous culture and leadership models, citing Hofstede (2002) and Javidan and House *et al.* (2004) as particular examples. Ultimately, Elkington and Tuleja (2018) suggest that more individualist Western leadership paradigms, predominantly those in commonly accepted practice in western Europe and the U.S., would be enriched by blending with the more collectivist and communal practices of Ubuntu and Confucianism. This idea of a less dichotomous approach to cultural and leadership studies, encouraged in particular by Confucianism's more dialectic nature, is perhaps the most important takeaway.

Caldwell and Prizant's (2018) chapter on influence as a key capacity in what they term "global" leadership contexts is also an important piece of scholarship for transcultural leadership studies. Their research identifies and describes a particular challenge for Indian and Chinese so-called "high potentials" in their attempts to rise to formal positions of executive leadership in global multinational enterprises overseas. Caldwell and Prizant (2018) interviewed 54 senior business leaders from 22 different multinational corporations with operating interests in India and China. These senior business leaders were interviewed about their evaluations of Chinese and Indian "high potential" employees. Their findings were clear in outlining the difficulties that the senior business leaders saw their Chinese and Indian employees have in adopting a more Western style of verbal influence, as opposed to what Caldwell and Prizant (2018) termed

the more favored, in Chinese and Indian cultures, styles of structural and relational influence. In brief, Western senior business leaders believed that the Chinese and Indian junior leaders were held back by their perceived inability to operate effectively enough within the Western verbal influence paradigm, struggling to directly confront and talk about differences of opinion within teams, and to their superiors, and to take advantage of opportunities to express their ideas and viewpoints in work meetings.

Caldwell and Prizant (2018) go on to suggest that Western-led multinationals need to better understand the preferred approaches and inherent strengths in their Indian and Chinese junior leaders, while also offering more training and support for them to pursue growth in the verbal influence domain, which seems to reflect a continuing bias, perhaps unintentional, toward Western leadership ideals over those favored by other world cultures. While the findings of their study are compelling and an important step forward in transcultural leadership studies, they share the approach of so many of the studies reviewed in this chapter of relying on qualitative data, anecdote, and projective participant talk about what is happening in culturally diverse working situations, rather than employing any form of direct observation or discourse analysis.

Nahavandi and Krishnan (2018) offer a historical perspective on what they term Indo-European leadership vis-à-vis the traditions of India and Iran. They not only explain the provenance of Indian and Iranian understandings of effective leadership practices, but also describe contemporary instances from both cultures where those same principles and practices are put into effect with excellent outcomes. Their central argument seems to be that the increasingly globalized, yet polarized, world could benefit enormously from a deeper understanding and integration of Indo-European leadership's action-oriented,

humane, and moderate tenets. They suggest that their particular value would be as a bridge between the two extremes of Western models driven by self-interest and a “win-at-all-costs” mindset, and the more modest, and at times apparently action-averse leadership models of the Far East. What is particularly striking about Nahavandi and Krishnan’s (2018) work is that it presents Indo-European leadership as defining itself on its own terms, as opposed to some of the works discussed previously that present alternative leadership models, but consistently define them in terms of their value relative to established Western ideals.

The last chapter from *Global and Culturally Diverse Leaders and Leadership*, (Chin, Trimble, & Garcia, 2018) that I will discuss is titled *Current and Emerging Patterns of Muslim Leadership*, (Klemkaite, 2018). In her chapter, Klemkaite attempts to construct a Muslim model of leadership via a socio-historical/socio-political examination of, and contrast with, the Weberian approach that underlies so much of contemporary Western leadership thought. Klemkaite emphasizes early and often that she shares the view of Robinson (2009), that contemporary Muslim leadership is experiencing a “crisis of authority” (p. 340) that is a byproduct of the marginalization of traditional religion-centric models and the resulting diffusion of more individualized interpretations of Islam in modern society. As such, Klemkaite argues for a dialectic lens, which portrays Muslim leadership as a reciprocal relationship of multidirectional influence between all levels and categories of leaders and followers. She offers this sociological lens in response to the focus on political and anthropological approaches to Muslim leadership studies (itself a small domain) that she detects in recent years, and which she sees as deliberately distancing themselves from more traditional qur’anic approaches prevalent in the past.

Although not easy to derive from the text itself, one of Klemkaite's central premises seems to be that the three Weberian models of authority do map well onto the history of authority within Islam, not unlike the premises and findings in Rajasekar, Al Abri, and Tabouk (2013), in their study of visionary leadership in the Arab world. Klemkaite concludes, however, that an overlay of Weberian models of authority is not sufficient to understand the current and future trajectory of Islamic leadership because of the powerful pluralization trend among contemporary Muslim authority bases. It is in response to this plurality challenge that Klemkaite proposes an explicitly sociological, dialectic approach to interpreting and engaging with the Muslim leadership theories and practices of today, and tomorrow.

Global and Culturally Diverse Leaders and Leadership, (Chin, Trimble, & Garcia 2018) is an exciting, important collection of scholarly works that, individually and in the collective, take a large and necessary step in challenging the long-standing Western bias in leadership studies, particularly those that would examine leadership in a transcultural context. The chapters I have discussed herein highlight the significant scholarly work being done by a still small number of leadership researchers that not only contests the hegemony of Western thought in leadership studies, but that also offers robust alternate models that take their substance from the lived, documented histories of some of the world's most important cultural traditions. The importance of the continuation, and proliferation, of this trend cannot be overstated. The chapters discussed in this section, similar to the vast majority of preceding leadership scholarship, still seem to be burdened with two long-standing constraints. Either they continue to use Western thought models as the basis for their expression of non-Western leadership approaches, or they still

construe and interpret those same approaches in projective, highly psychological terms. That significant scholarly attention to non-Western leadership models seems to be on the rise is a highly positive indicator for the field. By itself, however, it is not sufficient to rigorously address the “black box” challenge that continues to face leadership studies and transcultural scholarship alike.

Leadership Studies and the “Black Box” Challenge

Writing about his own model, Contingency Theory, Fiedler (1993) described it as having a “black box” problem. Fiedler’s research had produced solid data that predict task-motivated leaders being effective in both extremely favorable and extremely unfavorable situations, as well as data about relationship-motivated leaders being successful primarily in moderate contexts. What he did not have was data that helped him understand the “how” or the “why” of what he was observing; only what respondents were able to post-facto narrate as their understanding of “what” had happened. Fiedler, like so many leadership scholars, did not have an approach that would capture what leaders did or said that made them effective/successful or not. As with the black box construct, you see what goes in (leader traits and/or styles; the context in which he/she will lead), and you see what comes out (measurable performance outcomes, respondent reports about the leadership enacted and results achieved), but you are never able to see for yourself what happened inside.

I would argue that most any subsection of the field of leadership studies has a similar “black box” challenge, especially if its reliance is largely on capturing research participants’ and/or researchers’ (re)constructions of what they observed or experienced with respect to leadership in a past situation. These are projective endeavors that,

although valuable, still fall short of directly measuring the act of leadership itself. In fact, analysis of the titles of all the “regular” articles in *The Leadership Quarterly* for 2016 to February 2019 (excluding those from “special” and review issues that had a particular thematic focus or reviewed the research of others), shows the most frequent words to include ethical, relationship, creative, transformational, authentic, influence, relationship, exchange, and teams. The first few highest frequency terms in that list reflect the ongoing fixation on so-called “new” leadership phenomena of ethical, transformational, and authentic leadership approaches. The final two terms, “exchange” and “teams” are of particular interest, and their prevalence further supports the notion that leadership scholarship could benefit from more research that directly observes teams and teamwork in action, as opposed to participant reconstructions of it via their own meaning making and recollection.

Leadership scholars and practitioners are faced with an interesting conundrum: although we may say we know leadership when we see it, we may not be using research methods that permit us to “see” it in its full robustness. In other words, most studies of leadership rely on instruments, qualitative and quantitative, that measure informants’ perception of what has happened or is happening with regard to the exercise of leadership in a given situation or context. While there is nothing necessarily wrong with this approach, it can also be argued that it offers at best just one available perspective on the phenomenon of leadership. It logically follows that a methodology that seeks to more fully capture and understand the actual practice of leadership as it happens would be a helpful addition to the field.

The challenge, then, is to find a way to tangibly observe and describe leadership in action. In the same way that researchers rely on participants' words to understand their recollections/perceptions of how leadership is/was carried out in a given situation, so too can their language be the window to directly seeing the "what," "how," and "why" of leadership in those same, or other, contexts. In addition to helping to perceive and study the enactment of leadership in more traditional situations wherein a formal authority is present, a framework for studying the language of leadership could be particularly revealing in the context of shared leadership, or teams/contexts in which there is no designated, formal authority. Just as one model or way of thinking is inadequate to understand leadership, so is the case with the challenge of interpreting and construing transcultural differences and dynamics. Overreliance on participants' recollections, and narrative reconstructions, of past events, or on researchers' individually formulated descriptions of their own observations, continues to leave an unnecessary perception gap in the leadership and cultural studies. Alternative, complementary approaches to studying leadership and culture already exist and are being deployed, but still to a far lesser extent than the projective, psychology-based methods described above.

Discourse Analysis in the Leadership and Culture Domains

In recent years, an approach now known as discursive leadership has gained traction and recognition for the novel kinds of data it produces and the (socio)linguistic bent it adds to the study of leadership in action. A simple definition of discursive leadership is something along the lines of that offered by Walker and Aritz (2014), as leadership that is "constructed in the moment through communication in context" (Chapter 1, Table 1.3). According to Fairhurst (2007), discursive leadership is

principally focused on how language functions in pragmatic terms, how and what kinds of leadership are exercised in different contexts and present moments of social interaction, as well as any historical and cultural factors that shape it. Considering Fiedler's diagnosis of Contingency Theory as having a "black box" problem, and my own assertion that most contemporary leadership studies models share the problem wherein the "how," "what," and "why" of leadership in action are studied largely indirectly, a discursive methodology appears to have, if not a potential complete solution, at least the makings of a powerful additional research lens.

A deep dive into the scholarly history of discourse analysis across disciplines is well beyond the scope of this study. As such, I will keep my focus on the relatively recent movement toward a more linguistically focused approach to organizational research (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2000; Fairhurst, 2007; Clifton, 2012; Walker & Aritz, 2014). As Clifton (2012) elaborated, this linguistic turn in organizational research is based on the understanding that language is not in itself a window onto accurate representations of either internal (i.e. cognitive and pre-cognitive) or external participant realities. Rather, language is inherently performative, and serves as the vehicle by which participants actively (co)construct what they understand reality to be; it is the tangible embodiment of the process of meaning making in individuals and in groups. In an organizational setting, examining discourse means that leadership is naturally invoked and involved, as meaning making is happening at the individual, group, and overall organizational level, with the understood mandate that some organizational meanings are to be privileged over others (Clifton, 2012).

The preponderance of leadership scholarship involves qualitative or quantitative characterizations of what study participants believe to have happened or to be happening from a leadership standpoint in a given context. This certainly has value, and my purpose is not to decry that data or the methodologies that gather and analyze it. Rather, my intention is to highlight and justify the need for an additional type of data to complement what exists and further flesh out the big picture. As Bryman (1996) and Clifton (2012) point out, leadership in the Western paradigm has evolved through four major stages: trait, or great person, theory (until the late 1940s) focused on the intrinsic natures of significant formalized leaders; the style approach (until the late 1960s), which shifted emphasis from what leaders are to what they do; the contingency approach (until the 1980s) put more stock in the situated contexts in which leadership was enacted; and the most recent major phase that Bryman (1996) calls “new,” which includes transformational, visionary, charismatic, and authentic leadership approaches, among others. These preceding approaches all differ greatly from the even more recent discursive approach to studying leadership, particularly as a distributed (e.g. not wholly vested in an individual or a formalized group) phenomenon.

For a discursive leadership scholar, Fairhurst (2007) writes, there is “a difference between studying *actual* interactional processes... and studying *reports* of such processes” (Chapter 1, para. 24). In Fairhurst’s view, the former is a truly constructivist approach, whereas the latter is akin to what Cronen (1995) referred to as a kind of mental theater, in which the energy and effort we spend in “projectively” making sense – summarizing and inferring intent- of our perceptions of interactions causes us to lose touch with the authentic experiences themselves. As such, Fairhurst (2007), Clifton

(2012), and Walker and Aritz (2014), make strong cases for using discourse analysis methods to study leadership, and the human interaction intrinsic to it, as purely as possible, without the overarching frames of the inferred essences of the participants' psychological attributes, traits, and principles that other leadership theories focus on almost exclusively. Of course, it may be necessary, and helpful, to refer back to demographic, contextual (cultural or historical), or even perceptual (espoused beliefs) data points to make a complete analysis of a discursively analyzed case, but more as a complementary part, rather than a centerpiece, of any proposed study.

Employing a discursive approach to revisit more traditional leadership models like Contingency Theory, with its emphasis on how the formal authority interacts with context, followership, and environment does offer some exploratory promise. Learning more about the tendencies and trends, the “what” and “how,” of designated leaders in a variety of situations can offer much to the field of leadership studies. In fact, some excellent work has been recently done on how co-leaders, meaning two formal authorities sharing leadership in a team, linguistically construct their distribution of leadership roles and functions in a selection of New Zealand based organizations (Vine, Holmes, Marra, Pfeifer, & Jackson, 2008). They found, with specific examples from their coded transcriptions of these co-leaders' speech, that their discourse did reflect a division of leadership roles, wherein one leader takes on the relationship maintenance end of the spectrum, while the other focuses on task orientation. This work, and the few others of its type, are an important contribution to addressing the aforementioned “black box” problem, and yet they do not address two larger gaps that exist in the literature: the

“how” and “what” of shared leadership in terms of the lack of a formal authority, and cross-cultural leadership.

In a preliminary review of the literature, conducted via University of San Diego’s EBSCOHost and using combinations of keyword terms including “discourse analysis,” “cross-cultural communication,” and “leadership,” I found one article, by Choi and Schnurr (2014), that explicitly brings a discourse analysis approach to examining the communicative, problem-solving dynamics in a leaderless team. The approach they take, while appearing methodologically sound and faithful to some of the more foundational tenets of true Conversation Analysis (CA), nonetheless focuses on a culturally and linguistically homogenous team working at a university in the United Kingdom.

Of the still relatively sparse peer-reviewed, academic journal articles published around the topic of discourse analysis as it applies to some kind of leadership practice, an overwhelming majority of them are published in the United States, New Zealand, Australia, and Great Britain. Not surprisingly, the focus tends to be on the languages and cultures found within those nations, meaning primarily white, Anglo-Saxon, and/or English-speaking (Oh, 2012; Vine, Holmes, Marra, Pfeifer, & Jackson, 2008). While further exploration of the discourse of leadership in these contexts is certainly needed, there is a sufficient scholarly foundation in place relative to the multitude of other linguistic and cultural contexts available around the world.

Indeed, the vast majority of existing research that brings a discursive lens to bear on the exercise of leadership focuses on groups functioning within their native context (Holmes & Marra, 2002; Iedema & Scheeres, 2003). Even the few studies that focus on a non-Anglo-Saxon population still look at groups operating within the confines of their

own cultural and linguistic identities, such as recent scholarship on communicative and leadership practices among the Maori (Holmes & Marra, 2012; Holmes, Vine, & Marra, 2009), and Italian immigrants' construction of identity in Australia (Dipalma, 2015). Without ignoring the importance of these more one-to-one lines of inquiry (e.g. (im)migrants interacting with a new "home" cultural paradigm), many nations around the world, the United States chief among them, are experiencing ever-increasing cultural and linguistic diversification of their professional and community spheres (DiStefano & Maznevski, 2000; Walker & Aritz, 2014). This means that, increasingly, there are multiple linguistic and cultural groups attempting to function effectively, and concurrently, within cultural and linguistic contexts that are neither native nor, in some cases, very familiar to them at all. Still, leadership must emerge and things must get done. More sustained scholarship is needed to better understand the emergent communicative styles and trends in groups that are attempting to function, increasingly all together and at the same time, in a non-native setting.

Another issue with the existing body of research is, as Halvorsen (2013) notes, its tendency to be at one of two extremes: it is either very traditionally conversation analytic, or very sociolinguistic in nature. The former focuses on the more formal structure of linguistic interactions via opaque constructs such as "response tokens" (i.e. small listener utterances, typically devoid of overt meaning) (Murphy, 2012), and "variational pragmatics," an emergent field that sits at the intersection of pragmatics and dialectology, without providing a relatable contextual backdrop against which the semantic and societal value of those phenomena can be made plain. In the latter, variational pragmatics, more attention is paid to the identity/power backdrop of who says what to

whom, and to what effect. Very few studies have found the middle ground of a parsimonious design and methodology, with research questions and operational constructs that are accessible to the non-expert, and findings whose implications have obvious applicability, in particular to the domains of leadership, teamwork, and transcultural communication practices.

One of the earliest works of significant scholarship using discourse analysis as a window onto the enactment of culture in the workplace is that of Michael Clyne (1994). *Inter-cultural communication at work: cultural values in discourse* takes its central stance early on, as Clyne wrote, “Language represents the deepest manifestation of a culture” (1994, p. 1). Perhaps even more important to the purposes of the present study, Clyne wrote that, “apart from the application of theoretical linguistics, there is also the opposite type of interaction – research on language that is based in real-life situations leads to good theory” (1994, p. 5). The particular kind of theory-building in which Clyne appeared to want to engage was based not around the premise that language is what determines culture, but rather that “the discourse level of language is inseparable from cultural behavior” (1994, p. 6).

Clyne’s study was large in scale and scope, collecting audio and video-recorded workplace interaction data from across four major industries (automotive, textile, electronic manufacturing, and catering) in the Melbourne, Australia metropolitan area, with a focus on worksites that had a highly diverse combination of Anglo-Celtic Australian-born workers together with ethnically diverse immigrant workers from Europe and South and Southeast Asia. His data included over 100 hours of recorded, spontaneous workplace interactions between the populations described above, follow-up interviews,

and one role-play piece designed to gauge participants' attitudinal reactions to cultures other than their own. Clyne's analysis of the various kinds of speech acts is able to be identified in his data focused on complaints, directives, commissives, apologies, and instances of small talk. The study also looked at turn-taking style differences (e.g. degree of tendency toward and (in)tolerance of simultaneous speech), and willingness to engage in small talk in the workplace setting. Clyne found significant cultural effects at the level of speech acts (i.e. certain cultural groups produced more of certain speech acts than did others), turn-taking and general discursive styles, and for small-talk participation.

Even more interesting for the purposes of the present study, Clyne found that, "Communicative styles of one's ethnic group may persist, in the national language (here English) even after a complete language shift from the ethnic language has taken place" (1994, p. 204). In short, Clyne's findings suggest that culturally-rooted discursive behaviors and tendencies are not solely, or apparently even primarily, tied to the language with which that culture is most strongly associated (i.e. Asian culture and a major Asian language, such as Chinese). Culture as manifested in discursive behavior persists across language(s) spoken.

Clyne's study is noteworthy not just for its strong design, ambitious scope, and robust findings. It is a model for collecting and analyzing culturally diverse workplace communication data, which is badly in need of replication and/or extension in other contexts where, like in Australia, highly varied (im)migrant populations from countries and regions worldwide increasingly share the professional sphere with native-born, first language speakers of the majority language spoken in the (im)migrants' new home

nation. Similar studies would prove extremely valuable in the U.S., Britain, Germany, and other highly developed European nations.

Perhaps the only shortcoming with Clyne's study is that it did not fully examine the differences in cultural communication styles as participants moved from more homogenous cultural groupings to more mixed ones. This element is vitally important as it can identify and describe more embedded intra-cultural communication tendencies and track the extent, if any, to which those tendencies are likely to change, and the ways in which they do or do not shift, in inter- and transcultural working groups. The lack of a stronger focus on this dynamic was probably due to Clyne's strong preference for so-called spontaneous interactions, as opposed to those, like role-plays, that are partially or fully contrived. While I understand and somewhat agree that data collected from more natural interactions would seem to offer the greatest amount of inferential robustness, partially contrived interactions, of sufficient duration that do not ask participants to engage in unduly alien or unnatural activities, do not appear to impede the quality of the data nor of the findings that the data can generate. Fortunately, there is recent scholarship that integrates the observation and analysis of participants' discourse as they navigate the transition between mono- and multi-cultural working teams.

Walker and Aritz (2014) once again offer a valuable inroad to both a user-friendly application of a discourse analysis-inspired approach, and a focus on the kind of "leaderless groups working out of context" problem that they identify as increasingly frequent in 21st century professional life. They split study participants into three groups, two of which were homogenous U.S. native and East Asian native, and a third comprised of a combination of U.S. and East Asian natives. They then codified speech acts in a

small-group simulated team decision-making exercise according to six clear variables: turns taken per participant, number of words spoken per participant, overlaps (more than one participant speaking at once), backchannels (affirmation of another speaker's point), and latches (one or more speakers beginning a turn during another speaker's turn).

By studying the differences between the three groups, they found that the most significant difference between the East Asian and U.S. groups in terms of prevalent discursive styles had to do with the frequency and purpose of the latching performed by both groups in the different settings. U.S. participants most typically used latching to introduce novel content into the interactions, whereas East Asians used latching significantly more often to affirm and/or build on the previous speakers' point. Walker and Aritz (2014) maintain that these findings highlight the relatively competitive and individualistic culture of U.S. teams, versus the more collaborative and supportive culture in East Asian teams. This type of research, varying the kinds of intercultural groups studied and the conversational/discursive actions employed (i.e. follow-up inquiry, turn concession, etc.) is the next frontier of understanding the nature of leadership enactment in the 21st century's increasingly common workplace setting: culturally complex contexts in which no formally designated authority figure is actively present.

Conclusion

Despite the past few decades of globalization and the increasing cultural diversity in the world's most powerful economies, and consequently in their most important industries and workplaces, relatively little scholarly attention has historically been paid to achieving a more profound understanding of the ways that different cultures frame and enact appropriate, effective professional communication norms. Indeed, as all available

data in the U.S. point to steep declines in the study of world languages, previously the most accessible inroad for undergraduates to learn about cultures other than their own, culture as an educational objective in itself, absent traditional language learning, appears to be on the rise.

While some may see no issue with a sharp increase in colleges' and universities' curricular emphasis on culture and transcultural competence as key learning outcomes across a variety of disciplines, the review of the literature I have conducted here shows how problematic it remains to clearly define and measure culture, transcultural communicative competence, and related leadership phenomena, such as teamwork. The literature on leadership remains heavily biased toward Western models and norms, and the attempts that have been made to describe, measure, and analyze other cultures' leadership traditions frequently still either lack adequate scholarly attention (meaning they are still understandably in the theory-building phases), or simply look to establish potentially flawed equivalences to Western leadership constructs (like trait, style, and contingency theories) in non-Western cultural traditions.

The research and literature on inter- and transcultural differences in communication and leadership tendencies and preferences is less sparse, but has favored an approach that centrally relies on surveys that seek to locate cultural norms on bipolar dimensional continua, such as high- versus low-context communication styles, long- and short-term time orientation, high versus low power-distance tendencies, and so on. When dimensional survey measurement is not the sole method of data collection and analysis, the tendency has been toward qualitative approaches that ask participants to narratively describe and re-create the behaviors and styles of leadership and transcultural interaction

they have encountered in the past, and whether or not they found it acceptable or preferable in some way. There remains a distinct lack of research on transcultural communication and leadership that seeks to directly observe and analyze these phenomena in action.

A relatively small, but dedicated, number of leadership and communications researchers are focusing on developing and applying models of inquiry that use discourse analysis as an additional lens for studying and better understanding the ways different groups communicate among themselves and between each other. The stakes for more effectively understanding world cultures' and their communicative norms and preferences are high. Globalization continues to increase the extent to which the world's economies depend on successful communication and interaction between workers with different cultural backgrounds. The relative lack of scholarly literature that not only directly observes and analyzes transcultural communication in action, but that can also offer actionable, practical advice for how to increase one's transcultural communicative competence, is one that the world's increasingly interdependent economies cannot likely afford.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the growing body of scholarly research on discursive practices in transcultural leadership and teamwork situations, and to further explore the “black box” problem in leadership and transcultural studies. Within this larger purpose, I had additional subordinate objectives. The first of these was to gain additional insight into study participants’ personal views on the nature of leadership, authority, teamwork, and communication –in the professional sphere in particular- and any differences they may perceive between those constructs as they are operationalized in their culture(s) of origin and in working teams here in the U.S. I also wanted to examine systematically the discourse that individuals and culturally diverse groups produced in interaction with one another in the performance of workplace group decision-making tasks. Finally, I hoped to contribute to the overall understanding of the influence of cultural difference(s) on communication, collaboration, and interaction in culturally diverse working teams.

The questions that guided this mixed methods study were: (1) How do foreign-born individuals working in a U.S. context define constructs such as leadership, authority, teamwork, and effective workplace communication? (2) To what extent is there a shared understanding of leadership, authority, teamwork, and effective workplace communication among members of culturally diverse working teams? (3) How do foreign-born individuals working the U.S. interact discursively with one another when put into teams that lack a designated formal authority? (4) What interaction(s) can be observed between foreign-born individuals’ stated definitions of leadership, authority,

teamwork, and effective workplace communication and their enactment of them as observed in group decision-making tasks?

The mixed methods used to explore the questions articulated above are a combination of qualitative interviewing and analysis, along with primarily quantitative discourse analysis. The qualitative interviews were conducted with a semi-structured interview guide (Patton, 2002), developed in advance, inquiring directly about participants' understanding of the concepts of leadership, authority, teamwork, and communication practices in both their cultures of origin and the U.S. Analysis of the transcribed interview texts was done with NVivo software, which I used to analyze participants' statements via both in vivo and thematic coding (Strauss, 1987; Saldaña, 2013). I then rendered these analyses into similarly thematized analytic memos that I shared with participants and my cultural informants for review and verification purposes.

Discourse data were collected from video and audio recordings of two sets of group decision-making sessions organized first with participants groups according to the languages they were teaching (Arabic, Chinese, Dari, and Persian), and then in mixed culture groups, created with an eye toward having at least one participant from each language group represented. Time-stamped transcriptions of these sessions were then also coded, again using NVivo software, for various discourse features, which are outlined and described in detail below. Those discourse features were counted and analyzed using statistical analysis and visualization software programs such as Microsoft Excel and R. The quantitative discourse data provided both explanatory and exploratory information that, when explored in light of the qualitative data, made the findings for both data sets more nuanced and robust.

In order to better understand how foreign-born teachers from Dari (Afghan), Arab, Chinese, and Persian cultures define leadership, authority, teamwork, and effective workplace communication practices, in both their culture of origin and the U.S. contexts, as well as the challenges associated with navigating the interplay between them, I conducted semi-structured, face-to-face individual interviews with 13 participants in a world language teacher development program that took place in summer 2016 at San Diego State University (SDSU). This comprised the most significant qualitative component of the study.

In order to observe and analyze the discursive tendencies of the same 13 participants, I designed two separate group decision-making tasks that were thematically relevant to their teacher development program (see Appendix D). The first task involved reaching a consensus on the prioritization of national standards for effective world language teaching and learning, and was completed in the four possible monocultural groups with all Dari (Afghan), Arabic (Arab), Chinese, and Persian teacher development participants working together, respectively.

The second task also comprised reaching group consensus on a similar, but different, set of world language teaching best practices, and was completed in three mixed culture groups. I created the mixed culture groups with the priority of having at least one representative of each cultural group (Dari, Arab, Chinese, and Persian), though the fact that there were only two Arabic teacher participants in the study made this impossible. Ultimately, mixed group #1 had two Dari participants, one Chinese, and one Persian participant. Mixed group #2 had one Arabic participant, one Dari, one Chinese, and one Persian. Mixed group #3 had one Arabic participant, two Dari, one Chinese, and

one Persian. The fourth group was comprised of the four teacher development participants who had elected not to participate in the study.

All individual interviews and group decision-making meetings were audio and video recorded and professionally transcribed. An SDSU Linguistics graduate research assistant and I also reviewed the transcripts for accuracy while watching the video recordings. Task instructions for the group decision-making meetings indicated that the meetings were to be conducted in English, which they largely were. Any talking not done in English was translated with the assistance of speakers of these languages. These translated chunks were not included in the discourse data calculations, partly because semantically accurate translations either increased or decreased word counts compared with what was actually said, and also because the instances of talk in languages other than English was relatively minimal (5% of total Chinese group talk time and 15% of total Dari group talk time), and were not of significant substance to the actual group interaction, rather comprising brief asides about whether and how the assigned tasks would be completed.

I then sought to study the interaction between participants' stated definitions of leadership, authority, teamwork, and effective communication and their discursive tendencies as observed in the group decision-making meetings. I pursued this via a side-by-side analysis of the prevalent themes that emerged from individual qualitative interviews and the quantitative data derived from the discourse analysis conducted on the group decision-making meetings.

Site and Participant Selection

I chose to study teacher development program participants at SDSU's

STARTALK summer program because of the unique multicultural makeup of the program participants (bringing together native speaker, and in one case a highly proficient heritage speaker, teachers of Arabic, Chinese, Dari, and Persian languages), the professional (meaning similar to a workplace environment) context of the STARTALK workshop, and the uncommon access to this population that my position/role at SDSU afforded me. Funded through the National Security Agency, STARTALK offers select universities and other educational institutions federal grants to conduct summer language teacher development and K-16 language learning programs, particularly in Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTLs) like Arabic, Persian, Dari, and Chinese. My center has been fortunate to receive STARTALK funding for teacher and student programs since 2008. However, grantees must re-compete for funding each year, which means that funding from one year to the next is never a guarantee. For this reason, I chose to integrate the data collection for this study with a program evaluation I helped design and execute for the center's summer 2016 STARTALK teacher development program in cooperation with the program's co-directors. The STARTALK program co-directors and I identified the articulation points between the teacher development program's dual focus on content-based language instruction and tenets of learner centeredness, and my research interests related to differing transcultural definitions of leadership, authority, teamwork, and effective communication practices.

We developed an interview guide for one-on-one conversational interviews, all of which I conducted, with participating STARTALK teacher trainees who opted into the evaluation via an informed consent form. We also devised two video-recorded group decision-making activities for conducting discourse analysis on group interactions both

within and across cultures. Participant biographical information, used to create profiles of each participant and to contextualize some of their stated beliefs and discursive tendencies, was also collected as part of their registration for the program and as part of the informed consent process.

These interventions were indirect measures of the participants' understanding and enactment of the workshop's central theme of learner centeredness in curriculum design and instruction. Learner centeredness has parallels to the push-pull of leadership with and without formal authority, teamwork, and communication, in that it requires a teacher (leader) who puts the active engagement of followers (learners) ahead of her own, and who re-thinks traditional teacher-leader/learner-follower roles and behaviors that may be tied to deeply held, culturally reinforced beliefs about those roles.

I chose the STARTALK program at my own university center, as opposed to one of the dozens of other STARTALK programs funded around the nation in summer 2016, for the reasons of convenience, access, and affordability. Given that I needed a strong degree of cooperation from the STARTALK program directors in order to integrate my study as seamlessly as possible into the overall teacher development program, it just made the most sense for me to work with my current colleagues at SDSU, who possessed a solid understanding of the nature of my research questions and with whom I already had good rapport. The program at SDSU also was also a logical choice as it combined teachers of four different STARTALK languages (Arabic, Chinese, Dari, and Persian).

The plan was always to use any data collected as part of the 2016 SDSU STARTALK program evaluation for the purposes of this study, which is why informed consent forms were collected for all participants. Had I waited to collect data until after I

had defended my dissertation proposal and received advance IRB approval, it would have put the entire project at risk, as there would have been no guarantee of my center receiving funds to conduct a similar STARTALK teacher training program in 2017 or thereafter. Multi-language teacher development programs were actually somewhat unusual in summer 2016. Of the 26 STARTALK teacher programs funded that year, only eight were for multiple language teacher groups. Of those eight, only four programs served four or more language groups, and they were located in the Washington, DC metropolitan area, New York City, and Bemidji, Minnesota. Given the nature of my research questions and overall study design, the more language and culture groups I could involve in the study, the better.

Data Collection

On the first day of the summer 2016 STARTALK teacher development workshop at SDSU, I was introduced to the entire group as a LARC staff member and researcher. I then passed out the informed consent paperwork (Appendix A) and explained the nature of the study and the fact that participation in it was voluntary and that their standing in the STARTALK program was not in any way dependent on study participation. Of the 17 program participants, 13 signed the informed consent and were ultimately interviewed individually and slated to participate in video-recorded group decision-making meetings.

In order to facilitate data coding and analysis, as well as to protect participants' identities, a pseudonym system was developed and utilized throughout the course of the study. Initially, I used a system that grouped participants according to cultural affiliations, i.e. Afghan, Arab, Chinese, and Persian. After additional consideration and consultation with colleagues, I opted instead to group participants according to the

languages they were teaching for the STARTALK programs. This resulted in the following group designations: Arabic, Dari, Chinese, and Persian. Participants were then numbered, at random, and their gender was reflected with either a “M” or a “F.” As such, the pseudonyms came out as the following: Arabic_1M, Arabic_2F, Dari_1M, Dari_2F, Dari_3F, Dari_4F, Dari_5M, Chinese_1F, Chinese_2F, Chinese_3F, Persian_1F, Persian_2F, and Persian_3F. Dari_1M participated fully in all data collection activities, but was ultimately dropped from the study due to a lack of relevant data. His responses to individual interview questions did not speak, directly or indirectly, to the questions asked, and his participation (in English) in group decision-making activities was so minimal as to be a non-factor. He did participate at a slightly higher level in the monocultural group activity, but his participation there was entirely in Afghan language (a mixture of Dari and Pashto). I will address this unique situation in detail in the section on Data Analysis below.

Before moving on to describe the study participants’ backgrounds in more detail, I will make an additional note about the pseudonym system I have used. While I certainly appreciate that the system is not ideal, and that some readers may even find it off-putting, the goal was to use pseudonyms that would immediately connect the reader with two important facets of each participant’s identity as it relates to the stated purposes of this study: culture of origin and gender. While gender is not something I have chosen to explore here in any depth, being able to quickly identify a participant’s gender can be tremendously valuable for contextualizing their statements and, possibly, aspects of their discursive behavior. I did receive other suggestions for a pseudonym system, one of which was to use “borrowed” target language names in place of participants’ real names.

This approach, while aesthetically more pleasing, would have run the risk of not only being ambiguous both in terms of participants' culture and gender, but also of being unintentionally both tokenizing and patronizing; two things I have very much endeavored to avoid.

Demographics, Educational Attainment, and Time Spent in Culture(s)

Some basic demographic data was collected on each participant, and is reflected in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Participant Pseudonyms and Basic Demographic Data

Pseudonym	Birth Nation	Time Lived/Worked in Birth Nation	Time Lived/Worked in U.S.	"Home" Culture Education	U.S. Education	Age range
Arabic_1M*	U.S.	4 years	2 years	MA	BA	21-30
Arabic_2F	Morocco	19 years	15 years	AA	PhD candidacy	31-40
Dari_1M	Afghanistan	40+ years	3 years	MA	N/A	41-50
Dari_2F	Afghanistan	7 years	7 years	BA	N/A	31-40
Dari_3F*	U.S.	30+ years	30+years	BA	BA	21-30
Dari_4F	Afghanistan	16 years	16 years	MD	Attending college	31-40
Dari_5M	Afghanistan	24 years	7 months	BA	N/A	31-40
Chinese_1F	China	37 years	3 years	N/A	N/A	31-40
Chinese_2F	China	7 years	18 years	BS	N/A	31-40
Chinese_3F	China	9 years	3.5 years	MA	MA	31-40
Persian_1F	Iran	23 years	17 years	MA	N/A	41-50
Persian_2F	Iran	16 years	30+ years	High School	PharmD	41-50
Persian_3F	Iran	18 years	38 years	High	BA	51-

				School		60
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* Indicates that participant was born in the U.S. but either lived and was educated in their heritage culture, or strongly identifies as a member of that culture as well as of U.S. culture

Though clearly a very small sample of the corresponding immigrant populations currently in the U.S., the data displayed in Table 3.1 do reflect some interesting interactions between the participants in this study and the immigrant populations in the U.S. overall. For instance, the median age of the U.S. immigrant population, per the U.S. Census Bureau's 2015 data, was 43.9 years of age. In this study, participants were only asked to report their age as a range, 21-30, 31-40, and so on, and the median age range for participants in this study was 31-40, skewing the groups participating in this study very slightly younger than the immigrant population overall. In terms of educational attainment, the participants in this study outstripped the immigrant population overall. While only 29% of immigrants in the U.S. have a bachelor's degree or higher, 100% of the participants in this study had attained at least a bachelor's degree, either in their country of origin or here in the U.S. It is, of course, not terribly surprising that language teachers participating in a professional development program at a U.S. university would represent the higher end of the distribution in terms of educational attainment.

In terms of amounts of time spent in non-U.S. cultures compared with years spent living and working in the U.S., there are also some noteworthy, if not surprising, trends that can be seen in Table 3.2 below:

Table 3.2: Years Spent in Foreign and U.S. Cultures

	Mean/Median Years in Foreign Culture(s)	Mean/Median Years in U.S. Culture
Whole Group	19.2 / 18 years	14 / 15 years
Arabic	11.5 / 11.5 years	8.5 / 8.5 years
Chinese	17.6 / 9 years	8.2 / 3.5 years

Dari	23.4 / 24 years	11.3 / 7 years
Persian	19 / 18 years	28.3 / 30 years

The Persian group's difference in years spent in U.S. culture relative to the other groups can be explained, in part, by the political situation in Iran not having produced a mass migration since the 1979 Revolution, whereas the Arab world, Afghanistan, and China have all seen more recent events that contribute to contemporary overall migration and U.S. immigration figures. In addition, the Chinese and Dari groups have less comparative time in U.S. culture than the Arabic and Persian groups, which will be important to consider when looking at the qualitative interview and group decision-making discourse data analysis in chapter four, as it may help explain the apparent level of comfort among all groups operating within same versus mixed culture settings.

What is also evident after only a cursory look at the participant group for this study is that males are underrepresented. Whereas most national populations across the globe skew only slightly more female than male (generally between 50-60% female), this group had only three males compared with 10 females to begin with. After the decision to drop Dari_1M from the qualitative and quantitative data sets, the participant group comprised just two males and 10 females. This may make the group more consistent with most teacher populations around the country, and even around the world, but it is certainly a limitation that will be examined and discussed in greater depth in the Limitations section in chapter five.

Qualitative Interviews

I conducted the 13 individual qualitative interviews during the first week of the two-week STARTALK teacher development program. Each interview lasted

approximately 20 to 30 minutes and all were both video and audio recorded. An interview guide (Patton, 2002) was used to structure the conversation, making sure that each interviewee had the same opportunity to address the relevant topics, while also allowing the flexibility to explore emergent themes or issues in a more natural, conversational manner. The interview guide (Appendix B) began with general questions about the interviewees' perceptions of how leadership, authority, teamwork, and communication are defined and enacted both in their culture(s) of origin and in the U.S. After ample exploration of these constructs, the interview guide transitioned to eliciting a particular anecdote or incident from the interviewees' personal histories, if they had not provided something similar already, that would illustrate the points they had raised. It also offered the opportunity to ask if they perceived challenges or opportunities, or both, in the increasingly common multicultural work environments found in the U.S. I would then close the interview by inviting the interviewee to ask any questions they might have had for me, before thanking them again and letting them know that they would have the opportunity later on to review the interview transcript along with my analysis of the interview, in order to provide any additional input or comments. After the interviews were completed, the audio recordings were transcribed and time-stamped by a professional transcription service, and then both a graduate research assistant and I reviewed the transcripts while watching the videos in order to obtain the most accurate record possible of participant responses.

Group Decision-Making Meetings

The group decision-making meetings were conducted in the afternoon on the Tuesday and the Thursday of the second week of the STARTALK teacher development

program. The Tuesday meetings were for monocultural groups (Arabic, Chinese, Dari, and Persian teachers all grouped together), and they were all given the same task: to select four of the seven ACTFL National Standards for Language Teaching and Learning as the “most important” and to prioritize, based on what they had learned in the STARTALK workshop, the selected four and give a brief rationale. They were also instructed to conduct as much of the session as possible in English. The meetings were audio and video recorded, and professionally transcribed with timestamps. A graduate research assistant and I subsequently reviewed the transcripts while re-watching the video-recorded sessions to correct transcription inaccuracies, including of timestamps, usually due to crosstalk or challenging pronunciation issues. The participant instructions for the monocultural group decision-making meetings can be found in Appendix D.

It must also be noted that every effort was made to maintain a sense of normalcy among participants during the video-recorded group sessions. I neither wanted them to feel unduly observed, nor did I desire the corresponding performance from participants that can sometimes accompany such a sense of being watched by researchers. As such, the recording equipment was set up in advance, and only needed to be turned on or off by one of the participants or one of the student assistants working for the center, and the STARTALK programs, over the summer. I did escort a few of the group members to their session, but otherwise did everything I could to distance myself from the process. This was important for two reasons: 1) although neither I nor any other staff member, to my knowledge, emphasized my role as Managing Director at the center, it was also not likely a secret to participants and I did not want to create additional pressure on them by being overly involved in the group sessions; 2) as alluded to above, I also did not want to

impact interactions within the groups with an excessive researcher presence in or around these sessions. The purpose was for these to feel like an integral part of their workshop experience, and I was not a member of the STARTALK program team, outside of my role as a Managing Director and co-PI at the center hosting the program.

The Thursday meetings were comprised of mixed culture groups. As stated above, mixed group #1 had two Dari participants, one Chinese, and one Persian participant. Mixed group #2 had one Arabic participant, one Dari, one Chinese, and one Persian. Mixed group #3 had one Arabic participant, two Dari, one Chinese, and one Persian. The fourth group was comprised of the four teacher development participants who had elected not to participate in the study. The mixed culture groups were provided with the six STARTALK principles for effective language teaching and again instructed to select, from among all six, the four most important principles for preparing an inexperienced teacher for success in the classroom. They were further instructed to prioritize the selected four, and to provide a brief rationale based on what they had learned in the workshop to that point. The admonition to conduct as much of the session as possible in English was repeated here, although it was likely less necessary given that English would serve as the *de facto* lingua franca in mixed groups. As with the monocultural group meetings, the sessions were audio and video recorded, and professionally transcribed with timestamps. A graduate research assistant and I subsequently reviewed the transcripts while re-watching the video-recorded sessions to correct transcription inaccuracies, usually due to crosstalk or challenging pronunciation issues, as well to double-check the timestamps. The participant instructions for the mixed culture group decision-making meetings can be found in Appendix D.

Data Analysis

I analyzed the data in five distinct phases. The first phase, analysis of participants' individual qualitative interview responses, served to provide insight into how some foreign-born language teachers working in a U.S. context define constructs such as leadership, authority, teamwork, and effective workplace communication. Using NVivo qualitative research software, I first uploaded the interview transcripts and video recordings in order to review the transcripts for accuracy and to re-familiarize myself with the overall nature of each respondent's data. I then watched the video while reading the reviewed transcript of each interview and in vivo coded (Strauss, 1987; Saldaña, 2013) segments that were relevant to one of the constructs of leadership, authority, teamwork, and/or workplace communication. Additionally, I in vivo coded any reference to challenges posed by coming from a different cultural background and integrating into U.S. professional culture. In vivo coding seemed the most appropriate method for working with foreign-born, culturally diverse participants who, as Saldaña (2013) noted, are among those populations that are "often marginalized, and coding with their actual words enhances and deepens... understanding of their cultures and worldviews" (p. 91).

I then reviewed just the in vivo coded segments of each participant interview and re-wrote, largely in my own words, an analytic memo for each, interpreting the applicability of each coded segment to formulate that individual's definition of leadership, authority, teamwork, communication, or challenges presented by adapting to U.S. working culture as an immigrant. This was effectively a process of "putting like-minded pieces together into data clumps," in order to "create an organizational

framework” that would give shape to each participant’s responses (Glesne, 2006, p. 152). The analytic memos can be found in Appendix C.

Once I had completed the memo drafting process for each participant, I then shared the anonymized analytic memos and interview transcripts for each sub-group (Arabic, Chinese, Dari, and Persian) with a colleague who was also from the same national background as the participants and who had agreed to serve as a cultural informant. I solicited this feedback as a way of decreasing the likelihood that I would drastically misinterpret the significance of participant observations due to my cultural bias, linguistic misunderstanding, or another unintentional reason. In instances where these informants’ opinions differed from my interpretation or analysis, I would meet with them to discuss and better understand their perspective on the way(s) in which my interpretation or analysis had missed the mark. In a few instances, we addressed our differing interpretations by watching the video recording of the interview together. In the very few cases where the disagreement was more than a matter of word choice or providing additional context, I was able to incorporate the informant’s differing perspective into the memo and overall analysis. In other cases, I simply noted it as an alternative interpretation rather than trying to force a reconciliation between our incongruent views. I ultimately did decide to trust my interpretation the majority of the time, as I had the advantage of having conducted and re-watched the entire interview, and of re-reading the transcripts, multiple times. Additional detail on the observations of cultural informants and their contribution to my analysis is provided in chapter four.

Simultaneous with consulting my designated cultural informants, I also sent each participant the finalized transcript of their interview and my analytic memo via email.

This was done as a form of member checking, also known as respondent validation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In the message I explained why I was requesting their input and invited them either to reply with their agreement, or to provide more nuanced feedback indicating if there were areas where they did not agree, in part or in total, with my interpretation of their intended message. I did give participants one week initially to provide a response, indicating that I would also take non-response as a lack of disagreement with my analysis. However, as was explained in the informed consent that each participant read and signed, the option to question or weigh in on any element of the study, or to end their participation in it, remained open to participants at any time and beyond the initial week deadline. Of the 12 participants whose data was ultimately included for analysis, four responded 100% affirming my interpretation and analysis. The other eight never provided a response, in spite of three total messages comprised of the initial one and two follow-ups.

Once I had received feedback from both cultural informants and participants, I proceeded to write up a group-by-group summary of their responses relevant to each construct outlined in my first research question. In these write-ups, I placed particular emphasis on areas of individual convergence or divergence from the rest of their cultural group. In order to gain insight on the extent to which there is a shared understanding of the constructs under examination in this study, I then wrote a whole-group summary analysis of responses on the topics of leadership, authority, teamwork, communication, and challenges in cultural adaptation and integration for the Arabic, Chinese, Dari, and Persian groups.

To gain insight into the question of how foreign-born language teachers working

in the U.S. interact discursively with each other in teams lacking a designated formal authority, I used a discourse analysis-inspired approach to study the monocultural and mixed culture group decision-making meetings. The purpose here was to get a general sense of the dynamics at play and the extent to which they did, or did not, reflect the most salient themes that emerged from the individual qualitative interviews. I began by doing a turn-by-turn, total, and average words spoken count in both the monocultural and mixed culture groups for each participant. This was further supplemented by a calculation of total turns taken and average turn length, in seconds, for each participant in both the monocultural and mixed culture groups.

From there, the following discourse acts were tallied for each participant across both monocultural and mixed culture groups: backchannels (both free-standing and overlapping), overlaps (both cooperative and interruptive), and latches (again, both cooperative and interruptive). I also tallied the total number of these discourse acts for each participant in both types of group decision-making sessions, monocultural and mixed. The purpose here was to identify the extent to which participants engaged in supportive (cooperative speech acts and backchannels) discursive behavior versus discordant/disagreeable (interruptive speech acts and excessive overlapping backchannels) discursive behaviors in the differing contexts of same and mixed culture team interactions in which a designated formal authority was not present. These data were then compared with the data analysis findings from the individual qualitative interviews. Additionally, participants' discourse data was compared within and between same culture and total group contexts using a paired samples t-test seeking to determine the significance of the difference between collective discourse data for all participants in

the same and mixed culture group decision-making sessions. This was a comprehensive statistical comparison of all the discourse features outlined above and in the previous paragraph. I further explored the differences between language group discursive behaviors using descriptive statistics, focusing on the most salient features and distinctions between different language groups' discursive behavior in the same and mixed culture sessions, as well as on any confirmatory and/or dissenting evidence they provided for what participants had talked about in their individual interviews. Finally, I performed a cluster analysis, which drew from all discourse data for each individual participant, using the software R to gain insight into the extent to which similar or differing tendencies could be observed within and among the four groups. This analysis generated a cluster dendrogram that holistically displayed the extent to which individual participants' discursive behavior clustered together or apart (i.e. was highly similar or relatively dissimilar). I then wrote up my analysis and findings of the cluster dendrogram as it related to the findings from the other quantitative and qualitative interventions in the study.

Having provided a detailed explanation of the methodologies for site and participant selection, data collection, and data analysis used in this study, I will now move on, in two subsequent chapters, to a presentation of the findings from my study and a discussion of implications based on those findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

To this point, I have provided the contextual backdrop for this study by describing the problem, reviewing the literature, and outlining the methods used in this research. As noted previously, this study has been designed to contribute to the growing body of scholarly research on discursive practices in transcultural leadership and teamwork situations. The study also addressed the “black box” challenge in leadership and transcultural studies overall.

The four research questions that informed this study were: (1) How do foreign-born individuals working in a U.S. context define constructs such as leadership, authority, teamwork, and effective workplace communication? (2) To what extent is there a shared understanding of leadership, authority, teamwork, and effective workplace communication among members of culturally diverse working teams? (3) How do foreign-born individuals working in the U.S. interact discursively with one another when put into mono- and multi-cultural teams that lack a designated formal authority? (4) What interaction(s) are able to be observed between foreign-born individuals’ stated definitions of leadership, authority, teamwork, and effective workplace communication, and their enactment of these concepts in group decision-making tasks?

Applying a mixed methods approach, I collected data via a biographical data form, 13 individual conversational qualitative interviews, and seven group decision-making meetings. This chapter presents the results of my data analysis. First, I will provide a paired samples T-test of the discourse data for all 12 participants (one participant was ultimately dropped from the study due to issues with his data, as I

discussed in detail in the section on Data Collection in Chapter Three) across all four cultural groups. The purpose of this analysis was to get an initial picture of the extent to which there is commonality or difference in the discursive behavior among individuals, cultural groups, and across all four cultural groups represented in this study. From there, I explored the question of how the foreign-born teacher-participants in this study who were working in the U.S. in summer 2016 define leadership, authority, teamwork, and effective workplace communication, as well as their views on the differences between the beliefs and practices associated with these constructs in the U.S., on the one hand, and their culture of origin, on the other. By conducting individual qualitative interviews in which these topics were discussed in depth, and then completing a thorough analysis of the data provided therein, I was able to develop and vet analytic memos for each participant on these topics. Those memos were subsequently reviewed by the participants themselves for accuracy, as well as by a non-participant, representative cultural informant from my workplace for each cultural “group.” These measures provided a form of triangulation for my own findings in order to mitigate any inherent biases that may have influenced my interpretations of the data. In essence, they provided additional insights, both confirmatory and not, to help make sure that my representation of respondents’ views and experiences would be as close to “right” as possible.

In the following pages I will present a combined qualitative and quantitative analysis of each cultural group, comprised of individual Arabic, Chinese, Dari, and Persian language teachers. To this end, I will provide qualitative quote matrices and quantitative group session discourse data, in the form of descriptive statistics, to support my analysis of the stated beliefs and group interaction behaviors at the levels of the

individual, distinct cultural groups, and overall combined transcultural group. Finally, I will display the results of a cluster analysis, which creates grouped pairs based on degrees of similarity, using the discourse data from the same and mixed culture group sessions, individually and together, in order to provide another avenue for analysis of transcultural similarity and difference.

Exploring Differences between Participants' Behavior in Same and Mixed Culture Groups

I conducted a paired samples t-test, using a Microsoft Excel plug-in, in order to get an initial sense of if and how participants' discursive behavior differed between same and mixed culture contexts, and to begin to answer my research question about how members of a transcultural working group might interact with each other in a team that lacks a designated formal authority. The t-test incorporated all 12 participants' discourse data collected and coded by me in the study in both their same and mixed culture groups, including total words spoken, average words per turn, total number of turns, average turn length, instances of latching for interruption/disagreement, instances of latching for agreement/support, interruptive overlaps, cooperative overlaps, backchannels, overlapping backchannels, and total speech acts. The null hypothesis here is that participants' discursive behavior would not differ when working in mixed culture groups as opposed to same culture groups.

Table 4.1: T-test of all discourse data from same and mixed culture groups

	<i>SAME</i>	<i>MIX</i>
Mean	49.47272727	92.69621212
Variance	29807.53177	65400.92586
Observations	132	132
Pearson Correlation	0.825339896	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	

Df	131
t Stat	-3.323477683
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.00057645
t Critical one-tail	1.656568649
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.0011529
t Critical two-tail	1.978238539

As the results in Table 4.1 demonstrate, the absolute value of the t-stat is larger than the two-tailed critical value, and the p value is close to zero. As such, the null hypothesis is definitely rejected since the data provided a strong indication that participants' discursive behavior was significantly different statistically when working in mixed culture groups versus in same culture groups.

In brief, these results strongly suggest that culture matters a lot with respect to how people from different cultural backgrounds interact with each other when working together in a professional setting. Given this compelling result, it only seems appropriate to more closely examine each language teacher group in terms of participant perspectives about the constructs of leadership, authority, teamwork, and communication, as well as their sense of the challenges inherent to working within and across cultural lines. After analyzing all participants' qualitative interview data in the sections below, I will also provide descriptive statistics that can offer a more fine-grained look at the precise ways that discursive behaviors differed within and between language teacher groups.

How Do Foreign-born Individuals Working in the U.S. Define Leadership, Authority, Teamwork, and Effective Workplace Communication?

In order to respond to the question that functions as the heading for this section, I will provide my participant responses to semi-structured interview guide questions on these topics, often using verbatim quotes to support the answers I will provide. I will

proceed alphabetically by language teacher group name, i.e. Arabic, Chinese, Dari, and Persian. The decision to proceed in this manner, as opposed to writing up each individual participant's interview data, was driven by a need for presentational economy and analytic coherence. I fully understand that readers could interpret this reporting decision, at least on the surface, as counterproductive to my stated purpose of not approaching the study of culture(s) from a categorical or monolithic perspective. While I appreciate the tension that my chosen structure creates, I am also confident that, in the discussion that follows, each individual participant will receive their due consideration and treatment, with at least as much attention to what makes them different from their fellow language group peers as to what may reflect their similarity.

In short, within each section, I will provide analysis of individual and overall group responses to questions about their understanding of leadership, authority, teamwork, and communication in their culture(s) of origin and as they perceive them in the U.S. Direct quotes of participant responses will be displayed via quote matrices, or within the text itself.

The Arabic Group

The Arabic language teacher sub-group was the smallest of the four in this study. Only two of the four Arabic STARTALK teacher development program participants opted to participate in the study, one male and one female. The male was in the 21-30 age range, and the female in the 31-40 age range. Both received significant portions of their adult education in the U.S. and their home culture nations.

Arabic_1M is a young man of Lebanese descent who was actually born in the U.S., and then split time living, studying, and working between Southern California and

Beirut, Lebanon. He is a healthcare professional by training, with his secondary and post-secondary education having been completed in Lebanon; he has had professional experience both in Lebanon and the U.S. On the demographic form he completed in summer 2016 as part of the informed consent process, he listed his study and work experiences as four years in Lebanon and two years in the U.S. On the demographic form he also listed his highest degree as a Bachelor's degree.

Arabic_2F is originally from Morocco and was a PhD candidate and university level Arabic language teacher at the time of data collection. She is in the 31 to 40 year-old age range, and she indicated that she lived and studied for about 19 years in Morocco and had been in the U.S. for about 14 years at the time of the 2016 STARTALK workshop. She had obtained the equivalent of an Associate's degree in Morocco, even spending some period of time working as a journalist in Morocco and Tunisia. She completed her undergraduate studies here in the U.S., where she had also began her graduate work.

Leadership. Arabic_1M described leadership in Lebanese (Arab) culture as something that receives less focus than in the U.S. He indicated that leadership as a capacity is not taught or cultivated in people in Lebanon, and so he perceived Lebanon's overall familiarity with leadership as a concept and practice as being lower than what he has observed in U.S. culture.

Arabic_2F's characterization of leadership in Moroccan/Arab culture was one of a leader as a person vested with absolute positional authority. She described leaders and leadership in Moroccan/Arab culture as a role or position that demands the individual(s) fill it in a way that projects egocentrism and arrogance in order to be consistent with the

overall expectation of absolute deference from followers. Indeed, she even construed leadership as requiring a presence that inspires fear in followers, more than admiration or respect borne of positive feelings and experiences.

Table 4.2 contains actual quotes from the two Arabic participants. These quotes demonstrate each participant's view of leadership.

Table 4.2: Arabic Group Leadership Quote Matrix

Arabic_1M	Arabic_2F
I think it's more like a boss, not like a leader. Because there's a difference between a leader and a boss... A boss would just be giving orders and I think in Lebanon it's more like this. It's more like a boss giving orders	I think in the Middle East... if you are a good leader, you need to be tough, you need to be tough, you need to be authoritative, people need to fear you, love you possibly, but you need to be feared more than loved
...going back to the point about leadership, because we're applying the American based model in Lebanon, I think we know about leader – we're being introduced to the leadership thing	You wanna just, it's not your mistake, so. You do whatever, you give it to the leader and if something happens, it's the leader. So you wanna find someone to blame, and to say, it's not my business. He told me to do this, I'm just following.

As the quotes in Table 4.2 illustrate, there is both similarity and difference in the understanding and experience of leadership expressed by the two Arabic teacher participants. Arabic_1M and Arabic_2F both described their perception of leadership in Arab culture(s) as being largely positional, authoritative, and directive. When expanding on leadership in Lebanon, however, Arabic_1M indicated that there is a growing exposure to and familiarity with U.S. models of leadership, whereas Arabic_2F went on to talk about how subordinates in Arab culture(s) may try to subvert the leader-follower dynamic by shifting responsibility for any mistake or underperformance back to leaders,

since it was their decision in the first place. This is a telling comment that will be explored further in the sections on authority and teamwork below.

Authority. As Table 4.3 indicates, both participants immediately associated authority in the Arab cultural setting with a power imbalance, but each person did this by referencing a different context. For Arabic_1M, the first thing that came to mind was the gap between doctors and nurses in the healthcare context; he described doctors as always being listened to, whereas nurses often are not. Arabic_2F simply said “dictatorship” when I asked her what she thought about authority in the Middle East. When she expanded on this, she described authority in the Arab context as the fulcrum point between being free and being secure. Essentially, what Arabic_2F described is a situation in which only those who hold positions of formal authority are free to express themselves, and even they are bound by the perceived need to be flawless and all-powerful, so as to ensure the continued obedience, and thereby security, of their followers.

Table 4.3: Arabic Group Authority Quote Matrix

Arabic_1M	Arabic_2F
Here, nurses are really well-respected. They have – they can be independent in many things. Over there, even in some American hospitals, still you find the gap of doctors and nurses. The doctor’s always giving the order and the nurse would not do anything without asking the doctor	...we say, okay if you want freedom and you want – you’re not gonna get any security... You cannot enjoy both. You have free speech, but you’ll be scared. We wish, but that’s not gonna work

<p>You can be a leader without giving attitude to some people, or being bossy, or just giving orders. When you want to do something you're going to work with the team. So you don't have to be authoritative. Just work with the team and don't tell them 'Do this, and do this, and do this.' That's it. So I don't think authority is a necessity for being a leader</p>	<p>So I observed this stuff, I see it, I lived it. I know what I'm talking about. It's more like restricted environment where you cannot be yourself, in most cases... which is like I said, the leadership always starts from the top... So you need to be respected and feared so you can protect your country and have more stability</p>
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As was already noted, examples of each participant's specific comments on authority are presented in Table 4.3. Arabic_1M's equating of authority with "giving attitude... or being bossy" is consistent, in its own way, with Arabic_2F's assertions that formalized authority figures in Arab culture need to be feared and must create a transaction with subordinates wherein they, the subordinates, trade their individual freedom of expression for security.

Both participants also painted a picture of the exercise of formal authority as needing to assert dominance over others and to give the appearance of infallibility. Arabic_2F described the way authority in the Arab cultural context restricts both subordinates' and formalized leaders' ability to be open and express themselves without reservation; subordinates for fear of retribution, and formalized leaders out of a need to maintain the appearance of flawlessness. Both participants also clearly indicated that they do not personally agree with authority as they perceive it in Arab culture(s); instead they believed that formal authority is not necessary for the exercise of leadership and that people should simply set aside questions of hierarchy and lead by working together. This viewpoint was further reflected in their discourse data from the group decision-making meetings, in which they both displayed a high involvement interaction style, being in the

top four most active speakers in both same and mixed culture working groups in which there was no designated formal authority figure.

Teamwork. The topic of teamwork is where we see the first significant divergence of opinion between the two Arabic teacher participants in this study.

Arabic_1M stated that teamwork as a concept and practice does exist in Lebanese/Arab culture(s), and that its impact is increasing due to the consistent Western influence in Lebanon. Arabic_2F, on the other hand, indicated that teamwork was neither normal nor natural based on her experiences in Moroccan/Arab culture(s), except perhaps in the most globalized sectors such as banking and finance. The quotes in Table 4.4 below give a more nuanced sense of the differences here.

Table 4.4: Arabic Group Teamwork Quote Matrix

Arabic_1M	Arabic_2F
...here... everyone is kind of concerned about 'me, myself, and I'. Over there it's more like socializing, family oriented. So that's the difference. People kind of help each other without thinking of something in return	No, we're not great at teamwork, to be honest with you. And today I was very confused. You said at the beginning I have teamwork, and then, no, you're gonna work on your own doing that thing. So we just talked to each other but you do it individually, so I was kind of confused
It's more like teamwork and not like in every single place, but in general, I think it's more about teamwork and you can do mistakes. It's okay. Making mistakes here is okay... you don't get this label, for example, when you do a mistake. 'Oh, we did this mistake and it'll be on you forever.' Here you do a mistake it's okay, you can go through it and then change, learn (<i>comparing U.S. and Lebanese/Arab teamwork models</i>)	What I remember of Morocco, it was more like no teamwork, more, you know – very traditional way: the boss, the below-boss, the whatever, and give the orders and people follow, and that's leadership. You have one person, one boss who controls the whole thing. And the boss gives an order, below the person - the person below in the order, the order goes down and down and down until the task is accomplished, and that's it
That's something I like in our culture. I sacrifice with my brother, my friend, or I can help him with this, or that. So I don't know if this is considered teamwork	In Morocco yeah, the teacher is more self-centered, is more like – we studied today teaching-centered versus the learner-centered; I think because of the culture, we have more teacher-centered. You go and

	<p>the teachers say, blah, blah, blah. You take notes, and there is no group discussions. Like, from what I remember in Morocco we never had any group discussions. Questions, you raise your hand, you answer. If you answer bad, she would make bad remarks and you feel like, horrible about yourself. That's straight up to the point, the truth</p>
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I understood two main things from the quotes in Table 4.4: (a) collaborative work is not a common cultural practice in these participants' experiences of Arab cultures, and (b) making publicly visible mistakes is something that carries negative consequences, even as a student, and much more when one is a working professional. Consequently, making mistakes should be avoided whenever possible. Even more than peer-to-peer adverse reactions to one's mistakes, the potential rebuke by a formal authority, a teacher in this example, is an outcome that Arabic_2F described as highly probable and as having a very negative impact on the mistake maker.

Even further, a closer examination of Arabic_1M's comments suggests a highly socially compartmentalized approach to teams and teamwork, in addition to the zero-sum game dynamic implied by the pressure to not make mistakes in the sight of others. Both of Arabic_1M's teamwork comments clearly invoke the notion that teamwork is something one does for one's perceived "family," such as one's "brother" or "friend." He even describes it as a "sacrifice" in which one does not take into account whether or not there is anything to gain, or presumably to lose, in the act of teamwork. Failing this drive to make a personal sacrifice for the larger community or group, Arabic_1M was fairly explicit about how he would otherwise see a team or group-work setting, saying:

In the class about putting four people in a group and from my experience when I was in the school when I was a kid, I used to love it because I felt like this competition. Competing with my – the other three.

So, mistakes clearly seem like something to be avoided in Arab cultures, since you will be judged and others are likely just waiting for you to make a mistake so they can press it to their advantage, given that competing with peers is perceived as the way to get ahead. The only circumstance in which this may not be true is when one decides to “sacrifice” and risk both being seen as wrong and in not competing at all costs in order to help out a “brother” or a “friend.” In other words, engaging in teamwork without the directive provided by a designated formal authority is potentially dangerous in Arab cultures, as it stands to create more opportunity for mistake-making and less chances to successfully compete with peers. The next section on communication elaborates further on this dynamic.

Communication. This is another topic on which Arabic_1M and Arabic_2F diverge, at least on the surface. Arabic_1M simply did not seem to have a lot to say about communication, indicating only that it seems more open in Lebanese culture, relative to other Arab cultures, due to the greater Western influence in Lebanon. The only barriers he perceived to open communication were gender (men and women not being likely or even able to discuss certain topics across gender lines) and religion, which also plays a role in closing lines of communication between males and females.

Arabic_2F, on the other hand, had much more to say on the topic. She described communication between leaders and followers, as well as between peers, as much less open and direct in Moroccan/Arab cultures compared with what she had experienced in

U.S. culture. In particular, she cited the major difference that a subordinate in Moroccan/Arab culture would almost never provide constructive feedback to their supervisor or boss. In particular, she felt that this feedback would never be asked for by a formal authority figure, and it would not be offered unsolicited without the person offering it either being exceptionally careful, or doing it in spite of the consequences. Arabic_2F indicated that she always preferred the kind of openness she had observed since coming to the U.S., even when she was a child growing up in Morocco. She appreciated the ability in U.S. culture to give thoughtful feedback to her professors and have them welcome it, and she ascribed it to the emphasis placed in U.S. education and culture on encouraging critical thinking and analysis.

The primary difficulty that Arabic_2F cited in giving feedback in Moroccan/Arab cultures, particularly from one peer to another, is the relatively high likelihood of it being misinterpreted and/or misunderstood. She indicated that she believes this is due to what she sees as the strong tendency among Arab professionals to project and protect a belief and image of themselves as superior, and not needing to improve. She used the words “arrogant” and “stubborn” to describe this attitude, and it reminded me a bit of the tendency toward competition between peers that both Arabic_2F and Arabic_1M made reference to:

Culturally speaking and to be very honest with you... Sometimes when you talk to someone, especially at work, sometimes the thing you just want to show that you are better than them. So, culturally speaking, when you give advice to someone, they may not understand you.

This quote reminded me of what Arabic_1M said about how he enjoyed the competitive aspect of peer-group work in school in Lebanon. While certainly not definitive proof of anything, it is an interesting potential commonality that both comments support. For Arabic_2F, in particular, she indicated a much stronger affinity, dating back to even before she came to the U.S., for openness in communication and eschewing the personal insecurity and competitiveness that she sees as the underlying cause of less open communication practices in Moroccan/Arab cultures:

And I think the competitive part comes from lack of confidence. Because if you have enough confidence in yourself, you never feel threatened. And if someone gives you advice, you better take it. Like for me, I'm from Morocco originally, but when it comes to advice I don't feel like you make me inferior when you're telling me advice.

She indicated more than once during the interview that she had always felt like she wanted to speak up, question things, and even politely challenge authority during her childhood in Morocco, but that she was perhaps more educated and worldly, and therefore perhaps more open overall, than the average person from there and that she believes that did make a big difference in her case.

Arabic group summary. Both participants described leadership in Arab cultures as being a predominantly top-down phenomenon, taking place mostly when a formal authority figure gives orders to a (group of) subordinate(s). Both also portrayed authority in Arab cultures as associated with power, oftentimes in the form of one's education level. Arabic_1M described authority as a neutral construct in Levantine/Arab culture,

being neither inherently positive nor negative, whereas Arabic_2F portrayed it as more inherently negative based on her experience of Moroccan/Arab culture.

Teamwork was the topic that generated the most interesting congruence of opinion among the two Arabic participants. Both stated that teamwork is not unheard of in Arab cultures, but that it is also not a typical educational focus and is not something that would perhaps come naturally to many Arab people, depending on their level of education and international exposure. Most interesting for this study was the consistent characterization by both participants of teamwork as something that would be potentially more likely to create competition between team members, rather than collaboration. Both participants also identified barriers to open communication in Arab cultures. Arabic_1M pointed to gender- and education-based impediments, and Arabic_2F described a broader kind of challenge in which open communication and feedback between peers would be made difficult by people's need for ego-maintenance and not wanting to appear to be wrong or "less than" in anyone's eyes.

The Chinese Group

The STARTALK Chinese language teacher group was comprised of five female Chinese language teachers, only three of whom agreed to participate in this study. All three of them reported being in the 31-40 years range in terms of age. Chinese_1F did not report any educational achievement either for her time in China or the U.S., while Chinese_2F reported completing a Bachelor of Science degree in China and no degrees in the U.S., and Chinese_3F reported receiving an MA degree from both China and the U.S. universities. Chinese_1F and Chinese_3F both reported having been in the U.S. for about

3 years at the time of the study, and Chinese_2F reported that she had resided in the U.S. for 18 years at that time.

Leadership. Chinese_1F characterized the most common practice of leadership in Chinese culture as being a boss or formal authority figure; leaders' role is to be directive and not take public responsibility for any mistakes made, whether by subordinates or the leaders themselves. She also indicated multiple times that she sees leaders in Chinese culture as having and exercising more "power" than similar formal authority figures in U.S. culture. At one point, she explained her perspective simply: "The leader is the leader." When I followed up on this, it became clear that she meant that the leader is set apart from subordinates, both in stature and in terms of separation of responsibilities. She contrasted this with her views of U.S. culture in which she had seen leaders tending more to join side-by-side with their subordinates in working on tasks and even in seeming to want to be seen as just another member of the team. One way she summed this up was by saying that she thinks many Chinese leaders see their formal authority as a rationale for doing less work than subordinates, whereas many U.S. leaders seem to see it as a rationale for doing more.

Chinese_2F responded to my first question about leadership by making an interesting contrast; she believed that the enactment, or practice, of leadership, which she defined as managing people and directing their work, is quite similar in Chinese and U.S. cultures. What she sees as very different between the two cultures are the conceptualization of what being a leader looks like, and that she sees less pathways to becoming a leader, in terms of both quantity and quality, in Chinese culture in comparison to U.S. culture. She explained that, at least among her generation and that of

her parents, the understanding in China is that certain people are basically preordained for positions of formal authority, based on social and economic status factors, and that educational and training pathways to leadership positions for people outside privileged social categories are practically non-existent. She did acknowledge that this is likely changing and that she has the impression that younger generations in China do see educational attainment as a viable way to attain positions of influence and formal authority.

Chinese_3F gave a very clear response to the question about her definition of leadership, saying that it was to “lead a team to achieve the same goal, to encourage the team members, and to motivate them, and know them very well.” She provided this definition in the context of her own past professional experience as a designated formal authority figure in a Chinese organization. Similar to the other two Chinese participants, she described leadership practices and perspectives in Chinese and U.S. cultures as being largely similar, with the caveat that the “boss” is always treated differently and set apart by the formal authority that the boss wields relative to other colleagues in the organization. Chinese 3F, like Chinese_1F, discussed her understanding of the prevalent U.S. approach to leadership where she sees the “boss” is more of a first among equals, and at times even the target of pressure from subordinates in a give-and-take that she said does not tend to take place in Chinese working culture.

Given that there were almost no extensive or really insightful quotes from these participants on the topic of leadership, I will simply provide my analysis of the things they did say. Chinese_1F described her personal view of leadership in terms of balance, citing the “yin and yang” that she views as necessary for both embodying strength, but

always, from a place of engaging with one's followers and really knowing and understanding their best capabilities and their areas for needed growth. She indicated that the younger generation in China nowadays may even expect their leaders to strike this balance very well, whereas the older generation would not necessarily have this expectation. She attributed this difference to two main things: the 1980 implementation of the "one child" policy in China, and the on-average higher education level of younger Chinese people, which she thought would contribute to them expecting both high technical qualifications and excellent interpersonal skills from their leaders. By contrast, she suggested that the older generations in China might only expect, at best, the high technical qualifications.

Chinese_1F also noted that, in the U.S., the rules as stated seem to adhere more closely to the rules in fact. In her opinion, this may contribute to Chinese people perceiving U.S. workers as being very rule-bound, following policies to the letter rather than interpreting them in spirit. I interpreted this as a key difference between what Hall (1976) called a very "low-context" U.S. culture and the relatively much more "high-context" Chinese culture.

Chinese_2F described real leadership, in her view, as getting a group of people to understand and agree with your opinion on what to do and how to do it. She basically said that noticing whether or not people act on your advice, suggestions, or opinions is the best way to tell if you are actually a leader, with or without formal authority, in both Chinese and U.S. cultures. She did point to the difference she sees in the demeanor that leaders in the U.S. tend to have as opposed to what she observed in China. To her, many formal authority figures in the U.S. try to be perceived as friendly and respectful toward

their subordinates, even “easygoing,” to use her word. She further noted that this would be unusual in Chinese culture, where she indicated that approachability and being personable are not emphasized, or even expected, qualities in the professional sphere.

Chinese_2F also pointed to the higher level of outright corruption –often with impunity- that she perceived in Chinese politics and industry, and implied that this is something that she thinks many formal authority figures in Chinese culture expect to be able to engage in, which she views as incongruent with the mandate of real leadership. Ultimately, she equated leadership in Chinese culture to a byproduct of having a position of formal authority and being able to just be directive rather than having to make suggestions and convince people to do things. The latter is what she perceives to be more the norm in U.S. culture, even when one does have formal authority. The example she gave for this was the difference she sees, even in parent-child interactions in the U.S. and Chinese cultures. She indicated that U.S. parents seem to act more as advisors to their children, whereas Chinese parents tend to just give their children imperatives to which they expect unquestioning compliance.

Chinese_3F provided the lone noteworthy quote on the topic of leadership in the U.S.:

In America I feel like the employee is kind of the equal to the boss. So, I'm a teacher. So I observe the – my American teacher – how they work with the principal. Sometimes they give the principal a lot of pressure: “Oh, you cannot do this! It's so unfair for us!” This is not going to happen, in my experience, in China. You cannot say that, even [if] you really think it's unfair as an employee, but...you...cannot [be] so direct like this.

A logical offshoot of this point is that, according to Chinese_3F, there tends to be less subordinate-to-leader dialogue in Chinese professional practice, because it is understood

that, in the end, it is the boss's perspective and decision that matters most, and it could be viewed as inherently disrespectful to express disagreement to one's boss.

Authority. On the topic of authority, Chinese_1F did not have a lot to say, beyond linking it to some of her observations on the technical expertise and positional strength that links leadership and power. She did indicate that, for her, authority is highly variable depending on the context in which it is invoked. The example she gave was of a university context wherein the faculty member who had the most prestigious research record would be the recognized expert on a given topic and, therefore, would have the authority to persuade or influence students and colleagues whose experience and knowledge was not as great.

Chinese_2F reiterated much of what we discussed about leadership in her responses about the nature of authority in U.S. and Chinese cultures. She essentially tied authority in Chinese culture to structures and positions that are highly stable and centralized. Whoever occupies a given position, or status, such as that afforded by greater age or social station, automatically wields any attendant authority. In the U.S., she believes, there are also these types of positions, but even in a certain position of formal authority, she still sees the dynamic as being one where any authority one wields is ultimately given, or not, by followers and subordinates.

Chinese_3F described authority in similar terms to those provided by the other two Chinese participants, but she emphasized that authority does not have to be solely position-bound in Chinese culture, but, instead, can derive from less formal sources such as greater expertise, experience, or age. She further explained, very similarly to Chinese_1F, that the latter kind of authority actually seems to carry more weight with the

younger, generally more educated generations in China. Otherwise, she described authority as being synonymous with being “powerful,” and said that it means that one does not have to listen to the opinions of others, or that they may listen without what they hear influencing their actions.

The subordinate-to-leader relationship that Chinese_3F described was one where subordinates bear a lot of responsibility for demonstrating unwavering respect for formal authority figures. She portrayed this as the most important factor in the follower-leader dynamic. In practical terms, this means not challenging authority unless prepared to accept the negative consequences, and putting significant effort and/or money into giving gifts to one’s boss(es) as a way of showing how important one views them to be. In this way, it seems that the norm in Chinese professional culture is for the follower to bear the bulk of the responsibility for creating and maintaining a positive relationship with their leader(s). Chinese_3F observed that she sees this dynamic as the inverse of the norm in U.S. culture, where she sees leaders as being frequently more concerned with the views and needs of their subordinates than they seem to be with their own.

Teamwork. With respect to teamwork in Chinese culture, common observations across the three Chinese participants included the similar mindset about teamwork in both U.S. and Chinese cultures, with the caveat that larger population numbers in Chinese society make totally inclusive practices, where all organization members’ voices or opinions are solicited, much less feasible than in the U.S. This matter of numbers and logistics dictating people’s mindset and approach is an interesting point and a noteworthy constraint on the way (trans)cultural researchers should interpret teamwork and group interactions in China.

Of even deeper interest, however, was the common ground among all three participants in their descriptions of Chinese working team members' perceptions of each other and their potential motivations. Compared with U.S. work culture, there is evidence in all three participants' statement for a more stilted communicative/conversational dynamic between co-workers in China, where there is far less small talk between colleagues, even at lunch or break times. Some of this difference seemed attributable to a kind of interpersonal wariness, or even mistrust, that I found reflected in all three participants' comments on this topic. As the quotes below reflect, the participants in this study portray teamwork in Chinese culture as fraught with mismanagement of disagreement and mistrust in genuine sharing of ideas. At a minimum, I was left with the distinct impression that teamwork scenarios in Chinese culture might actually tend to diminish peer-to-peer communication as opposed to enhancing it, particularly when all or most group members are not of the same mind. The quotes in Table 4.5 further illustrate the points above.

Table 4.5: Chinese Group Teamwork Quote Matrix

Chinese_1F	Chinese_2F	Chinese_3F
If two different idea conflict, so we have to make decision, right? Just last long and this depends on who can stay longer. ...Then I'm tired. I say okay, you do what you want to do. I go.	Okay, do it your way and let reality teach you that you are wrong	If you share too much, if you share all your impressive inside thoughts, then everyone would get it and then they'd say, 'Okay,' and then they'd go do some under-the-table behavior

In the quotes in Table 4.5, and in their comments in general, Chinese_1F and Chinese_2F explicitly address what I understood to be a tendency in Chinese working

culture to not even attempt to engage in constructive conflict with a peer. Chinese_3F took it even farther, suggesting that mutual mistrust may also be a byproduct of what she characterized as a highly competitive Chinese professional culture.

Communication. Chinese_1F portrayed follower-leader communication in Chinese culture as being more complex and nuanced than in U.S. culture, due to the far greater power imbalance she perceives in China between those with formal positional authority and those without. She also indicated that peer-to-peer communication tends to not be fully genuine unless it is conducted in private and between two or more people who have mutual trust. The rationale she gave for this is that, when there is an audience, as in a workplace setting (i.e. a meeting), people will be so concerned with not losing face, or causing anyone else to do so, that communication will be inhibited. In fact, this issue of not wanting to lose face, or to cause the loss of it for another, is responsible, in Chinese_1F's opinion, for the tendency for people who disagree with each other to simply avoid communication, or even social contact. She even described a greater tendency in Chinese culture, when compared with U.S. culture, to use silence or non-responsiveness as a way to indicate displeasure or disagreement.

Somewhat unsurprisingly, given the things she had to say about leadership and authority, particularly formal authority, Chinese_2F said that subordinates in Chinese culture would be unlikely to openly disagree with a leader's opinion. Instead, she said they would likely express faint agreement to the leader's face, and then possibly go ahead and do something different without saying anything about it. This makes sense in light of what she said about the way to gauge whether or not you are a leader, i.e., the extent of your ability to persuade others to agree with you. Openly disagreeing, even politely, with

a leader in that context could be understood as a way of telling that person that you do not see them as a leader. This principle has an interesting extension into the area of communication between peers in Chinese professional culture.

When I asked her about the differences in managing peer-to-peer disagreement in U.S. and Chinese cultures, in fact, Chinese_2F actually gave me an object lesson in her response. I posited that in U.S. culture, a colleague who disagrees with a peer co-worker might very simply and directly say something like, “No, I don’t agree with that,” before explaining his or her position. At this point, Chinese_2F directly disagreed with me, explaining that she saw this kind of response as being more common in Chinese culture than in the U.S., explaining that her experience had been that people in U.S. culture tend to be more polite, and would instead disagree by saying something like, “Okay, but what about this other way of looking at it?” Because of what she perceived as a more direct and potentially edgy way of communicating between Chinese peers, Chinese_2F said that she believes that disagreements in Chinese culture would tend to escalate and become more unpleasant more quickly in a Chinese workplace than in the U.S., even if much of the disagreement would remain below the surface.

Perhaps the most telling thing that Chinese_3F said about communicative tendencies in Chinese culture was that being overly talkative or sociable can make one seem like a “show-off.” She described the predominant model for a Chinese professional as maintaining balance but, overall, projecting a persona that is “humble and low-key.” An attendant element of this tendency can be, Chinese_3F noted, an abundance of caution in communications with co-workers, particularly of an oral kind, unless co-workers are well trusted, or even close friends. This was where she noted a stark contrast,

in her experience with U.S. workplace norms; she said that her American colleagues are “always very happy to share” even personal details, which leads her to believe that the bar for being considered trustworthy in U.S. culture must be lower than in China.

Chinese_3F also alluded to what she perceives as a hesitance on the part of Chinese people to potentially make a mistake in their interpretation of other people’s true thoughts or feelings; consequently, they only share their own thoughts and feelings in part and very carefully. This made me wonder if what she was describing here is also the manifestation of a fundamental difference between a more high-context culture (Chinese) and the much more low-context U.S. cultural norms. It also served to highlight, again, the tendency toward a kind of mild mistrust and circumspection that Chinese_3F portrayed as prevalent in peer-to-peer interactions in Chinese working culture.

Challenges. The main challenge that Chinese_1F could identify for a professional coming to the U.S. from Chinese culture was language-based. Mainly, she felt that attaining adequate proficiency, vocabulary, and accuracy in English would be the one thing that could not be taken for granted in making the transition between cultures.

Chinese_2F also saw the potential language barrier as the greatest challenge that a Chinese professional would have to overcome to be effective in the U.S. workplace. She felt this might be particularly true for Chinese people because she thought they would be very reluctant to risk looking “bad” in front of their colleagues by not demonstrating a strong enough command of English language structures and vocabulary. As such, she thought a Chinese professional might tend to be less active in workplace communications, particularly in group meetings, which could inhibit their actual and perceived effectiveness. This turned out to be partly prophetic, as the average total words

contribution of the Chinese participants in the mixed culture meetings was, by far, the lowest among all four groups.

The primary things that Chinese_3F pointed to as challenges for her in adapting to U.S. working culture also were language-related. However, she also included cultural aspects of humor in the U.S. workplace as a possible communication problem for Chinese individuals working in the U.S.:

I'm the only Chinese teacher and most of them are American teachers. So they're real nice, but they'll tell a joke and it isn't really related to the child who – I don't know the knowledge. I don't know the background. I don't know the stuff. I just don't know how to communicate with them.

While understanding jokes or humor across cultural lines can certainly be a language proficiency challenge, Chinese_3F clearly indicated that, at least for her, there is more to communication problems than language, per se. She actually extrapolated her struggles to follow in-group humor to a much larger and more complex communication gap.

Chinese group summary. All three Chinese participants expressed, in one way or another, the sentiment that “the leader is the leader,” highlighting an attachment to the idea that real leadership is tied to a position of formal authority. The social distance between leaders and followers, in the Chinese context, that this thinking implies is where participants perceived the largest gap between Chinese and U.S. cultures, despite the fact that they were also in agreement that the concept of what leadership is does not differ significantly between Chinese and U.S. working cultures. Rather, it is in the way that leadership is exercised that the most transcultural difference can be found.

Two of the three Chinese participants also discussed the sheer logistical challenge that Chinese organizations face in terms of a much larger population of workers and the difficulty in generating consensus via group dialogue that this presents relative to U.S.

organizations. So, even if Chinese professionals believe in creating fully inclusive dialogue as a best practice, they may not come to the U.S. with much experience with doing this. All three Chinese participants also indicated that leadership boils down to whether or not others listen to you and act on your opinions and directives, assuming you hold the positional power that would allow you to offer freely in the first place.

All three participants described authority in Chinese culture as being principally a product of positional power, but also that it can be based on superiority in terms of age, experience, or knowledge. They also agreed that Chinese culture does not encourage people to openly challenge authority. When authority is resisted, it will most often be done via face value agreement followed by some form of passive resistance, i.e. agreeing with an authority figure to their face but doing something different, preferably without their knowledge, later.

With respect to teamwork in Chinese culture, common observations included claims from all three participants that there were similar mindsets about, and approaches to, teamwork in both U.S. and Chinese cultures, with the caveat that larger numbers in Chinese society make totally inclusive practices, where every member has the opportunity to speak up and be heard, much less feasible than in the U.S. Beyond the pragmatic issues, however, all three participants painted a clear picture of teamwork being problematic in Chinese culture because of how people tend to react to disagreement, preferring to avoid prolonged discussion and negotiation in favor of simply keeping one's own counsel and letting things play out as they will. Many of these same factors and issues were reiterated in all three participants' descriptions of communicative tendencies in Chinese professional culture.

The final, and perhaps most significant, thing that all three participants said about Chinese culture is that it is viewed and enacted quite differently by different generations. Everything they told me in their interviews they ascribed to their generation (about 35 years old and up), and perhaps the preceding one or two generations. The younger generations of Chinese people, they suggested, would hold different views on many of the topics explored in this study. This was also mentioned with some frequency by the Arabic and Persian participants, and is an important reminder that culture, in the context of nations and societies, cannot be well described in monolithic terms.

The Dari Group

The Dari STARTALK teacher group was the largest of all four in the program, with six participants, five of whom agreed to participate in this study. I was only able to use the data for four of them, however, as one of them, Dari_1M, did not really answer the questions I asked in the individual interviews and, more importantly, did not speak English during more than 90% of his sparse participation in the same and mixed culture group decision-making sessions. Based on these factors, I was not able to make a cogent analysis of his opinions on leadership, authority, teamwork, or communication in Afghan and U.S. cultures, nor was I able to derive usable discourse data from his participation in the group sessions.

The other four study participants were comprised of three females and one male, spanning the 21-30 and 31-40 years old age groups. All have earned at least a bachelor's degree, either in Afghanistan or in the U.S., and, except for Dari_3F, who was born in the U.S., all lived in Afghanistan from early childhood until sometime after completing their

undergraduate studies. Their time spent working and/or studying in the U.S. at the time of the STARTALK program was between seven months (Dari_5M) and 16 years (Dari_4F).

Leadership. All four Dari teacher participants used variations on terms such as “power,” “force,” “strength,” and “control” to describe leadership in the Afghan cultural context. They all contrasted this way of thinking about leadership with what they perceived to be the U.S. leadership norm of putting oneself more on the same level as subordinates, sharing the work with them, taking any opportunity to train and mentor, and being willing to accept the consequences of mistakes. Positional power was highlighted repeatedly as the only way to be seen as a leader and have broader influence on a group in Afghan culture. This positional-power theme can be clearly seen in the responses included in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Dari Group Leadership Quote Matrix

Dari 2F	Dari 3F	Dari 4F	Dari 5M
Leadership in Afghanistan goes just as a power... and it's not to guide, just force and power.... But here (in the U.S.) a leader is a guy, who is a trainer, or a friend. ... My definition is that a leader is supposed to be good guys, and good friends	Strength and courage. I feel with Afghans they see it as more of a sense of pride. In order to lead, it shows that you're more dignified. ... For them, it's somebody who can take control and lead	In Afghan culture, leadership is probably different from here because they're kind of selfish and powerful. They are putting themselves at a high level and that's the most important. ... You would have to show your power if you want to succeed in everything	...most of our leaders, they are uneducated, they don't know what leadership means. They don't have the strategies, they don't know the vision, the objective, how to reach your goal, how to accomplish it. ... They are just sticking with an immediate decision, whatever is good for their benefit, whatever is

			good for their advantage, they're taking that
...to be a leader without force or something, yes. It's possible in the United States because everybody has the same rights	I feel like a leader regardless of their title is a teacher. They're constantly teaching and they're constantly learning and they're constantly giving without expecting to receive. Somebody who doesn't have that arrogant mindset and somebody who see even though they're in a position of power, they see the people below them as equals	In Afghanistan, when you see the act, the walking, the way he or she pretend, you will know that's the boss. But here (in the U.S.), you have to know who the boss is. ... Here, it's completely different. They are friendly, they are on same level and they are not strict	Being a good leader, you should work hand in hand with your employees. If he can't do it, you should tell him good instructions, tell him good information, or at least give him incentives on how to accomplish it. That's why this is the best thing that I learned from them (U.S. Drug Enforcement Agents he worked with in Afghanistan), that they are also involved in any activities that they are doing. ... That's what I would call good leadership. They're not pressuring the employees, they're also taking risks and load on themselves, they can also take pressure

It's a little bit impossible to talk with somebody if you are a leader. You have to be a leader. If you are in a position... If you say something, is not leading, it's order	I feel like a leader is opinionated and they will speak right no matter what... a leader isn't afraid to be wrong and a leader shows respect	<i>(There is not a third relevant quote for Dari_4F)</i>	That's why in my culture, you said define leadership by your culture, so it's totally meaningless, it's totally pointless. There is no good use of leadership in my country, they are all corrupted. The main reason is the lack of knowledge, the lack of education
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What is evident from the quotes in Table 4.6 is what these participants see as the consistently limited conception of leadership in Afghan culture: Leadership is associated almost exclusively with being more powerful than one's followers, being selfish and being treated as infallible, and having control, both conceptually and materially, over everything in a given context. The stark contrast between these participants' perceptions of leadership in Afghanistan and what they perceive in the U.S. is based largely on a question of the leader's tone and approach in communicating with subordinates. For all four participants, their stated personal definitions of leadership align much more closely with what they see as operational in U.S. culture: leader as mentor, guide, and overall benevolent presence who focuses on helping followers feel supported enough to be able to pursue and achieve their goals.

Authority. It was quite difficult to disentangle definitions of authority from those of leadership with the Dari teacher participants in this study. For all of them, the notion of

authority tied back to constructs such as a formalized position (boss), elder status, gender (patriarchal culture), or religion (interpretations of Islam in Afghan culture). All four participants also indicated that they felt that it would be impossible to exercise any kind of meaningful influence or leadership in Afghan culture without at least one of these formalized kinds of authority. With the exception of Dari_3F, they all also stated that they did believe that one could lead/influence others without formal authority in U.S. culture, but they did not have ready examples of what this would look like based on their experiences here. Dari_3F, for her part, had a dim view of authority in both Afghan and U.S. cultures, highlighting what she sees as a frequently hypocritical approach to authority in the U.S., where those vested with enforcing rules and laws, i.e. police or politicians, can get away with behavior and actions that others cannot.

Table 4.7: Dari Group Authority Quote Matrix

Dari_2F	Dari_3F	Dari_4F	Dari_5M
...based on the culture that I come from, when I'm talking someone who is older than me and they have a higher position than me and they made a mistake I cannot because I was raised in this culture. I cannot say truly, or just straight. I would say something slowly, smoothly	...since they're an authority figure, they have that level of respect so you have to say that they're right and you're wrong all the time. That's just how it is	on the Afghan side, you have to have authority to be a leader	Everyone who has power and authority, those positions have been purchased

As the quotes in Table 4.7 make evident, authority is tightly bound to leadership in the Afghan cultural context. One is not considered a leader, and therefore cannot expect to

exercise any influence over others, unless one has position, elder status, or some other leveraging factor.

Furthermore, authority was described as unimpeachable and beyond reproach, meaning that followers/subordinates cannot bring concerns, complaints, or even critiques to their leaders without risking serious personal repercussions. Add to that, the statement by Dari_5M about rampant corruption among Afghan formal authority structures, and a problematic picture is painted of challenges Afghans might face in transitioning to the U.S. context, where they might be allowed, or even expected, to be analytical or critical of power structures around and above them.

Teamwork. The endorsement of teamwork that all four Dari teacher participants offered was lukewarm, at best, based on the prevalence and nature of genuine teamwork in Afghan culture. While two participants, Dari_4F and Dari_5M, did indicate that teamwork may be more commonplace among the younger generations in Afghanistan, the overall picture is clouded by a lack of concrete examples of teamwork in Afghan culture and/or qualifiers about situations in which teamwork would be difficult or impossible in Afghan culture. See the selected quotations from the four participants' interview data in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Dari Group Teamwork Quote Matrix

Dari_2F	Dari_3F	Dari_4F	Dari_5M
If the goal is to make a lesson plan they will do that. If this goal affects one of the people of this group, they will take a step back	Afghans work really well with people. They are good at when they're given a task, they do it because it's like a self-worth	Actually, I haven't seen teamwork at all in Afghanistan... Just the new generation, I guess	The new generation, they have teamwork. The others, no. They are doing whatever they want. From their perspective, whatever they're thinking, that's good
<i>(No 2nd quote from</i>	<i>(No 2nd quote from</i>	If you want to do it,	...in our normal

<i>Dari_2F)</i>	<i>Dari_3F)</i>	do it, none of my business. We don't have a leader. Nobody told us when we have to finish, why should I suffer? I have enough time in one week, I will do it	daily operations working in Afghanistan. If you go by the old manual, everything is working alone, individually, it's not teamwork
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While *Dari_3F* does offer the lone clear indication of an affinity for teamwork in Afghan culture, it was interestingly still tied to a sense of “self-worth” more than the intention of contributing to the collective good. This concern with self-preservation is reflected in the other participants’ comments, as well. *Dari_2F*’s observation that teamwork might become problematic if the group’s stated objective is deemed potentially negative for one or more team members combines interestingly with the statements from *Dari_4F* and *Dari_5M* about a tendency toward self-protectiveness among Afghans who are tasked with working in a team. The overall impression these three statements create is one of individual concerns consistently overriding any collective objectives.

Communication. Along similar lines to the perspectives and attendant challenges associated with teamwork described in the previous section, all four participants described communication in Afghan culture as often constrained and sometimes problematic. The biggest obstacle to open, direct communication that participants pointed to was the overarching need in Afghan social circles for every individual to be perceived as being appropriately respectful of the others. Indeed, when I asked one participant if she thought being respectful is valued over being honest in Afghan culture, she affirmed this claim without hesitation. This led me to wonder if it might be nearly impossible for some Afghans working in a less constrained U.S. environment to speak up clearly and directly

on workplace issues, even those that might be impacting them in extreme ways. This thought seems to be supported by the statements of all four Dari teacher participants presented in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Dari Group Communication Quote Matrix

Dari_2F	Dari_3F	Dari_4F	Dari_5F
With Afghan culture, if you're been in Afghanistan, you see your leader, or your – he's working above you and he's doing something wrong, as a respect you have to close your mouth. If it's something he's doing wrong, he's the responsible one for this. Not you	There's that level of respect that even – well, they're very fake though. It's just like that. With Afghans, they'll be really nice in front of your face and they're all about hospitality	I guess because they are selfish and thinking that they know more, why would they need somebody else's advice on how they can do it? I know how I'm going to do it	Even if someone knows better than that, if you say, 'It's not good, you're not making good decisions,' they say, 'No, he doesn't know everything'
If you didn't, they won't share their ideas because they don't want to affect some person. How I told you they are – don't want to be disrespectful. The respect is the very first thing	<i>(No 2nd quote from Dari_3F)</i>	If you want to do it, do it, none of my business. We don't have a leader. Nobody told us when we have to finish, why should I suffer? I have enough time in one week, I will do it	<i>(No 2nd quote from Dari_5F)</i>

The most salient aspects of the quotes in Table 4.9 portray communication in Afghan culture as inhibited by the obligation to show respect to others, especially formal authorities, even if the respect shown is not genuine. Additionally, all four participants highlighted the tendency toward drawing a hard, clear line between what is one's own problem or responsibility versus what is the concern of fellow members of society, which

I read principally as watching out for one's own best interests ahead of the interests of others. Finally, the implication that there is an abiding sense of satisfaction with the knowledge or ideas that one already possesses, meaning that it is not seen as necessary or helpful to seek or heed the advice/input of others, paints a clear picture of a cultural milieu in which open, clear communication would be infrequent and highly stilted, at best, when and if it does occur. This dynamic is reflected in the discourse data for the Dari teacher participants, as we will explore in detail in the subsequent section on discourse data and descriptive statistics.

Challenges. All four Dari teacher participants agreed that the adjustment from Afghan working culture to that of the U.S. presents multiple challenges. Dari_2F, for instance, indicated that it takes as much as five years or more, in her experience, for Afghans coming from Afghanistan to adapt to the cultural and linguistic shift. She also highlighted the potentially higher incidence of psychological and emotional “injuries” that many Afghan, and other immigrants, must wrestle with in going through the adaptation process.

Dari_4F echoed these thoughts by stating that adjusting to a new culture “just takes time.” She cited her experiences in multiple cultures (Afghan, Kazak, Russian, and U.S.). Dari_5M also saw ample challenges, for himself and, he assumed, for others, in not just the overall cultural shift, but also in the sundry philosophical and procedural differences both in large scale domains such as leadership and teamwork, and in the day-to-day ways that working systems in the U.S. are devised and implemented in comparison with the norms in Afghanistan. Perhaps the most comprehensive quote on the matter came from Dari_3F: “The Afghans in Afghanistan are completely different

than the Afghans who were in Afghanistan and came here or were born here. They have a completely different mindset.” While she is the participant with, by far, the least direct personal experience with life in Afghanistan, having been born and raised primarily here in the U.S., this particular insight seems most appropriate coming from her, as she would be well positioned to understand both cultures, with perhaps a stronger sense of the U.S. side of things.

Dari group summary. All four Dari teacher participants were fairly uniform in their portrayal of leadership in the Afghan cultural context. Words such as “power,” “control,” “selfish,” “infallible,” along with characterizations of a very high power-distance dynamic, were used by all four to describe what they have experienced with Afghan leadership. By contrast, all four also indicated that their personal definitions of, and preferences for, leadership were more closely aligned with what they perceive in the U.S., where a leader can be a guide, mentor, and even a friendly supporter who works alongside their subordinates in service of the shared goal, reflective of a much lower power-distance effect.

With respect to authority, all four participants made it clear that it is inextricable from the formal positional power that accompanies formalized leadership, elder status, or some other leveraging factor. There was also a consensus that Afghans are not only expected to offer unfailing respect and deference to authority, but that it is actually potentially dangerous to engage with authority in any way that is not objectively respectful and deferential, e.g., bringing a concern or even a mild critique to a superior’s attention.

No participant offered any indication that it would be impossible or impractical for Afghans to work well together in a team, and two of the four even stated that they thought teamwork was becoming more common among younger generations. The four participants did, however, identify what they portrayed as potentially significant challenges that Afghans might face in a highly teamwork-oriented workplace. All four participants' comments spoke to an overriding concern among Afghans for autonomy and self-preservation, both of which they saw as potentially superseding one's ability to attend to and achieve collective goals or the common good in the professional sphere.

Similar to their views on teamwork, all four participants described open, direct, frequent communications as potentially problematic for Afghans working in the U.S. They pointed to the unrelenting Afghan cultural need to be seen as respectful in all communications, as well as a tendency to not listen, or fully attend, to communications from others due to what was described as a relatively high level of self-satisfaction with one's own knowledge and skills. Even communications from superiors, which would not be openly questioned or disputed, might run up against this tendency to not really engage with what one is told by another. Since most Afghans seem to know that this is the case, it seems as if interpersonal communication in the Afghan context could tend to be highly constrained and largely procedural in nature. This is perhaps the most interesting finding from the qualitative analysis of the Dari teacher participants' interview data, as it is clearly reflected in their discourse data, which I analyze and discuss in a subsequent section, as well.

The Persian Group

The three Persian teacher participants in this study comprised 75% of the total Persian teacher participation in the 2016 STARTALK program. All three were female and had attained a university degree or higher either in Iran or here in the U.S. All of them identified in either the 41-50 or 51-60 age groups at the time of the study, and all had spent more than a decade working and/or studying in both the Iranian and U.S. contexts. The Persian teacher group was one of the most homogenous of all four participant groups in the study, and this homogeneity informed my analysis and reporting of their responses in the individual interviews I conducted with them.

Leadership. As indicated by Table 4.10, the definitions and descriptions of leadership provided by all three Persian participants were quite clearly impacted by the sociopolitical situation in Iran stemming from the 1979 revolution and subsequent Islamic Republic. Indeed, all three Persian participants gave primarily political examples when talking about their understanding of leadership in the Persian cultural context, which is unsurprising given the demographic makeup of the three, having grown up in post-revolution Iran. They also talked about leadership as a generally centralized phenomenon, wherein those who are empowered to lead are granted that formalized authority by their position or via a connection to the Islamic government. All three also indicated that they personally prefer what they perceived to be the more distributed, democratic view of leadership and influence, at least in terms of potential, in U.S. culture. Finally, the predominant view espoused by all three Persian participants was that leaders, in either culture, should have some advantage, either in terms of experience, knowledge, or capability, over subordinates in order to capture and maintain their deference. I found

this to be suggestive of an interesting degree of alignment with more Western perspectives on leadership, wherein it can be exercised from positions of both formal, and more informal, authority.

Table 4.10: Persian Group Leadership Quote Matrix

Persian_1F	Persian_2F	Persian_3F
About their education, it's different from here, it's more teacher-centered classrooms. The teacher is the leader of the class, has more power. The students are the followers or listeners	In order to be a good leader, you have to be liberal. You cannot just sit there and say, "Okay, do this, do that," because if they don't see you as part of them, then the leadership doesn't work, I think.	I think of everything that has happened, all the freedom that has been taken from people because of the way of thinking. The leadership in that country, this is what comes to me
The leader should have some power, some strength, some advantage. Not physical, but being smart about something	I think in order to be a good leader, you have to understand who you are leading... and you have to understand their feelings and their pain... If they don't listen to you and they don't do it, then you're not a leader, or not the good leader	Definitely, I think so, yes. It depends on who you are, how you interact. It depends in that situation. You can rise up, but that's how people can move up

The quotes in Table 4.10 do reflect a preference for leaders to exhibit a humane orientation, an orientation that results in a two-way tradeoff for leaders and followers; if leaders want to be listened to, they first have to succeed in understanding and relating to subordinates, which presupposes a leader who actively “listens” to followers. While this appeared to be the approach that all three participants found preferable, all three Persian participants seemed to suggest that this approach is not the predominant style in Persian culture, where formalized authority is still quite strong and centralized, and where the functional responsibility to listen well, and act accordingly, lies principally with

followers more so than with leaders. Balancing this out, however, is the second quote from Persian_3F, which she gave in response to my question about whether she thought it was possible for someone to lead without formalized authority in Persian culture.

Although she qualified her statement by indicating that it would depend on the nature of both the individual and the situation, she did appear to see some potential for more flexible leader-follower interactions in Persian culture than might be perceived based on an outsider's view of what can look like very hierarchical political and societal structures in Iran.

Finally, it is also important to note what I perceived to be an uneasy relationship to leaders and their power in Persian culture, evidenced by Persian_3F's first quote above, referring back to the effects of the 1979 Revolution and the restrictions on individual freedoms that many have experienced in its aftermath. Given the well-documented instances of both passive and active resistance to those restrictions over the past couple of decades in Iran, it seems reasonable to conclude that there could be a genuine ambivalence on the part of Persian people toward fully accepting top-down leadership styles, particularly when individual beliefs and freedoms are impacted.

Authority. The relationship between authority and leadership, as portrayed by all three Persian participants, is perhaps the most overtly nuanced and complex of all four groups in this study. With the Arabic, Chinese, and Dari groups, authority and leadership were more interwoven, with authority most frequently defined as the formal, positional sort that nominal leaders would also possess. The Persian participants, however, painted a blurrier picture of authority in the Iranian context, with formalized authority being vested in government officials, though often with a distinctively negative connotation, and in

elders, parents, and teachers. With these latter three, the authority is such that all three participants stated that it would be uncommon and upsetting to challenge, or otherwise openly disagree with that person. All of this suggests there is a strong sense in Persian culture of the need for positive authority figures, against whom one would not wish to have negative feelings, accompanied by an apparently equally powerful suspicion of, and readiness to resist, authority, particularly governmental authority, that is controlling and overly hierarchical in nature.

Table 4.11: Persian Group Authority Quote Matrix

Persian_1F	Persian_2F	Persian_3F
Usually, in Iranian culture, the older people are the leaders. Younger people try to copy or have the older people as a role model, like their grandparents. They always respect older people, the teachers, the grandparents, the parents	But that was authority, they had no choice and that was mandatory. Sometimes, in that culture, you need that, otherwise it's going to take a long time to re-train people of different ideas	I think it's a little bit different in Iranian culture. You always respect everyone blindly, your father, your mother, your boss, because that's how it should be
Even now, you don't see that much respect in Iran because like here, they are so involved in technology and being in the illusional world of the internet. Things have changed back there, too	I think authority can be dictatorship... If you have authority, it doesn't mean that you're the leader. You might be a dictator and have authority to force people to do something	Even if my dad is wrong, I respect him so much that I cannot disagree with him on certain things. I let it go, even to this day. It's something that everyone does
Sometimes, in the matter of respecting, yes, but I don't think so. Sometimes, somebody is older and is educated but his knowledge is not up-to-date. Somebody who is younger and up-to-date, maybe is better to be a leader.	<i>(There was no third relevant quote on authority from this participant)</i>	I'll give you an example, when my daughter was in high school, if there was something really wrong with the teacher that was teaching or some issue, I would never, ever think of mentioning that or emailing the teacher because I have so respect for that teacher that I

		wouldn't dare even think of saying anything. Here, it's different
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Table 4.11 presents quotations on authority from each Persian participant, and there is quite a lot in them to unpack. First, the drive to respect elders and notionally positive formal authority figures is clear. It is complicated somewhat, however, by the third quote from Persian_1F and the second quote from Persian_2F, both of whom also strongly suggest that even formalized authority is not seen as absolute in Persian culture. This thinking is blended with a pragmatism that was not as evident in the other three groups. This pragmatic turn -evidenced by Persian_2F's first quote- in which she acknowledges, and even seems to advocate for, the need for top-down, formalized authority in order to effectuate change in Persian society and culture. Finally, there is the admission, by Persian_1F, that the Iranian culture she and the other two participants grew up in is changing and that younger generations will almost certainly have different perceptions and attitudes with respect to leadership, authority, teamwork, and communication.

Teamwork. In discussing teamwork with all three Persian participants, it quickly became clear that the notion and feasibility of teamwork in Iranian culture was not all that different than the teamwork experiences they had had in U.S. culture. In essence, they suggested that teamwork is certainly possible in Persian culture, and even fairly common in certain contexts, although there are constraints. Some of these constraints are imposed by religion, which makes cross-gender teamwork problematic. In addition to religious considerations, there is the sociopolitical structure under the Islamic Republic, which all three participants alluded to as helping to create a highly competitive

environment with rampant corruption. Competition and corruption, all three seemed to suggest, may lead more people to think first and foremost of their own welfare and success, more than that of the team or organization. Sample quotes on teamwork are presented in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12: Persian Group Teamwork Quote Matrix

Persian_1F	Persian_2F	Persian_3F
Here, they give them more freedom, they become more creative. I think in that aspect, I think here is much better	I think it is. I think maybe here you are more open-minded because I don't want to say you have more freedom, but it's just the way people think differently. The system is set up differently. Maybe it's more acceptable to work as a team	I think teamwork is one of the shortcomings in Iranian cultures... Everyone wants to do everything by themselves. They think they want to take over everything
Yeah, you can talk to each other and see which one has the stronger ability in what section of the work	Over there, you don't have that surface or under, it's the same. You don't feel that you are in control, you don't feel that you're part of this, you feel that you've been forced into doing this stuff, forced to cover your hair, force of not having that freedom with team play. It just limits you somehow that it's different than here	I feel like I have learned teamwork here watching American friends or culture, that in order to be successful, you have to do teamwork
I think office work is easier here. For example, go to downtown to do something about your property and it's more organized. In Iran, sometimes you can buy people if you give money or have connections, your work is going to be easier to be done	If you go to the government office, you cannot just go shake a man's hand because that's not acceptable, because he's a man. When you do the teamwork, you have to be comfortable in that relationship in order to talk to each other. I think that makes it harder... if you have a religion that separates men and women, maybe it's hard to be a team	<i>(There is no third quote on teamwork for this participant)</i>

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My analysis of the quotations in table 4.12, as well as of the question of teamwork in Persian culture overall, is that teamwork does take place in Persian culture, and that it takes place in a fashion not entirely dissimilar from the way teamwork unfolds in the U.S. In Persian culture, however, teamwork does seem to be constrained by religious, political, and educational factors that are specific to Iran, in particular in the aftermath of the 1979 Revolution.

As several of the statements above strongly suggest, some freedoms are constrained in Persian culture, from the way children are instructed to work in schools (what Persian_1F's first quote is referring to), to the restrictions imposed on women, (what they can and cannot wear, what they can and cannot do) and these constraints can create impediments to the kind of openness and trust that Western models of teamwork are founded upon. On the other hand, based on the quotes presented in Table 4.12 and other data that were collected, teamwork in Persian culture does not appear to be constrained by markedly rigid communication practices (note, for example, Persian_1F's second quote above).

There is corruption to be contended with, of course, and this corruption can create an imbalance of power that is not conducive to effective teamwork. Presumably corruption may be one of the reasons Persian_3F, in her first quote in Table 4.12, alludes to the relative weakness she sees in Iranian society with respect to the prevalence and success of teamwork.

Based on what is reported in Table 4.12, which is representative of the larger data set of Persian participants' interview responses about teamwork, it would appear as if

Persians will have, on average, an easier time adapting to U.S. teamwork models than participants in this study who had other cultural backgrounds. Indeed, as the discourse data I examine later in this chapter also suggests, Persian culture seems to reflect relatively little impact on how its members behave in monocultural versus multi-cultural groups. This is not to say that they would not find certain kinds of transcultural dynamics or interactions more challenging than others, as we will see in the next section. Rather, it is to say that the Persian participants, as a group and as individuals, displayed a lesser degree of discursive behavioral differences between their same culture and mixed culture group interactions relative to the Arabic, Chinese, and Dari participants and groups.

Communication. As was alluded to in the section on authority in Persian culture, communication is impacted by social norms regarding being perceived as kind, respectful, and not overly direct. All three Persian participants were quite clear about the need to avoid being perceived as rude in one's communications, and they indicated that they believe most Persians would not be inclined to trust, or believe, a communication that was overly direct or overt. As the sample quotes in Table 4.13 suggest, they clearly perceive the difference between the more high-context Persian communication style and the much more low-context directness of communication in U.S. culture.

Table 4.13: Persian Group Communication Quote Matrix

Persian_1F	Persian_2F	Persian_3F
...sometimes people are shy to say no to something. They don't want to do it but, "If I say no, it's disrespectful or they'll think I'm mean." Sometimes, they think that they should be obligated to respect that person if they	...the communication between the government and people lacks because right now, they are ruling us in a way that they force you. It's not like a freedom or difference	Compared to Iranian culture where you don't trust anyone. If you say something, I'm going to think of the negative part of it, and maybe it's changing for people who have been living here for a long time but definitely,

ask them to do something		you don't think as straightforward, you think around it
...think again and analyze what you want to say, if it's rude to say, or sometimes you keep it in your heart. "Maybe if I say that, the other person's going to be offended or I'll hurt their feelings." It's not as often as here	Then, because in our culture, you always say you have to be nice to people, but in the business world, you can be nice but at the same time, you have to be harsh. It's a balance between that and this and it makes it harder when you come from a culture where you weren't raised like that	Even if my dad is wrong, I respect him so much that I cannot disagree with him on certain things. I let it go, even to this day. It's something that everyone does
I think in American culture, people go straight to the point	<i>(There is no third quote on communication for this participant)</i>	What I think, here everything is very straightforward, what I learned from living here. That was new for me at the beginning and you realize, you get surprised so many times that what you say, you mean it

What comes through most strongly in the representative quotes in Table 4.13 is the potential impediment to clear communication, even in moments where it would be potentially necessary, or at least important, for resolving a problem (e.g. when two or more parties are not in agreement on something in a professional or interpersonal context). All three Persian participants were quite clear that they would go out of their way to avoid seeming rude by disagreeing with a(n) (in)formal authority figure, or by contradicting someone's apparent wishes. They also alluded to the Persian tendency to communicate in a more roundabout way than is done in U.S. culture, and how there is sometimes an inherent mistrust -or even often plain disbelief- among Persians when it comes to taking what someone says at face value. Similarly, two of the participants described what they framed as a Persian tendency to ruminate on what to say or not say

in order to determine whether or not to express something, and/or the most kind, polite way to communicate something, if indeed it must be said. It is not hard to imagine how, in the comparatively low-context U.S. workplace setting, this communication style could encounter and possibly engender challenges.

Challenges. Given the apparent similarities between the ways in which leadership, as well as the concepts of authority and teamwork, are perceived in Persian and U.S. cultures, communication stands out as the largest potential challenge to Persians working in the U.S. While teamwork may not be as common in Persian culture, and while the sociopolitical landscape of Iran over the past four decades does potentially problematize the constructs of leadership and authority for those who have lived through it and ultimately left it behind, the most deeply seated difference between Persian and U.S. cultures seems to lie in the high-context communicative tendencies of Persians versus the very low-context tendencies in the U.S.

Persian group summary. All three Persian participants were fairly uniform in their descriptions of how they conceptualize leadership as an unequal but still bilateral interaction between subordinates and superiors. This emphasis on bilateral relationships operates whether inequality results from formal positions or life/professional experience and expertise. All three participants' comments reflected a clear receptiveness to leadership as they perceive it in U.S. culture, albeit with some equally clear ambivalence toward top-down, hierarchical models of individual and organizational leadership, vis-à-vis their experiences of political/religious leadership in Iran since the 1979 revolution.

Regarding authority, there was general agreement among the three participants that there is a strong tendency in Persian culture to identify for oneself an elder authority

figure, e.g., a family member or a teacher, to whom one would lend exceptional loyalty in return for guidance, understanding, and care. More formalized positional authority was also recognized and described in detail by all three participants as a prominent aspect of Iranian society, and, thereby, Persian culture, but it also seems to be viewed with a measure of skepticism and might not be obeyed as universally and willingly as it would be when embodied by the aforementioned familial figure or teacher.

Teamwork was not portrayed as something quite as infrequent or unusual in Persian culture, when compared with the comments about teamwork offered by Arabic, Chinese, and Dari participants, but it was also not described as a strong suit or an overriding tendency. Religious and societal boundaries between men and women are partly the cause for this, according to the three Persian participants, but an additional factor was also put forth, namely a tendency to mistrust others' motivations in a teamwork setting, due to non-negligible levels of corruption and individual team members' personal ambitions often not being subservient to team goals.

Despite the caveats inserted above, the major impediment to Persians adjusting to a U.S. pedagogical context would appear to be differences in prevalent communication styles. Communication in Persian culture is characterized by more high context tendencies, wherein people talk about things, especially sensitive topics, either with a good deal of roundaboutness, or perhaps avoiding explicit mention of them entirely. The driving purpose here is to avoid seeming rude to others, particularly those one respects, or must appear to respect, or to people who might feel offended and thereby create problems for the speaker.

Another factor influencing communication in Persian culture that was highlighted by participants was the tendency among Persians to not trust the face-value meaning of another's words. Instead, it was stated that Persians will tend to think "around" what is said in order to decipher what the real meaning might be. This understanding of how one's message is likely to be received would logically induce the speaker to be less direct in communicating with others, knowing that a direct message would not be interpreted as such in any event. Finally, two of the three Persian participants stated that it has taken them no small amount of time and effort to adjust, not always successfully, to the more direct, low context nature of usual communications in the U.S. This was described as perhaps the greatest challenge that Persians face in integrating themselves into U.S. workplace culture.

To What Extent Is There a Shared Understanding of Leadership, Authority, Teamwork, and Effective Workplace Communication Among Members of Culturally Diverse Working Teams?

The qualitative interview data for all four cultural groups (Arabic, Chinese, Dari, and Persian) in this study suggests that all of the groups have a significant amount in common with respect to their espoused cultural views on leadership, authority, teamwork, and communicative tendencies. With respect to leadership, most participants from all four groups described it as being heavily influenced by power-distance dynamics, which create a consistently strong and clear differentiation, at multiple levels, between leaders and followers/subordinates. There was also a somewhat surprisingly common factor for identifying leadership and authority that came from comments made by members of all four cultural groups: one is only able to be considered a leader/authority figure if others

actually listen to, and act on, what one says. In addition, participants from all groups suggested that getting others to listen and act is more likely when the leader/authority figure holds the kind of formal position power that would make not listening to them, or acting on their expressed wishes, untenable or unsafe. This is suggestive of a common cross-cultural understanding of leadership more as the enactment of formalized authority than the exercise of mere influence.

Furthermore, there was similar alignment between all four groups regarding the predominant view of leadership and (formal) authority as largely indistinguishable constructs in their culture(s) of origin. Here the Persian group was a slight outlier, with participants indicating that their personal beliefs on the matter differ from the post-revolution sociopolitical reality in Iran. The realities of Iranian society since 1979 are apparently very much in keeping with a strong power-distance dynamic, but all three participants espoused more flexible and nuanced personal values when it came to talking about the interaction between leadership and authority.

There was one notable difference among the four cultural groups when it came to their apparent views on what they perceive to be the prevalent perceptions and practices related to leadership and authority in the U.S. The Arabic, Dari, and Persian participants almost universally proclaimed greater individual and collective understanding of, and agreement with, what they perceived during their time in the U.S. to be the philosophy and practice of leadership, and the enactment of authority. The Chinese participants, however, were much more muted, and even seemed alienated at times by several elements of what they perceived to be the prevalent U.S. approaches to leadership and authoritative action in the workplace. While the other three groups indicated consistent

appreciation for the more flexible leadership and authority structures they had encountered in U.S. culture (i.e., bosses working side by side with employees more as firsts among equals than as true superiors among subordinates), the Chinese participants seemed to believe that while a boss acting as a first among equals may be a fine value to hold within oneself, in practice there should be more distance between not just bosses and employees, but even between co-workers in the workplace.

The strongest example of this came from Chinese participants' comments on how U.S.-born coworkers seem to be very open with each other and with their bosses about personal-life matters, particularly during shared break times. This aspect of U.S. professional culture seems singularly incompatible with Chinese thoughts and norms, especially when compared with the other three groups' responses to the same aspect of U.S. professional culture.

Regarding teamwork, participants from all four cultural groups gave conceptual descriptions from their culture(s) of origin that seemed well-aligned to what they talked about having seen and experienced here in the U.S. Based on this apparent alignment, it would seem as if the concept of teamwork does not differ in the extreme between U.S., Arab, Chinese, Afghan, and Persian cultures. In practice, however, all four cultural groups were largely in agreement that teamwork is problematic, either because of a lack of educational/societal emphasis on it (Arabic, Dari, and Persian), or due to sheer population size and attendant logistical challenges (Chinese). There was also transcultural agreement on the matter of whether teams that lacked a formal authority figure would be adequately functional, with the general sentiment being that although such teams might achieve their goal(s) occasionally, teams with a formal authority figure would be more

consistent and efficient since they would have someone capable of definitively resolving any disagreements or indecision within their team(s).

The topic of communication also generated a good amount of cross-cultural consensus. Participants from all four groups provided descriptions of communicative norms that reflected different kinds of constraints on communications, either resulting from social codes requiring high levels of demonstrated respect and non-critical discourse, particularly toward authority figures, or from constraints that tie back to religious and gender-driven rules. There was also a stated tendency, among the Chinese, Dari, and Persian groups' participants, to either hold back in communications with others, particularly peers, or to not trust (i.e. not take at face value) the things people say. For the Chinese participants, this appeared to stem from a lack of confidence in one's fellows to not pass someone else's good ideas off as their own, perhaps just a byproduct of a large population competing for limited spaces of prestige. For the Dari and Persian participants, it seemed to derive from a deeper cultural sensibility that almost nothing of significance should ever be said so directly as to be able to be understood in face value terms.

How Do Foreign-born Individuals Working in the U.S. Interact Discursively with One Another When Put into Mono- and Multi-cultural Teams that Lack a Designated Formal Authority?

As stated at various points previously, one of my primary goals in this study was to systematically examine the discourse that individuals and culturally diverse groups, and individual members of them, produced while interacting with one another in the performance of workplace group decision-making tasks. The group decision-making

meetings were conducted in the afternoon on the Tuesday and the Thursday of the second week of the STARTALK teacher development program. The Tuesday meetings were for monocultural groups (Arabic, Chinese, Dari, and Persian teachers all grouped according to the language they were teaching), and they were all given the same task: to select four of the seven ACTFL National Standards for Language Teaching and Learning as the “most important” and to prioritize, based on what they had learned in the STARTALK workshop, the selected four and give a brief rationale for their decisions. They were also instructed to conduct as much of the session as possible in English. The meetings were audio and video recorded, and professionally transcribed with timestamps.

The Thursday meetings were comprised of mixed culture groups. As stated above, mixed group #1 had two Dari participants, one Chinese, and one Persian participant. Mixed group #2 had one Arabic participant, one Dari, one Chinese, and one Persian. Mixed group #3 had one Arabic participant, two Dari, one Chinese, and one Persian. The fourth group was comprised of the four teacher development program participants who had elected not to participate in the study. The mixed culture groups were provided with the six STARTALK principles for effective language teaching and again instructed to select, from the six, the four most important principles for preparing an inexperienced teacher for success in the classroom, to prioritize the selected four, and to provide a brief rationale for their decisions, again based on what they had learned in the workshop to that point. The admonition to conduct as much of the session as possible in English was repeated here, although it was likely less necessary given that English would serve as the *de facto lingua franca* in mixed groups. As with the monocultural group meetings, the sessions were audio and video recorded, and professionally transcribed with timestamps.

In order to gain insight into the question of how foreign-born language teachers working in the U.S. interact discursively with each other in teams lacking a designated formal authority, I used a discourse analysis-inspired approach to study the monocultural and mixed culture group decision-making meetings. The purpose here was to get a general sense of the cultural and discursive dynamics at play, recognizing that these may be either mutually distinct and/or intertwined, and the extent to which they did, or did not, reflect the most salient themes that emerged from the individual qualitative interviews. I began by doing a turn-by-turn, total and average words spoken count in both the monocultural and mixed culture groups for each participant. This was supplemented by a calculation of total turns taken and average turn length, in seconds, for each participant in both the monocultural and mixed culture groups.

Additionally, the following discourse acts were tallied for each participant across both monocultural and mixed culture groups: backchannels (both free-standing and overlapping), overlaps (both cooperative and interruptive), and latches (again, both cooperative and interruptive). I also tallied the total number of these discourse acts for each participant in both types of group decision-making sessions, monocultural and mixed.

To clarify, a latch is a speech act where the words of the previous speaker are repeated verbatim, or almost verbatim, by the next speaker with little or no pause in between turns. An overlap is when one speaker starts talking before the previous speaker(s) have finished. I considered a cooperative overlap or latch to be one where the speaker was attempting to build upon or agree with/support the point of view or intent of the previous speaker(s). Similarly, an interruptive overlap or latch was when I perceived

the apparent intent as to disagree or simply not take up the point of view or intent expressed by the previous speaker(s). A backchannel is a word or short phrase, or even an onomatopoeic sound that acknowledges and/or affirms the substance of the previous or current speaker's turn. For instance, if one speaker says something like "I do not agree with what we read, you know what I mean?" and another speaker says "yeah," that would be a backchannel. If the other speaker started saying "yeah" before the initial speaker had finished their turn, it would be an overlapping backchannel.

Analyzing turns taken, words spoken, and average turn length provided a window into the enactment of individual and cultural group discourse as a reflection of the ideals participants espoused in their individual qualitative interviews about leadership and authority. Although they were placed in groups that had no designated formal authority, their discursive behavior in such a setting can be considered a reflection of their perceived willingness and ability (from their individual and group perspective) to take a leadership/authoritative role. Analyzing the frequency and type of backchannels, overlaps, and latches provided insight into the participants' enactment –or lack of enactment- of previously espoused ideals regarding teamwork and effective communication. A high frequency of backchannels, either overlapping or not, could reflect a more engaged style. Combined with frequency figures for either interruptive or cooperative overlaps and latches, a picture can begin to emerge of how individual and group participants may actually approach teamwork, and it certainly has the potential to provide insight into their preferred communication practices.

In Tables 4.14, 4.15, and 4.16, I provide the cultural group averages of all the discourse data analyzed in this study for the same- and mixed-culture group decision-

making sessions. In the sections that follow the tables, I will discuss these quantitative data in their own right and in comparison with the most salient espoused values from the qualitative interview data for each cultural group. In most cases, I will go group by group, as I did in the prior section, but there will also be instances where it makes sense to look at cultural group data in a more comparative manner.

Table 4.14: Combined Group Discourse Production Means

	Words spoken same	Words/turn same	#Turns same	Turn length same	Words spoken mix	Words/turn mix	#Turns mix	Turn length mix
Arabic	1143	14	83.5	5.6	1357	11.5	118.5	4.7
Chinese	258.7	12.3	21.7	5.27	419	10	38.3	4
Dari	154.5	14.1	16.25	5.97	938	11	84.8	3.9
Persian	486.3	7.13	64.33	2.87	588.3	6.4	98.3	2.5

Table 4.15: Same Culture Group Discourse Act Means

	Latch_int	Latch_coop	OL_int	OL_coop	Bckchnl	Bckchnl_OL
Arabic	0	10	5	10	12.5	28
Chinese	0	3.7	3.7	5	.7	2
Dari	0	1.5	2	3.5	1.3	2.5
Persian	.7	6.7	9	12.3	6.3	8.7

Table 4.16: Mixed Culture Group Discourse Act Means

	Latch_int	Latch_coop	OL_int	OL_coop	Bckchnl	Bckchnl_OL
Arabic	2	10.5	20	11	11	32.5
Chinese	.7	7.7	7	4.3	3	12.3

Dari	.8	13	11.5	16.5	6.75	20
Persian	0	8.7	9.7	16.7	11	36.3

**What Interaction(s) Are Able to Be Observed between (a) Foreign-born Individuals’
Stated Definitions of Leadership, Authority, Teamwork, and (b) Effective
Workplace Communication and Their Enactment of Them as Observed in Group
Decision-making Tasks?**

Arabic Group Discourse Data

A salient feature that emerged from my qualitative interviews with both Arabic group participants was their consistent characterization of teamwork as something that would be potentially more likely to create competition between team members, rather than collaboration. Both participants also identified barriers to open communication in Arab cultures. Arabic_1M pointed to gender- and education-based impediments, and Arabic_2F described a broader kind of challenge in which open communication and feedback between peers would be made difficult by people’s need for ego-maintenance and not wanting to appear to be wrong or “less than” in anyone’s eyes.

Both of those tendencies, i.e., competition and ego-maintenance strategies, are perceptible in the discourse data summarized in table 4.15 above. First, note the average words spoken, per participant, during the monocultural Arabic group session. At 1143, their participation level in the interaction was far higher than the average for any of the other three cultural groups, more than 2.3 times as many words on average as those produced by Persian participants in their same culture session, over 4.4 times as many as for the Chinese group, and almost 7.4 times as much as for the Dari group. Their average

number of words per turn taken (14) are practically tied with the Dari group (14.1), the group with the highest words-per-turn average among all four groups.

The average number of turns taken by the two Arabic participants (83.5) also far exceeds the numbers for the other groups, with the exception of the Persian group (64.33), though the Arabic group's average is still nearly 30% greater than the Persian group's average. Of course, one might wonder whether it is simply to be expected that a group of two participants would speak more than groups of three or four. This is certainly a reasonable question, although it is important to keep in mind that the figures above are averages, not merely sums, and the two Arabic participants in this study did have a third workshop companion working along with them in the same culture session, though her discourse data was neither tracked nor tallied at any point, and so does not factor in to the calculations presented above. Furthermore, the wide margins of difference outlined above seem unlikely to be able to be accounted for solely by pointing to the difference of two speakers as opposed to three or four. This observation is further supported by the fact that the Arabic participants continued to be the most discursively productive, and even increased their on-average discourse production when working in larger, more evenly distributed, mixed culture groups.

All of the above observations suggest that the competitiveness in teamwork situations that both Arabic participants described may have been a factor in their unparalleled discursive production relative to the other groups. This effect seems to only have been enhanced by their placement into mixed culture groups, where their average words spoken spiked to an even higher 1357 words, and their average number of turns taken rose to 118.5. In watching the video recordings of both Arabic participants in the

same and mixed culture groups, it is quite evident that they both attempted to establish a kind of discursive dominance in the same group interaction, with Arabic_1M, surprisingly, ceding that role to Arabic_2F about halfway through the session. At that midpoint, her production began to outpace his, for an eventual difference of 1506 words spoken for her, and 779 words spoken for him. This becomes even more evident in the data when looking at the difference between Arabic_1M and Arabic_2F in terms of average words per turn and total number of turns taken. Whereas Arabic_1M speaks eight words per turn on average, Arabic_2F speaks 20; Arabic_1M needs 93 turns to reach his 779 words spoken, while Arabic_2F takes only 74 turns to speak 1506 words. These longer, more robust turns can be considered reflective of someone, Arabic_2F in this case, assuming or attempting to claim a role of authority and leadership within the group.

The question of whether or not some of the on-average differences noted above can be attributed more to individual, rather than larger cultural, distinctions is certainly a valid and important one to address. If we were to only examine and take into account the same culture sessions' data, it would be tempting to conclude that we are just seeing the preferred discursive tendencies of two individuals in a group decision-making context. It is in exploring these same culture sessions' data alongside the mixed culture sessions' data, both for cultural groups and for certain individuals, that the cultural difference hypothesis become more salient and intriguing. Of course, given the small n in this study, the hypothesis is just that: a somewhat grounded hypothesis.

Arabic_1M's discursive performance in the subsequent mixed culture session seems to indicate that he was anxious to claim a position of leadership/authority once free of Arabic_2F's influence. Arabic_1M's total words spoken in the mixed culture group

increased by more than 35% from the same culture session, his total turns increased as well from 93 to 108, and his turn length average and words per turn were also increased. I again found this suggestive of the competitive drive to not be seen as “less than” that both Arabic participants discussed as common phenomenon in Arab culture.

A look at the data for the various speech acts (latches, overlaps, and backchannels) is also informative, particularly when we consider the number of cooperative and interruptive instances. For the Arabic participants, the data are particularly telling. Not only were the Arabic participants the most active group, on average, in the mixed culture sessions; they were also the most interruptive group, more than doubling any other group in terms of interruptive latches, and more than doubling all but the Dari group in the number of interruptive overlaps. These differences would appear to be significant in light of the relative infrequency of such speech acts, especially among these groups.

Chinese Group Discourse Data

Although the Chinese participants were quite clear that they did not perceive large differences between Chinese and U.S. cultures in the conceptualization of leadership and authority, one thing they did all talk about, in one way or another, was the lack of practical experience most Chinese professionals, managers or employees, would have in generating and sustaining inclusive dialogue in working teams. The discourse data collected and analyzed in this study strongly support the Chinese participants’ claim that active engagement in inclusive dialogue is not the norm for most Chinese professionals. In the same culture group session, the participants’ average words spoken was a mere 258.7. While this number was not the lowest (Dari was with 154.5 average words

spoken), it was 47% lower than the Persians' average, and almost 78% lower than the average words spoken by the Arabic participants. The figures for the Chinese participants' average words per turn and average turn length are not noticeably different from the other three groups, but the average number of total turns taken for the group (21.7) is similarly low relative to the other groups (83.5 for Arabic and 64.3 for Persian), again with the exception of Dari (16.25). These numbers demonstrate that the nature of the Chinese participants discursive interventions was not unlike those of the other three groups. Rather, with the exception of the Dari participants, the Chinese participants—as individuals and as a group— simply intervened far less on average than did the Arabic and Persian participants.

The Chinese participants' low-engagement/participation tendency from the same culture sessions carried over to the mixed culture groups as well. There, the Chinese participants came across as being even more reticent; they had, by far, the lowest average words spoken, 419 compared with 588.3 for Persian, 938 for Dari, and 1357 for Arabic. Similarly, their average number of turns taken was very low, 38.3, followed by Dari at 84.8, Persian at 98.3, and Arabic with 118.5. Words per turn and average turn length were in keeping with the figures for the other three groups.

Finally, the Chinese participants were also the least active in terms of latches, overlaps, and backchannels, with the exception of interruptive latches in the mixed culture sessions, where the Persian participants performed 0 to the Chinese participants .7. That single exception notwithstanding, the discourse figures for the Chinese participants clearly depict and reinforce the description given by all three participants in their qualitative interviews of a Chinese approach to workplace interactions that is

reserved, even cautious, and not at all inclined to take up a leadership role if formal or positional authority is not also clearly theirs to hold.

Dari Group Discourse Data

Very much in keeping with the prevalent findings from the individual qualitative interviews with these participants, the Dari group discourse data strongly suggests Afghan culture's potentially constraining effect on robust teamwork and open communication. As previously discussed in the Dari group summary, all four participants in this group indicated that the drive for self-preservation and autonomy among Afghans could impede communication and teamwork between themselves and fellow Afghans and in teaming situations with other groups. The participants also emphasized Afghan social norms requiring unfailing respect and innocuousness in interpersonal communications, both of which the participants suggested could constrain the nature of talk within Afghan teams.

The degree of apparent constraint is significant in this case. In the same group session, the Dari team produced by far the least discourse of all four language teacher groups, at 154.5 words spoken on average and 16.25 average number of turns taken. The words spoken are one seventh that of the Arabic group, one third that of Persian, and only two thirds that of Chinese. What is most striking is how much this group's discursive behavior changed when they worked in the mixed culture sessions, where their average words spoken soared to 938, and their average turns taken rose to 84.8, 600% and 500% increases respectively. While the Chinese group nearly doubled its production in the mixed culture sessions, relative to their same culture meeting, the Dari group's change in discursive behavior between the two sessions is a genuine outlier. One possible

explanation, going back to the qualitative interview data for both the Chinese and Dari participant groups, could be that, while Chinese culture remains relatively reserved across cultural contexts, Afghan culture appears to be most restrictive in situations where multiple Afghans are participating and, therefore, would be subjected to one another's judgments according to accepted cultural norms.

The same phenomenon is visible in the speech acts measured in this study. In the same culture session, the Dari participants were overall the least active in terms of latches, overlaps, and backchannels (43 total speech acts), only to then be the most productive of the four groups in the mixed culture sessions with 274 aggregate latches, overlaps, and backchannels. The 274 speech acts total were 11% more than those of the Persian participants (247), 57% more than the Arabic participants (174), and 160% more than the Chinese participants' aggregate total (105).

While it is not possible, based on this study's design and the data it generated, to be certain of the reason for these dramatic differences between the Afghan participants' homogeneous and mixed group behavior, the obvious differences certainly support the idea that Afghans may behave quite differently when in a monocultural setting than they do in a more diverse, multicultural context. Although there was nothing explicitly evident to me in the Dari participants' qualitative interview data to reflect or explain the marked shift in their discursive behavior between the same and mixed culture sessions, it is another signal of discourse analysis' potential to not only confirm the beliefs and perceptions expressed in response to qualitative forms of inquiry, but also to highlight apparent departures or inconsistencies from those same statements. Further exploration of this apparent Afghan behavioral change across cultural contexts would be an interesting

avenue for future research. What is clear is that, just as the t-test data I presented at the beginning of this chapter suggest, culture matters. Indeed, some cultures seem to matter even more than others when it comes to not only whether or not people interact with each other, but also the manner in which said (non)interactions manifest themselves.

Persian Group Discourse Data

Two things from the Persian participants' qualitative interviews are also clearly reflected in their discourse data: the desire to both (a) identify a formal authority figure to defer to and (b) avoid the appearance of rudeness. Each is evident in the Persian group discourse data, albeit with somewhat of a twist with respect to the latter desire.

The first of the desires that emerged from the interview data, demonstrated deference, seems to be reflected in the rather modest discourse production numbers for the Persian participants in both the same and mixed culture sessions. To be sure, for the same culture session, the Persian group was the second most productive in terms of average words spoken (486.3, second to Arabic) and turns taken (64.3, again second to Arabic), but what is more telling than pure place rankings in this case is the way that the Persian group's discourse production closely approximates what would be the average words spoken and turns taken across all four groups and all twelve participants. The average words spoken across all four groups was 510.6, and average turns taken 46.4. Compared with averages for all four participant groupings, the Persian group is 5% lower than the words spoken average, and 28% higher than the average for turns taken, but this group's averages are far and away the nearest to the overall discourse production means for all four groups. This "middle-of-the-road" behavior, consistent with their qualitative interview data, could be interpreted as a sign of the Persian participants' sensitivity to the

lack of formalized authority figures in the group sessions, reflecting an unspoken desire to neither take the lead, nor to fail to participate adequately.

The avoidance of apparent rudeness is much more evident among Persian participants in the mixed culture sessions than in their same culture one. In the same culture session, the Persian group actually displayed the most latches and overlaps, of both interruptive and cooperative types, of all four groups. They were, in fact, the only group to produce interruptive latches in the same culture sessions, at an average of .7, compared to 0 for the other three groups. They totaled the second most cooperative latches with 6.7 on average, second to Arabic participants' 10 cooperative latches. Their interruptive overlaps were the highest, with 9 on average, and their cooperative overlaps were again the most, at 12.3 on average. They did a good amount of backchanneling in the same culture session, in a distant second place behind the Arabic group, though in much smaller numbers.

The Persian participants' discursive behavior really stands out, relative to the other groups and to their same culture meeting, in the mixed culture sessions. The Persian participants' qualitative interview statements about Persians' affinity for projecting deference and civility when social and/or workplace hierarchies are in doubt, are clearly reflected in the discourse data.

First, whereas in the same culture sessions the Persian group was the only one to produce an interruptive latch, in the mixed culture sessions they were the only participants to produce no interruptive latches at all. Though they had the second most cooperative latches in the same culture sessions, with 6.7 on average, they totaled the second lowest average number of cooperative latches in the mixed culture meetings (8.7),

while still increasing the amount of cooperative latching they did overall. Interruptive overlaps stayed about the same in absolute terms, up to 9.7 on average from 9, but in relative terms they went from the highest on average in the same culture sessions, to the lowest among all four groups in the mixed culture meetings. Cooperative overlaps went up by about 27%, and remained the highest figure among all groups.

Where the Persian participants' politeness and deference to others is most evident is in the relatively high number backchannels they produced, both standalone (11, tied with Arabic for first) and overlapping (36.3, first and over 40% higher than the combined average for all three other groups). Having viewed the videos multiple times, it was difficult for me not to conclude that the interactional uncertainty produced by culturally diverse teamwork provoked in the Persian participants an increased emphasis on seeming polite, cooperative, and supportive of their peers.

Cluster Dendogram Analysis

As I indicated near the beginning of this chapter, I understand how my chosen approach of analyzing participants' qualitative interview data thematically and by language groups, rather than proceeding individual by individual, could be seen as assumptive and even a lazy form of overgeneralization. I can also see how my having done something similar with the quantitative discourse data presented in the previous section could reinforce that perception. While I remain confident that the preceding treatment and analysis of both data sets has adequately addressed such potential concerns, I attempted to take the analysis yet another step farther. In addition to using a paired samples t-test and descriptive statistics to interpret and analyze the quantitative discourse data collected for this study, I also used the statistical computing and graphics software,

R, to perform a cluster analysis using all aspects of the discourse data for all 12 participants. The purpose of this cluster analysis was to see which individuals from among all twelve participants paired and/or grouped most closely in light of all possible correlations between the 21 different data points observed for each of the participants.

For ease of reference, those 21 points are displayed in Table 4.17 below:

Table 4.17: Discourse Data Features by Same and Mixed Culture Groupings

Same	Total words spoken	Average words per turn	Total turns taken	Average turn length	Total interruptive/cooperative latches	Total interruptive/cooperative overlaps	Total backchannels / overlapping backchannels	Total speech acts
Mixed	Total words spoken	Average words per turn	Total turns taken	Average turn length	Total interruptive/cooperative latches	Total interruptive/cooperative overlaps	Total backchannels / overlapping backchannels	

In order to make this analysis work, I created slightly altered pseudonyms for each of the twelve participants, with a numeric marker to indicate in which mixed culture group session they had participated. As the cluster dendogram in Figure 1 below suggests, Arabic_1M is now “A3M1” indicating that he is from the Arabic participant group, took part in mixed culture group session number three, is male, and is numbered one among all Arabic participants. It was important to be able to easily see in which mixed culture group each of the twelve individuals had participated in order to get a sense of the extent, if any, to which there might be discursive data congruencies within or among the mixed culture groups (vis a vis a potentially emergent kind of group microculture) in addition to the Arabic, Chinese, Dari, and Persian macrocultures. This cluster analysis also offered an opportunity to quickly visualize the discursive diversity

that existed within the overall participant pool and within the microgroups constituted by the mixed culture session teams.

Figure 1: Cluster Analysis Dendrogram

The results displayed in Figure 1 are quite telling, and in some ways confirmatory of other major findings from both my qualitative and quantitative data analyses. For instance, we need look no farther than the relatively tight grouping of the three Chinese participants (C3F1, C1F2, and C2F3) to see a reflection of the qualitative finding that Chinese culture can place far-reaching, significant constraints on the way its members communicate, as well as the quantitative finding that their behavior, although it did change somewhat from the same to the mixed culture sessions, also stayed the most uniform of all four participant groups. The clusters in Figure 1 also strongly suggest that differences in aggregate cultural groups' discourse data numbers were not primarily the result of within-group individual performance differences (e.g. one outlier pulling group discourse means disproportionately down or up).

It is also interesting to note that Chinese_3F, C2F3 in the dendogram, is set apart from Chinese_1F and Chinese_2F. Looking back at the discourse data, Chinese_3F simply spoke a lot more than her two fellow group members (more than twice as much as each of the other two in both same and mixed culture sessions), and also reported the highest level of education among the three, claiming to hold Masters degrees from both China and the U.S. It is not possible to know for certain if her higher level of education afforded her the additional confidence to be more outspoken, but it is an interesting congruence nonetheless. It must also be noted, however, that although Chinese_3F's discursive production levels (average words spoken, average turn length, and average number of turns taken) are very much an outlier relative to her two fellow Chinese teacher group members, the remainder of her discourse data offers a clear profile of her as "looking" much more like her fellow Chinese group members when compared with the data for participants from the other three cultural groups.

Also noteworthy is how tightly the Dari participants cluster together, with the exception of the one male participant. Indeed, the gender divide that was discussed extensively in interviews with Arabic, Dari, and Persian participants is evident in the cluster analysis results, as we can see that D2M5 (the lone male Dari participant) and A3M1 (the sole male member of the Arabic group) are both separated from their female cultural counterparts by two intervening members of other cultural groups. The fact that the relative "distances" between males and females from two different cultural groups are the same here is intriguing and something potentially worth exploring more in future research. The discourse data for both male participants suggested they felt empowered to take on more vocal, prominent roles when working outside the bounds of their same

culture groups. For instance, in the mixed culture session Arabic_1M (A3M1 in Figure 1) increased his total words spoken by 276 words, a 35% increase. Dari_5M (D2M5 in Figure 1), meanwhile, increased his total words spoken from 173 in the same culture session to 1269 in the mixed culture meeting; a more than seven-fold increase. None of their female counterparts had discourse production increases on quite those levels.

Finally, it is also telling that the Persian participants did not cluster so well at all, at least when compared with the other groups. Looking at their demographic data, this result may be somewhat unexpected, given the relative similarities in their gender, age range, education levels, and amounts of time spent in Iran and the U.S. Returning to the qualitative interview data, however, it becomes clear, once again, that the Persian group reported having the most diverse, nuanced perceptions of teamwork and communication, especially as they relate to the interaction between authority and leadership, when compared with the other three cultural groups. That this diverse, nuanced perception of teamwork and communication is reflected in multiple ways in their discourse data is encouraging, and further reflective of the general finding in this study that discourse analysis may offer benefits that are both explanatory and exploratory in nature, the latter of which I will discuss more in the next chapter.

Conclusion

As stated at the outset of this chapter, my purpose has been to explore the ways in which data collection and analysis in this study have responded to its four research questions. Initial answers to research question #1, regarding how foreign-born language teachers working in the U.S. define constructs such as leadership, authority, teamwork, and effective workplace communication, have been detailed in the early sections of the

chapter via group-by-group analyses of their qualitative interview data. The same is true for research question #2 and the extent to which there may be a shared understanding of these four constructs among members of culturally diverse working teams. Within the four cultural groups (Arabic, Chinese, Dari/Afghan, and Persian) commonalities with respect to definitions of leadership, authority, teamwork, and communication far exceeded individual differences. As the cultures interacted within more heterogeneous teams, however, distinctions became even clearer and more frequent. In particular, the Arabic and Persian groups tended to align more closely to one another, while the Dari/Afghan and Chinese groups appeared to share more common ground. In brief, based on the findings in this study, culturally diverse working teams do not appear likely to hold *a priori* shared understandings of complex constructs such as leadership, authority, teamwork, and communication.

With respect to how foreign-born language teachers working in the U.S. interact discursively with one another when put into mono- and multi-cultural decision-making teams that lacked a designated formal authority, initial findings are intriguingly consistent. In mono-cultural teams, individual participants' discursive behavior remains, by and large, consistent with the averages for the larger cultural groups. In multi-cultural teams, a greater range of possibilities became apparent, with the Dari/Afghan and Chinese participants showing the largest changes in discursive behavior, compared with their performance in the same culture sessions. These changes were particularly noticeable for the Dari/Afghan and Chinese participants in the area of significantly increased discursive participation (average words spoken and turns taken) in the mixed culture meetings, both as individuals and collectively.

Finally, regarding the observable interactions between foreign-born language teachers' stated definitions of leadership, authority, teamwork, and effective workplace communication, and their enactment of these concepts in group decision-making tasks, the qualitative interview data and the group decision-making discourse data showed striking alignment. Put simply, this study's participants largely reflected what they defined as prevalent behavioral cultural paradigms in their group interactions, albeit much more so when in a monocultural setting, and less so when working in mixed culture teams.

Having addressed each of my four research questions, I will now turn, in the next chapter, to a more pointed discussion of these findings. I also will discuss implications for both additional research and for practice. Finally, I will highlight the limitations that were present in this study that should be considered in the design and implementation of any such future research.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Despite the ongoing massive investment in increasing U.S. citizens' transcultural knowledge and competence, by both the federal government and public and private institutions of higher education, there remains a pronounced lack of scholarly and pedagogical consensus on what transcultural competence is, or even what the practical implications of cultural differences are. Per a preliminary report on the National Security Language Initiative (NSLI) from 2008, hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars, if not billions, have been invested since the mid-2000s in higher education grant programs designed to enhance U.S. citizens' transcultural competence and linguistic proficiency in less commonly taught world languages and cultures¹. As I discussed in detail in chapter two, there have recently been increasing calls and curricular changes made within U.S. higher education to enhance university students' transcultural competence. It remains too soon to assess how effective these educational initiatives will be.

Since 2006, with the Bush administration's authorization of the National Security Language Initiative, the U.S. Departments of State and Defense have arguably improved their personnel's knowledge bases in less commonly taught languages such as Arabic, Chinese, Persian, and Afghan languages (e.g. Dari and Pashto). However, overall undergraduate enrollments in language courses and programs have progressively dropped to unsustainable levels, according to the last few Modern Language Association census reports (Looney & Lusin, 2018). At the same time, U.S. college and university students' study abroad preferences have increasingly skewed toward short-term, six to eight week

¹ For more detail on this report, visit <https://nsep.gov/sites/default/files/nsli-preliminary-results.pdf>, with particular attention to the budget allocations on page 26.

summer experiences, very often in places where the language spoken is a variant of English, and majority cultures are strongly influenced by traditionally Anglo-Saxon, Western models (i.e. England, Australia, Ireland, and South Africa). As U.S. society further globalizes, growing more linguistically and culturally diverse, its college and university students appear to be on a path to diminished knowledge and understanding of the rest of world's languages and cultures (Kruse, Rakha, & Calderone, 2018; Shalala et al., 2015).

Added to the challenges described above is the fact that both *leadership*, as a construct, and culture and transcultural competence continue to be scholarly domains within which there is a lack of expert consensus with respect to questions of how they can be best defined, most effectively cultivated, and accurately measured and assessed. The primary objectives of this study were to continue the scholarly pursuit of increased understanding of culture's impact on individuals' definitions of *leadership*, *authority*, *teamwork*, and effective *communication*, as well as their enactment of them in working groups. A secondary objective of this mixed methods study was to explore the value of an alternative, complementary methodology, in this case discourse analysis, as a powerful lens for examining leadership (via constructs such as authority, teamwork, and communication), and (trans)cultural differences with respect to how *leadership*, *authority*, *teamwork*, and *communication* are both understood and enacted. The research questions that guided this study were: (1) How do foreign-born individuals working in a U.S. context define constructs such as leadership, authority, teamwork, and effective workplace communication? (2) To what extent is there a shared understanding of *leadership*, *authority*, *teamwork*, and effective workplace *communication* among

members of culturally diverse working teams? (3) How do foreign-born individuals working in the U.S. interact discursively with one another when put into teams that lack a designated formal authority? (4) What interaction(s) can be observed between foreign-born individuals' stated definitions of *leadership*, *authority*, *teamwork*, and effective workplace *communication* and their enactment of them as observed in group decision-making tasks?

The experiences and perspectives of 12 teachers of Arabic, Chinese, Dari, and Persian languages were explored and analyzed through semi-structured, one-on-one qualitative interviews and analytic methods. Those same 12 teachers then participated in same and mixed culture working groups, from which data on their discursive behavior was collected and analyzed using quantitative methods. Both qualitative and quantitative data sets were then considered and analyzed in relationship to each other.

In the next section, I will provide a brief summary of the findings discussed in detail in chapter four before turning to a discussion of them. I will then discuss implications for additional research and improved practice. I will conclude by describing the study's limitations and significance.

Summary of Findings

As I indicated in chapter four, there was abundant agreement across the four cultural groups (Arabic, Chinese, Dari/Afghan, and Persian) with respect to their espoused definitions of *leadership*, *authority*, *teamwork*, and *communication*. More often than not, the similarities far exceeded the differences, a finding that responds to both my first and second research questions.

Individual and Group Definitions of Constructs: Similarities and Differences

The overwhelming consensus among participants from all four cultural groups was that the constructs of *leadership* and *authority* are most often necessarily intertwined. The prevalent sentiment expressed in all four cultures regarding *leadership* was that, in essence, it is about people listening to—and therefore acting upon—the things the leader says. While this perception may seem obvious when employing a Western paradigm, it was further complicated by almost all participants making comments that strongly suggested that, in their cultures, the only way to actually get people to listen to you (and to therefore be a leader) is to have formal, positional authority. Consequently, I could only conclude that leadership and formal authority are seen as largely one and the same in Arab, Chinese, Afghan, and Persian cultures.

I did find one notable case of intergroup discrepancy in my analysis of the qualitative interview data. The Persian participants' indicated a fairly strong preference for a less hierarchical leadership-authority dynamic than what they perceived to be the societal norm in post-Revolution Iran. While participants from the Arabic, Dari, and Chinese groups gave both positive and negative responses to questions about strongly top-down hierarchies, the general consensus among the four Persian participants was that they favored the more fluid relational dynamics between superiors and subordinates that they said they had observed in their time living and working in the U.S.

Another broad-strokes finding from this study's qualitative data shows an interesting interaction between *teamwork* and *communication*, as described by participants from all four cultural groups. In general, the consensus among the four groups was that *teamwork* as a concept in their cultures looks reasonably similar to what

they have experienced in the U.S. For a variety of reasons, however, responses from all four cultural groups also pointed to the problematic nature of the practice of teamwork in their cultures of origin, most of which derived from challenges in the domain of peer-to-peer communication.

To clarify, teamwork was framed for participants in this study as a situation in which a group of peers, in which no formal authority figure is identified, works together toward completion of a task or set of tasks. It was the lack of a formal authority figure in a teamwork situation that gave participants from all four cultural groups the most pause.

According to the Arabic participants, the biggest challenge to effective teamwork, absent a formal authority figure, would derive either from constraints on cross-gender interactions (driven mostly by religion), or on the compulsion they claimed they and other Arabs are likely to feel to compete with peers in order to establish their own superiority. The corollary to this state of mind, they suggested, is that peers engaging in teamwork in an Arab cultural context would also be guarded in their communications and interactions so as to minimize the risk of exposing a personal flaw or making an obvious mistake. The reason both Arabic participants gave for this is that peers in Arab culture would seek to leverage such “weaknesses” for their own gain, and formal authority figures would judge the mistake maker harshly and publicly for it.

The challenges that the Chinese participants identified with the practice of teamwork in their culture derived both from the logistics of large numbers (a byproduct of China’s relatively enormous population), as well as mistrust of peers’ motives and actions. The Dari and Persian participants also discussed the problem of mistrust, not so much for fear of peers stealing each other’s ideas or somehow using them against one

another, but rather because peer-to-peer communicative tendencies in Afghanistan and Iran, particularly on matters of significance, can tend to be so high context (i.e. indirect and not at all face-value in nature) that it is both difficult and inadvisable to put too much face-value faith in what others say.

Discursive Interactions in Working Teams

In order to address my third research question —How do foreign-born individuals working the U.S. interact discursively with one another when put into mono- and multi-cultural teams that lack a designated formal authority?— I relied upon time-stamped transcriptions of video-recorded group decision-making meetings. I then coded those transcriptions for a turn-by-turn total and overall average words spoken count in both the same and mixed culture groups for each participant. I supplemented average words spoken with a calculation of total turns taken and average turn length, in seconds, for each participant in both the same and mixed culture groups. Additionally, I tallied the following discourse acts for each participant across both the same and mixed culture group sessions: backchannels (both free-standing and overlapping), overlaps (both cooperative and interruptive), and latches (again, both cooperative and interruptive). I also calculated the total number of these discourse acts for each participant in both types of group decision-making sessions, mono-cultural and mixed. I provided greater detail on the nature of backchannels, overlaps, and latches in chapter four.

I analyzed the discourse data described above at the levels of the entire participant pool, the cultural group, and the individual participant. I used a paired samples t-test, a cluster dendogram analysis, and descriptive statistics to analyze and interpret the discourse data. The most salient findings included a highly significant difference between

all participants' discursive behavior in same culture groups as opposed to in mixed culture groups (paired samples t-test); a strong reflection in the discourse data of select cultural tendencies that participants described in the qualitative interviews (descriptive statistics); and strongly correlated cultural groupings, particularly for the Chinese and Afghan participants, based on the totality of their discourse data (cluster dendrogram analysis).

In very broad terms, my analysis of the discourse data revealed that, when working in mono-cultural teams, individual participants' discursive behavior remained highly consistent with the averages for the larger cultural groups. When working in multi-cultural teams, the Dari/Afghan and Chinese participants showed the largest changes in discursive behavior, compared with their performance in the same culture sessions. These changes, which were present for all four cultural groups, were particularly noticeable for the Dari/Afghan and Chinese participants in the form of significantly increased discursive participation (average words spoken and turns taken) in the mixed culture meetings, both as individuals and collectively.

Comparing Participants' Statements with Their Behaviors

To answer my fourth and final research question —What interaction(s) can be observed between foreign-born individuals' stated definitions of *leadership*, *authority*, *teamwork*, and effective workplace *communication* and their enactment of them as observed in group decision-making tasks?— I looked for reflections of highly salient findings from the qualitative interview data in the discourse data from the group decision-making meetings. In general, I found striking alignment between what participants defined as prevalent cultural paradigms and their discursive behavior in the group

interactions. This alignment was much more evident when participants worked in a mono-cultural situation, and less so when they worked in mixed culture teams. With this summary of findings as the backdrop, I will now move to a deeper discussion of these findings.

Discussion of Findings

For the purpose of further exploring the results of this research, I will divide this section into two segments. In the first section, I will focus on findings from the qualitative portion of the study, while in the second sections I will discuss findings from the quantitative portion and make connections where possible with the qualitative findings.

Qualitative Findings

The exploration of this study's first two research questions was pursued with qualitative methods. The findings that emerged from the qualitative data collection and analysis are detailed in chapter four. Here, I will discuss four salient aspects of those findings: (a) transcultural convergence on the relationship between *leadership* and *authority*, (b) leadership as a function of how subordinates "listen," (c) the role of *communication* in problematizing *teamwork*, and (d) the non-monolithic nature of cultures.

Transcultural convergence on leadership and authority. One of the foundational questions this study was designed to explore was the extent to which there were shared definitions of *leadership*, *authority*, *teamwork*, and effective *communication* between the four participating cultural groups. Qualitative methods offered a strong, affirmative response to this question, particularly as it relates to transculturally shared

definitions of *leadership* and its relationship to *authority*. Unsurprisingly, participants' talked indirectly about strong power-distance dynamics.

Power-distance is defined as the extent to which lower ranking individuals in societal hierarchies expect and accept the unequal distribution of power in a society (Hofstede, 2002). Three of the cultures included in this study (Arabic, Chinese, and Persian) ranked in the top half of societies studied for the power-distance dimension in the extensive survey-based quantitative findings presented by both Hofstede (2002) and House and Javidan et al. (2004). The fourth societal culture represented in this study, Afghanistan, was not included in either the Hofstede or the House and Javidan studies. Historically, however, Afghanistan has had strong cultural influences from Arab, Persian, and Chinese societies. It is therefore not terribly surprising that there was strong transcultural agreement among participants from all four cultural groups that leadership is most often simply a function of the enactment of formalized authority.

All participants made statements that portrayed attempting to lead or influence others without holding some kind of formalized authority as highly problematic in their cultures of origin. Although most of the participants indicated that they had seen and understood that power-distance dynamics are not nearly as pronounced in U.S. culture, they also expressed that it is at times quite difficult for them to accept and adjust their mindsets and actions for this difference. This is despite many of them saying they find the U.S.'s relatively low power-distance tendencies preferable to what they had experienced in their cultures of origin. The Arabic and Afghan/Dari teacher participants were the most consistent and uniform in articulating their acceptance of strong power-distance dynamics in their cultures.

There were also some findings from among the four cultural groups that did not align as well with respect to *leadership* and *authority*. The Persian participants recognized that, in practice in contemporary Iranian culture, the ability to influence others is indeed highly dependent on one holding formalized authority that is recognized by followers/subordinates. They did put more emphasis than the other participants on parents, elders, and mentors as alternative formal authority figures, which also led them to make explicit comments about a general wariness of hierarchy in Persian culture, and of any formalized authority that is not also undergirded by a more personal relationship, such as that between family members, close friends, and/or trusted mentors. It is certainly possible that this wariness of impersonal hierarchies is a much more universal tendency than what this study's data were able to show, but it is noteworthy nonetheless that the Persian participants were the ones who most clearly and consistently articulated it.

Another complicating point came from interviews with members of the Chinese group. The Chinese participants comprised the one group that did not speak in mostly positive terms about their experience of the diminished power-distance dynamic in U.S. culture. All three of them indicated that they frequently found the greater degree of openness and personal access that U.S. leaders and authority figures invite from their subordinates to be off-putting and problematic.

In talking about their issues with it, the Chinese participants described how strange, and even alienating, they found the greater interpersonal sharing and openness between peers and authority figures that they had encountered in the U.S. They elaborated that their discomfort often derived from seeing how free subordinates in U.S. culture seem to feel to openly complain about, and even directly contradict, their leaders'

viewpoints and decisions. This finding both reflects, and adds nuance to, the literature I reviewed in chapter two, particularly Caldwell and Prizant (2018), whose study found that Chinese junior executives tended to struggle with acclimating their conduct to fit the Western verbal influence paradigm. It also is in keeping with the work of Elkington and Tuleja (2018), where they position Confucianism as a counterpoint to Western individualism in leadership and group interactions.

There is one important way in which the aversion that this study's Chinese participants expressed toward U.S. models of unconstrained, direct communication differs from a major transcultural research finding. The GLOBE studies (House & Javidan et al., 2004) found that people from high power-distance parts of the world that operate with heavily hierarchical cultural paradigms tended to indicate a strong preference, at least in theory, for less top-down power dynamics. The statements made by the Chinese participants in this study do not align with GLOBE on this point, which is, in itself, interesting and worthy of further research.

Leadership as a function of how subordinates “listen.” Another salient point that emerged from the qualitative interview data involved a frequent connection between being an effective leader and being “listened to” by subordinates. Participants from all four cultural groups made statements that alluded to the true test of leadership being found in whether or not subordinates actually follow through on what leaders say. As a member of a highly individualistic, low context communication society (the U.S.), I was struck by this sentiment. Of course, one cannot lead effectively, likely in any context, if the ability to exercise influence is unduly limited or obstructed by followers' (in)actions. What I found intriguing, however, was the subtle implication that openly and directly

disagreeing with an authority figure's directives would be impractical and unnecessary in the cultures involved in this study, even when one does not intend to comply. Or perhaps particularly when one does not intend to comply.

Thinking in terms of the profoundly low context U.S. cultural paradigm, I took it for granted that the most common response from a subordinate who does not intend to follow through on an imperative would be to either directly indicate some level of disagreement or discontent, or simply to keep their doubts to themselves and comply as fully as possible. What I took away from participants' statements on this topic was that, perhaps, in the range of more high context cultures represented in this study the default may actually be to "listen" and follow through only partially, or not at all, to what leaders say unless doing so is obviously and immediately dangerous to one's self interest. Understanding this possibility, particularly for leaders from lower context cultures working with teams that include members from higher context cultures, seems like a potentially vital component for the exercise of transculturally effective leadership. This is something I will touch on more in the section on this study's practical implications.

Communication's role in problematizing teamwork. An additional connection that emerged from my analysis of the qualitative data was an apparent connection between *teamwork* and *communication*. All four cultural groups participating in this study indicated that they understood the conceptual mechanics of *teamwork*, both from the perspective of their cultures of origin and as they had experienced it in the U.S., but they each had a slightly different take on why teamwork is not as prevalent or cherished a practice in their cultures as they have found it to be in the U.S. The different reasons

stated all seemed to return, in one way or another, to the ways that *communication* between team members would be understood and practiced in their cultures.

For the Arabic participants, the greatest communicative challenge involved competition between peers. Both Arabic teachers who participated in the study talked about how prevalent the drive to compete and stand out from among a group of peers, whether in a school or workplace setting, was in their experiences growing up in the Arab world. This competitiveness, combined with what they portrayed as a strong aversion to taking undue risks that might result in one being perceived as mistake-prone, was the greatest obstacle they saw to effective teamwork in Arab culture.

The Dari/Afghan and Persian participants talked about how peers would not really trust each other enough, in terms of what they explicitly say to one another, to make teamwork a comfortable, reliable way of getting things done in their cultures. They described culturally based interpersonal communication norms and practices that align strongly to very high context ways of expressing and understanding things, and connected that to inherent cultural challenges to U.S.-style teamwork in contemporary Afghan and Iranian cultures. They even intimated that really important things would or could not be expressed very explicitly in their cultures, since doing so would only cause people to disbelieve, disregard, or misinterpret the message, which could derail genuine peer-to-peer collaboration.

Finally, the Chinese participants simply stated that it is difficult in Chinese culture to trust peers' motivations in a teamwork setting, due to the fear that a colleague will take any good ideas they hear and try to represent those ideas to management as their own. Added to this is the Chinese cultural aversion, which all three participants described, to

being overly talkative and/or demonstrative in a peer group or teamwork setting, as this would be perceived as showy, and would not be in keeping with cultural ideals of modesty and reserve.

Non-monolithic nature of world cultures. A subtle, yet very important finding that arose from the qualitative data was the ever-evolving nature of societal cultures and corresponding norms. This was not something I explicitly set out to uncover in this study, though it is also not surprising to learn that cultural definitions and enactments of concepts and constructs vary over time. This finding might even help explain some of the points on which this study's findings depart from those of Hofstede (2002) and GLOBE (House & Javidan et al., 2004). Hofstede's data on cultural dimensions was collected in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The GLOBE data sets were collected between 1994 and 1997. With such broad temporal gaps between data sets, even high degrees of differentiation should not be unexpected.

At least one participant from each cultural group made a statement to support the intergenerational variance that they had perceived within their culture of origin. The Arabic participants, both being younger than most of the participants from the other three groups, talked about how they tended to view some things differently than did their parents' or grandparents' generations. Likewise, participants from the Afghan, Chinese, and Persian groups (all of whom were older on average than the Arabic group) were often careful to qualify some of their statements about their respective cultures, citing what they perceived as differing cultural perspectives among younger generations. While there is little in this finding that does not align with educated intuition and perhaps even

common sense, it is noteworthy nonetheless. If nothing else, it serves as a rationale for additional studies of a similar nature and methodology to this one.

Having reviewed these four most salient qualitative findings, I now turn to the findings that emerged from the quantitative segment of this study.

Quantitative Findings

In order to respond to my third and fourth research questions — How do foreign-born individuals working the U.S. interact discursively with one another when put into teams that lack a designated formal authority?— and — What interaction(s) can be observed between foreign-born individuals' stated definitions of *leadership*, *authority*, *teamwork*, and effective workplace *communication* and their enactment of them as observed in group decision-making tasks?— I conducted quantitative analyses of all twelve participants' discursive behavior in same and mixed culture group decision-making meetings. I presented detailed results of these analyses in chapter four. Here I will provide a discussion of the most salient findings from the quantitative data in three major segments: (a) findings regarding culture's apparent impact on discursive behavior from a paired samples t-test, (b) reflection of qualitative findings through analysis of participants' discourse data via descriptive statistics, and (c) findings from a cluster analysis of all discourse data points for all twelve participants that point to strong cultural groupings in terms of discursive behavior.

Impact of culture on discursive behavior. An underlying, yet central, question in this study was the extent to which discourse analysis could provide a trustworthy, inferentially robust window, beyond what can be learned from asking participants to explain such things for themselves or through anecdotal researcher observations, onto

both culture itself, and group interactions. Quantitative methods provided an up-front, compelling response to this question: culture appears to be a profoundly influential factor in determining how individuals and larger groups interact with each other. A paired samples t-test showed a remarkably significant difference in how this study's participants behaved when interacting with members of their same culture compared with their behavior in interactions with members of other cultures ($p < .001$).

Discourse data collected and analyzed from same and mixed culture group decision-making meetings reflected not only a significant influence on participants' discursive behavior, but also strongly suggested that some cultures (Chinese and Dari/Afghan in particular) can place apparently heavy constraints on members' participation levels. This is a simple, yet powerful finding with potentially very important implications for managers and leaders tasked with configuring working teams in culturally diverse settings. As tempting as putting teams together based on cultural affinity may be, it should not be done absent a deeper understanding of the potential for cultural norms placing unwanted limitations on team member contributions. A comparative analysis of participants' discourse data across same and mixed culture contexts using descriptive statistics both extends and provides nuance to this finding.

Reflection of qualitative findings. Quantitative analysis of participants' discourse data provided a clear reflection of certain, highly salient qualitative findings from this study. This was the case at the level of each of the four cultural groups, and for the participant pool overall. For the Arabic group, the description that both participants provided of teamwork situations provoking a tendency toward competition and ego maintenance, rather than selfless collaboration, in Arab culture was apparent in their

discourse data. The average participation level for the Arabic participants (measured via average words spoken) was more than two times greater than that of the Persian group, more than four times greater than the Chinese group, and more than seven times that of the Dari/Afghan group. Such a broad participation level gap is difficult to ignore when paired with participants' emphatic statements regarding their own perceptions of Arab cultural tendencies in working teams that lack a designated formal authority.

The Chinese participants' unanimously declared cultural values of caution and reserve, especially when interacting in situations where there is uncertainty regarding who is, and who is not, vested with formal authority, were also reflected in the quantitative data. Their overall participation level, across both same and mixed group sessions, was the lowest in net terms for average words spoken, turns taken, and discourse features (latches, overlaps, and backchannels). While the Dari/Afghan participants, when freed from the cultural constraint they apparently felt in the same culture session, increased their participation levels by over 600% in the mixed culture groups, the Chinese participants only upped their participation by 61%. This is not only reflective of this study's qualitative findings from Chinese participants' statements regarding their cultural preference for projecting modesty and reserve, but also from several other anecdotal and survey-based research studies that have sought to depict communicative tendencies in Chinese culture (Hofstede, 2002; House & Javidan et al., 2004; Meyer, 2014; Elkington & Tuleja, 2018; Caldwell & Prizant, 2018).

The Dari/Afghan participants all offered descriptions of Afghan cultural norms as a source of tangible constraint on interpersonal communication, particularly outside of nuclear family structures. The discourse data I collected and analyzed in this study

provided a glaring reflection of how strongly this constraint may be felt when Afghans work together without clear authority structures in place. As a group, the Dari participants increased their participation levels from the same to the mixed cultures sessions by 600% (average words spoken), and 500% (average turns taken), both of which were far more than increases realized any of the other three cultural groups. The Dari participants also went from being the least active group in terms of latches, overlaps, and backchannels in the same culture meetings, to being the most productive group in terms of those same three discourse features in the mixed culture sessions. Such a pronounced quantitative finding is quite telling when taken in parallel with the Dari participants' qualitative statements about how constrained communication among Afghans can be. Since there is almost no scholarly research on Afghan culture writ large, much less on Afghan culture as it relates to the constructs of *leadership*, *authority*, *teamwork*, and *communication*, this study is an important initial step toward beginning to address that lacuna.

The Persian group's commonly expressed cultural ideals of politeness and demonstrated deference in situations with ambiguous authority structures were also perceptible in the quantitative data. Their average participation rates in both the same and mixed culture sessions were the closest among all four cultural groups to the combined average for the entire participant pool, reflective of an apparent desire to neither seize control nor to fail to participate adequately. I found this to be in keeping with statements made by all four Persian participants about the cultural norm of showing deference, especially in situations where there is no clearly established hierarchy.

The second Persian cultural value, showing politeness or, at a minimum, avoiding the perception of rudeness, was also evident in both the qualitative and quantitative data. Persian participants' politeness was especially clear in the mixed culture sessions, where they were the only group to produce no interruptive latches, and the lowest average number of interruptive overlaps, while also having the highest average number of cooperative overlaps and overall backchannels, both of which are supportive, overtly polite discourse acts in most cultural contexts.

In sum, the reflection in the quantitative data of certain, highly salient qualitative findings from this study is encouraging for the field of discursive leadership studies overall, and offers promise for its application of discourse analysis in transcultural studies as well. There has been a recent, but still relatively nascent, linguistic turn in communications and organizational relations research (Aritz & Walker, 2014). This trend is predicated, in part, on an understanding of discourse analysis as a window onto another facet of social constructionism and as a complement to more traditional, psychology-based approaches to leadership, management, and social sciences (Aritz & Walker et al., 2017). The strong reflection of select key qualitative findings in the discourse analysis aspect of this study represents an encouraging additional step on the path. Taken together with the other stand-alone findings from this study's discourse data, I believe a strong case is made here for the explanatory and exploratory promise of discourse analysis in both leadership and transcultural studies.

Strong discursive behavior grouping by culture. Further employment of quantitative methods that took the entirety of this study's discourse data into account, revealed a grouping dynamic across the participant pool and an even stronger grouping

trend among cultural groups. I have provided details of the quantitative cluster analysis I conducted, along with its results and findings, in chapter four. The entire group of this study's twelve language teacher participants were reasonably, and unsurprisingly, well grouped, meaning that their discursive behavior was, by and large, similar overall. More granular analysis revealed another level of grouping along cultural lines, again based on degrees of similarity in the discourse data. The Chinese and Dari/Afghan groups were particularly tightly grouped, with the Arabic and Persian groups showing more internal diversity. The cluster analysis also suggested some within-group variance based on even more nuanced factors such as gender and higher education achievement. These findings are yet another example of the potential exploratory robustness of discourse analysis for interpreting group interactions. They also speak to discourse analysis's potential to gauge (mis)alignment between individuals' behavior in a given situation and their espoused beliefs as reflected in either qualitative interviews or survey-based methods.

It is particularly challenging to discuss these findings in relationship to existing scholarly research as there is, to my knowledge, no research study that has used cluster analysis in conjunction with discourse analysis to examine questions related to transcultural communication and leadership. My hope is that the findings presented in this study are sufficiently compelling to motivate other scholars to pursue similar lines of inquiry and methods for exploring them.

Having discussed both the major qualitative and quantitative findings of my study, I turn now to what I consider to be the most relevant implications for additional research and practice in the field of transcultural and discursive leadership studies.

Implications for Further Research

The most immediate implication for additional research is an expanded version of the current study. As I will discuss in greater detail in the section on limitations, the present study had a relatively low number of participants. Consequently, the best I could hope to accomplish was the fleshing out of some grounded hypotheses that would serve as the basis for additional research in the future. This study's design and methods would benefit from a greater number of participants from each of the four included cultures, a greater diversity of demographics (age, educational background, socioeconomic status, etc.) within each cultural group, and inclusion of more cultural groups.

An increase in the number of research studies that incorporate discourse analysis as a complement to qualitative interviews, and/or survey-based quantitative or qualitative inquiry, would also be beneficial. As the literature review I provided in chapter two strongly suggests, there has been a long-running reliance on psychologically based inquiry in both leadership and (trans)cultural studies. The overriding tendency has been to rely, often solely, on participants' descriptions of cultural practices and dynamics as they relate to whatever phenomena are at study. I do not mean to suggest that well designed studies of this type do not or cannot provide meaningful and robust findings and results. I simply believe that discourse analysis offers, at a minimum, a different kind of window that can perhaps be more direct in capturing what actually happens in group interactions, and can therefore either be an excellent tool for triangulation purposes, or offer opportunities to productively problematize findings from participants' (re)constructions of events and phenomena.

In addition to increasing the number of studies incorporating discourse analysis methods into their design and analysis, increased diversity of the discursive features being studied is also important and would be beneficial. Such movements are already underway, but in still relatively small numbers. The discourse features that were the focal point of the present study were inspired, in part, by the work of Walker and Aritz (2014). Aritz, Walker, and colleagues have more recently shifted their focus to the discursive functions of questions in the organizational context (Aritz & Walker et al., 2017). This is an exciting and necessary trajectory in discursive leadership studies, and one that will benefit from additional mass and momentum.

It would also be beneficial to augment the scope and diversity of transcultural research efforts. The present study had as one of its challenges the almost total lack of existing research on one of its four participant groups, Afghan culture. Increased scholarly intent to engage with and conduct research designed to better understand cultural groups that remain understudied is needed in order to achieve greater equilibrium and depth in transcultural studies and theory building.

Beyond integrating more world cultures, especially those that have received little to no serious scholarly attention, it is also important that more research designs deliberately account for potential generational and gender differences, among others. To be certain, I am sensitive to the challenges involved with pursuing, much less achieving, an optimally diverse participant pool, particularly when working with minority groups. Nonetheless, as the present study makes clear, it is important that there be more research that intentionally sets out to address questions of intergenerational and inter-gender differences in transcultural norms and practices.

Less focus on cultures in isolation is also needed. The most comprehensive research studies in recent years, Hofstede (2002) and House and Javidan et al. (2004), have sought to describe a large cross-section of the beliefs and practices of the world's cultures in the context of their own societies. Said another way, they set out to capture how Iranians think and act while working with their fellow Iranians. This is valuable, and perhaps even a necessary pre-cursor to the kind of research undertaken in the present study. What is also true, however, is that the world is increasingly globalized, with fewer societies functioning in isolation from others. More research focusing on cultures in contact is absolutely vital to understanding and proposing meaningful contributions to the ever more transcultural world in which we live.

By extension, additional research on (im)migrant cultures and the assimilation processes and challenges that they face is also needed. Less than a handful of the research studies I reviewed in chapter two had (im)migrant populations as their central focus, despite the fact that (im)migration has been steeply on the rise in the world's largest economies for over a decade. Largely ignoring the linguistic and cultural challenges faced by (im)migrant populations and the societies into which they seek to integrate is simply no longer a viable option. Particularly if the intention is to conduct research that is in genuine dialogue with the realities and needs of the world it purportedly seeks to explore and better understand.

Perhaps the most important, and challenging, need in transcultural and leadership studies, particularly those that would integrate discourse analysis into their design, is for more studies conducted in naturalistic contexts. Although studies that use discourse analysis to explore culturally diverse organizational dynamics are modestly on the rise,

very few of them have been able to be conducted in actual organizational settings, often taking place instead in fully to partially contrived contexts. In this respect, Clyne (1994) is still a standout as one of a very few expansive research efforts on the topics of transcultural communication and group interaction conducted in an actual workplace setting. As traditional barriers between the worlds of academia and private industry continue to be blurred and break down, more researchers need to create and leverage opportunities to conduct their research in actual contemporary workplaces. The current study represents a kind of hybrid, wherein a semi-professional setting—a teacher professionalization program—taking place on a university campus was able to be leveraged into a research site opportunity. This unfortunately tilts the participant population toward the educational sector, something that is not unexpected for a program conducted on a college or university campus. Nonetheless, it does offer a potentially increased naturalness that group interactions studied in a laboratory context may not have.

Implications for Practice

Although this study's research questions and central intent were not to explore or generate practical implications per se, its findings do suggest some potential implications for improved practice for teams and leaders in the culturally diverse workplace. For instance, the finding that monocultural teams may encounter barriers to all participants having high degrees of participation and engagement is important for leaders and managers to bear in mind. Although, as I outlined in chapter two, there is a good amount of research that suggests that diverse teams can experience performance challenges as well (Earley & Gibson, 2002; Earley and Mosakoski, 2000; Franklin, 2007; Jehn,

Northcraft, & Neale, 1999; Ravlin, Thomas, & Ilsev, 2000), the present study's findings strongly support the idea that simply reducing team diversity is not a solution by itself.

An additional practical implication suggested by this study's findings is for majority culture leaders and managers to seek opportunities to talk, one on one or in small groups, with team members whose culture of origin is different from their own. The insights gathered from the qualitative interviews I conducted were indispensable for making sense of the video-recorded group decision making meetings and the discourse data generated in them. Asking genuine and open questions of employees from societies other than the U.S., preferably questions intended to gauge the employees' understanding of how they can best contribute and function within the U.S. professional context, is a potentially valuable practice for leaders and teammates in culturally diverse workplaces. At a minimum it could build greater within-team rapport, and beyond that it might offer important information for leaders to more accurately interpret those team members' actions, words, and work products.

A third, and final, implication for improved practice that the current study offers is the need for increased focus on training and professional development opportunities for employees whose cultural backgrounds are outside the U.S. context. Although almost all of the participants in the current study indicated that they believed they understood the way teamwork and communication are most frequently conducted in the U.S., once they were put into same culture groups, their behavior did not appear to reflect that understanding.

I do not mean to suggest that workers from non-U.S. cultural backgrounds absolutely must adopt preferred U.S. practices in order to be successful contributors in

U.S. workplaces, though it does make sense that doing so at least to an extent would be advisable. Rather, I am suggesting that it would be helpful for all employees, regardless of their cultural backgrounds, to be more mindful, aware, and deliberate about the cultural influences on their workplace behaviors. The purpose of such training would be that employees are better positioned to make conscious choices, as opposed to unconsciously adhering to invisible, but powerful, cultural scripts. The present study is not alone in making such an implication. The work of Hall Haley and Ferro (2011) on challenges faced by Arabic and Chinese teachers transitioning into the U.S. educational context also found that mere awareness of the different cultural norms at play was not sufficient in and of itself to meaningfully impact individuals' behavior or practice.

Limitations

Although this study did generate a number of salient and compelling findings, it also is beset with a number of limitations. One of the most immediately obvious limitations is apparent in the relatively small number of participants. Working with data from only 12 participants overall, and only two to four representatives of each of the four cultural groups involved, does not allow for transferable, much less generalizable, transcultural knowledge. At best, a few somewhat grounded hypotheses have been generated that will, hopefully, be able to tested and revised by future research efforts.

A second limitation can be attributed to selection effects that may very well have influenced the findings and resultant hypotheses that this research was able to produce. Only 13 of the 17 total STARTALK workshop participants opted in to this study, with one person from each of the four cultural groups electing not to participate and one of the 13 providing data that was not relevant and in most ways was unusable for the study's

purposes. It is impossible to know how participation by the four individuals who opted out of the study might have changed the nature of the data collected, and it would be irresponsible to assume that it would not have done so.

Selection effects also create a third limitation in this research. All 12 participants were aspiring or already established language teachers, and their educational level exceeded, on average, that of their corresponding immigrant communities. As such, it is certainly possible, and perhaps even probable, that a similar study conducted with other subgroups from the same cultural backgrounds would have yielded different data and findings.

A fourth limitation derives from three aspects of the study's design. By conducting in-depth one on one interviews with all 12 participants in advance of their participation in the group decision-making meetings, it is possible that I primed them to think and behave somewhat differently than they otherwise might have. Although the better part of a full week passed between the one on one interviews and the group sessions, this does not fully negate the possibility that participants' thoughts and actions in the sessions were influenced by what was discussed in their interviews.

Secondly, the order of the same and mixed culture sessions may have influenced participants' behavior in the sessions. It is possible that participants' increased participation levels in the mixed culture sessions were partly due to their increased familiarity with the task at hand. Although the mixed culture session task was not identical to the task assigned in the same culture meetings, the two tasks were highly similar in nature. It is not possible to be certain that a similar participation dynamic, where participation rates increased across the board from the same to mixed culture

sessions, would have existed had the mixed culture meetings preceded the same culture ones.

Lastly, there is the fact that the same culture meetings were conducted, for the most part, in English rather than in participants' first languages. Although it would not have been feasible to do it otherwise, given the complications associated with doing discourse analysis on translations of participant speech, it is possible that having to speak a second language (English) with one's fellow first language speakers of Arabic, Chinese, Dari, or Persian impacted the discourse produced in the same culture sessions.

It is also the case that extrapolating participants' comments and behavior, as captured in a professional development workshop, to their probable opinions and actions as they would unfold in an actual workplace setting is almost certainly not a straight one-to-one proposition. It is at the very least possible that all of this study's participants would behave somewhat differently in similar situations in an actual workplace where their time and efforts are being compensated.

A sixth limitation present in this research can be found in my own professional role at the center where the study was carried out. Although it was not advertised or made explicit to the participants, it was also not a secret that I was Managing Director of the center and co-Principal Investigator on the STARTALK program in which they were participating. Some portion of the 13 participants who opted in to the study may have done so, wholly or in part, because they knew that I held an influential position at the center. Additionally, it is possible that their responses to my questions in the one on one interviews were in some way influenced by their potential knowledge of my role. Although I went to as many lengths as I could to de-emphasize my role and mitigate its

potential impact on the nature of the data that was collected, it is not possible to assume that it had no effect on this research.

Significance

The limitations I have outlined thus far notwithstanding, this research study makes some important contributions to the field of transcultural leadership studies. First, by incorporating participants from Afghan culture (the Dari teacher group), this study has given significant scholarly attention to a heavily understudied group. This research is also among the very few scholarly studies to examine the challenges that immigrants face in their efforts to assimilate successfully to the U.S. professional context. Many studies of immigrants in the U.S. have tended to look at the challenges that immigrants' arrival and presence generate. Those studies are also important, but not more so than ones that take the approach that this research does. By giving these individuals the opportunity to describe many aspects of their cultures experiences in their own words, rather than by selecting from among pre-determined choices on a survey created by Western researchers, their perspectives and practices are inherently privileged and highlighted in a way that they otherwise would not be.

This study also makes an important contribution to the still very emergent domain of discursive leadership studies. By also integrating a transcultural communication aspect, it is among just a handful of serious scholarly endeavors that have engaged with the very pressing 21st century issues of the evolving nature of both leadership and transcultural communication. This research, along with that of Clyne (1994), and Walker and Aritz (2014, 2017) contributes to the growing body of studies that highlight the significant potential of discourse analysis to complement and support other prevalent

research paradigms in the fields of leadership and transcultural studies. Despite its proof of concept nature, the fact that this study integrated four generally understudied cultural groups in the leadership and culture literature lends it that much more significance for ongoing scholarly efforts to better define, assess, and cultivate transcultural communicative competence and effective leadership practice.

Finally, the specific methodology employed in this study has potentially great significance for the scholarly study of both transcultural communication and leadership-related phenomena. The discourse analysis data in this study was triangulated with data generated through qualitative interviewing and vice versa. The intent was to examine what participants said in the interview context and triangulate that with their actual behavior while engaging in real-life activities. This is particularly important for leadership and transcultural studies research given the possibility that interviewees may say what they think researchers want to hear, or even what they themselves prefer to believe, regarding their own behavioral tendencies and preferences, or those of others. This kind of response bias can easily occur in studies focused on transcultural communication and leadership. This is perhaps especially true when research participants from cultures different from the one where the research is taking place have a solid conceptual understanding of the cultural differences that are at play. The concern in such a case is that participants may want to appear to abide by new cultural norms, even while they may psychologically adhere to the norms of their culture(s) of origin. The discourse analysis methods applied in this study can significantly mitigate the risks that response bias can present to getting robust, patently actionable findings from research efforts in leadership and transcultural studies.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A**Informed Consent Form**

Informed Consent Form

Invitation to Participate: You are being asked to participate in a study of Leadership and Communication Practices in the 21st Century Global Workplace.

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to better understand the way some teachers from nations other than the United States define constructs such as leadership, authority, teamwork, and effective communication in professional interactions in the US workplace context.

Procedures: The contents of the consent form including the purpose and steps involved in data collection will be explained to you in English, and/or your native language, upon request. Data will be collected through two conversational interviews, which will be video/audio recorded, and two group decision-making tasks in which you will participate. Anticipated time commitment, outside the bounds of your participation in the STARTALK Teacher Training program, on your part is not expected to exceed 30 minutes.

Risks: There is minimal to no risk to you for participating in this study.

Cost and Financial Risks: There will be no charge to you for this research study.

Benefits: The study will contribute to better understanding of how people with varying cultural backgrounds define leadership-related constructs and communicate in

professional settings. The findings will be presented to educators and administrators in order to discuss how to foment better communication practices in professional teams with members of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Additionally, all participants will receive a \$25 Amazon gift card, regardless of whether they fully complete all study activities or not.

Confidentiality: A password-protected computer will be used during the data collection to store data. No hard copies of notes will be used or kept. In addition, no identifiable information, such as legal name or address, will be requested from you in this study.

Furthermore, every attempt will be made by the researcher(s) to maintain all information collected in this study strictly confidential, except as may be required by court order or by law.

Disclaimer/Withdrawal: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time for any reason.

Subject Rights: If you wish further information regarding your rights as a research participant, or if you have any questions or concerns pertaining to your participation in this study you may contact Mr. Chris Brown at 619-618-9139.

Conclusion: You have read, or had explained to you in your native language, and understood this consent form. You have been given the opportunity to ask questions and

have had them answered to your satisfaction. You agree to participate voluntarily in this research study. Upon signing below, you will receive a copy of the consent form.

First Name of Participant

Signature of Participant

Project Director and Principal Investigator

Chris Brown

APPENDIX B**Semi-structured Interview Guide**

Leadership

1. How do you believe leadership is defined in your country of origin?
 - a. What does it look like in practice?
2. How do you believe leadership is defined in the United States?
 - a. What does it look like in practice?

****** If differences are raised, ask WHY they think those differences exist?

3. How do you personally define leadership?

Do you feel one of the national definitions more strongly influences your personal definition? Why?

Authority

1. How do you believe authority is defined in your country of origin?
 - a. What does it look like in practice?
 - b. Why is it the same as/different from the definition of leadership?
2. How do you believe authority is defined in the United States?
 - a. What does it look like in practice here?
 - b. Why is it the same as/different from the definition of leadership?
3. How do you personally define authority?

Team Work

3. Same progression as above

Communication

4. Same progression as above.

Experience

5. Is there a particular incident or story from your home culture that comes to your mind when you think about leadership, authority, teamwork, and/or professional communication?
6. What have you observed or experienced in U.S. culture that, in your view, exemplifies what a U.S. native might think about leadership, authority, teamwork, etc.
7. What impact do you think some of these differing definitions of leadership, authority, and teamwork can have a multicultural working environment? Does it ever create a hindrance? Can it be viewed as a positive thing?

APPENDIX C**Analytic Memos**

Arabic_1M

Leadership

You indicated that leadership as a construct and a capability is not as "popular" in Lebanon/the Arab world as in the U.S., and that it isn't something that is really focused on or directly taught in educational programs there either, so it is not something that people in Lebanese/Arab cultures are very familiar with.

However, you also indicated that Lebanese culture is comparatively more open than other Arab cultures, which you believe would make it easier for Lebanese people to adapt to U.S./Western working cultures.

You said you preferred the more open, less hierarchical U.S. approach to leadership compared with the more directive, top-down way it tends to be handled in Arab/Levantine culture. You made the contrast between a leader and a boss, and said that in Lebanese/Arab culture people with positional authority behave more like bosses, just giving orders and such, than leaders who would also encourage followers and even provide assistance and support to them in their work.

Authority

One example with regard to authority in Arab culture is nurses and doctors. You felt that nurses here in the U.S. are more respected and "listened to" by doctors than in Arab/Lebanese cultures.

You equated authority directly to power, and indicated that you see it as being relatively similar across most all world cultures. You also equated it to educatedness, which

reinforces the point above about doctors being unwilling to listen to nurses in Arab culture, given their relatively higher level of education.

You also clearly stated that you don't think authority is inherently positive or negative, that it depends on how it is exercised, and that you don't believe one needs authority in order to be a leader or enact some form of leadership.

Teamwork

You said that you don't think that teamwork, while it exists in Lebanese/Arab culture, is very prevalent or highly common compared with in the U.S.

Teamwork in a more Westernized Arab country, like Lebanon, may be more similar to teamwork in the U.S. than in other Arab countries, like Iraq, for example. Also, people in Arab culture, Lebanon in particular, are more communally focused than people here in the individualistic U.S., which means that people there are more likely to help a teammate out without thinking of what they may get in return or as a result, although you did describe this as something of a "sacrifice" and tied it to relationships like "brother" or "friend" and not just "teammate." This made me wonder if there is still more of a sense of collaboration and workplace dynamics being more of a "zero-sum" game in Arab culture, meaning that in order for one individual or group to "win," someone else has to sacrifice, or "lose" in some way. Nonetheless, you indicated that these points may mean that Arab people coming from Lebanon might not have as much difficulty adapting to U.S. working culture as might people from other Arab countries.

You also talked about how, in the Lebanese hospital system at least, more U.S. and Western ways of doing things, including working more in teams, is being implemented all the time, and that it is a good fit with many existing elements of Lebanese culture. It is also important, in Arab/Lebanese culture, to avoid even the appearance of having made a mistake, or being overtly fallible. You observed that this does not seem to be the case in U.S. culture, that making mistakes here is sometimes even viewed as positive and/or necessary, which may create a more collaborative kind of environment.

You provided the example of when you were in school as a child, you really enjoyed being put into groups for collaborative work, because the sense of competition you felt toward your teammates taught you how to manage things.

You further indicated that, although a leaderless team kind of situation might be functional in Lebanese culture, you feel that there still needs to be some kind of authority figure associated with a team or group to manage some logistical things like time, individual and group responsibilities, and so on, in order for things to go really well.

Communication

Communication in Lebanese culture tends to be more open and flexible than other Arab cultures, partly because of the relatively higher level of Westernization, though this is situationally and topic dependent.

You also did indicate that gender lines can impede some open communication in Arab/Lebanese teams or groups, since there are some things that can't be talked about between men and women, due to both culture and religion.

You felt that the language barrier might be the biggest challenge Lebanese/Arab people would face in adapting to workplace communication practices in the U.S.

Arabic_2F

Leadership

You indicated that the educational traditions are different in the Arab world/Morocco and the U.S. seem to differ markedly in terms of the more teacher-centric approach and structure in Morocco, versus a more learner-centric approach in the U.S. You drew a comparison between the roles of "teacher" and "leader," and indicated that the Moroccan/Arab model sets the teacher up as sole formal authority, and puts a premium on being "right" at all times, or facing ridicule for being publicly wrong. You expanded on this by saying that leaders in Moroccan/Arab culture need to project strong authority in an effort to be feared, and loved if possible, but feared and revered above all else, and that this is what creates stability in Arab cultures.

You went on to depict leadership as a role in Moroccan culture that can project egocentrism and arrogance, almost by necessity. You used phrases such as "I am the best" and "I know everything," and subordinates just need to follow the rules as the leader sets them, to characterize what you see as typical Moroccan/Arab leader attitudes. You also described leadership as something that "always starts from the top" in Arab cultures and indicated that this expectation is observed by both leaders and followers, even though it creates a very restrictive position for subordinates.

You also explained that these effects can be somewhat diminished in certain professional contexts where all, or most, hold higher levels of education, but that such situations are still far from the norm in Middle Eastern/Arab cultures. You also indicated that you believe the U.S. style of leadership, engaging followers and seeking their input rather than just telling them what to do, is more effective. You also stated that globalization

may be gradually creating some change in Arab cultures, as certain private businesses and banks, that must deal with the West and other cultures, may be influenced to an extent and slowly are starting to change their perspectives and practices.

Following up on the professor-to-student dynamic described below, you indicated that you see leadership in the U.S. as more shared, between those governing and those governed, than in Moroccan/Arab cultures, where you see it as more individually held and based more on the power of one's ideas than on their given position.

You described the follower-leader dynamic in Arab/Moroccan culture as one where followers look to a leader as the person who will take the blame for any mistakes that are made. You emphasized this as one of the major functions of leadership in Arab/Moroccan culture. You even went so far as to indicate that followers would feel indifferent to their leaders' mistakes as long as the leader took the responsibility for it, although you admitted in a follow-up response that a leader openly recognizing a mistake and taking responsibility would be unusual in Arab culture.

Authority

When I asked you what hearing the word authority in the Middle Eastern context makes you think of you said "Dictatorship."

You made note of how the U.S. system of society and governance appears more stable with less centralized authority than those in Morocco and much of the Arab world. You particularly noted the right to free speech that is so central to U.S. society, and the prevalence of the rule of law, rather than the rule of a particular leader figure or figures.

You further connected the lack of political and social stability in Morocco and in other Arab countries to the reliance on top-down, or unilateral authority by those in positions of power/leadership. You contrasted this with the relatively stable democracy and rule of law in U.S. society and culture.

You indicated that the general trade-off that is both spoken and unspoken in Moroccan/Arab culture is that people must choose between either freedom and security. Authority can either make you free (as in to express yourself), or it can make you safe, but not both.

You further described the effect of the above as being a situation in which most, or many, people in Arab cultures do not feel free to "be themselves."

Related to the above notion of how subordinates just need to "follow the rules," you connected the method of education to this, pointing out how everything is based on rote memorization rather than critical thinking. You contrasted this with the U.S. culture where there does not tend to be a single, central authority who dictates things to the whole team, also noting that there tends to be more listening done by leaders/authority figures in U.S. culture than in Arab culture, due to the greater emphasis in U.S. culture on critical thinking and group problem solving.

You repeatedly signalled one primary difference between U.S. and Arab cultures being that in the U.S. we have the rule of law, and that the laws are really the authority, whereas individual people are the authority in the Arab world. The result of this, as you see it, is that people in the U.S. culture can lead even without position power because the ultimate position power is in the laws themselves, and the clear right/wrong dichotomy that they create.

Teamwork

You indicated that teamwork is not a natural construct in Arab/Moroccan culture, and that even you can sometimes find the implementation of it in U.S. culture confusing.

You said that teamwork, though still not perhaps a prevalent and deeply embraced concept in Moroccan/Arab culture, does exist more now than before, suggesting that it is on the rise, but that it is still more prevalent in U.S. culture than in Arab culture.

When I asked about the reason for teamwork not being prevalent in Arab/Middle Eastern cultures, you discussed how the culture influences the way people think, and alluded to it just not being likely that a group of Arab people would be able to get into a team, have everyone openly share their thoughts and ideas and take notes on the group discussion.

You later went on to say simply that you don't perceive people from Arab cultures to be "good team workers."

Communication

You also indicated that someone who has no other cultural influences other than those coming from the Moroccan/Arab cultural context would probably have a significant number of challenges adapting to the U.S. culture.

You said that you, personally, prefer a more open communication and that, even when you were younger and living in Morocco, you wanted to be allowed to question things and express your own opinions. You indicated that in this way, the U.S. system makes more sense to you, since you see significantly more freedom here for people in a "lower" position to still express their opinions and even disagreement with formal authority. You

also noted, however, that when you were new to the U.S. and trying to adapt to the culture, you didn't feel the need to openly disagree with things that you didn't like. You also said that maybe other people from a similar background to your own would react differently and would possibly be more likely to resist or complain about cultural differences.

When I asked you if someone coming from Moroccan/Arab culture would be receptive to the idea of being invited to give their supervisor/boss feedback, particularly of the constructive kind, you indicated that it would be a shocking, perhaps even offputting, thing to be invited/expected to do for a Moroccan/Arab person. You noted that it could even create unwanted misunderstandings, even if advice is given well-meaningly, and that this can create a sense of needing to be very careful in giving input, feedback, or advice to others.

You observed that, in your experience here in the U.S., there is more of a tendency for people to welcome each other's opinions, even across boundaries of hierarchy and authority. You gave the example of university professors being open to their students' opinions, even when they differ from their own. You seem to ascribe this to the emphasis on critical thinking in U.S. culture, as opposed to the lack of it in Arab cultures, where rote memorization and being just up or down graded by teachers is more the norm, and where real dialogue and appreciation for "outside of the box" thinking simply don't occur often, if at all.

In Moroccan/Arab culture, you said that colleagues openly giving feedback/input to each other may not be understood as such, due to what you described as mostly attempts by people to show that they are superior to one another, and that this is often met by

resistance from peers because they also operate under the idea that they are "the best" and that, out of stubbornness they would not want to let anyone tell them that they should change or try to improve.

Challenges

You indicated that the changes you experienced coming to U.S. culture, particularly in the academic and workplace environments, were a bit shocking at first, in particular being able to challenge established opinions, speak your mind, and just talk to your boss in a bottom-line kind of way (you gave the example of being able to tell your boss that you need to take a day off and giving your reasons why).

Chinese_1F

Much of what is talked about below is couched in the idea that generational difference is very significant in Chinese culture as a driver of how people will think, talk, and act with respect to leadership, authority, teamwork, and communication.

Leadership

The notion of balance, yin and yang, is foundational to a successful approach to leadership in Chinese culture. You brought this up more than once as also being your preferred style, both when you lead and when you follow. As a boss or a leader, be strong, but from a place of knowing your team, talking to them, and not just trying to lead through power.

However, many leaders in Chinese culture may think that their only role is to be directive (i.e. telling people what to do), and blaming them for their mistakes, as well as for the leader's own mistakes. Also, leaders appear to have more power (this was mentioned a few times), even of the sometimes arbitrary type, in Chinese culture, setting not only agendas and priorities, but also employee salaries. In the end "the leader is the leader," which is to say, not part of the group, but instead set apart. Again, however, this may be changing gradually with the rise of a younger generation to positions of authority and influence.

Conversely, in U.S. culture, leaders appear to continue to participate in tasks and work, sometimes at the same level as their subordinates. While this is not impossible in Chinese culture, it appears to be less common. While Chinese leaders may see their positional

power as a justification for doing less work than their subordinates, U.S. leaders appear to tend to view it as a rationale for working harder.

Older generations in China may just expect a leader to be the most qualified, or capable in a given area. The younger generations would expect this also, but may also want to see a leader who manages communication and relationships, especially complex relationships, well. This may be because younger Chinese people possess, on average, a higher level of education, and so expect more from their leaders.

Chinese people may tend to see U.S. workers as very rule driven. Meaning that, the rules as stated and the rules in fact may be much more similar in U.S. culture than in Chinese culture.

Authority

Highly variable according to context/situation. It boils down to who has more currency in the given situation. An accomplished researcher in a university context, for instance, would hold more authority than someone less well published.

Teamwork

Teamwork in Chinese culture is important, but only seems to work well and efficiently if team members are generally like-minded. If two team members are not like-minded, they will most probably need a third, more authoritative (in terms of knowledge or experience) team member to settle their disagreement and make a decision in order for things to move forward. Failing this designated authority, a lack of team consensus can devolve into a

simple "war of attrition" or a "who can hold out longest" type of scenario, rather than an ongoing discussion and evaluation of the best idea(s) and way forward.

Also, since disagreement in Chinese culture appears to diminish communication as opposed to driving it, letting people work in teams without a final, designated authority to make decisions and move the group's work forward is likely to be a waste of time and effort, as team members won't be likely to work through difference on their own. The importance of common beliefs/ideas among team members was mentioned multiple times as determinant of team functionality.

Mistakes can be recovered from in Chinese working culture, but it may be harder to do so than in U.S. culture, which may make being seen as having made a mistake far less desirable. The problematic nature of monetary rewards for individual and team achievements in Chinese culture can be at cross-purposes with real teamwork as it can create additional competition between team members.

Teamwork in Chinese culture also may look really different than in U.S. culture simply due to raw numbers, meaning that if average team size in U.S. culture is 4-6, it may be more like 18-20 in Chinese culture, which makes group decision-making look really different.

Communication

Communication in Chinese culture between leaders and followers may be less open, frequent, and direct than in U.S. culture because of the greater power imbalance between leaders and followers in Chinese culture.

Silence or non-responsiveness is used more frequently in Chinese culture to indicate unhappiness/displeasure, compared with in U.S. culture.

The biggest challenge in adapting to U.S. working culture for a Chinese person would probably just be proficiency and accuracy of expression in English.

Another feature of the way communication is done differently in Chinese culture could be influenced by China's relatively large population. The reality of having to potentially communicate and deal with the problems of a large numbers of people pushes leaders to become perhaps more expeditious and less inclusive in their style. It also complicates group interactions and teamwork since trying to plan for a team meeting wherein all team members would, ideally, contribute is not as common in Chinese culture because teams will tend to be much larger in China than in the U.S. for instance.

A lot of "real" communication in Chinese culture may go on outside the formal meeting, or be postponed until after the meeting, so as to avoid putting people on the spot and/or potentially causing them to lose "face."

This is not to say that Chinese teammates can't at times speak directly to each other on a one-to-one basis, only that more care is taken to avoid loss of face for the other person than in U.S. culture. There is also a tendency in Chinese culture, however, to simply not talk to someone with whom you do not agree about a given topic.

The story about the Chinese girl staying with a U.S. host family and not getting dinner one day because they only asked her once (too early in the day) if she was hungry, seems to suggest that when there is a power imbalance, the person who is "up" may need to work harder than they expect to get the person who is "down" to talk about their needs or problems.

Chinese_2F

Leadership

You believe that the enactment of leadership, managing and directing people to do work, is very similar between U.S. and Chinese cultures, but that the way people get to become leaders here is markedly different.

In U.S. culture, one can rise to a position of leadership, or simply be regarded as a leader, based on the merits of their work or accomplishments. But not in Chinese culture, where one needs to be chosen by existing authority structures and there isn't, or wasn't while she was living in China, any programmatic teaching of leadership skills to people with the idea that they would naturally rise to such positions. This is particularly true in the older generation. Younger people in China now may tend to see education more as a pathway to positions of leadership and authority.

So, you believe that the conceptualization of leadership between U.S. and Chinese cultures is really quite different, even if the day-to-day practical understanding of it is fairly similar.

You have found U.S.-based supervisors to be very friendly and respectful, even "easygoing," perhaps in some contrast to what can be "typical" in Chinese culture.

You said that real leadership is when a person can organize a group through the power of suggestion and getting people to agree with your opinions, rather than through simple authoritarian command. If people ignore your opinions, that means you are not a leader.

You also indicated that political corruption is perhaps greater in China, giving the example of the governor in China who would use public money to have a bridge built, and then make sure the contract went to his brother-in-law, for example. You believe that

if that happened in the U.S., it would mean the person would not have a chance at being re-elected. In China, however, it might not have the same impact.

You indicated that, in your view, leadership in Chinese culture is a product of having formal authority.

One big difference that you highlighted in the notion of leadership (and authority) between U.S. and Chinese cultures in the parent-child relationship. You said your children get upset when they perceive you as "commanding" them; that they get really frustrated and complain. This makes her think that American parents must be more on the side of suggesting things to their children than commanding them to do, or not to do, things.

Authority

You felt that authority is treated very differently between U.S. and Chinese cultures.

Formal authority, particularly in Chinese politics, is very centralized. Even when it looks like the core political leadership is doing something in response to the will of the people or the political opposition, it may just be a ruse to distract from what they are actually doing.

Here in the U.S., you said that you see authority is more granted to leaders, not just political ones, by the people (their followers).

You expressed that formal or positional authority is tied directly to leadership in Chinese culture, meaning that one gets a position of authority, and that is having leadership.

However, you also agreed with the idea that Chinese authority figures may not view their authority as being contingent on being accountable to, or responsible for, their followers.

Authority based on age or social station (parent, older relative, etc.) is pretty absolute, and you don't get to openly question it, nor do parents expect to be openly questioned by their children.

Teamwork

You indicated that teamwork might work similarly in U.S. and Chinese cultures, in that Chinese teams should not need a designated authority present to monitor and mediate their work.

You said that work teams in Chinese culture would not be anywhere near as likely as American teams to have lunches together where they would discuss their personal lives or individual interests with each other, unless they were already very close, personal friends. Otherwise, the tendency would be to either not talk at all, or only talk about work-related issues. You gave the example of a slightly older Chinese colleague who joined your American team and was very taken aback that other team members would ask the boss personal questions, based on his philosophy that if someone wants to tell you something, they will do so. You said that this is reflective of a common mindset in Chinese culture.

In Chinese culture, if disagreement between peers cannot be resolved, you said a typical Chinese response might be to just say "okay, do it your way and let reality teach you that you are wrong" as a way of washing one's hands of the situation and avoiding accountability for the probable failure.

Communication

In Chinese culture, if a subordinate doesn't agree with their boss/supervisor, they will most likely just say "okay" and go along with their supervisor, rather than risk expressing dissent. If they agree, then they will, logically, respond more enthusiastically. The result of this dynamic can be that follower will agree with a leader to their face, and then go do something different.

You said you thought that Americans are actually less direct than Chinese are when they want to manage disagreement. I posited that Americans might just say "No, I don't agree" to a peer or even a supervisor, but you felt that Americans would say something more like, "Okay, but what about this other way," and that Chinese would actually disagree more in the way I said, if they were going to express disagreement at all, and that the disagreement level between peers would actually be more likely to escalate and become unpleasant in Chinese culture than in American culture.

You said that English can be a big barrier to some Chinese immigrants participating actively in workplace communication, because they would not want to speak out too much and possibly make mistakes or look "bad" in others' eyes.

But beyond just the language challenge, you indicated that the different way of thinking about leadership, authority, teamwork, and communication in U.S. culture compared with Chinese culture could be the biggest challenge that Chinese people working in the U.S. could face.

Chinese_3F

Leadership

You defined leadership, based on your previous experience in Chinese culture, as getting to know one's team, motivating and encouraging them all to work together to achieve joint goals.

One difference you note in Chinese versus U.S. culture is that there is more effort toward dialogue and consensus building in U.S. working culture than in Chinese culture, where once leadership has made up its mind, that's the end of the discussion. People may still be allowed to indicate disagreement, but it won't impact actions taken or not taken.

You indicated that you see the more "first among equals" mindset toward what differentiates a leader from followers in U.S. culture, and you said that is not the same in Chinese culture, where the boss is the boss, and that distinction remains consistently clear.

Authority

Authority in Chinese culture can be the product of superior experience, knowledge or age, even if one does not have formalized positional authority granting them leadership.

Usually, younger, less experienced peers will respect this informal kind of authority.

You noted that one way that Chinese followers recognize authority is through giving really nice gifts. You highlighted the difference between this practice in Chinese culture and in the U.S., where she says she has seen subordinates give low value or low effort gifts to bosses as a kind of formality, and that this would not work in Chinese culture.

You further noted that people are not encouraged to challenge authority in Chinese culture. You indicated that, of course, some still choose to do it, but that it is not well looked upon in general. Conversely, you said you had observed what you see as a more receptive approach in U.S. culture, relative to Chinese culture, to soliciting and listening to subordinates' opinions and needs.

You also emphasized that demonstrating unwavering respect to formal authority is a must in Chinese professional culture. Building a positive follower-leader relationship is based more on always showing proper respect than on other factors.

Teamwork

You see teamwork in Chinese and U.S. cultures as being largely similar, with just some minor differences, some of which have to do with prevalent communicative and social styles in each culture.

Also, similar to in U.S. culture, you indicated that in peer teams in Chinese culture a pseudo-leader will usually emerge based on the nature of the project and whomever may have called the (initial) meeting. Or the group will organically appoint a leader, as there seems to be a perceived need for one voice to keep things on track.

Also, you agreed that there may be less within-group trust in Chinese culture, especially if team members feel that they all share common interests and goals, and so may have to compete with each other. You gave the specific example of how team members would be particularly guarded about their ideas and unique contributions on a high-profile project that could result in strong performers receiving a promotion.

You extended this viewpoint in describing how, in Chinese culture, if a team meeting is held with no formal leader/authority present, people would not be likely to fully share their viewpoints/ideas/opinions with each other, nor would they expect their peers to do so.

Communication

You noted that being very talkative or sociable in Chinese culture can earn one the label of being a "show-off." Or even when one is feeling like expressing a strong opinion and possibly assuming a leadership/informal authority role, there can be sense of push-back (external and internal cultural pressure) to conform to the expectation of staying "humble and low-key" in keeping with Chinese cultural norms.

There is also tendency in Chinese culture to be more careful in one's communications with others, unless they are very close and trusted friends. You noted that the bar for being considered trustworthy in U.S. culture seems to be lower as her American friends are "always very happy to share," even personal details. Chinese people will not want to make a mistake in making assumptions about other people's true thoughts or feelings.

You also indicated that language can be a significant barrier to Chinese professionals integrating themselves into the U.S. workplace. You gave the example of being the only non-American teacher in your school, and sometimes feeling a disconnect with your colleagues, particularly around their use of humor when talking about some students or other work-related things. You insinuated that your uncertainty regarding what is meant as a joke and what is not can feel like a challenge. You recognized this as a combination of a linguistic and cultural challenge.

As a teacher, you noted that you have seen U.S. teachers communicate their displeasure about things they consider unfair really directly and even aggressively to their supervisors. You say this would not be acceptable in Chinese culture, no matter how unfair one felt something was.

Dari_2F

Leadership

You described leadership in Afghan culture as being all about force and power, and said that everything belongs to the leader as opposed to the followers. You contrasted this with your understanding of leadership in U.S. culture as being more about being a guide and a friend to followers. You also indicated a personal preference for what you perceive to be the prevalent U.S. style.

When I asked you if you believed that leadership without formal authority or position power is possible in the U.S. context, you said you thought it was because of the greater social freedom, rights, and equal status that U.S. residents enjoy compared with Afghan people.

Authority

You indicated that leadership without formal authority or imposing top-down power is only "possible" in Afghan culture within the context of family. You gave the example of parents, which I found interesting because parents are, of course, the original formal authority figures in our lives. However, I suspect you meant that this is the way parents can decide to "lead" their children, but that no formal authority figure in Afghan culture other than one's parents would be likely to choose a softer style.

You also said that most Afghan parents do just "lead" their children from a position of authority and power, but you said that those who take a more "smooth" and "friendly" approach, acting more as guides to their children, may have a better outcome.

Conversely, followers/subordinates can only point out a leader/formal authority's "mistake," or even contradict them, in the most slow, careful, "smooth" way. This seems connected to the premise that communicating respectfully is a core value in Afghan culture.

Teamwork

You said that Afghans could work well together in a team, even with no one being placed formally in charge, unless the stated goal of their teamwork would be likely to have negative consequences for one of the team members, in which case the team would stall or just not work to make progress.

You also said that teamwork, while maybe not prevalent in Afghan society, does exist, though it would not look exactly like teamwork in a U.S. context.

Communication

You emphasized that being respectful and careful in communications, particularly with a superior, is necessary in Afghan culture. You said that in Afghan culture a subordinate would not say anything to their leader about a mistake they were making or something they may be doing "wrong." You framed it in terms of not being the follower/subordinate's "responsibility" to try to address the problem, but rather solely the leader's.

You also described the leader's position as coming with the authorization in Afghan culture to be very direct and controlling in their communication style, saying that they would tend to just give orders and expect them to be followed without question. This

seemed like the opposite of how followers/subordinates are expected to act/communicate.

You also suggested that followers/subordinates would be unlikely to be persuaded or motivated by a peer, or even by intrinsic factors, instead needing to be directed by a formal authority.

You also indicated that peers will put respect first in non-conflictive communications with each other. You said respect comes before everything else in Afghan culture, and you agreed that this could inhibit very productive teamwork where clear communication between team members is important. When I asked if being respectful is more important than being truthful in Afghan culture, you affirmed that statement.

You also made a comment "Maybe they'd say something they have in their heart. They will have a very clean heart, maybe they will give you their idea, but very respectfully" that suggested, to me, that suggested a connection between deeply held emotion or beliefs in an Afghan person and their willingness to communicate openly, but still respectfully, with a teammate or an authority figure. It made me wonder if it might take an Afghan person longer to communicate about certain issues because they would need to get to a point where their emotions were more intense (either positively or negatively) before they would feel compelled to speak their mind.

You acknowledged that questioning a formal authority figure in a direct and open (but still respectful way) would most likely be challenging for Afghan people, because of their culture. You indicated that the first five years in the U.S. for an Afghan immigrant is an intensive transition period.

Challenges

Time required to adjust to the U.S. culture overall, and the working culture in particular.

You indicated that it could take as much as five years in the U.S. before an Afghan immigrant is really ready to work successfully.

You also stated that you believe many people immigrating from African countries and Afghanistan come with emotional "injuries" that can make it more challenging for them to function easily in a workplace, and make it more difficult for others to work with them.

Dari_3F**Leadership**

You used the words "strength and courage" and "pride" and "dignified" to explain how you think leadership is defined in Afghan cultural terms. You also said that for Afghans a leader is someone who can "take control."

When I asked you how you perceive leadership in U.S. culture, you initially connected it with money, power, and white males.

You also connected ethnicity to leadership in Afghan culture, saying that being Pashtun, versus being Tajik as one example, automatically places the Pashtun in a higher position and grants them more possibility to lead and be seen as a leader.

You reflected on your perception that you, as a female, are more empowered to be a leader in U.S. culture (due to what you see as greater social freedom in the U.S.), than in Afghanistan due to politics and conflict there. You described many Afghans as "brainwashed" and "backwards," ascribing it to the influence of the Taliban. You pointed out that, even though there are some women in positions of political authority in Afghanistan, that the society would likely not view them as equivalent to their male peers simply because of their gender.

You also, when connecting leadership to authority in Afghan culture, talked about an "arrogant" mindset, which you then contrasted with your own views on leadership (as an Afghan-American born in the U.S.). You described your view of leadership as being a true teacher, who seeks to learn as much as they instruct, and who gives to their followers without expecting reciprocation and who sees and treats those "below" them as equals.

You later described the arrogant mindset as indicative of a "bad" leader, and the more egalitarian mindset as indicative of a "good" leader.

You also described your personal view of leadership as a complex combination of someone who is an opinionated and fearless truth-teller, who is blunt, not afraid to be wrong, but who is also respectful. I understood this to mean that you see a leader as someone who speaks unvarnished truth to power, but who simultaneously treats peers and followers with respect, in spite of their possible position power offering them the option of not doing so.

Authority

You talked about how religion (Islam) in Afghanistan gets muddled with what I understood to be a patriarchal culture, which creates a conflictive dynamic wherein although religion may not place so many direct restrictions on women's behavior, the patriarchal culture often does.

You also connected authority with age in Afghan culture, in that it is outside the accepted norm for a younger person to challenge or defy an older person.

You connected the Afghan cultural perception of authority to an "arrogant" mindset wherein people below the authority figure have to just listen to and accept whatever they may say or do, and that following this expectation is linked to behaving in what Afghans seem to see as a culturally acceptable manner. To elaborate on this, you gave the example of your parents always assuming, if one of your school teachers raised an issue with your behavior, that you had done something wrong and that the teacher should not

be questioned or challenged. You indicated that this was the residual Afghan cultural influence, in your view.

You associated authority in U.S. culture with the police, and pointed out the paradox of how they are empowered to enforce the rule of law, but that they also can get away with not following those laws themselves.

Teamwork

When I asked about teamwork in Afghan culture, and whether you thought it was possible to have a team with no designated authority, you replied that you thought there always needs to be someone "in charge" in every culture.

You did go on to say that you feel like teamwork and workplace interactions do function differently in U.S. versus Afghan culture due to the greater emphasis on rule of law in U.S. culture, which keeps one person from being able to abuse or take advantage of another with impunity. You connected this back to the relative communicative freedom in U.S. culture, as opposed to the need to maintain respect and composure in Afghan culture.

When you discussed the Afghan emphasis on being hospitable, and offering help and support to others, you described it as a kind of cultural performance that sometimes is not genuine but rather motivated by fear and the expectations that all Afghans must behave and act according to a group mindset of cordial interdependence. You indicated that privately, behind closed doors with family and trusted friends, however, that many Afghans do not really enjoy having to bend to these social expectations. You said you saw it as something sad.

You balanced the above perception, however, with a portrayal of Afghan people as being exceptionally hard-working, collaborative, and determined, particularly when they are given and accept a task. You connected this to their desire to maintain their identity of self-worth and of being perceived as hospitable and positive contributors within their community/society.

Communication

You described Afghan expectations with respect to interaction/communication between Afghans as something that you can sometimes find constraining. You said that Afghans don't want anyone, especially other Afghans, to see them doing anything that could be considered "wrong," which you connected back to the notions of maintaining an image of pride and dignity. You went on to say that, even in the context of the workshop that week, you found yourself modifying your behavior when interacting with the other Afghan participants, and that you were "being more myself" when interacting with the non-Afghan participants. You further described how, when your fellow Afghan participants would speak to you in Dari you would find yourself being even more overtly respectful in your responses, and that it even impacted your body language and gestures.

You expressed what I interpreted as some level of dismay at this realization.

You also discussed how you have seen first-hand times when Afghan people in a workplace setting would decline to speak up against something wrong or unfair out of deference to a boss or authority figure. You clarified that you had seen Afghan people stay completely silent in the face of something with which they did not agree, rather than say anything at all, positive or negative. You also portrayed yourself as someone who

would then go to that Afghan colleague and express your dismay about their silence, and possibly encourage them to speak up. You associated this sense that people can and should speak their mind to authority as something that is more prevalent and encouraged in U.S. culture.

Conversely, you said that a leader or authority figure in Afghan culture would not be at all likely or inclined to seek input or feedback, especially of the critical variety, from their followers/subordinates. This was in response to my portraying seeking critical input from followers as an acceptable leader behavior in U.S. culture.

You also discussed the Afghan cultural priority on being hospitable as a way of conveying respect. You nuanced it as sometimes being "fake," or something that Afghans would maintain publicly while feeling quite different privately. You further described this as tendency in Afghan communication norms where one cannot say whatever they may want to say without the consequence that other Afghans would judge them negatively for stepping outside the restrictive norm of there being what you said was "one way and one way only" of communicating appropriately.

Challenges

You said emphatically that there is a big difference in mindset and behavior between Afghans still living in Afghanistan and those who either came to the U.S. or who were born in the U.S. but raised in an Afghan-American family and/or community.

To illustrate a challenge Afghan immigrants may feel with integrating to U.S. culture you talked about your father and the relatively high status he enjoyed while living and working in Afghanistan, and how that changed when he came to the U.S. and then went

back to Afghanistan to work as an interpreter for the U.S. military. In particular you mentioned that he experienced culture shock because of how other Afghans now looked at him differently (perhaps in a way diminished as an authority figure) as he took orders from Americans.

As in communication above, you saw the Afghan cultural tendency to stay silent in the face of unfair treatment from authority figures as a challenge to their integration into a U.S. workplace context.

Dari_4F**Leadership**

In discussing how leadership differs between Afghanistan and the U.S., you used the words "selfish" and "powerful" to describe leadership in Afghanistan. You said that the most important thing to an Afghan leader is maintaining their high position relative to followers/subordinates.

You further distinguished leadership in the U.S. versus Afghan cultures as something that can be observed in Afghan culture, that a boss or leader will be easy to identify based on the way they talk and carry themselves in Afghan culture, as opposed to the U.S. where it can be difficult to tell who is really "in charge" unless you have some prior knowledge about the situation.

You stated that in Afghan culture a leader can not be seen as having made a mistake, or as having any weakness, because that would, by definition, be outside the scope of what being the "leader" means. Additionally, you said that Afghan leaders would not recognize that they make mistakes, instead upholding a thought process wherein the mistaken individual is the one who openly questions the leader or tries to point out where they think the leader made a mistake. When talking about the mindset of an Afghan leader who will not admit a mistake, your answer made me think of a parent who scolds their children for complaining about the parent, "I provide and I do it the right way." This made me think yet again about potential commonalities between parent-child and leader-follower relationships in Afghan culture.

When I asked how you perceive leadership in U.S. culture, based on your 16 years or so living and working in the U.S., you said it was very different here, with leaders often

going out of their way to be friendly, to put themselves on the same level as their employees, and trying to avoid seeming "strict."

When I asked you which style of leadership, Afghan or U.S., is more consistent with your own style and preference, you said that you might take the more friendly-seeming U.S. approach and combine it with the more directive style prevalent in Afghan culture.

Authority

You described the nature of formal authority in Afghan culture as being self-protective and not inviting open communication between themselves and their followers/subordinates.

You said you didn't think it was absolutely necessary in U.S. culture to have formal authority in order to exercise leadership. When I asked for an example, you asked if I could help you.

When I asked about examples from U.S. culture of people leading without formally designated authority, you gave the example of the language group leads in the teacher training program. I asked if, by their title (leads) and deliberately facilitative role, they didn't have some formal authority, and you agreed that they did have some, but that it wasn't like the authority that a boss has.

You indicated that you felt it is necessary to be a designated formal authority in order to exercise leadership in Afghan culture.

Teamwork

You indicated that you had never personally seen a clear instance of teamwork in Afghan working culture, and that you don't think it really exists as a salient construct. When I asked about whether you had ever seen teamwork among Afghans living outside of Afghanistan, you said only among the younger generation, perhaps.

When you asked if you believed that a team with no designated authority would be able to achieve its goals in an Afghan cultural context, you said "no." One reason you gave is that you thought that, inevitably, team members would have different opinions on how the work should be approached and accomplished and that, lacking a designated formal authority, team members would have little to no reason to listen to one another's opinions in order to reach a common resolution.

You agreed with statements I made about leaderless teamwork being more common in the U.S., as well as people in general being more likely to try to help each other out at work. You also described your view that in the U.S. teamwork is mandatory in order to get things done, whereas in Afghanistan you observed that everyone seems to work more individually and in pursuit of individual goals.

However, you also indicated that you personally believe that some form of leadership or designated formal authority is needed for a team to be able to achieve its goals, otherwise strong personalities and disagreement among individual team members might override a focus on completing the work in the best way possible.

Communication

When I asked what you thought the reason may be for there being less tendency to communicate openly in Afghan culture (you put it at maybe 30 to 40 percent of the time) than in U.S. culture, you pointed to the legacy and ongoing state of war/armed conflict in Afghanistan as a possible reason. I interpreted this to mean possibly that people just feel less secure in general in Afghanistan.

When I asked if there would be any circumstance in Afghan culture wherein someone might offer unsolicited advice or input to a peer or colleague, you said that maybe only if they were a trusted family member or close friend.

You also agreed when I asked if one's boss finding out that a subordinate was offering unsolicited input or guidance to a co-worker in Afghan culture could constitute a risk of the boss becoming angry and enacting some discipline. When I asked if you had the sense that this would be less of a concern in U.S. culture, you also agreed.

When I asked if an Afghan leader/boss would ever invite constructive feedback/input/critique from a subordinate, you indicated emphatically that this would simply never happen in Afghan culture, due to the boss's need to remain "above" and superior to their followers. You also indicated that the follower's would be taken aback or even put off by their leader asking them for critique.

Challenges

You did agree, based on your own experiences working in four different national cultures (Afghan, Kazak, Russian, and U.S.), that it can be challenging to adapt to the different rules and expectations, and that it is something that "just takes time."

Dari_5M

Leadership

You described the existing/established leadership structure in Afghanistan as being under-educated, lacking in knowledge, long-term vision, and strategies to set and pursue goals. Rather, you said that the majority of existing leaders in Afghanistan are former warlords who seek positions of power and influence in government in order to obtain immediate personal gains. You also connected leadership in Afghan culture as inseparable from having and exercising one's power.

You contrasted the current reality of Afghan leadership with what you learned working for the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency as a translator. There you said you experienced leadership that was practical, goal-oriented, supportive, mentoring, and participatory (leaders get involved in tasks alongside their followers). You contrasted this with "boss" behavior by Afghan leaders, and indicated that you saw the U.S. style as "good" leadership and that it taught you new things about how to have authority and lead effectively.

You connected the general outdatedness of infrastructure and technology in Afghanistan to what you perceive as the overall lack of effective leadership. I interpreted this as a commentary also on the general workplace atmosphere in Afghanistan, in which I got the sense that there is little motivation, or sense of capability, on anyone's part to create positive change.

Authority

You described the situation in Afghanistan related to power and formal authority as one that is mostly corrupt. You said that positions of influence are purchased by people with money and vested interests, or they are given to family members or close friends.

You suggested that the high levels of corruption in Afghan society make it so that those who are empowered can operate with impunity, leaving pressure and consequences only for those without formal authority.

You described your experience with U.S. leadership as something that created a different picture of authority, in which the leader also assumes risks and takes pressure on themselves alongside their followers. Again, you directly contrasted this with the prevalent top-down boss behavior in Afghan workplaces, where bosses only give assignments and deadlines, but then take no personal interest or role in how the follower is to go about accomplishing the task.

Teamwork

You said that in government offices people will try very hard to avoid being seen making a mistake because they know that they will not get a second chance, but will just be replaced. I understood this as a factor that could really inhibit the open practice of peer-to-peer teamwork.

You further elaborated that, although the younger generation in Afghanistan may have better education and preparedness to lead, they are inhibited because they are only in the lowest levels of most organizational hierarchies, and their attempts (hypothetically) at teamwork would not be well-received by upper management due to their corruption and

desire to maintain their positions of power. You used the word "useless" to describe the attempt at doing real teamwork in Afghanistan, which suggested to me that it's just not a functional construct in contemporary Afghan culture.

You described the established mindset on working in Afghan culture as "working individually, alone. It's not teamwork."

Communication

You described a dynamic in which followers in Afghan culture would not want to approach their leaders (bosses) with problems, questions, or to admit a mistake and ask for help, out of a fear (well-founded, based on your description) that the leader/boss would punish them, replace them, or even just behave aggressively toward them. You said this unfortunately leads to followers who continue to make mistakes or underperform in a chronic way.

You suggested that ideally many Afghans would feel comfortable going to a peer or a co-worker to ask for help in order to do their best work, but that sometimes the strict management practices that are often employed in Afghanistan make it risky to ask anyone, peers included, for too much help or support, for fear that a leader/boss will become aware and treat it as a weakness. You further indicated that Afghans working in government offices, for example, will try hard to avoid being seen making a mistake, for fear of being replaced. I understood this as inhibiting communication in the Afghan workplace.

You described a dynamic in which it seemed to me that real communication between colleagues, whether leader-to-follower or follower-to-follower, would be minimal. I

understood this because you repeatedly described the management focus as being on outcomes only, but almost in the sense of just "checking off requirements," rather than on process and continuous improvement of individuals and teams.

You also indicated that peers in Afghan culture may not be very receptive to input from each other. You said that the reaction would be something along the lines of "They don't know everything. Why should I take their advice?" You did say that younger generations in Afghanistan, due to their connectedness with the outside world via the internet, do have more of a sense of the importance of teamwork for creating meaningful progress in work and society, but that they are not empowered by leadership and the overall prevailing culture.

Challenges

You said that coming from Afghanistan and trying to integrate into U.S. (working) culture is a big challenge for you, because of the extreme differences between the two cultures in how everything is done, from leadership to the way most working systems are conceived and carried out. You also emphasized that you see it as a great opportunity for you to learn new things.

Persian_1F

Leadership:

In Iran, leaders, like a teacher for example, have more power and get to be the central focus of activity more than followers (students). Here things seem to be more the other way around, with kids (in the school context) having a more active role relative to teachers. The school culture here is better, because kids have more freedom to be creative, which is a positive thing. In Persian culture, teaching and learning would tend to be a more top-down, teacher-driven experience. One negative aspect of this is that in US culture there is less respect for authority (teacher) than in Iran, although this is changing in Iran as well, due to proliferation of internet and other mobile technology. However, failing to be adequately respectful of authority has real consequences, in school and in society, up to and including dismissal/expulsion.

From the Persian perspective, when compared with followers, a leader should have some advantage, relevant to the kind of work they oversee. It could be physical, intellectual, etc. But it is a big part of what gives a leader their power. If you have a good leader, this lends followers a real advantage, especially if they are, or act like, a teacher for them.

There seemed to be some association between political leadership in Iran and leadership without authority.

Authority:

In Persian culture, if authority is not based purely on superior position, it can be based on superior knowledge (informal). It is also possible for a person with authority to learn

something from someone who lacks that same authority (example of learning from children).

Older people have inherent authority in Persian culture. It is very important that they be respected and treated as role models. Young people will deliberately try to have an older person as a role model. For example, teachers, parents, grandparents.

Communication:

Clear communication can be challenging in Persian culture due to people not wanting to seem rude to each other. This can include people agreeing to do things at another's request, even things they don't wish to do or that can be very inconvenient for them, in the name of maintaining respectful decorum.

In Persian culture people spend more time analyzing and thinking about saying, or not, things to others, often for fear of seeming rude or hurtful to the other. In particular, if the comment/feedback is unsolicited it may be more likely to be perceived as rude/hurtful.

These things are especially applicable if the other person in question is above you in the social/organizational hierarchy and if they are not particularly open-minded or flexible in their personality. About the only way to give feedback to a positionally superior person in Persian culture is to frame the communication in a very positive, or "nice" way.

In a workplace team context in Persian culture, peer-to-peer communications can be more direct IF they are mutually perceived as intended to be helpful.

By contrast, in U.S. culture, people just go straight to the point when they talk to each other, even across lines of formal authority.

In teams in both cultures, people who lack formal authority but still see their role as "always being bossy" are very likely to be disregarded, or at best politely tolerated.

Teamwork:

Getting things done, within or across organizations, seems easier in the U.S. The culture of bureaucracy and even corruption (transactional mindset - "you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours" - need at times for bribery) can make things harder in Iran.

However, when it comes to who can exercise leadership in a team, age is not the sole determining factor. Rather, it has to do with who really has the most expertise/skill in the matter at hand. This seems to be fairly consistent across both Persian and U.S. cultures.

Persian_2F

Leadership

Leadership as a concept is very similar in both Persian and U.S. cultures. In practice, mostly due to religious and political reasons, is where differences arise. Good leadership consists of joining in doing the work alongside subordinates/team members, while also providing guidance and being an example. It also consists of being a genuine understanding of your followers, including their feelings and hardships. Lacking that, you can't be a good leader.

Leadership must have a clear, achievable goal and be able to move people toward achieving it. The example of Khomeini and the Iranian Revolution serves to show that this is universal to leadership, whether good or bad. Leadership is also about having the ability to get people to listen to you, and have their listening inform their actions. If people don't listen to you, it means you're not a real leader. In order for people to listen to you, you need to be "liberal," as in not overly directive and top-down in nature, so that people will see you as still "one of them."

In Iranian culture, leadership -in terms of uniting people- may be more about influencing people's beliefs more so than their actions. Good leadership consists, in large part, of leading people to believe what you believe, with Hitler as an example of a successful leader in this regard.

Authority

Authority can be necessary to effect any kind of sweeping or collective changes in Persian culture, mostly due to recent political and religious history in Iran. It can also be

necessary for bringing people together in joint efforts (forming teams), or even for motivating individual action, with the lack of clear unifying leadership during Iran's "Green Revolution" being a factor in it not being successful. While this can certainly also be true in U.S. culture, it seems more pronounced in Persian culture, where if there is not sufficient authority, people will not give up their right to self-govern, or will not come together in an adequate way to achieve a common goal.

Authority can also be seen as a kind of dictatorship, whereas leadership is more like democracy. This is an important distinction, in that simply having and exercising authority is not the same as leadership.

The top-down forcing of people to act in certain ways creates a feeling of not belonging, or not being invested or having agency/control. This limits people in a way that is not the same in the U.S. Since people coming from other cultures can tend to carry their cultural tendencies with them still, even after many years, it can make it challenging to adapt to new cultural norms.

Communication

Changing one's mindset when it comes to open, direct communication can remain a challenge, even after over 30 years living and working in U.S. culture. In Iran, because of the over 30 years of dictatorship, communication between the "leadership" and the people is lacking, because everything is enforced top-down, with no freedom or tolerance for individual difference.

Also, being a female boss here in the U.S. is hard because many of the males you encounter here, especially Hispanics, can be chauvinistic and not accepting of direction

from a woman. Being from Persian culture makes dealing with this dynamic even more challenging.

U.S. seems to have fewer social rules/restrictions than some other cultures, which can make open communication easier here, and is also why it seems people who are born and raised in U.S. culture may tend to think more freely than people who immigrate from other cultures.

For instance, in Persian culture, the emphasis on being socially "nice" can make it very challenging for Iranians who come here and must adapt to a workplace or business setting in which the etiquette for being polite but also being direct (or "harsh") is more the norm. Since some Iranians may not feel they have as much self-authority/agency when compared with many U.S.-born people, they have a much harder challenge to participate with equal freedom and openness in some aspects of professional life.

Teamwork

Teamwork may be easier in U.S. culture because people are encouraged to think more openly and freely, when compared with Iran. This is not to say that teamwork isn't possible or even a part of Persian culture, just that it depends more on context, perhaps than in U.S. culture. One example of a kind of teamwork was the Revolution in Iran and the way the populace took to the streets together in support of it.

In Persian culture, teamwork is probably fine and functional, as long as it does not cross gender lines. Men can work with men, and women with women, but not men with women or vice versa. It is also understood across cultures that teamwork grants the whole group more power than each individual would have on their own. The religious factors that

back up this dynamic also make it harder to work as a team across gender lines in Iranian culture.

The existence and importance of teamwork is related to the context. In a bureaucracy, like a government office, it is less important. But in other situations, a lack of real teamwork can have very negative consequences.

Being treated as "second class citizens" represents a challenge for people from other cultures in their efforts to integrate successfully into the U.S. professional sphere.

Persian_3F

Leadership

Leadership in Iranian culture tends to be centralized, rather than distributed among multiple people within a given context. When thinking about leadership in Persian/Iranian culture, what first comes to mind is the government/politics and all the freedom that has been taken away from the people because of the way of thinking under the Revolution.

You indicated that you did not agree with the above structure, however, saying that you believe that leadership should be distributed and is best in the hands of whoever has the (best) ideas, irrespective of the context.

A big part of doing good leadership is about trusting followers with agency and responsibility for their own learning and success. Maintaining balance between providing guidance and trusting followers to find their own way is also important.

Authority

Association with, or tangible connection to, the government in Iran can lend authority that otherwise individual would not possess.

Similarly, authority is almost automatically vested in parents, elders, teachers, etc. And, when it comes to parents or parent-figures, many people from Persian culture would prefer to never challenge these types of figures, instead wanting to just respect and love them, and be loved in return. The nature of the respect for others, especially those vested with some kind of formal authority, can be described as "blind" at times. One example of how this is different in U.S. culture is the way a parent might challenge or address an

issue/problem with their child's school teacher. In Iranian culture the parent would not seriously consider challenging the teacher, out of respect/decorum.

Iranians would not, however, assume that formal authority is necessary for doing leadership. It is recognized that doing leadership without already holding formal authority is the pathway to "rising up" in a given situation.

When you are positioned as a follower in Persian culture, you really tend to stay 100% in that mindset, not challenging and not even contributing except in your capacity as a follower. This appears to be changing in Iranians who are living and working in the U.S. now, as they seem to be increasingly competitive with others, including with each other. It seems at times as if Iranians now living and working in the U.S. take advantage of the more open, trusting U.S. culture to try to improve their own standing. Almost subverting the intended nature of flatter organizations and more collaborative teams.

Teamwork

Teamwork in Persian culture is different from here in the U.S. Iranians may have a stronger preference for pursuing individual achievement and, consequently, recognition. Teamwork, or the lack of it, can be seen as a shortcoming of Iranian culture.

When Iranians work in a group, whether in Iran or here in the U.S., the notion of teamwork as understood in U.S. culture is not in play. Rather, Iranians working in a team might look more to make it so that they stand out as individuals rather than putting the success and recognitions of the whole team first.

Coming from Iran to the U.S. affords the opportunity to see and learn about teamwork in a different light, as the pathway to a different, perhaps more "real" kind of success.

Communication

Iranians may tend to be more indirect in their communications than Americans, but this seems like it diminishes over time as Iranians live and work longer in the U.S.

When it comes to parent figures, however, as mentioned in the "Authority" section, challenging or communicating overly directly with those types of people is something that, in general, Persians may try very hard to avoid, or even just refuse to do.

People in formalized positions of social authority (parents, teachers, elders, etc.) also should not be openly disagreed with in Persian culture. To disagree with these figures, especially on topics about which they seem to feel strongly, is considered disrespectful and is simply not done.

Iranians don't tend to trust/believe the direct message in what their compatriots say. They don't assume the message is straightforward and will instead "think around it." This may change for Iranians who live in the U.S. for a long time.

Communications between and with Persians can be marked, as the above suggests, by a lack of trust, in contrast with U.S. culture in which much more implicit trust seems to exist between people and in their communication.

The straightforward nature of communication in the U.S. (people tending to more or less mean exactly what they say) can take people from Persian culture by surprise and take some getting used to.

APPENDIX D**Same and Mixed Culture Group Decision-Making Tasks**

Same-culture Task

STARTALK Teacher Training at SDSU 2016

In your group, please discuss and come to a consensus decision on the following:

If you had to advise a new teacher as to which four of the six STARTALK-Endorsed Principles for Effective Teaching and Learning are most important to master first, which four would you prioritize, and why?

Please note: you must choose only four of the six principles, and you should indicate briefly the reason why you have chosen these four principles over the others.

Please conduct as much of this meeting as possible **in English**.

Implementing a Standards-Based and Thematically Organized Curriculum

- The thematic unit is standards-based. The content is cognitively engaging and relevant to the learner.
- Every unit assesses a student's increasing ability to use language for real-world purposes.
- Each lesson supports the goals of the unit by having clearly stated learning targets that indicate what students will know and be able to do by the end of the lesson.
- Lesson design is research-based and learning experiences are sequenced in ways that allow for maximum student learning.
- Grammar is not the focus of the course, unit, or lesson. The teacher teaches grammar as a tool for communication, avoiding meaningless rote drills and ensuring that all practice requires attention to meaning.

Facilitating a Learner-Centered Classroom

- The teacher acts as a partner with students in the learning process.
- The teacher demonstrates and models to make input comprehensible. Students learn vocabulary from using it in language-rich contexts such as stories, hands-on experiences, picture descriptions, or subject-matter content.
- The teacher engages learners in cognitively challenging real-world tasks.
- The teacher provides multiple opportunities for learners to collaborate in pair and small group activities while interpreting and expressing ideas about topics of interest to them. There is frequent student-to-student interaction.
- The teacher makes instructional decisions based on learner's performance and allows for ongoing feedback from a variety of sources to improve learner's performance.

Using the Target Language and Providing Comprehensible Input for Instruction

- The teacher uses the target language at least 90 percent of the time.
- The teacher uses a variety of strategies to make language comprehensible, monitors student comprehension, and makes adjustments as necessary.
- The teacher avoids the use of translation by using verbal and non-verbal strategies and also avoids eliciting translation from students.

Integrating Culture, Content, and Language in a World Language Classroom

- Learners acquire cultural knowledge and insights as they consider and reflect on the relationships among the products, practices and perspectives of the cultures being studied.
- Content-related instruction allows learners to make meaningful connections to the world around them. Learners build, reinforce, and expand their knowledge of other disciplines and the world while using the target language.
- Learning experiences are designed to allow students to use language as they work with the content and cultural topics of the unit.
- Learners engage in meaningful and purposeful communication. They communicate. They know how, when and why to say what to whom.

Adapting and Using Age-Appropriate Authentic Materials

- The teacher uses authentic materials and designs tasks appropriate to the language proficiency and age level of the learners.
- The teacher uses a variety of authentic print and non-print materials.

Conducting Performance-Based Assessment

- The teacher uses formative checks for learning during lessons to adjust instruction as needed and to provide timely feedback to learners.
- Learners know how well they are doing with regard to specific learning goals and they know what they can do to improve their performance.
- Learners have the ability to assess their own learning.

- Learners engage in summative real-world performance tasks to demonstrate how well they have met the performance goals of the unit.

Mixed Culture Task

STARTALK Teacher Training at SDSU 2016

In your group, please discuss and come to a consensus decision on the following:

If your group had to advise a new teacher as to which four of the seven principles for implementing Learner-Centered Teaching Changes to Practice are most important to master first, which four would your group prioritize, and why?

Please note: the group must choose only four of the seven principles, and you should indicate briefly, in writing, the reason why you have chosen these four changes to practice over the others.

Please conduct as much of this meeting as possible **in English**.

Principle 1: Teachers Let Students Do More Learning Tasks

Principle 2: Teachers Do Less Telling So That Students Can Do More Discovering

Principle 3: Teachers Do Instructional Design Work More Carefully

Principle 4: Teachers More Explicitly Model How To Learn/How Experts Learn

Principle 5: Teachers Encourage Students To Learn From And With Each Other

Principle 6: Teachers And Students Work To Create Climates For Learning

Principle 7: Teachers Use Evaluation To Promote Learning

Mar 28, 2017 2:03 PM PDT

Christopher Brown
Sch of Leadership & Ed Science

Re: Expedited - Initial - IRB-2017-23, Discursive Leadership: Exploring the "black box" challenge in cross-cultural leadership studies

Dear Christopher Brown:

The Institutional Review Board has rendered the decision below for IRB-2017-23, Discursive Leadership: Exploring the "black box" challenge in cross-cultural leadership studies.

Decision: Approved

Selected Category: 7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Findings:

Research Notes:

Internal Notes:

Note: We send IRB correspondence regarding student research to the faculty advisor, who bears the ultimate responsibility for the conduct of the research. We request that the faculty advisor share this correspondence with the student researcher.

The next deadline for submitting project proposals to the Provost's Office for full review is N/A. You may submit a project proposal for expedited or exempt review at any time.

Sincerely,

Dr. Thomas R. Herrinton
Administrator, Institutional Review Board

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