

## ABSTRACT

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LEADERSHIP PERCEPTIONS AND  
PRACTICES OF SOME U.S.-TRAINED  
AFRICAN PROFESSIONALS IN THE  
PUBLIC SECTOR

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This qualitative study looks at the leadership perceptions and practices of career professionals in the public sector across three countries of sub-Saharan Africa (Ethiopia, Ghana and Madagascar). All participants were alumni of the Humphrey Fellowship program, a year-long mid-career fellowship in the United States for professional development and leadership. The study sought to understand the participants' perceptions of leadership and how they apply it in their professional practice. The research questions were *How do U.S.-trained Africans perceive the relevance of their U.S. leadership training in their home-country practice? To what extent can they incorporate U.S. leadership approaches into their leadership practice there?*

The literature review includes the history and current state of leadership research and theory, the field of intercultural communications and recent scholarship and program evaluations on leadership and leadership training across cultures. Noteworthy are the lack of recent scholarship on public sector leadership in Africa and the transference of western-developed models in most international training.

Data collection consisted of in-depth interviews with 16 primary research participants who were mid- to upper-level career professionals in their respective countries' public service. Additional related data were gathered from participants' fellowship documents; data gathered from primary participants were reviewed with focus groups including primary and secondary participants.

Data analysis followed a grounded theory method, allowing themes to emerge directly from the data collected. Findings were compared across participants within and across research sites considering professional sector, gender, cultural and educational background and political/economic contexts.

The substantive grounded theories emerging from the study identified as the central theme the importance of "operating space" as an environment around individual capacity to exercise leadership practices, and its interaction with issues of culture. Results reflected the importance of the macro-context and levels of democratization within which participants operate on the micro-context of their own professional leadership practice.

The study recommends that future research on leadership in Africa pay more attention to the importance of macro-context and culture in developing leadership capacity in such individuals, and recommends specific approaches for enhancing leadership training for individuals from such backgrounds, including peer mentoring, case study and experiential exercises.

**KEYWORDS:** Africa; Grounded theory; Humphrey Fellowship; Intercultural; Leadership; Professional Training; Public Sector; United States.

SQUARING THEIR ROOTS:  
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AFRICAN PROFESSIONALS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

By

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## Preface

### Personal Interest in this Study

After more than 25 years of work with the education and training of students and professionals from around the world, I chose to return to graduate school late in my career in order to reflect on my practice and the theories and research concerning it, deepen my own understanding of my work and take my future work to a new level. The ten years I spent leading the Hubert Humphrey Fellowship Program were particularly motivating for my educational quest and ultimately the inspiration for this doctoral dissertation.

Those ten years were preceded by a series of other experiences that contributed to my interest in this research project. Earlier in my adult life, I enjoyed and grew from the intercultural sojourns I had as a Peace Corps administrator in Africa and the Middle East, a Peace Corps volunteer teacher in Africa, and an undergraduate exchange student in Europe. These experiences also helped frame my interest in and perspectives on issues of leadership across cultures. Previous work and writing I have done on intercultural critical incidents (Dant, 1995), where I argue for the usefulness of structured reflection on life events to open doors of insight and self redefinition, also influenced my approach.

As I now pursue PhD studies later in my career, I have been intrigued by the impact that cultural and political differences have on individuals' perceptions of the education they obtain overseas, and the ways that they find such an experience useful (or

not) once integrated into a broader array of life events and realities that have built their professional identities and skills back home. Just as my own overseas experiences have deeply enriched and challenged me, so did I seek to understand whether and how similar experiences may have contributed to the broad conceptualization of leadership for these research participants, as well as its effect on those around them.

I sincerely wish that this work will contribute not only to knowledge about the research topic, but also inform the practice of mentoring similar young leaders in the future—a challenge I have shared with many colleagues over the years through the Humphrey Fellowship Program and other similar endeavors. Without those colleagues' inspiration and hard work, my own quest for understanding would have never been possible.

## Dedication

To my late father, Hale Louis Dant. Eighteen years with you were not long enough, Dad—but in that time, you gave me the gift of an inquisitive mind and the vision that some day, I could do this.

## Acknowledgements

Many people have contributed in numerous ways to my making this journey at this point in my life and career. All deserve thanks and appreciation.

The faculty and staff in the Department of Education Leadership, Higher Education and International Education at the University of Maryland, College Park were very encouraging and supportive over the many years of my part-time doctoral studies. My advisor, Dr. Dennis Herschbach and other committee members, former course instructors and mentors all—Dr. Hanne Mawhinney, Dr. Carol Anne Spreen, and department chair, Dr. Steven Klees. I owe you all tremendous thanks and truly have appreciated your guidance and inspiration over these past several years.

To Dr. David Bachner – a long-time mentor and source of inspiration in many ways that led to my starting doctoral studies – I extend special thanks. You once warned me, “You’ll never finish this unless you have fire in your belly about your topic.” You were right, Dave! I took you up on the dare.

My colleagues and supervisors at the Institute of International Education (IIE), where I have worked for 15 years now, also are to be recognized for their moral and professional support for this undertaking—especially Ms. Edith Cecil and Ms. Peggy Blumenthal (my direct supervisors over the years at IIE) and IIE President, Dr. Allan Goodman. Likewise, I acknowledge, with great appreciation, IIE’s financial support of many of my tuition costs.

Gratitude is also due to so many of my doctoral student colleagues – Janet Awukoya, Truphena Choti, Dave Edwards, Kang-yap Benedict Jung, S.J., Jenny Kim, Carol Radomski, and others. You inspired me, taught me, gave me courage and moved me along the path. Many thanks to you all.

There also have been numerous friends, mentors and colleagues who willingly and critically served as reviewers of drafts and sounding boards on ideas: Dr. Judy Babbitts, Dr. Wendy Carter, Ms. Kate Emanuel, Ms. Cheryl Francisconi, Dr. Cathie Gray, Dr. Robin Helms, Dr. Nicolas Hennebo, Ms. Nancy Overholt, Dr. Syedur Rahman, Mrs. Micaëla Thorup and Mr. Thom Vaccaro. Each of you has helped me make this a stronger piece of work.

Many other friends helped me re-energize and “take a break” by entertaining me, feeding me, hosting me and reminding me to make some time to talk about the rest of life “out there”—many thanks.

This fairly complex field-based project could not have been completed without the assistance along the way from many people: early on, Humphrey Fellows Karine Simonyan, Lucilia Tremura and Sylvia Zulu, who participated in the pilot study and provided excellent advice on the study’s formation; in the field work portion, Kofi Keteku, my Ghanaian transcriber extraordinaire, IIE staff members Aaron Mitich and Elon Cook; and the U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Section staff in Accra, Addis Ababa and

Antananarivo. Each of you helped make the logistics, problem-solving and paperwork of this project flow—many thanks.

To Humphrey Fellows from around the world: your work and commitment has always inspired me. To those who directly participated in this research project: you gave me the passion to work on this topic and convinced me that your story was one to tell and understand. I only hope that this project's outcome can benefit you and your future peers going forward.

There were also many casual informants on the ground. These countless individuals with whom I struck up conversations assisted me by serving as barometers of the times in the places they live and call home. They included myriad taxi drivers, many guesthouse, coffee shop and waiting room acquaintances, and other friendly and curious individuals who brightened my days with refreshingly straight talk.

Family and friends are greatly responsible for seeing me through this – Danny Wilson, my life partner; Léa Dant, my daughter; and the rest of my family and many friends who encouraged me, tolerated my crazy hours and helped me get through my low points. Without your love and support, I would never have gotten this far! Thank you all.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Leadership as an object of theoretical study and focus of professional career preparation has become almost ubiquitous in today's graduate-level professional development programs across North America. Grounded in western management theory, an explicit focus on leadership preparation was first included by business schools as a key training component for MBAs. Its importance has since expanded across professional schools of public policy, education, health and even divinity. It has become a "value added" element to degree or training programs that previously focused mainly on technical skills and theories.

This trend of focusing on leadership development also includes training for professionals from overseas, whether its goals are broad efforts for capacity-building or specifically targeted technical training. Elements of leadership development have been added to core curricula either as a complementary module or experientially imbedded into a program's design.

I spent 12 years of my career working in two organizations involved in the implementation of one such effort. The program—a mid-career fellowship for developing world professionals—is known as the Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship. President Jimmy Carter launched this fellowship as a White House initiative in 1977 as a tribute to Vice-President Humphrey's career of leadership. This fellowship brings more than 150 highly selected developing-world professionals from a broad range of professions to some 15 U.S. university campuses each year, with U.S. government support under the Fulbright

Academic Exchange program. During this year-long program, the Fellows pursue non-degree advanced coursework in their respective professional fields combined with special seminars and a “professional affiliation” (practicum) in a U.S.-based organization. Consistent with the trend described above, this fellowship program’s design includes a series of elements offering participants awareness of and training in leadership.

### **The Inspiration for this Study**

One day in 1996, I was sitting in on a seminar of Humphrey Fellows taking place at the University of Minnesota’s School of Public Policy, one of the partner institutions of the program. Some 15 of these mid-career fellows from as many different developing-world countries had arrived there a few weeks earlier for their year-long program of advanced training. The seminar chair had chosen the theme of leadership as that week’s topic.

To open the session, the seminar chair asked for volunteers to come up and write on the whiteboard the equivalent of the word “leadership” in their own languages, and to explain what they thought it meant in their home cultures. She specified that the topic was not focusing on leaders (e.g., heads of state or other high-level political or positional leaders) but the creation of a social process inspiring others at any level—**leadership**.

A Latin American Fellow got up, wrote *el Liderazgo* on the board and gave her explanation of its meaning for her, followed by a Haitian, writing *le Leadership* and

explaining his sense of it. Next came a Fellow from China who wrote the Chinese characters “危” and “机” on the board, clarifying that one character represented “danger” and the other “opportunity,” but when combined, they meant leadership. The board quickly became a mosaic of words and characters, setting just the tone the moderator wanted.

The final Fellow to speak came from Africa. Taking the eraser, he thoroughly wiped the whole board clean of any marks or words. He then proceeded to write in large capital letters his indigenous language's word for leadership, and explained that in his culture, leadership was expressed through power and domination.

That experience provided the inspiration for this study. Why was this reaction so extreme in the case of the African participant? Is there something unique that has not yet been understood that motivated such an approach to leadership? Was his explanation of leadership unique to him as an individual, or did it reflect more broadly the realities of African professionals? What sense did such a Fellow make of the type of transformational leadership training offered in the United States when he represented his own reality at home so differently?

In considering how best to approach this inquiry, I realized that 12 years of work with this group had provided a rich and broad base of observations, interactions and significant conversations from which to start. Over the years those experiences had

informed and increased my sensitivity to these trainees' needs, viewpoints and realities back home as I designed and shaped leadership development opportunities for them through their U.S. Fellowship. Yet, I had only interacted with them in the U.S., hearing about their realities back home out-of-context. There should be much to learn, I conjectured, if one visited them in that home context and had an opportunity to appreciate how their experiences and accomplishments in the U.S. were (or were not) integrated into a lifetime of professional practice and identity.

### **North American Leadership Training and Africans**

While many professionals worldwide interrupt their careers for advanced study in North American universities, for most Africans such opportunities are severely limited due to the economic realities in Africa. Overall, this continent has the world's lowest average GNP, and even well trained professionals earn extremely modest salaries compared to North Americans.<sup>1</sup> This limits access to educational opportunities in North America to those who can find the significant resources required.

With few funding opportunities available through home country resources and U.S. host universities' grant sources likewise limited, it has fallen to a number of North American and international donor agencies to offer scholarships and grants in advanced

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<sup>1</sup> Except for South Africa, almost all per capita incomes across Sub-Saharan Africa average less than \$1,000 per year, ranging in 2006 from a low of \$680 in Burundi to a maximum of \$1,044 in Ethiopia. U.S. per capita income was \$43,444 (International Monetary Fund, 2007).

training for these 30- to 50-year-old professionals. Collectively, such programs have trained more than 15,000 African professionals over the past 40 years (Africa-America Institute, 2007), the great majority of whom have returned to their home countries to assume positions of responsibility and leadership in the public, private and NGO sectors (Institute of International Education, 2007; Morgan, 1999).

Consequently, these grant opportunities are keenly pursued by Africans (the average application-to-award ratio for the Humphrey Program, 20:1, is not unusual across other such grant opportunities). This large applicant pool allows donors to create selection and award criteria that go well beyond simple consideration of the individual's academic or technical skill potential. Rather, these programs also tend to focus on generating leadership skills in these scholar/professionals, and to identify individuals particularly suited to benefit from them and apt to apply them back home.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Many North American scholars generating leadership theory state or imply that leadership concepts can be universally applied (Bass, 1990; Smith & Krueger, 1933; Yukl, 1994). Frequently, universal application of the theory presented is not even raised as an issue. When the question of such universality is discussed, it is generally not central to the arguments presented. And yet, Burns (1978) points out that leadership is “among the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth” (p. 2).

The processes through which the significant major theories of leadership in currency today were developed are *hypothetico-deductive*. That is, they were developed based on a set of hypotheses, defined through concepts, and then “tested” against their relationship with the “real world” (Locke, 2001, p. 36). For this study I wanted to do the opposite: to examine how Humphrey Fellows made sense of their leadership training in their home countries, and then to compare my findings against the theoretical constructs that have been developed. To do so, I chose to use grounded theory (GT) methodology pioneered by Glaser and Strauss (1967). GT enabled me to move from empirical observation to an in-depth understanding of the context and factors that define the practice of public sector professionals in Africa.

Locke (2001) explains the challenge of this approach this way:

For researchers executing this move, the creative opportunity and the particular challenge of working within the grounded theory style is that they have to invent some aspect of the social world through their conceptualization. The conceptualized element then becomes a lens for bringing into focus the patterning perceived in the social situation they studied (p. 37).

By reversing the conventional hypothetico-deductive research process, I was able to generate such explanations of the behavior patterns and contexts that I observed, generating substantive theoretical statements about these individuals’ reality.

One outcome of the use of grounded theory is the generation of substantive theory. That is, theory which is explanatory of the specific context of the study and types of interrelationships observed within it. Further discussion of substantive theory within

the broader context of theory-building will be discussed in Chapter 2, Methodology. The final chapter of this study will include a description and discussion of the theoretical statements generated through this study.

### **Research Questions**

The primary research questions for this study were: *How do U.S.-trained Africans perceive the relevance of their U.S. leadership training in their home-country practice? To what extent can they incorporate U.S. leadership approaches into their leadership practice there?*

To deepen the exploration of these questions, the following sub-themes were developed and investigated:

- The participants' self-perceptions as leaders as they may have evolved over time;
- Expectations and perceptions others may have of their leadership practice;
- Received definitions of leadership they hold, as possibly transmitted through educational, professional, social, religious, cultural, political or personal values and experiences; and
- Policy and other externally defined impacts on their perceptions and practice.

These lines of inquiry emerged from an initial review of relevant literatures and a preliminary study leading up to the project's design. They were also advised by

personal reflection on the decade I spent interacting with these Fellows, as mentioned above. All of these considerations will be fully discussed in the chapter that follows.

### **Scope of Study**

Humphrey Fellows, who are the unit of analysis of this study, represent a broad scope of professions. They include public administrators, health, law and banking professionals, urban planners, educators, agricultural economists and social services leaders, to name a few common professions. More senior alumni now include individuals who have acceded even to cabinet-level appointments in their national governments, or who serve as high-level judges (at least two now sit on the supreme courts of their respective countries), ambassadors, governors, regional directors and elected office-holders at the local and national levels. They also include those in the top levels of NGO and private sector organizations.

I undertook a series of interviews with past Fellows, traveling to three African countries to do so: Ethiopia, Ghana and Madagascar (see Illustration 1 below). In each country I interviewed four to eight past Fellows in-depth. In two countries, I also met with a broader range of Fellows in group settings. This approach afforded me the opportunity to engage with all participants face-to-face and in their home contexts. I observed them in their work or home settings, and in so doing observed the day-to-day realities they face. This exposure gave me a deeper appreciation for some of the

important contextual backdrops that surround their daily lives, compared to anecdotal accounts provided by Fellows while visiting the United States.



Illustration 1: Map of Africa highlighting the three research sites (World-Atlas.us, 2009).

## Overview of Methodology

Throughout my research, I sought to gain insight into how such transnationally trained individuals conceive of and exercise leadership. To accomplish this, I undertook two pilot studies that helped to map out the framework around the research questions described above. I also developed a set of four lines of inquiry that appeared to cover the areas of investigation that might offer understanding of the experiences and influences that surround these participants, leading to answers to the research questions. However, using a four-step analysis process, their insights and realities that emerged from the stories and personal concepts they shared revealed more. It helped to identify an unanticipated and powerful macro/micro-level interaction that had a significant impact on their approach to leadership. This interaction influenced their potential for success (or failure) and the outcomes they experienced in their careers over time. An exploration and analysis of these two interactive levels of reality ultimately allowed me to further explore the research questions. This in turn permitted me to formulate the substantive theory, reflected in a refined model for understanding the realities of these participants.

## **Previous Studies Relevant to the Phenomenon**

Most North American scholarship on leadership concepts and leadership development presumes (or does not even consider as a question) that they are grounded in modern western culture, values and learning styles. The State Department's policy on its

program, cited below, likewise does not account for or infer that the kind of leadership theory or training indicated for these fellows might be of a certain type or address the particular challenges they may face in their home countries, suggesting instead a technician approach to building their capacity. Jérémie Sawadogo, a West African-born educator with U.S. graduate training who has had significant experience working in international donor agency training situations, critiques this reality of western training approaches. He calls for educational strategies that take into account an African approach to adult learning (Sawadogo, 1995). These recommendations were accounted for as this study was designed.

Some specifically focused research does go beyond this universalistic perspective to consider non-western, non-industrialized settings (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede, 2001; Hoppe, 1990; House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman & Gupta, 2004). This work lays a broad and useful platform of reference and support from which the design of this study was based. Chapter 3, a deeper consideration of those earlier researchers' findings, will reveal the limitations, however, when applied to the research questions at hand. Mostly quantitative in their methodology, these previous studies assist but do not replicate the focus, purpose and usefulness of this present study; nor do they address the core values and contexts that drive such participants personally in their thinking and acting.

Similarly, existing studies on indigenous forms of African leadership tend either to look at them from a purely anthropological viewpoint or to problematize them as a

restraint on development and good governance or the source of corruption and human rights abuses. While both types of analyses have their place, neither can be the sole basis for understanding the realities of these transnationally trained individuals.

Despite more than four decades of focused efforts towards building modern African capacity for professional skill and leadership, research related to post-colonial educational investments still focuses almost exclusively on summative program evaluations and economic impact studies. These studies, strongly oriented towards donors' interests in monitoring and evaluating their investments and program outcomes, approach research through the domains of organizational behavior and human resource management (Bramley, 1996). Most published research on training evaluation draws heavily on Kirkpatrick's (1958) approach for evaluating impact, initially just a basic heuristic for human resource managers that since has evolved into to a more sophisticated, layered approach (Brown, Eagar & Lawrence, 2005; Eseryel, 2002; Gilboy, Carr, Kane & Torene, 2004; Kirkpatrick, 1996; Taschereau, 1998). However, the explanatory power of such an approach is limited. While providing good insights into organizational-level inputs and outputs, this approach leaves the learning and integrative processes in a black box. No doubt sufficient for donors' information needs, its priority is on program value rather than the role such training and intercultural experiences represent for the professional back home. When held up to a broader array of contextual

elements through which the phenomenon can be examined, which I will discuss below, the potential for analysis is clearly limited.

This study takes inspiration from Woltring, Constantine & Schwarte (2003), who looked retrospectively at an eight-year effort to build leadership skills in mid-career health professionals across the state of California. Woltring et al. stressed the importance for the leadership development field to begin assessing effectiveness through long-term retrospective approaches. They argue for field observation and interviews with knowledgeable observers of those trained as the key to understanding. They recommend that “alumni themselves would have the best insight as to the usefulness of the...experience to their own work, organization, and community” (p. 120). This perspective is particularly pertinent to the research questions and approach at hand.

### **Framework of the Study**

This independent, non-donor supported study will by design delve into those black box areas most other studies related to the phenomenon of interest seem studiously to have avoided. The explanatory power needed to explore fully the research questions is not possible through a purely evaluative approach most of them used, nor can it be correctly interpreted if the environment in which these professionals exercise their practice is not clearly understood.

This argues for a framework that accounts for a specificity of environment that is non-western as well as a set of cultural and political values differing from those generally

assumed in western, particularly North American, leadership theory and training. It further requires a methodological approach that will allow investigation of individuals within their social contexts. As will be further described below and discussed in depth in Chapter 2, grounded theory methodology was a key tool for such an investigation.

### **Site Selection**

The three countries chosen as research sites represent a cross-section of economic, geographic, historic and post-colonial parameters across sub-Saharan Africa. Briefly stated, two—Ghana and Madagascar—are post-colonial states having inherited modern infrastructures and educational traditions of their European occupiers, the United Kingdom and France. The British colonized and ruled Ghana from the mid-1800s to 1957. Similarly, Madagascar was under French colonial rule from the 1880s through 1960. The third country in this study, Ethiopia, developed into a powerful indigenous African imperial state over several centuries. It developed western-style education and infrastructures in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century with its first “modern,” western-educated emperor, Haile Salassie. Ethiopia’s imperial period ended with a socialist takeover in the early 1970s.

In earlier days of modern independence and governance, however, all three countries experienced some years of leadership embracing a Marxist/Socialist political framework. While all now have moved from that framework to espouse democracy, or at

least a commitment towards democratization, each is at a different point of a political continuum towards that goal over time.

These varying backdrops allowed me to explore similarities and differences across various parameters, especially to look at those that had impacts on the research questions. These different contexts offered clues to the participants' realities and potential for success over time—a key finding of the study overall.

### **Limitations**

This study is limited by a number of factors. It is confined to sub-Saharan Africa and certain countries within that region; to certain professional profiles; and to a specific range of alumni cohorts based on the number of years since they had returned home. The time I spent on the ground in each country was relatively short, although it was built on my previous years of living and working on the African continent along with a decade of prior experience with thousands of Fellows under my supervision. I also sought to strengthen my understanding of the individual interviews through considerable prior and follow-up contact with the participants at a distance, using email and telephone.

A key concern for me was that as a former director of their fellowship program, participants might be reluctant to reveal their insights as honestly as was needed. I therefore took care to account for and bracket any inherent issues my presence and role brought to the equation. As I will discuss in Chapter 2, I explicitly addressed issues of power influence I carried as their former director. I also accounted for my nationality as a

U.S. citizen at a time when much of the world found the official political stances of my country problematic. Finally, I was always mindful of the issues of race and Eurocentrism as a western-educated person of Euro-American ethnicity, and how those might play into perceptions, sensitivities and possible biases.

### **Significance**

I undertook this study in order to understand better if these developing world professionals exposed to western leadership training gain and apply new perspectives through this training, and if so, how they then integrate them into their professional lives and identities once returning back home. The study has sought to generate substantive theory about the process these professionals undergo to exercise leadership in their home countries. I believe the study can offer new insights for western faculty, administrators and other professionals working with these Fellows and others like them (rather than just the program's funders), and help educators provide a better framework for course and program content and design.

More broadly, the international academic, training and research communities interested in developing world professionals may gain insights into their work if what was discovered generates knowledge that can be transferred to their work or suggests further studies in this vein. Finally, this study's intended contributions to knowledge may offer insights that could inform and suggest future formal inquiry into this area of research, which to date lacks much depth.

## Clarification of Terms

This dissertation makes frequent use of several distinct but related terms. Therefore, a brief discussion follows of the usage I make of each, and how such terms and concepts may interact in the process of this research.

### Theory, Theorizing and Grounded Theory

*Grounded theory (GT)* is the tradition of qualitative research methodology that I chose to use in this study. The rationale for my choice is explained below; its background, methodological approach and intended outcomes will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Briefly stated, the methodology known as grounded theory seeks to generate new theory about a phenomenon by grounding this theorizing process in the actual perceptions and experiences of those living it—the participants themselves. This differs from the more prevalent deductive process of looking at an existing theory as a starting point, or drawing on external thought processes to launch a line of theory that is defined through one or more hypotheses that are then scientifically tested and validated, or not. On the other hand, the grounded theory process requires a series of analytical steps which will be described in Chapter 2. These analytical steps will be illustrated anecdotally and discussed theoretically as the findings unfold in subsequent chapters.

*Theorizing* is the process by which the core or central category of the research process is elucidated, discussed and presented. It is an ongoing process that starts from

the creation of the research design and continues throughout the research project and beyond. Weick (1995, p. 389) defines the theorizing process to include “abstracting, generalizing, relating, selecting, explaining, synthesizing and idealizing.” Theorizing is an ongoing process, and when it is used continually along a promising line of investigation, it allows one researcher to build from an earlier theorizing process.

*Theory* is the product of any research process investigating a situation or relationship between elements that succeeds in predicting and explaining similar situations or relationships on the basis of the research. Locke (2001) defines theory for a researcher audience as “a constructed set of interrelated propositions that enables researchers to make sense out of observed events” (p. 36). More to the point, Maxwell (1996) insists that a theory that is useful will also tell an enlightening story about some aspect of the world that provides insight into and a broader understanding of it. Mintzberg (Mintzberg, 1979) argues that good inductive theory is built on rich description and anecdote. He advocates for the recognition that in good inductive theory-building, many elements in the context must be studied simultaneously. Their dynamic interaction is an important element to consider in the analysis, not a hindrance to “isolating” certain other variables in the relationship.

*Theory* can be divided into two types under the academic research process: *formal theory* and *substantive theory*. Formal theory is the product of a long series of investigations that all lead to similar conclusions and can broadly predict future

relationships or outcomes of a wide range of similar settings. Einstein's Theory of Relativity (1916), Dewey's Theory of Inquiry (1938) or Wallerstein's World Systems Theory (1974) are well known examples of formal theory. However, they were only recognized as such after a long process of research, verification by others, and general recognition from peer experts that they had warrant.

*Substantive theory* is explanatory of the situation or interrelationships of the specific phenomenon under study (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). It may be generalizable but will only become so if applied elsewhere and is successful in its capacity to predict and explain. If that is the case, it may be a line of theorizing that could result with further work and verification in a formal theory. However, for the purposes of this investigation, the intended outcome is substantive theory—a theory which is explanatory of the specific context of the study and types of interrelationships observed within it. The following chapter will discuss this type of theory further, and define its place within this study.

### **Policy that Frames the Phenomenon**

Section 340.0 of the State Department's policy guidelines, which legally frame the Humphrey Fellowship, define the program's purpose in this way:

To help educate a core group of a new generation of developing world leaders...the purpose of the studies will be to enhance the students' capabilities for public service, in particular to help improve incomes, living standards and employment and enable them to contribute more effectively to the equitable development of their country  
(J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board, 2006).

The policy provided is thus very general. Its implementer, the Institute of International Education, under a contract with the U.S. Department of State, likewise provides only general clarification in its *Guidelines for University Coordinators* (Institute of International Education, 2006): “Fellows’ weekly seminars should include guest speakers and other opportunities to consider issues of leadership” (p. 58). How Fellows perceive their exposure to these concepts and skills, and the ways they then apply them to their practice at home, has thus far been a story untold.

### **Glossary of Terms**

**Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA):** The U.S. Federal government entity (since 2000 part of the U.S. Department of State) responsible for oversight and policy guidance relating to the implementation of the Humphrey Fellowship Program, funded by annual appropriations from the U.S. Congress.

**Constant-comparative method:** Ongoing simultaneous process of collection, coding and analysis of data during an investigation used in grounded theory methodology. “They should blur and intertwine continually, from the beginning of an investigation to the end” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 43).

**Cultural Affairs Assistants (CAAs):** Key local-hire contact in U.S. Embassies for the coordination of the Humphrey Fellowship Program in each country. Employees in U.S.

Embassies assigned to implement the Humphrey Fellowship's recruitment process and coordinate alumni follow-up.

**Derg:** The short name in Amharic language widely used to refer to the “Coordinating Committee of the Armed Forces, Police, and Territorial Army”, the communist military junta which ruled Ethiopia from 1974 until 1987.

**Elites:** University-educated professional class in African societies who are distinguished from the general population on the basis of their educational attainment, access to power and privilege within their national contexts, and broader exposure to the world outside their own context. Less than 1% of the population of any African country in this study has attained the educational level of these elites (World Bank Institute, 2006).

***Fikambanan'ny Flangonana Kristinina Malagasy (FFKM)*** – The Malagasy Council of Christian Churches.

***Fihavanana:*** Indigenous Malagasy concept of kinship, goodwill and friendship between human beings related through blood, marriage or origin.

**Halo effect:** A subjective bias applied to a person's one outstanding trait and extended to influence the total judgment of that person (Thorndike, 1920). One sub-question of this study sought to ascertain whether receiving a Humphrey Fellowship resulted in a “halo effect” on Humphrey Fellows in their professional or personal status.

**Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program:** Mid-career fellowship for professionals from developing countries worldwide who spend one academic year based at a major U.S. university as non-degree fellows.

**Humphrey Fellow:** Participant in the Humphrey Fellowship Program. Sixteen alumni Fellows from three sub-Saharan African countries were the principal participants in this study.

**In-vivo codes/categories:** Concepts defined by using the actual words of research participants rather than being named by the analyst (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 65).

**Institute of International Education (IIE):** U.S. non-profit organization for international education and training programs, founded in 1919. IIE has been responsible for the implementation of the Humphrey Program since its inception in 1978 under contract with the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State.

**Leadership:** The working definition of leadership used in this study was a broad one which includes positional, distributive, collaborative and democratic models.

**Malagasy:** The adjective describing things and people from Madagascar.

**Professional affiliation:** The work attachment component undertaken by all Humphrey Fellows during which they spend six or more weeks working on a pro-bono basis in a U.S.-based organization in their field.

**Sub-Saharan Africa:** The region covered by the 45 independent countries located fully or partially south of the Sahara desert. This region’s history, traditions and cultural identities significantly differ from those of the countries of North Africa (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt), whose history, traditions and cultural identities are more directly linked with and influenced by the Arab world. For simplicity’s sake and since this study focuses exclusively on that region, the term “African” here will refer only to Sub-Saharan Africa unless otherwise specified.

**Transnational professional:** Term used in this project to describe the background and world view of its participants—while educated at home through the undergraduate level, all participants underwent significant overseas training that they incorporated into their world views and practice as they returned to work and family back home.

**Ubuntu:** The definition of self is reflected by this indigenous African ethic and practice of collective allegiance and mutual reliance—“I am, because we are.” The term derives from the Bantu languages of Southern Africa. *Ubuntu* is often contrasted with western individualism and Cartesian logic, which defines the self as “I think, therefore I am.”

**Westphalian model:** concept of nation-state sovereignty based on two principles: territoriality and the exclusion of external actors from domestic authority structures.

### **Organization of the Study**

The five chapters in this dissertation are organized to reflect the methodological flow taken in developing a grounded theory study. The creators of the approach stress

that it is best presented to others in the order of its discovery (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). As such, chapter-sequencing for this dissertation presents methodology first. Elements that often are presented as separate chapters in “classic” dissertation designs—literature review and findings—are partially integrated so as to allow emerging findings and theory to be explained and buttressed by appropriate participant quotes and findings from literature and other data that relate to and help explain those findings.

This introductory chapter has provided an overview of the study, its inspiration, purpose, the research questions, related policy, scope, framework, limitations, significance and key terms. Chapter 2 will discuss in more depth the research design and rationale, methods applied, sampling, standards for quality, ethical issues and limitations of the study.

Chapter 3 presents a preliminary literature review. This review is limited to laying the framework of the study—what did the researcher know and learn in preparing for it. As such, it covers the domains of program evaluation, leadership and intercultural studies as they pertain to the research topic.

The fourth chapter presents the profile of the participants, their shared backgrounds and experiences that advised the research questions. It then provides a stepwise account of the project’s data collection and analysis, from field work through data transcription, preliminary (open) coding and analysis and intermediary (axial)

coding and analysis. It will go on to discuss theoretical coding, analysis, findings and theory generation. Interspersed with this discussion is further inclusion of relevant literature and some quantitative data that were revealed to be germane to the findings that were emerging. This leads to linkages and more in-depth insights related to initial findings and their verification.

The fifth and final chapter presents the synthesis of the research findings. It then relates them to the ongoing literature review that fed and directed the theoretical coding process. This process lead to theorizing—the study’s set of grounded theories. The final chapter also discusses implications of the study and offers some suggestions for further research, especially concerning future leadership training for similar individuals.

The five chapters are followed by an appendix containing the initial interview protocol, coding charts, transcript samples and the references cited.

## CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

The context of this study includes three African countries that are home to career public sector professionals who have had an opportunity to expand and develop their leadership skills through a mid-career training opportunity in the United States and have returned to their home countries and rejoined their previous work settings in the public sector. These three countries are representative of a range of sub-Saharan African countries at different points of development, democratization and stability.

To date, the published research on the above phenomenon (including my own previous work on this subject) has primarily focused on and been sponsored by donors supporting such training. In the field of professional development, such research predominantly uses impact evaluation—*what did training participants receive; did they value it; did they use it effectively; were the resources needed worth spending?* Such evaluations are useful for donor agencies and training organizations interested in cost-benefit analysis.

This study asks two somewhat different questions: *How do U.S.-trained Africans perceive the relevance of their U.S. leadership training in their home-country practice? To what extent can they incorporate U.S. leadership approaches into their leadership practice there?*

A multi-step process was required to define more precisely the two research questions and how best to seek their answers. This process started with an inventory of

leadership terms and frameworks observed in recent Humphrey Fellowship applications on file, followed by a review of previously collected impact data studies done on the Humphrey Program. From there followed a pilot interview protocol and field test of interviews. The anecdotal observations and experiences of the hundreds of Humphrey Fellows with whom I had worked over a decade's time also enriched the pilot findings. The details of this pilot process are provided later in this chapter.

### **Research Paradigm**

It is a paradox that qualitative studies on leadership are so rare, Conger (1998) argues, given that qualitative methodology should be the choice for topics as contextually rich as leadership: “The three dimensions of leadership—multiple levels, dynamism and social construction—make it a very complex research topic” (p. 117). Morgan (1999) further argues for the need to refine research on donor-sponsored training programs so that they become more participant- and stakeholder-oriented. To date this has been done far too little, Morgan claims, because most donors view such approaches as “messy, mushy, intangible and intractable” (p. 26). Such viewpoints add force to the argument for this project's proposed qualitative approach, whose methodology and dynamic evolution over the period of active data-gathering are outlined below. Such dynamic situations cannot fully be understood from snapshot approaches—they need an approach that incorporates the movement and evolution that is part of their story.

The majority of the research published to date on leadership across cultures uses the quantitative paradigm, however, both in terms of impact research previously undertaken with this specific audience as subjects (Dant, 1997; Gilboy et al., 2004; Kuchak, Jennings & Mansfield, 2000). Broader studies around the topic of developing-world professionals, leadership and culture (Hofstede, 1980; Hoppe, 1990; House et al., 2004; April & Ephraim, 2006) also rely on quantitative approaches, often using large data sets. The literature review in Chapter 3 will reflect and discuss these quantitative investigations. It will show how those studies were useful in framing this study, but their limitations also were clear. They have not led their authors to the theory-building potential that seemed possible; instead they tended to skip over theoretical considerations and jump more directly to practical insights for program impact or focus on program management and training cost-effectiveness.

Given the realities of the individuals under study, as reflected in the initial pre-study process, it was clear that this investigation needed to include a broader context. This context encompassed external influences, impact on the participants, and the participants' own agency that surrounds and motivates them in their practice of leadership at home. Realizing that there was such a multi-dimensional set of contexts clarified the need for a qualitative research methodology for this study.

The research questions as framed also sought understanding not only of the participants' personal perceptions, but their practices as well. The study therefore needed

to include the contexts of practice around the individuals studied. This is consistent with the observation Denzin & Lincoln (2000) make about qualitative research:

...a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible...qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (p. 3).

Ultimately, I also wanted answers found to generate some theoretical constructs that could be explanatory of these viewpoints and practices in their home environments. I felt this was important in order to assist more broadly future work and research on the subject.

### **Grounded Theory Methodology**

Within the paradigm of qualitative research, a specific methodology must be chosen as a fitting tool or road map for carrying out the research and analyzing the findings. The research questions asked about the participants' perceptions of the relevance of their U.S. leadership training and the extent to which they can incorporate such training into their leadership practice back home. Thus, it seemed fitting that causality was a factor on which to focus, leading to the possibility of some theoretical understanding of what takes place in the home context of these individuals. Therefore, I selected the qualitative research tradition of grounded theory as the methodology for this study.

As discussed earlier and will be more thoroughly explored below, substantive theory is usually the first stage in theory-building. It seeks to explain a specific context or set of similar contexts without necessarily claiming generalizability. However, this investigation and its findings seek not only to generate substantive theory, but from it to offer suggestions about the improvement of current approaches to leadership training devised by western educators working with such non-western professionals. As such, it needs to provide a methodological guide for broadening the research that will allow the development of materials that would be applicable to more participants than those from the three countries studied.

#### Theory and Grounded Theory

As first addressed in Chapter 1, *theory*, *theorizing* and *grounded theory* are terms whose use can at times overlap. However, their use should not be so casual as to allow them to become conflated. Therefore, it is useful to discuss in more depth these terms that were introduced previously.

The generation of *formal* theory has been the research objective of most schools of academic investigation in the social sciences. Locke (2001) defines the tradition of formal theory generation as a “logico-deductive” approach (p. 27), whereby the researcher takes a series of hypotheses, often built on previous formal theories, and seeks to “test” them via hypothetical concepts and assess them against reality, as measured

quantitatively or described qualitatively.<sup>2</sup> The resulting formal theory contributes to knowledge in its particular domain until others build on it or refute it through further theorizing. Much of the academic knowledge about leadership to date is constructed through formal theorizing built on the above approach—hypothetical theorizing and challenges to it through revised hypotheses that are tested against gathered and analyzed data. Key formal theories relevant to the topic of this dissertation are discussed in the literature review in Chapter 3.

The “grounded” theory-generating approach first proposed some four decades ago by Glaser and Strauss (1967) was quite innovative at the time it first appeared. It argued for a reversal of the above theory-generating process as a legitimate research approach. Instead of developing a hypothesis or logical framework and testing it through controlled empirical engagement, grounded theory methodology takes an empirical situation and through analysis of the data collected (e.g., interviews, documents, participant observation), this methodological approach “discovers” themes and concepts from within the data. Substantive theory then can be allowed to emerge from these concepts. That theory is refined through ongoing analysis and calling on other research or data to help it describe, define and explain patterns that emerge through the analysis of the data.

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<sup>2</sup> It can be debated whether every researcher approaches the generation of new or improved theories without first having empirical hunches, questions and reactions to reality; however the formal academic process of developing a theory is, as Locke defines it, the general, academic procedure.

As briefly discussed in Chapter 1, the grounded theory approach can generate two kinds of theory—substantive and formal. *Substantive* theory is the intended product of this inquiry. Some have questioned whether the product of the substantive process is in fact theory rather than findings or observation (Meetoo, 2007). Locke (2001) argues in favor of Glaser and Strauss's (1967) initial contention, however, that substantive theory is an important and significant building block contributing to the later potential development of formal theory after longer or repeated research. This study also takes that position.

The phenomenon of interest in this study, perceptions and practices of leadership used by mid-career public sector professionals who have undergone U.S.-based leadership training, lends itself particularly well to a grounded theory approach for several reasons. First, as outlined earlier, the review of literature relevant to the topic revealed that research to date falls short in addressing many of the situations that this topic of study considers. There is little evidence that any of the formal interpretations of leadership theory have specifically considered in much depth the context of the individuals who were studied in this project. Thus, there is little basis from which to extend existing theories, since the original assumptions inherent in them do not account for these participants' realities. Secondly, there is so little known from an emic perspective about the context of professionals seeking to exercise leadership in the

African public sector. As such, the generation of preliminary or substantive theory is a significant step in itself.

### Research Stance

The creators of grounded theory methodology, Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, parted ways some years following their ground-breaking collaboration. (I will discuss this issue in more detail in the next chapter, Literature Review). Briefly stated, their respective interpretations of the methodology became focused either on micro-analysis and highly systematized description of data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Strauss & Corbin, 2000; Corbin & Strauss, 2008) or on a broader, open-ended approach to data analysis that considers that “all is data” (Glaser, 2001, p. 145), and stresses concepts over detailed description.

My own methodological stance leans towards Glaser’s (1992, 2001) in that the significant, theory-related strands of my findings only emerged clearly when I stepped back from too much detail and “noise” in the preliminary analysis phase and considered what I had heard and observed more broadly in the macro context of the participants’ political and social realities. I then found that broad themes yielded more insight with this study than the micro-analytical approach prescribed by Strauss and Corbin (1992, 2000; 2008). At the same time, as I will discuss further below, I did rely on the stepwise

approach to data analysis developed by Strauss and Corbin. Ultimately the themes<sup>3</sup> that emerged from the data were a combination of my own analysis and those participant-generated (“*in-vivo*”) codes for which Glaser and Strauss originally advocated.

## **Research Design**

The preliminary work undertaken for the design of the study consisted of three steps. I first reviewed and analyzed the selected application statements on leadership of 15 Humphrey Fellows in the 2000-2001 cohort (reflecting a purposeful sample of 10% of that class, including all world regions and a balance by gender, professional field and amount of previous experience). This process identified possible key words and situations related to their leadership that those Fellows cited as significant to them prior to their fellowship. This analysis revealed some consistent references in both work- and personal-related areas, and contributed to the development of a mobile-like conceptual framework model, presented later in this chapter.

Next, a stratified random sample of 25 impact questionnaires was reviewed from those solicited in 1996 from all existing alumni at the time (600 responses were received; about one-third of the total alumni up to that year). Predominant insights and keywords were identified and correlated with analytical findings on the whole study produced at the

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<sup>3</sup> *Themes, categories and codes* are terms often used interchangeably in grounded theory and are used and cited as such in this discussion and at later points.

time (Dant, 1997) and with a later impact study (Kuchak et al., 2000). This review provided additional points to consider in the development of the interview protocol.

From these preliminary investigations, along with a preliminary review of the relevant literatures, three in-depth pilot interviews contributed to the development and testing of the draft interview protocol. The pilot interviewees were actual alumni of the Humphrey Program who were available in the Washington, DC area at the time—one each from Africa (Zambia), South America (Brazil) and Eurasia (Armenia). Each interview lasted from 60 to 90 minutes. These pilot interviews provided an opportunity to anticipate how the conversations might unfold in the field, how to handle the issue of researcher bias, and also allowed for a dry run of interview set-up, interviewing, transcription and data analysis skills.

These pilot interviews consistently reinforced the importance of family background in the leadership self-concept, a factor not found in the previous leadership studies reviewed. This pilot study finding resulted in the inclusion of more discussion points around this theme in the field work. All three pilot participants also spoke of the importance of culture in defining leadership, but had limited ability to articulate this meaning clearly. This suggested a broad structuring around a topic that required participants in some cases to be drawn into the topic through anecdote more than analytical commentary.

The pilot interviews and analysis also offered an opportunity to practice the *constant-comparative* method of analysis, which Glaser and Strauss (1967) suggest, is a fundamental component of their approach:

Joint collection, coding and analysis of data are the underlying operation. The generation of theory, coupled with the notion of theory as process, requires that all three operations be done together as much as possible. They should blur and intertwine continually, from the beginning of an investigation to the end (p. 43).

This first experience with the constant-comparative method informed the actual interview process of the study. Specifically, as trends emerged in the field, preliminary analysis followed immediately and more focus and time was allotted in interviews that followed to areas of discussion that began recurring. The interview protocol ultimately served as a guide to open-ended conversations that allowed participants to pursue themes and perceptions “grounded” in their own realities. In the end, the mobile-like model described below served as a more effective tool for guiding this process than the original scripted protocol.

### **Exploration of the Research Questions**

Yin (1992) suggests that the following of a framework, even if findings ultimately challenge its validity, can facilitate richer and more in-depth data collection in that the investigator maintains focus on the things that are linked to the framework. He argues that this avoids an approach that starts with “let’s collect information about everything” (p. 27), which can result in an endless descriptive exercise lacking focus. While mindful

of Glaser's (2001) argument that "all is data" (p. 145), I nevertheless felt that a study encompassing such a broad set of possible factors needed some structure to guide it.

The two research questions of this study—*How do U.S.-trained Africans perceive the relevance of their U.S. leadership training in their home-country practice? To what extent can they incorporate U.S. leadership approaches into their leadership practice there?*—invite a broad exploration of factors, context and experience. To collect data sufficiently broad to respond to them, the framework below was developed.

Each of the four general lines of inquiry in the chosen approach, illustrated below and then discussed in more detail, were devised to guide exploration of the Fellows' sense-making of leadership. Like the mobile depicted in Figure 1 below, floating around a central piece, I imagined that each part could possibly revolve and redefine how the parts are juxtaposed and have an impact on the central piece (the participant's sense-making of leadership).

These "spheres of influence" (Blumer, 1969, p. 58) initially seemed to me to play varying roles in influencing the Fellows' perceptions of leadership as their lives and the

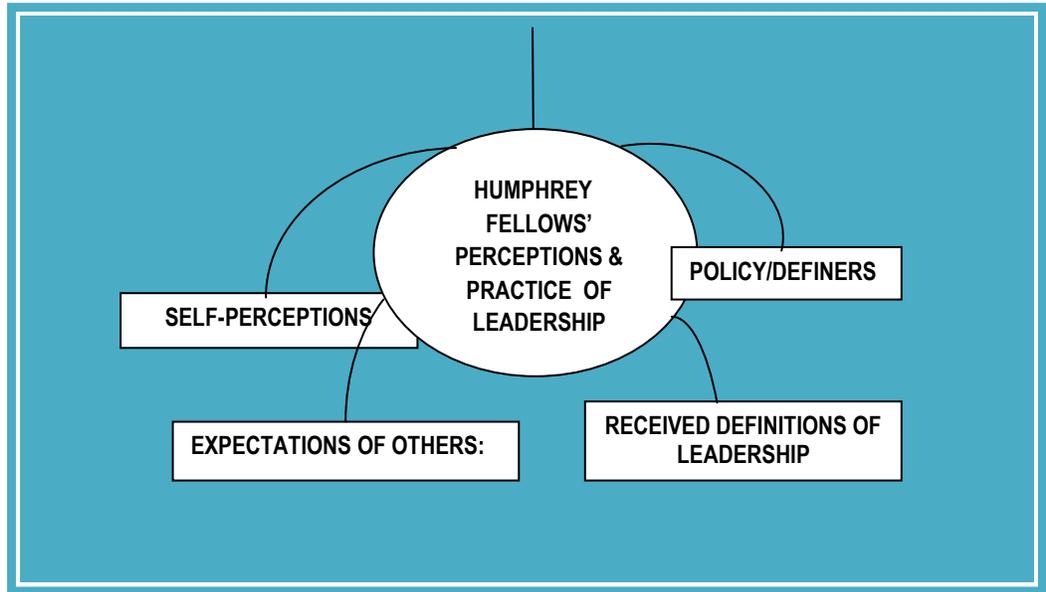


Figure 1: Initial lines of inquiry used for the investigation, juxtaposed around the phenomenon of interest.

environments surrounding them unfold and evolve. As such, I used this model as a scaffold upon which to build the study's semi-structured interview protocol. Reviewing the model above counterclockwise from the left, the initial spheres surrounding the phenomenon of interest suggested the following sub-questions in each line of inquiry:

**1. Self-perceptions:**

- How have the Fellows' personal lives and careers helped them define a leadership style?
- Has this definition evolved through their career paths?
- How have the fellowship or other experiences changed the Fellows' self-perceptions?

- What possible "halo effect" exists in their minds due to having been chosen for a prestigious fellowship?

## **2. Expectations of others:**

- How do employees, peers, supervisors, family, friends and community members perceive Fellows as leaders, and why?
- What impact do people farther afield have on their role perception (*e.g.*, overseas contacts, professional peers who are not work colleagues, community members who are impacted by a Fellow's actions)?
- Does a halo effect color these individuals' perceptions over-positively? Or on the contrary, does Fellows' credibility suffer because of others' resentment about their receiving a prestigious fellowship and a chance to travel overseas?

## **3. Received definitions of leadership:**

- What definitions of leadership do Fellows acquire through their upbringing, observation, modeling and discussion within their own cultures?
- Do they belong to a subculture of their home society that defines this differently?
- Does this definition differ from what they perceive to be a western definition?

- What roles do politics and political evolution in the home context play in this definition?
- Are there other leadership definitions from other cultures that have impacted on their perceptions?

#### **4. Policy or other defining impacts:**

- Becoming a Humphrey Fellow subjects these individuals to scrutiny and a whole range of expectations. How do these factors possibly have impact on Fellows' perceptions?
- What role do these layers of expectations or limitations play in framing or influencing a Fellow's leadership beliefs and practices?

### **Linking Research Questions and Data Collected**

Based on preliminary research and observations outlined earlier, the above conceptual mobile served as the preliminary framework within and around which I developed the semi-structured interview protocol, initially tested and then refined through pilot interviews with three past Fellows. It was clear that these categories were only to serve as a guide, and that according to the realities discovered, insights likely could move beyond the model.

In the meantime, not only did these spheres of inquiry shape initial data collection; they later contributed to building an initial data coding guide for early analysis. Just as the mobile allowed visualization of the evolution of concepts in the

participants' lives, so did it also serve as a useful tool for sorting through findings and observations that likewise evolved over the period of inquiry.

### Study Design

More than 3,500 mid-career professionals now have completed a Humphrey Fellowship (Institute of International Education, 2009). Over the ten years spent as director of the program's national office, I personally led the training of well over 2,000 of these individuals, and later maintained my ready access to them throughout the study period. The pilot studies had suggested a strong interest among alumni in participating in this study: all contacted immediately agreed to participate, and gave generously of their time.

During each of the three country visits, I met participants individually (Humphrey program alumni) for in-depth interviews. I then followed up where possible with a large group interview, combining some of the individual interviewees with a broader range of other individuals who also were Humphrey alumni but not necessarily meeting the sample criteria of the research design, outlined below. I also included, whenever possible, participant observation in the Fellow's workplace, home or other relevant settings of professional practice. This often was quite revealing, as discussed in Chapter 4.

## Participant Sample

The primary participants interviewed and observed in each of the three sites were purposefully selected from the Humphrey Fellowship alumni pools of 15-50 in each country, for a total of 16 selected Fellows overall for the study. In order to ensure some consistency of profile which might allow broader leadership concepts and viewpoints to emerge, primary informants were limited to those who held mid- to upper-level leadership positions. To increase the likelihood that participants could clearly recall the specific role of the U.S. experience without conflating it with subsequent opportunities, the study targeted as primary informants those Fellows who had returned from their training less than a decade previous.

Sampling also focused on expanding knowledge in areas little explored to date. For this reason, selection of participants targeted those who have worked primarily in the public sector rather than the private/business sector, where research published to date mostly has focused. Unlike Lokkesmoe's (2009) recent study of Humphrey Fellows in global leadership positions, the sample specifically excluded individuals who held multi-nationally focused appointments. Rather, it looked only at those whose career tracks were bounded within their own national contexts, as the impact and importance of those contexts were central to the research questions. Given the significant differences often observed across gender in both the leadership and intercultural literatures, sampling further ensured that both men and women were included in each site.

In order to generate peer thinking, verify some individuals' statements and views, and tease out and test emerging findings, individual interviews were rounded out with several follow-up interviews. In two countries, focus groups that included a broader range of past Fellows in each country. This included alumni who worked in the private or NGO sector as well as some public sector alumni who had been back home longer than the ten-years defined as the sample's outside limit.

### **Implementation of the Field Work**

Because my current employment calls on me to travel abroad regularly, I was able to extend some business trips to include field research over a period of two years. Spreading these visits out over time also offered the opportunity to reinforce the constant-comparative approach to data collection and analysis as described above and to allow ample time for follow-up with participants on-line and by telephone as needed.

#### **Participant Recruitment**

The sampling criteria delineated above served to identify potential field participants through the published alumni data base for the Humphrey Program, available online. U.S. Embassy Cultural Affairs Assistants (CAAs) in each country, who coordinate recruitment of Humphrey candidates and follow-up with alumni in each U.S. Embassy, were instrumental in contacting potential participants and advising the researcher regarding sample selection (career track, potential for availability, etc.).

Recruitment began several weeks in advance of the planned field visits via an email message inviting alumni to participate, with additional exchanges with the CAAs. With the latters' assistance I obtained updated email and telephone contacts and sent ahead details about the proposed dates and locations for the country visit. I followed up with each potential candidate in advance with a full, Institutional Review Board (IRB)-approved consent package.

#### Data collection in the Field

Using a semi-structured interview format with individuals or groups, all participants first consented to having their interviews digitally recorded. They provided such authorization through a signed consent statement or, in some cases, by orally consenting to same at the beginning of the recorded interview.

In the pilot interview phase, I had drawn on the Fellows' leadership essays in their applications on file as a way to focus and engage the conversation. As the essay was written prior to the overseas leadership training experience, it often reflected an earlier and no longer current viewpoint by the participant. I observed how this triggered all three pilot participants to compare/contrast some values and viewpoints in a historic context, and to develop some clearly articulated opinions about their evolution in thinking.

Based on its success in the pilot, this triggering exercise was incorporated into the interview process with all Humphrey Fellow participants. While what they had to say in those essays may or may not have encapsulated their true conceptual approach at the time

(some acknowledged that they were writing what “I thought you wanted to hear”), it did prove to be an effective technique for putting the individual back into the mindset of an earlier day and speaking about the evolution in their thinking and what their professional life and practice was at the time.

My fluency in French allowed me to undertake interviews directly in that language while in Madagascar, which uses French as an official language and the language of choice in business and public administration. I therefore could pursue participant observation on site and subsequent transcription of interviews without need of an interpreter or translator. Each participant was offered the option of using either language in our interviews, and two availed themselves of French for some or most of the interviews. English is the medium of higher instruction and communication in professional settings in both Ghana and Ethiopia; all participants in both of those sites were comfortable using English in their interviews.

Individual interviews provided the primary source for data generation in this project. Focus groups provided a strong source for enriching and verifying data and themes generated through the individual interviews. Additional secondary data were gleaned through participant observation on-site, document review (Fellows’ files, documents and publications they had produced back home; media coverage and other reports related to their work). Table 1 below illustrates the areas of inquiry and modes of data collected,

grouped around the four general lines of inquiry introduced earlier in this chapter, in the section exploring the research questions.

As the project’s analysis and discussion unfolded, these four lines of inquiry also served to structure the literature review, analysis and findings of the study. Through this process, the relative importance of certain lines over others—and a differentiated juxtaposition of those lines overall—became apparent. This evolution will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

<i>Lines of Inquiry</i>	Document review	Individual interviews	Group interviews	Participant observation
<i>Received definitions of leadership</i>	<b>X</b>	<b>Y, Z</b>	<b>Y</b>	
<i>Self-perceptions</i>	<b>X</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Y, Z</b>
<i>Expectations of others</i>		<b>Y</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Y, Z</b>
<i>Policy/Definers</i>	<b>X</b>	<b>Y, Z</b>	<b>Y, Z</b>	<b>Y</b>

Legend: **X** = documents; **Y** = Participants; **Z** = Others impacted by participants

Table 1: Areas of focus and modes of data collection

An initial design had included interviews with colleagues or supervisors of the alumni as well as instructors who may have taught them in the U.S. However, the approved design process, in consultation with my advisor and committee, resulted in this

more targeted focus on the participants themselves. Even alone they certainly offered a wealth of insight and data for consideration and analysis.

I undertook a total of 25 individual interview sessions with 16 participants across the three sites, and two focus groups in two sites involving ten and seven participants respectively, for a total of some 29 hours of recorded and transcribed discussion (this does not include preliminary and wrap-up interactions concerning consent forms, timing, refreshments, etc., briefly noted in the transcripts but not transcribed verbatim). Individual interviews, ranging in length from 35 to 180 minutes, averaged about 75 minutes.

A scheduled focus group for one site—Ethiopia—invited participants to a location that turned out to be hard to find, and only one participant managed to attend. Unfortunately, my stay in-country ended the following day, not allowing a rescheduling of the event at the time. In order to provide an alternative to verification and expansion of themes normally done through a focus group, I managed to return briefly to Ethiopia in December 2008, 18 months after the original site visit, and held in-depth follow-up interviews. Using the theoretical sampling approach to identify sources that would most assist with emerging theories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 45), I met with three of the original five participants. By that time, each had reviewed and commented on the original interview transcripts and we were able to home in on certain points of emerging theory.

This second visit also augmented my understanding of how the participants at this site had evolved situationally and conceptually in their own settings. In addition to providing some very useful insights into evolution-over-time of the individuals' experiences and approaches to leadership, this second round also offered the opportunity to observe the (unfortunately negative) evolution of the political climate in which these participants were operating. Given this increasingly negative environment, it is questionable whether the focus group setting at that site would have yielded much frank group discussion in any case.

### **Data Transcription, Coding and Analysis**

All interviews were transcribed soon after each field trip was completed. Given the bilingual nature of some interviews and the non-native speaking English of all, I opted to do most of transcription myself. While very time-consuming, this process allowed me to become much more familiar with the detail and context of each interview. Without question, coding and analysis of the data greatly benefited from this personal investment of my time.

As completed, each participant received his/her interview transcript by e-mail for comment and feedback. This process offered the chance to clarify or correct; however in most cases responses from these busy professionals consisted of brief notations about small details. All responses received were approving of the substance of the conversations. In some cases, with responses not forthcoming despite reminder messages

sent, a follow-up was sent noting that the absence of a reply would imply their concurrence.

Parallel to the above process, starting right from the field work and regularly throughout the successive steps of analysis, personal memoing allowed documentation of ongoing reactions and hunches. Memoing also helped note with more detail the settings and pertinent observations related to participant observation, and considered initial links and theories emerging from the conversations. All of these components were helpful for beginning the coding and theory-generating process that was beginning at the same time.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) also emphasize the importance of collecting additional "slices of data" as one pursues a grounded theory study, a collateral approach later named *triangulation* (Locke, 2001; Stake, 1995). Stake likens triangulation to the celestial navigation of an ancient mariner, who could better situate his ship's true place by focusing the astrolabe on a series of different sightings. In qualitative research, Stake contends, the same approach is applied through examining multiple modes of data "to establish meaning rather than location, and to strengthen our interpretation or give us grounds for revising it" (1995, p.110). Expanding the literature review and keeping abreast of local contexts through current media were the approaches taken to assist with this process.

To strengthen the credibility of this study, several of the modes summarized above served to generate triangulated data: observation of Fellows in their workplaces or

communities, observation of their environments on-site; and review of relevant documents both from the Fellows' application dossiers and of current policy, media and analytical documents gathered during the field work and since it. Personal conversations and email exchanges with others closely working with Fellows in the field, as well as in the universities that host them, provided further opportunities to enrich this process.

As observations and reflections were coded, correlated and written up based on the interviews as transcribed and initially analyzed, hunches and premises began to emerge from the correlations reflected in the interviews and memo-writing. Trends along cultural, regional, sub-cultural and ethnic lines began to appear, leading to possible explanations that were relevant to the research questions but not always anticipated. Outlying and negative cases, also appearing through this process, contributed to enriching the analysis process and will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Once completed and proofed, each interview transcript was loaded into a qualitative analysis software program, NVivo 7, in order to begin tracking and developing a more formal coding process for analysis (Miles & Huberman 1994). These transcripts were reviewed for initial coding, using codes that were generated through a review of the research proposal, including the four lines of inquiry.

The stages of data organization and analysis are depicted in Figure 2 below, moving from definition of participant profiles and attributes that can be helpful to data analysis followed by three stages of analytical coding—*open*, *axial* and *selective*. These stages

will be discussed later in more detail, and their execution further described as each stage yielded findings that are related in Chapter 4.

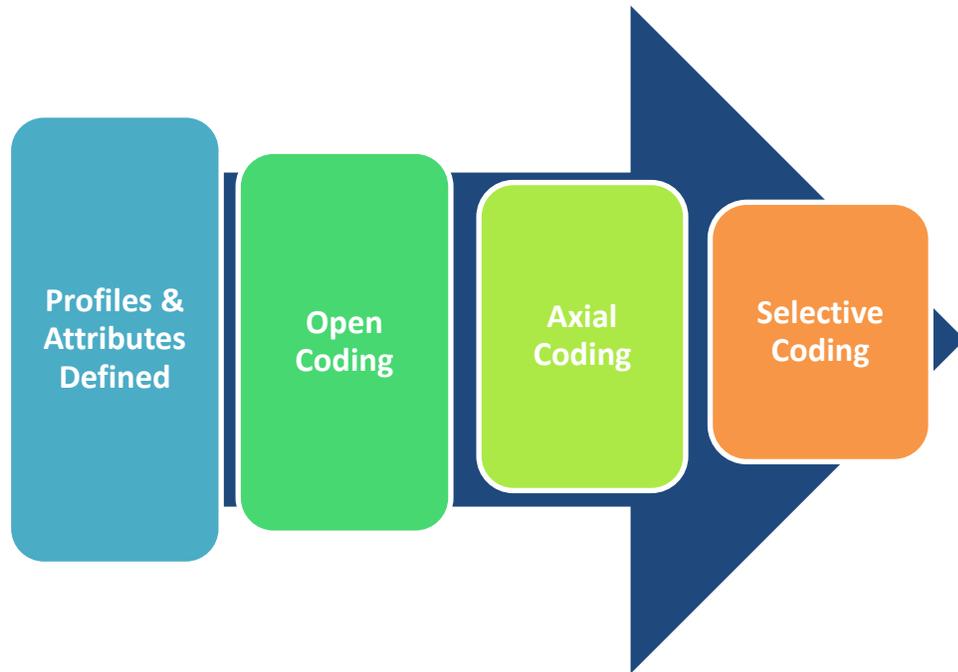


Figure 2: Steps used in grounded theory data analysis

At the time of the second round of field visits (late 2008), the preliminary analyses and trends from round one (mid-2007) were emerging clearly. The time delay between the two field work trips allowed for the first-round participants' cases to be defined through attributes. Using data available up to that time, data analysis then moved from *open coding* developed during the preliminary studies as well as initial coding of interviews described above evolved to the next level in grounded theory analysis, known

as *axial coding*. Axial coding seeks to develop, identify and connect relationships and causal conditions relating individual pieces of data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Creswell (1998) prescribes that analysis subsequent to axial coding should next lead to *selective coding*, which seeks to develop “story lines” (pp, 55-58), integrating the categories of the axial coding. This process next leads to the development of some *conditional propositions*—some of which were cited earlier in this chapter. Yet, as will be discussed in the findings, other propositions—just as important—were not anticipated, or at least emerged from areas about which little was initially expected.

Once the preliminary work began to take more form through deeper interaction with coding, analysis and theory generation, it was possible to refine and refocus the literature review, incorporating much more inquiry along the study’s emerging themes: political history, democratization and post-colonial theory. As mentioned earlier, this process led to an important restructuring of the original model of lines of inquiry as depicted in Table 1 above. This restructuring will be more fully discussed, along with the study’s findings, in Chapter 4.

The resulting analytical process of grounded theory is not as orderly as the figure above may seem to depict. In fact, the stages of coding and analysis are iterative and often require analysis to regress, reconsider and re-incorporate data and coding before it can truly advance to a next stage. This might best be depicted by the more complex

model in Figure 3 below. To enhance appreciation of this analytical process, this four-step model will reappear in more detail as the study's analysis and findings are reported.

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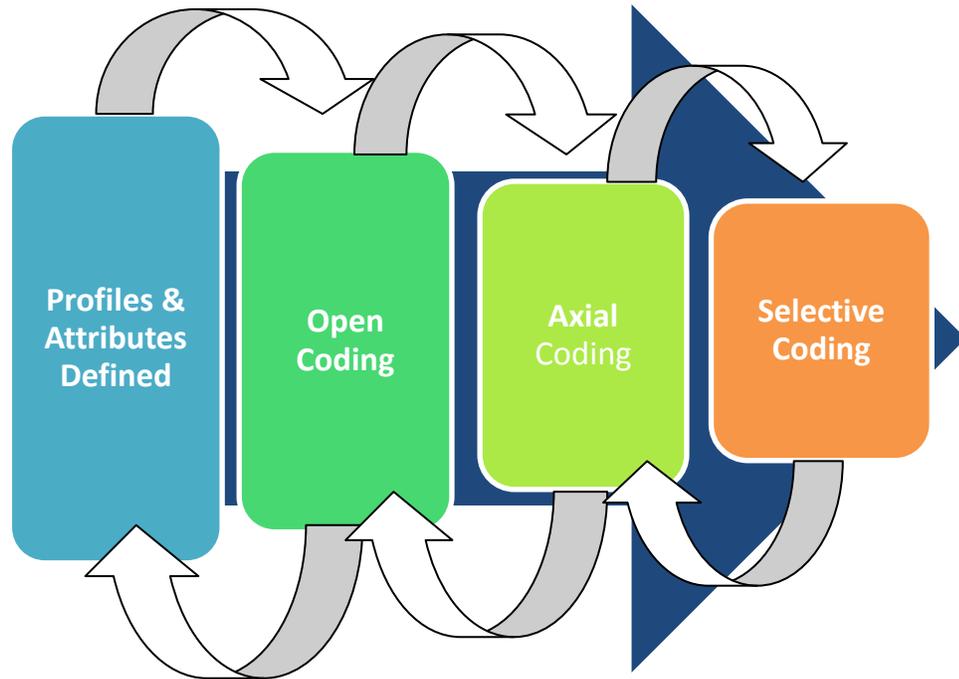


Figure 3: Iterative process of analysis in grounded theory

Consequently, later participant interviews included more focused conversations on those more important themes as they were emerging from early interview analysis, with follow-up queries and interactions by e-mail to previous participants to cover the same themes. When significant new codes and themes were appeared, they had to be reconsidered in light of the previous interviews. At times, additional open or axial coding was added to those interviews in order to push the analysis forward in a comprehensive manner.

As conceptualization began to take place, relationships connecting statements and events within the whole context of the inquiry came to light. Maxwell (1996) suggests that mapping observations through displays, tables or charts is helpful both to aid in building theory as well as to categorize data so that it might be reduced if needed, and ultimately to help present it later. This approach was very useful for seeing what “there” was there, as well for as identifying the holes in the inquiry which required more data-gathering and -analysis. By the time the second round of interviews began, those points had become much clearer. This allowed that round of field work to bring the investigation closer to a point of data saturation, needed for the final analytical step, *selective coding*.

#### Defining the Core Category for the Grounded Theory

Corbin and Strauss (2008) define a grounded theory’s central (or core) category as the one “that appears to have the greatest explanatory relevance and the highest potential for linking all the other categories together” (p. 104). Generated through the selective coding process, the *core category* should offer the most analytic power to the study and best enable the generation of theory. In some studies, an analyst can be confronted by more than one possible core category. Should this occur, Corbin and Strauss recommend that “especially for beginning analysts . . . stick to one idea as the central category” (2008, p. 105). Such advice was useful to me as I sorted through the rich array of findings and sought to best represent them in a way that suggested the building of an emerging theory

in the strongest way possible. Ultimately, the category of *operating space* appeared the most powerful explanatory element in this study's findings, to be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.

### **Philosophical Assumptions**

Guba & Lincoln (2000) stress the importance of situating one's research approach within a philosophical framework of assumptions. They classify research paradigms across three general categories: *postpositivist* (generally using quantitative methodologies) which takes a decontextualized, "scientific" stance; *interpretive* or *constructivist* (mostly using qualitative approaches) admitting the role of dialectical inquiry and the importance of contextual factors; and an *emancipatory* or *critical* paradigm, which relates and reacts to contextual and historical factors in a framework of oppression.

This project's design assumed an interpretive/constructivist stance. I do fully acknowledge the factors of historical oppression, considered later in both the literature review and findings that are implicit in many situations in Africa, and certainly included such considerations in my research and interactions with participants. The focus of this research project, however, is to reflect and understand, what currently exists—including factors of oppression—rather than to formulate a critique of the situation *per se*. Thus, what follows are the philosophical assumptions made as the project was conceived and presented to the dissertation proposal committee:

*Ontology (What is the nature of reality?):* Mertens (1998) points out that in the interpretive paradigm, reality is *socially constructed*. Using the definitions of Firestone (1983), Schwandt (1994) and Tillman (1990), the leadership perceptions and practices of Humphrey Fellows may not only be rooted in a variety of sources, experiences and influences to be explored, but given the special experiences these individuals have had through a relatively long-term overseas stay, this reality is self-constructed and likely to be evolving over time. It therefore made sense to engage with participants in an open-ended and, as needed, evolving mode of inquiry in an area that has so little established literature to date.

*Epistemology (What is the nature of knowledge?):* The leadership perceptions to be explored through this study reflect a broader social construct and setting that are both divergent around the world and potentially evolutionary in many distinct ways. As these divergent realities are discovered, theories and broader ways of knowing by and about Fellows can also be expected to vary. Likewise, my own closeness to the experience of these participants (both as their former program director and a long-term resident and professional operating on their home continent) colors my sense of knowledge around this topic. As the instrument of research, I believe I have brought the richness of my decade of experience with these participants, but I also have sought carefully to bracket the biases of this experience, as discussed further below. While acknowledging these

inherent influences, they also demonstrate that the phenomenon of interest is not, as Mertens (1998) cautions, a “figment of the imagination” (p. 13).

### **Standards for Quality of Conclusions**

In preparing to develop a strategy for pursuing the research described above, it was important to keep in mind the benchmarks needed to determine whether insights and conclusions drawn from the process are worthwhile. Dey (1999) defines validity or credibility for grounded theory research as being “well-grounded conceptually and empirically... to provide a valid account” (p. 268). As explained earlier, a substantive theory does not aim to present a broad or universally applicable (formal) theory, but as Glaser & Strauss (1967) argue, seeks rather to bring deeper understanding of a phenomenon in the specific context on which the research focused.

Miles and Huberman (1994) frame the “standards for warrant” of a study along five lines (pp. 277-280): 1) Objectivity/Conformability; 2) External Validity/Transferability/ Fittingness; 3) Reliability/Dependability/Auditability; 4) Internal Validity/Credibility/ Authenticity; and 5) Utilization/Application/Action Orientation. Each standard was kept in mind as the research, analysis and findings were generated, as I had originally committed to doing in my dissertation proposal defense. The bulleted points following each category respond to each of those criteria:

**Objectivity/Confirmability:** Is the study relatively free from unacknowledged researcher bias and personal assumptions, values and biases? Are rival hypotheses or conclusions considered? Are the study data retained for reanalysis by others?

- I delineated clearly in each meeting with participants the inherent biases in the “research practitioner” role I played, and encouraged them to assist me by being frank and critical.
- As discussed earlier, the initial model developed for these lines of inquiry proved to be sufficient to account for data collected in the field and their analysis. Rather than “forcing” the data into that initial model, a new model was allowed to develop; it is presented in the final chapter of this study as an illustration of the emerging substantive theory.
- I outline in the literature review competing hypotheses about leadership concepts. As the analysis unfolded, these propositions were again considered, and through focus groups and member checks, I explored rival explanations and incorporated them into the analysis and ongoing inquiry where they had warrant, or confirmed them as non-significant where they did not.
- I will ensure that research data are available for reanalysis within the confidentiality limits required by IRB guidelines.
- 

**Reliability/Dependability/Auditability:** Are the research questions clear and the features of the study design congruent with them? Is the researcher’s role and status within the site explicitly described? Were quality checks made? Do multiple observers’ accounts converge when they might be expected to?

- The research question and sub-questions have been carefully thought through and delimited by earlier, broader and more ambitious versions.
- I sought to make my role quite explicit throughout the field work and afterwards. Where there might have been confusion about my role in terms of power or influence, I specifically pointed out that such power was no longer in my hands. I also followed Sawadogo's (1995) recommendation that I explicitly encourage these African participants, who may be culturally oriented to telling others what they think may please them, to "please me" by being open, honest and critical in their comments and observations, so that I might produce a high-quality research project.
- Quality checks have been an important process in data analysis, facilitated by global email access. In some cases, follow-up was limited due to worsening political situations that required some discretion about using email or telephone conversations which might be monitored. Nevertheless, I carefully tracked the evolution in context in each site through local and international media and personal accounts gleaned from knowledgeable third parties on the scene.
- Multiple observations across all sites did converge in some cases—and are presented as such. In other cases there were divergences; they have been considered and discussed when relevant. For example, individual resilience

appeared to be a significant contributor to “survival” observed in some participants’ experiences with situations of high stress and challenge. This is discussed further in the findings section of Chapter 5.

**Internal Validity/Credibility/Authenticity:** How context-rich and “thick” are the descriptions? Does the account “make sense, seem plausible” and give the reader a vicarious presence? Did triangulation occur among complementary methods and data sources to create converging conclusions, or if not, is there a coherent explanation for this? Was negative evidence also sought? Have rival explanations been actively considered? Were conclusions considered to be accurate by the original participants?

- I have sought to render descriptions and analyses such that they offer a sense of “vicarious presence” to the reader. I have chosen to include a fair number of participant quotations and descriptions of environment to buttress this effect.
- Sample transcripts are provided in the appendix, which offer additional evidence of the richness of participant input. Certain extremely interesting transcripts have been withheld from direct quotation to protect potentially vulnerable participants; however, their inputs have enriched the data and data analysis throughout.
- Ample triangulation has been included, I believe, such that if the grounded theory emerging from the data did not make sense, there was ample opportunity to debate its credibility with participants and peer reviewers.

- Transcripts, findings and conclusions were shared with participants and other knowledgeable sources as the study and analysis unfolded. However, the political complications in two sites limited some follow-up towards the end of the research period. Essentially, the study suffered somewhat from one of its key findings—that politics can play a significant role not only in the freedom of professional civil servants’ leadership practice on the job, but in some cases on their freedom altogether.

**External Validity/Transferability/Fittingness:** Are the characteristics of the original sample fully described enough to permit adequate comparisons with other samples? Does the report examine possible threats to generalizability? Is the sampling theoretically diverse enough to encourage broader applicability? Is the transferable theory from the study made explicit? Does the report suggest settings where findings could fruitfully be tested further? Could replication efforts be easily mounted elsewhere?

- My efforts to provide thick description through the interviews and participant observation sought to respond to the call for “fittingness.”
- I have spent significant time researching the historical, cultural, philosophical and political threads that have been variously woven together in the research sites, and discussed their variability as well as their similarity in a way that should offer ample opportunity to consider applying them elsewhere—at the least in other African settings.

- The methodology of the design is certainly universal in its possible application to U.S.-trained participants from non-western settings.
- As an exploratory study, transferability was not a key objective of this project. It will be up to others to perceive that possibility if it makes sense to them, but I do not base the study's warrant on accomplishing this. Whatever I have discovered is by definition limited by the specific settings and educational definitions of this one Fellowship. As the study's data analysis and write-up unfolded, I devoted significant time to reflecting on the possible follow-on opportunities for research and refinement along my line of inquiry. These possibilities are related in Chapter 5.

**Utilization/Application/Action Orientation:** Are the findings intellectually and physically accessible to potential users? What is the level of usable knowledge offered? Have users of the findings learned, or developed new capacities?

- I was a panelist in a session on the Humphrey Fellowship Program and leadership development, based on my initial literature review, at the 2005 International Leadership Association (ILA) Conference in Amsterdam. In 2007 I delivered an interactive training session on leadership across cultures at the Intercultural Management Institute (IMI) annual conference at American University, Washington, DC. I also presented some of the initial field findings of this study in a formal session at the 2008 IMI annual conference. All three presentations underwent referee review before

acceptance on the conference programs. All sessions presented were positively received by an expert audience, including several individuals in each session from sub-Saharan Africa who offered comments concurring with the findings presented.

- I intend to submit findings coming from this study in article form to relevant academic publications, and to present them at future conferences.
- My primary intended audience for this inquiry is other western leadership educators who work with individuals similar to participants of this study. I am persuaded that whatever I find from this inquiry should be of interest to them and their practice.
- I likewise can conceive of developing case studies for classroom learning based on the findings emerging from this project. They could well enrich students' learning about leadership, challenge the thinking of concerned professionals dealing with leadership responsibilities. These case studies could inform and assist educators seeking to enlarge their own understanding of leadership around the world.
- In some cases, follow-up interviews were held to clarify or expand on certain themes. In the case of Ethiopia, three of the five participants were fully re-interviewed 18 months after the first field visit, which not only provided verification of more developed themes from the earlier field work,

but also offered me a first-hand perspective of an “operating space” that was actively evolving over time in a place whose political stability was in full fluctuation.

- Major emergent themes coming from the interviews were further explored in focus groups that included some primary participants who had previously met with the researcher one-on-one, as well as a number of their peers who were not in the principal sample but had the same background. These peers fully understood the context within which the themes and findings were emerging and were enthusiastic and articulate in reflecting on the issues raised and in pointing the researcher in further directions to help refine certain areas. In this way, the focus groups helped deepen insights that were found to be credible and closed out a few lines of research that appeared to be “dead ends.” A notable example of this was a single suggestion by one informant early in the field work that the technology gap was a major contributor to the challenge of effective leadership for professionals in his country. When raised with a group of peers a few days later, this category was roundly dismissed as “beside the point” to the peer group and was noted as an issue for that one person without necessarily reflecting a broader concern.

- Finally, this study has drawn widely on relevant domains of knowledge to assist in providing explanation and understanding of what was observed and discussed. This study's findings, likewise, could be a contribution across many of those same fields.

The other element contributing to the credibility of the findings and theory generation was the regular interaction I pursued with a group of peer researchers within the University of Maryland's College of Education. This group, meeting twice monthly over the whole period of the research project, was both a sounding board and an effective "devil's advocate." It allowed me to strategize next steps, focus and refine approaches to analysis, present and test working models of relationships and possible theory. Moderated by a faculty member, this peer group also complemented my advisor's assistance in the development and design of this dissertation. Finally, I also created my own circle of "critical friends"—classmates in my doctoral program with whom I had collaborated in coursework and for whose intellect, understanding and critical thinking I had great respect. We also have met on a regular basis over the course of this project and they contributed to the process of focusing, testing and refining.

### **Ethical issues**

As the central research instrument in this design, a key concern I held was that I had also worn the hat of director vis-à-vis some of the study participants, the Humphrey Fellows. The focus of the study was on past Fellows, and I now am myself no longer the

director of their program, largely diminishing any true power relationship I held with them. Nonetheless, there were areas about which I needed to be concerned in carrying out this research and ensuring its validity. Past Fellows are eligible for small refresher grants, awarded by the organization by which I still am employed. While I no longer have any role in making award decisions, there could have been likely some perception that I held this power. It is not uncommon for Fellows to seek a recommendation or reference from me, as well. Thus, it was clearly important for me to clarify to participants the limits of my power in grant awards. Even more important to this study's success, I needed to persuade them to be as honest and forthcoming with me in their interview comments by letting them know that I and future professionals only can gain by their providing me with their honest insights. I made this statement a very explicit part of my conversation, and shared some insights with them about my "student life" to help them shift their own gears of perception.

Recalling the advice provided by Sawadogo's (1995) "Training for the African Mind", in which he argues that the African sensitivity to hierarchy affects any feedback process, expressed by the strong cultural need to please those in authority by telling them what they want to hear. I therefore explicitly sought honest feedback by explaining that how I needed them to help me was by hearing their frank thoughts or insights about their experiences. I believe it was a helpful approach; many revealed to me experiences and insights that as director I had never heard over the years I worked closely with these same

individuals. While quite aware of the potential for respondent bias inherent in the program's former director—now researcher—seeking comments on the experience, I made overt efforts in bracketing the effect at the outset of each meeting—"I am no longer the director of the fellowship and the most useful input I can receive from you is your honest and critical reflections and viewpoints on how you apply your experience and learning." This was a constant reminder offered to respondents at every juncture. The level of disclosure about other aspects of the participants' background and current challenges are indicators that their responses, by and large, did tend to be open, honest and critical when they meant them to be.

As I traveled abroad, I also needed to ensure the public appearance of legitimate research, avoiding any impression that I was collecting information that would appear to be intelligence-gathering or other potentially embarrassing or misconstrued activity. Since the Humphrey Fellows' program is sponsored by the U.S. government, I carefully coordinated my activities with the relevant authorities in the U.S. Embassies in the host countries, which in all cases were pleased to cooperate with me but made no attempts to "manage" my research approach. I also was very sensitive to appearances for the participants themselves, relying on their own judgment about workplace observation and contacts with their colleagues, supervisors or community members.

In another vein, I also was careful to bracket my identification as a U.S. citizen to address possible concerns that I may represent official political stances of the United

States at a time when these positions were the subject of considerable criticism abroad. In fact, I found that the United States generally enjoyed a very positive reception across the African countries I visited, noticeably warmer than in other parts of the world I visited on other matters over that same period of my research.

Finally, I was cognizant that my identity as a person of European origin and the product of a western education and paradigm also may have led my participants to make certain assumptions about my stance, my sensitivities and my expectations. I was as mindful as possible of these potential areas of interpretative filtering that could emerge on both my own and my participants' behalf. I brought to bear my own years of experience in sub-Saharan Africa and honed intercultural skills to ward against such filters or blinders as I undertook the data collection and later sought to interpret it. I also continuously updated my knowledge of contextual issues on the ground over the research period, during which two of the three research countries were undergoing major national elections and possible policy shifts that had direct impact on many in this study's sample.

## **Conclusion**

The conceptual framework supporting this study's design suggests that while James McGregor Burns' (1978) approach to transformational leadership, and many approaches and theories inspired by him, offers some compelling bases for leadership definition in a strongly democratic western context, contextual realities around the world may not be similar enough to be so applicable worldwide. While Burns argues for the

universality of his approach, an in-depth discussion follows that suggests that this argument is offered more parenthetically than centrally in his work, and does not account for much variability of macro-context.

The methodological approach and lines of inquiry outlined in this chapter have sought to allow consideration of such contextual understanding and nuance along with the perceptions and practices of the participants themselves. These contextual issues will form the core of the study's analysis. They will receive deeper discussion in the chapters that follow.

The literature review that follows will consider how leadership as a domain of research and professional practice has evolved over time, and consider some of the theories and trends emerging from the many contributions made to the field to date. It will reflect the importance of transformational leadership, as first conceived by Burns (1978), as a preponderant source of leadership theory and training in North America today.

## CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

Building on the base provided in Chapter 2 on grounded theory methodology, this literature review first presents a more in-depth exploration of the literature of grounded theory. It then provides a review of key relevant areas of three literature domains framing the study: program evaluation, leadership and intercultural theory.

The domain of program evaluation is included because the only studies somewhat close to the specific topic area of this study—the overseas training of African professionals—were found to be evaluations. In a sense, this section demonstrates what is not known more than what can be built upon.

The subsequent section of this literature review provides a historical background of the phenomenon of leadership as well as a review of past and current literature on the field of leadership as a modern practice and domain of research.

The final part of this chapter will broadly review the domains of culture and intercultural communications and theory. It lays out some of the dynamics facing transnational professionals such as the study participants, who cross cultures not only through overseas study and training, but in their daily lives back home. As highly educated élites in their own countries, they live in a context combining indigenous and inherited western post-colonial values and approaches, and are impacted in significant and growing ways by globalization.

The review of literatures presented in this chapter must be qualified as “preliminary” because it seeks only to provide the reader with the framework from which the study was designed without necessarily covering all literatures drawn upon to explain the study’s ultimate findings. In grounded theory studies the constant comparison methodology uses such a process. As ongoing analysis reveals new insights and preliminary findings, explanatory power is built through the review of additional literatures relevant to the emerging findings. They mirror the range of issues that were raised in the process of inquiry and also reflect the breadth of cross-disciplinary coursework leading up to this dissertation. The analysis and the ultimate findings of this study were enriched through relevant writing and theories from the domains of political science, anthropology, sociology, psychology, development studies, management and public administration. Discussion of these literatures is included, as relevant, in the findings and discussion portions of the dissertation (Chapters 4-5).

Each of the literatures to be reviewed below is far vaster in scope than those parts relating to the research questions. In order to delve more deeply than broadly into the specific topic, this literature review therefore has been purposeful in considering the pertinence of research and inquiry to the research questions as the reviewed fields intersect.

## Grounded Theory Literature

*Grounded theory* is the specific interpretive paradigm chosen for this project. Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, both sociologists at the University of California, San Francisco, originated this approach in the 1960s. In *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* (1967), they posited that the discovery of theory from data systematically obtained through interaction with those in a given social setting was more useful than the usual sociological process of the time: generating hypothetical theory creation without relying on field research or observation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Glaser and Strauss also stressed the *intentionality* of their approach, differing from earlier such discovery that occurred only through *serendipity* –“unanticipated, anomalous and strategic findings that give rise to new hypotheses” (Merton, 1949, p. 3).

Glaser or Strauss?

In Chapter 2, I outlined the differing approaches that have evolved through the “Glaserian” and “Straussian” approaches to designing and carrying out grounded theory studies, and provided my own stance and approach in using GT. Below is a more detailed account of the two schools of grounded theory and their evolution over time.

As the application of grounded theory evolved and grew as a research mode in the 1970s – 1980s, its two creators began working independently from one another and mentored students and collaborated with new colleagues in the application of the approach in quite different ways.

Glaser and Strauss's original major work on this approach is still viewed broadly today as the seminal work on this research tradition (Creswell, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Locke, 2001; Mertens, 1998). Locke situates grounded theory within the school of American pragmatism, and specifically, in the school of *symbolic interactionism* that emerged from the disciplines of philosophy and sociology in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. She explains that several American pragmatist philosophers

...shared a sense of disenchantment with what they saw as the irrelevance of the philosophy and social sciences of their day to people's day-to-day lived situations. They wanted to develop a way of thinking about and conceptualizing human behavior that focused attention on people's practices and their lived realities: they shared the objective of understanding social life "in the making..." (2001, p. 20).

Yet the methodological processes of undertaking GT were not the focus of Glaser and Strauss's original book. Both authors were accomplished researchers who were moving their research into a new mode that made sense to them (Meeto, 2007), and their book sought to defend it before their mostly quantitative research-oriented colleagues.

In 1990, the first edition appeared of a detailed "how-to" text for GT aimed at students and other researchers new to the mode, *Basics of Qualitative Research* (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Two years later Glaser published his *Basics of Grounded Theory Analysis* (1992), much of which was a point-by-point rebuttal of Strauss and Corbin (1990).

Side-by-side these two books reveal the significantly differing approaches, especially epistemologically, that the two collaborators had taken since their initial

collaborations. Babchuk (1996) describes the fundamental point of difference between the two from Glaser's perspective:

Convinced that his version is the "correct one" (Glaser, 1992, p. 6), [he] set out to delineate differences between his conception of grounded theory and Strauss and Corbin's version, which he believes has deviated so completely from the original outlined in *The Discovery* that it represents an entirely new methodology he labels "full conceptual description." In other words, Glaser argues that it is now obvious to him that Strauss never fully understood grounded theory from the beginning and as a result two distinct methodologies have emerged (p. 2).

Glaser & Strauss's original published work (1967) advocated for a purely direct collection of qualitative data through interviews without the bias of a preliminary literature review. They advocated for seeing first what there was to see in the field. Based on themes (codes) identified by the researcher just by listening to participants, sources for literature to help clarify and explain what threads of theory emanated from participants' experience would emerge through the identified codes. Then literature could be reviewed that was relevant to the emerging theoretical themes.<sup>4</sup>

Glaser maintained his original position on the best methodological approach, described above. Anselm Strauss and his new collaborator, Juliet Corbin, structured the methodology further (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), advocating for micro-level analysis of transcribed data. Glaser has constantly argued, however, that such an approach leads to

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<sup>4</sup> As can be observed through the initial chapters in this dissertation, this study takes a modified approach to this literature review. Given my own professional background and recent doctoral coursework, it is impossible to conceive that I initiated this study with a complete "blank slate" where relevant literature was concerned.

“forcing data” into thick description rather than focusing on higher-level conceptualization (Glaser, 2002, pp. 7-12). Glaser maintains that researchers should only listen to participants and take broad notes, following up from memory afterwards with memoing on major points. Glaser publicly criticized Strauss & Corbin’s description-focused approach, and the rift between the two original authors persisted through Strauss’s death in 1996.

### Grounded Theory Research on Leadership

Parry (1998) points out that much work in leadership theory has been developed from the basis of psychology and the individual, whereas leadership is a social process that must be understood by context as well as individual psychology. He likens grounded theory studies to case studies in that both are confined to substantive settings and are longitudinal. However, case study focuses on deep understanding of a case or set of cases within their context, whereas grounded theory, after looking at context, explicitly seeks to move away from those specific contexts and generate explanatory theory reflecting patterns which predict future outcomes in the setting studied over time, or its replication elsewhere in similar settings.

Relatively few grounded theory studies of leadership have been published to date. In each case reviewed, the researcher chose the grounded theory methodology as a way to focus on context and social processes, essentially breaking open the black box that stands between the individual and the output of the leadership situation.

McCaslin (1994) looked at the nature of leadership development within dying rural communities in the U.S. Upper Midwest. These communities' best and brightest had out-migrated for economic reasons, leaving the leadership of such towns in the hands of the "rural disadvantaged" (p. 3). McCaslin contends that their profile does not match the traits assumed by any known leadership theory. He argues that "none of these established theories or their hybrids on their own suffice to explain or address the nature of leadership within rural communities" (p. 4). The grounded theory approach allowed the formulation of a theory of reciprocating transformational leadership, a leadership style drawing heavily on the "commonality of purpose" (p. 158) present across these communities.

Komives, Owen, Longerbeam and Mainella's (2005) grounded theory of (U.S.) student leadership identity development argued that "most leadership development scholarship focuses on skill-building or short-term interventions such as retreats or courses, rather than on the process of how leadership capacity or leadership identity is created or changes over time" (p. 594). Komives et al. submitted that grounded theory was the approach that allowed them to gain fresh understanding and generate new theoretical constructs about the processes a young person experiences in creating a leadership identity.

Jones & Kriflik (2006) looked at the context of leadership in a cleaned-up bureaucracy in a western state of Australia. They found that approaching their study

through grounded theory allowed the identification of a core social process that was not accounted for through any formal leadership theory currently in favor—neither under transformational leadership theory nor that of instrumental/authoritative leadership. Their study brought to light the importance of intermediation and brokering applied by mid-level leaders within contexts where either style of formal leadership was observed.

Most recently and closest to the subject of this investigation, Lokkesmoe's (2009) doctoral dissertation on Humphrey Fellows developed a grounded theory of effective leadership development based on interviews and survey data from past Humphrey Fellowship participants from three countries (Brazil, India and Nigeria). Her study considered the effective development of *global* leaders—those professionals who move from leadership positions within their national contexts to international positions within development assistance organizations or international agencies. Her findings argue for the importance of intercultural competence for these individuals' effective leadership in an international context. The study, like this present one, building from collected quantitative data, empirically investigates a set of realities and challenges about which little had been written to date. It differs from this study, however, in that it does not focus on the challenges such individuals face within their own national contexts.

Consistent with the above grounded theory studies, the current investigation also seeks to look at leadership among a population that is unusual in several ways—in its

context, in the personal lived experience of its participants and through the influences of the specific overseas leadership training they have in common.

### **Program Evaluation Literature**

The modern traditions of adult training evaluation were laid out by Kirkpatrick (1958), whose approach, almost unanimously, continues to serve as this field's central reference point today (Arthur, Bennett, Edens & Bell, 2003; Bates, 2004; Collins & Holton, 2004; Eseryel, 2002; Kirkpatrick, 1994, 1996; Morgan, 1999). Kirkpatrick uses a four-tier evaluation model consisting of stepwise measurement over time of trainees' 1. Reaction; 2. Learning; 3. Behavior; 4. Results. Most research available on international training programs approach the topic in this vein, often revealing little beyond a cost-benefit analysis for donors.

The stated purposes of the above-cited studies ranged only from whether what was done was *enjoyable* to, ultimately, *if it impacted institutions*. However, Taschereau (1998) and Morgan (1999) point out the importance of going beyond Kirkpatrick's model to assess the different needs and purposes of monitoring and evaluation for various stakeholders in a program—donor staff, central agencies, field offices, participants, their communities, the media, and so on. Morgan (1999) further argues for the need to refine monitoring and evaluation techniques so that they become more participant- and stakeholder-oriented.

What still is lacking is much direct inquiry with trainees to assess and explore their own understanding and application of leadership concepts and practices. Also missing is how these concepts and practices emerged and evolved within these individuals, and whether and how their program's organizers and faculty approached the task of assisting them in a way that truly met their needs, expectations and realities back home. This study has sought to fill this gap by drawing on a broader and richer range of knowledge and findings to enrich its insights using the lines of inquiry outlined earlier. The implications for the study's findings include recommendations for leadership training programs.

### **Leadership and Leadership Theory Literatures**

To focus my efforts on this domain of knowledge, I first considered several exhaustive literature reviews or meta-analyses published for each domain. The leadership theory and leadership development domain yielded many works that consider the topic from the business and public administration perspective primarily, but with relatively little specific consideration of any settings outside the English-speaking, industrialized worlds of the U.S., Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand (Alimo-Metcalf & Alban-Metcalf, 2001; Boaden, 2006; Day, 2001; Hartley & Binksley, 2003; Van Wart, 2003). Where it does exist beyond the English-speaking world, the research focus is predominantly on Western Europe and certain countries of Asia (Derr, Roussillon & Bournois, 2002; Dorfman, 1996; Feng, 1997; Graumann & Moscovici,

1986; Griffeth, Hom, Denisi & Kirchner, 1980; Leung, Bhagat, Erez & Gibson, 2005; MacLeod & Pai, 2002). Likewise, overviews of leadership research in the intercultural field almost exclusively examine settings in industrialized countries and parts of Asia, and focus predominantly on the for-profit business sector (Dorfman, 1996; House et al., 1997; Leslie & Van Velsor, 1998; Peterson & Hunt, 1997; Redding, 1976; Ronen & Kraut, 1977).

I also reviewed recent relevant scholarship from the fields of higher education, comparative education, organizational development, adult learning and training and development studies. These fields relate to the “target audiences” concerned by the research question; all are fields that now place some emphasis on leadership development as part of their professional training curricula.

Some aspects of gender and feminist studies also were considered, as I sought to understand whether and how the factor of gender may affect the viewpoints, experiences and options those concerned with the question might face, and suggest certain trends or patterns that may emerge on these bases.

The following leadership literature review, then, is specifically relevant to the study’s phenomena. It addresses many of the aspects included in the four lines of inquiry outlined for the research questions. This review will move from biological and anthropological issues of leadership—essentially the natural and social frameworks defining humans as a species—to historical traditions from the West and within Africa,

and finally will discuss current leadership theories and the dilemmas they raise in the African context.

### Biological and Anthropological Contexts

Leader-follower associations are not only the province of humans; they are observed in all higher mammals and most birds. The concept of “alpha” leaders prevails among many socially grouped species (these leaders are usually male, but among several primate species and hyenas, females have distinct “alphas” among themselves as well). Whether among humans or other higher primates, resident populations of males and females (as opposed to hunter-gatherer societies, where roles are very distinct) complex gender and intergenerational patterns vary not only across species or race, but also across specific settlements, families or packs of species. These patterns include styles and evolving traditions of interindividual influence, domination, trust, reciprocity and partnering (Crook, 1986). Many of the complex actions and attitudes in highly sophisticated social situations I discuss below are likely grounded in these biological roots.

Anthropologists define the political organization of humans as a universal element in all societies (Ferraro, 2001). Such organization differs across societies along three key dimensions: the extent to which the political dimensions are distinguishable from other key structures (religion, kinship, economy); the society’s level of political integration and the territory that is defined by it; and finally, the *extent to which authority is concentrated*

*into political roles* (Ferraro, 2001, p. 251) (emphasis added). The field of anthropology also defines four *levels* of political organization among peoples (bands, tribes, chiefdoms and states), based on the extent of their political integration and degree to which political roles are specialized. Political anthropologists recognize a common pattern of dissonance when a traditional tribe or chiefdom society is imposed with or attempts to adopt an imported state society. This reality is an important factor for consideration of this research question in the specific context of Africa.

#### Historical Underpinnings of Leadership

The roots of leadership inquiry go all the way back to eastern and western antiquity. The western roots are more pertinent to this study in that they frame the assumptions made both by European colonial powers that laid out the current political and administrative infrastructures within which Africans continue to operate today. They also heavily influenced much of the formal education Africans received growing up, not to mention the western training the African study participants later received in the United States as Humphrey Fellows.

Ancient scholars' exemplars of leadership were emperors and conquerors that mostly relied on strength and raw power (Aristotle, 350 B.C.E; Plato, 394 B.C.E.). For such leaders, authority was an "owned object, not a concept to be refined" (Burns, 1978, p. 24). Such themes persist in Africa still today, as emphasized by Darbon (1995). Masunungure (2004).further defines this reality as the *primordial* tradition in African

leadership and administration: a pre-colonial mindset of the private sphere that is in conflict with the inherited western civic realm. He argues that corruption and mismanagement stem directly from this dissonance of private vs. public value sets when a western civic society system is grafted onto a non-western set of traditions.

*Lædere*, the Anglo-Saxon word that spawned the English word *leader* that now predominates conceptual western thinking about this phenomenon, is found in texts more than 1,000 years old. Its original meaning was *people on a journey* (Bolman & Deal, 2003). This does not mean, however, that it is conceptually identical across western cultures. The German equivalent for “leadership”, *Führung*, is closely linked to Hitler’s self-aggrandizing title, *der Führer* (the leader), and colors many Germans’ thought processes even today as they may consider applying this term to a person or situation (Derr et al., 2002; Klenke, 1996). Other western languages have borrowed the English term *leader* wholesale (*le leadership*—French; *el liderazgo*—Spanish), but—as my classroom observation in Chapter 1 reflected—attribute to it a kind of exotic, non-local aura. Such linguistic contrasts and nuances are ones that also are significant to any investigation across cultures.

Philosophy and literature have likewise had their hand in shaping today’s understanding of leadership. Galton’s *Hereditary Genius* (1869) sought to explain leadership on the basis of genetic and social inheritance. Around the same time, the

English philosopher Carlyle (1993) suggested that leaders and followers are both born to be such.

By the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, structuralism became the basis for modern western management theory (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Perrow, 1986). This coincided with the European bureaucratization of many African colonies (including two of the three countries in this study, Ghana and Madagascar), which were inheriting the administrative and educational traditions of their metropolitan colonizers that in some cases became frozen in time over many decades and still persist today (Ahluwalia, 2001). Similarly, under its first western-educated Emperor, Haile Selassie I, Ethiopia, as an indigenous nation-state, also was strongly engaged in modernization in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century (Girre, 2006).

The thread of Machiavelli's argument supporting the need for intelligence and dexterity to lead organizations (or in the early 1900s, to lead emerging bureaucracies) began to reappear, after 500 years, through the writings of Weber. He enriched the consideration of this topic through the nuances of faith-based values in his *Protestant Work Ethic* (Weber, 1958a) and *Spirit of Capitalism* (Weber, 1958b), both first published just after 1900. Weber presumed the potential of cause-and-effect, each individual's capacity to effect change in the structural organization of society, and the potential for charisma. Until then, this latter element had been a strictly theological concept. Weber secularized it (Graumann, 1986), calling charisma a "revolutionary force that

deinstitutionalizes social relations and personalizes social structures...creating a new pattern of social relations” (Lepsius, 1986, p. 55).

Charisma today is recognized as one element for making a leading individual successful (Aron, 1970; Coser, 1977). Such approaches, while prevalent throughout history and today, generate strong followership based either on power or persuasion, often paralyzing those following from their own agency (Conger, 1990; Yukl, 1994). Sawadogo (1995), on the other hand, suggests that in the African context in which he grew up, clear hierarchy is important, expected and respected. This dichotomy will be further discussed in the Intercultural Theory section that follows.

By the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, leadership began to emerge as a field so named, and with it, more specifically articulated and debated leadership theory. First came *great man* or *born leader* theories (Jennings, 1960), inspired by Carlyle several decades earlier. In the face of further inquiry and convincing exemplars of other models, those theories soon were debunked in management science as they had been earlier in the philosophical vein. *Trait theory* sought to ground leadership in personality and character (Bird, 1940; Smith & Krueger, 1933) with little regard or consideration for the context within which the leader operates. Murphy’s *environmental leadership theory* (1941) argued on the other hand that leadership does not reside in the person but is a function of the occasion. Similarly, post-World War II analyses identified *situational leaders* (Bass, 1990), wherein not necessarily inspiring individuals suddenly blossom as they respond to

challenging situations that allow them to exercise leadership (Fiedler, 1958; Fiedler, 1983).

Bass (1960) made the case that the great man vs. situational controversy was a pseudo-problem, since theories of leadership cannot be constructed for behavior in a vacuum. This helped further the focus in leadership theory on the overall context in which leaders operate. From this, a clearer understanding emerged that leadership can be the result of this overall context rather than simply the product of the titular or positional leader.

By the 1970s, a *contingency* approach to leadership was advanced (Northouse, 2001), which included not only the leader's behavior but also the roles played by context and position. This model holds currency in business and industry to this day. Around the same time, House (1971) advanced a *path-goal theory* that a leader can determine followers' perceptions of goals or rewards available to him or her, and determine paths (behaviors) through which such rewards can be obtained.

This evolution over the decades set the stage for current western theories that predominate, focusing on *transformational leadership*, which places an emphasis not only on the context of leadership, but also on the agency embodied across that context. A deeper discussion on transformational leadership will follow in a later section of this review.

In the past quarter-century, more appreciation of the important factor of *gender* in leadership also has emerged, as leadership roles and opportunities have opened up for women. As women's accession to leadership roles outside traditional gender-defined fields has become more natural than exceptional, specific gender values and approaches that women may uniquely offer have become more clearly articulated, rather than reflecting a woman's effort to "be exceptional by man's standards" (Klenke, 1996, p. 2).

### Contemporary Leadership Theory

Leadership theory has flourished in North America since the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Several of the models outlined in the previous section have generated a vast commercial literature, and a plethora of leadership case study materials exist. Leadership has become many a professional's buzzword—a visit to any airport bookstand will offer dozens of easy-to-read choices for the business or lay reader.

Many of these theories and approaches also have been broadly disseminated beyond North America, often uncritically. Around the world, many of the traditional concepts and theories of leadership in past days presumed maleness, and until recently were interpreted exclusively through the lenses of male theorists. Even today, some modern theorists accommodate gender simply by suggesting that there can be a "great man/**woman** theory," or that trait, organizational or other leadership theory can be expanded simply by emphasizing the stereotypically stronger skills of women in collaboration, nurturing, empathy, multi-tasking, etc. A feminist perspective, however,

reframes leadership—whether it involves males or females—in explicit terms of its power equation, and challenges whether women’s success at leadership is not much more about access than it is about skill (Connell, 1987; Klenke, 1996). The variations of gender across cultures and contexts were also important elements for participants with whom I discussed these realities. I will address gender and culture more fully in the intercultural theory and literature section below.

### Transformational Leadership

Burns’s seminal piece, *Leadership* (1978) moved the study of leadership from a focus on the positional leader to the overall context in which leadership can exist dynamically across individuals (Bass, 1990). Burns argued that leadership is expressed either as *transactional*, wherein people recognize efficiency through providing their support to the leader demonstrating it, or as *transformational*, engendered by leaders through a convincing vision that shares leadership and brings followers along towards achieving new ends. This distinction often is made to differentiate management from leadership. Building on Burns, Heifetz (1994) submits that leaders must embody both *technical* leadership (management) and *adaptive* leadership (transformational). Heifetz moved the focus from the positional leader to a space that allows for *collective* leadership. He posits that leadership should belong to individuals at all levels of organizations, exhorting positional leaders to bring out those potential qualities in their followers. Stated another way, Kotter (1990) argues that the most useful definition for

leadership today is “a process that helps direct and mobilize people and/or their ideas” (p. 3). Hence, the definition of leadership can apply at many levels; not just at the top.

*Visionary* leadership (Terry, 1993) looks at the leader who scans current trends and engages followers in asking, "Where are we going?" Terry's *ethical assessment* approach to leadership not only asks, "Where are we going?" but "Why are we going there?". Bryson & Crosby (1992) advocate for leadership for the *common good*. Kouzes & Posner (2003) argue for *credible* leadership. Goldsmith (2003) frames leadership as *shared*. These are but several of the more prevalent models that have devolved from Burns's work to date.

These current western authorities on leadership assume—at times explicitly but often implicitly—that organizational hierarchies are flattening and becoming more negotiable, and that social and political contexts in which leaders operate are stable and reliable. Finally, all seem to take for granted that leaders operate within the confines of democracy and “good governance.” The potential for universal transfer of such assumptions is frequently promoted across the developing world by many western educators and donors and donor governments funding them. Very little discussion or challenge of the veracity of this assumption was found in the literature review.

### Leadership and Democratization

Democratization and democracy often seem to be givens when a state defines itself as a democracy. And yet, as Gros (1998) points out in his overview of late 20<sup>th</sup>-

Century democratization in Africa, “the rules governing power alternation and state-society relations...though ostensibly based on democratic ideals, *have not been fully internalized*” (p. 2, emphasis added). Such transferability is a presumption this study explicitly tested through its inquiry on the ground and in the context in which such transfers are being made today. As the findings of the study showed, universality of approach was far from what was observed. Sangmpam (2007) observes a phenomenon he calls the *overpoliticized state*, which he attributes to all developing world regions and not just Africa. This phenomenon challenges the advancement of democratization because these regions’ “political behaviors/features converge, more so than in Western countries, toward a common property, *overpoliticization*, that defies liberal compromise in political competition. (p. 4-5, italics added). Sangmpam’s analysis was helpful in interpreting key findings of this study.

At the managerial level, the realities of public administration, management and leadership in African contexts also has been described as unique. Some 20 years ago, Balogun (1989) described the disappointing performance of public services across Africa as due to career public servants’ comfort with “bureaucratic methods of organization, [a] focus primarily on protocol, empire building, arbitrary job creation and endless form-filling” (p. 230). Blunt & Jones (1992) later concurred, pointing out the special challenges facing African managers in the realms of political party meddling and their resulting contextual limitations on management. In the socio-cultural context, they also

stressed the importance of culture and how it had been largely ignored in earlier pan-African efforts to diagnose and improve the challenges of the bureaucratic setting that Balogun (1989) described.

Unfortunately, some 20 years after the above findings were published and solutions for them prescribed, the same critical areas of challenge still loom largely today in the African settings researched. Such will be the topic of discussion and recommendations in the findings of this study.

### Culture and Leadership

The initial inspiration for this study, as related in Chapter 1, was a personal experience observing Humphrey Fellows who had been invited to define leadership according to their respective cultures' interpretations. As a result, the initial line of thematic discussion with the study's initial participants heavily focused on exploring their thoughts and experiences about leadership as it related to cultural perceptions and distinctions. At that juncture, there was an anticipation that the generation of grounded theory was liable to emerge primarily from this source.

My broader research review discussed the recent development of *ubuntu*, defined as a leadership concept rooted in indigenous societal values in South Africa (Enslin & Horsthemke, 2004; Ramose, 2003), framing the possibility that this was a driving emic force. This interpretation is in competition with a prevailing etic view that leadership in Africa is no different from leadership elsewhere, but its effectiveness is diminished when

exercised without an environment of good governance (Diamond, 1998; Shapiro, 1993). The lack of good governance is a broadly assumed by scholars on the subject as a common reality in most countries across Africa today (Ahluwalia, 2001; Fawole & Ukeje, 2005; Gros, 1998; Villalón & VonDoepp, 2005).

### **Intercultural Theory Literature**

This section presents an overview of intercultural theory as it relates to the research questions and context of the study. At about the same time the field of leadership began to be defined as a distinct academic domain from management studies, so also was the field of intercultural research and theory defined in the mid-20th Century as a distinct sub-field of anthropology. Intercultural research looks at the life-ways and values of all peoples, not just those that are in some way considered exotic or undiscovered, the original focus of the anthropological discipline.

Anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn (1951) acknowledged that more than 160 operating definitions of culture had been identified in the field of anthropology. His conclusion was to offer as a universal definition of culture “the distinctive way of life of a group of people; their complete design for living” (p. 86). Another key founder of the field, Anthropologist Edward Hall, defines culture as *values, attitudes and beliefs a group of people hold in common* (Hall, 1989). More recently, Ferraro (2001) suggested as a conceptual definition of culture “everything that people have, think and do as members of a society” (p. 22), stressing that any culture is a shared phenomenon.

Hall (1989) clarifies that what is visible in a cultural setting is only a reflection of those attitudes, beliefs and values, not necessarily their essence. He further presents psychosocial findings that such values, attitudes and beliefs are neurologically hard-wired in humans by age six. However, these tendencies do not necessarily appear clearly to the unaware eye or ear, even at times to the individual concerned. Hence, the westernized individual from a non-western country may well appear (and at a certain level, even feel) similar to westerners through a practice of learned western attitudes, values and beliefs. This is reinforced when at times they can express such thoughts more fluently in a learned western language acquired through advanced education than they could in their native language.

The above concepts have generated the metaphor of the iceberg as representing a culture, as illustrated in Figure 4 below. It depicts how the visible manifestations of culture (clothing, language, food, housing styles, gestures, etc.) can belie the beliefs, values and thought patterns (a much larger system of culture) that lie below the surface in the same way that the larger part of an iceberg is hidden to an observer under water. These are known as explicit and implicit aspects of a culture (Kluckhohn, 1949).

While to date most intercultural research uses the nation-state as the unit of analysis for definitions and comparisons (Chhokar, Brodbeck & House, 2007; Hofstede, 1980, 2001; House et al., 2004), culture-level analysis can only reflect “central

tendencies” for a country (Hofstede, 1991, p. 253)—such analysis does not predict the behavior or values of any one individual in that country. It is equally important to realize

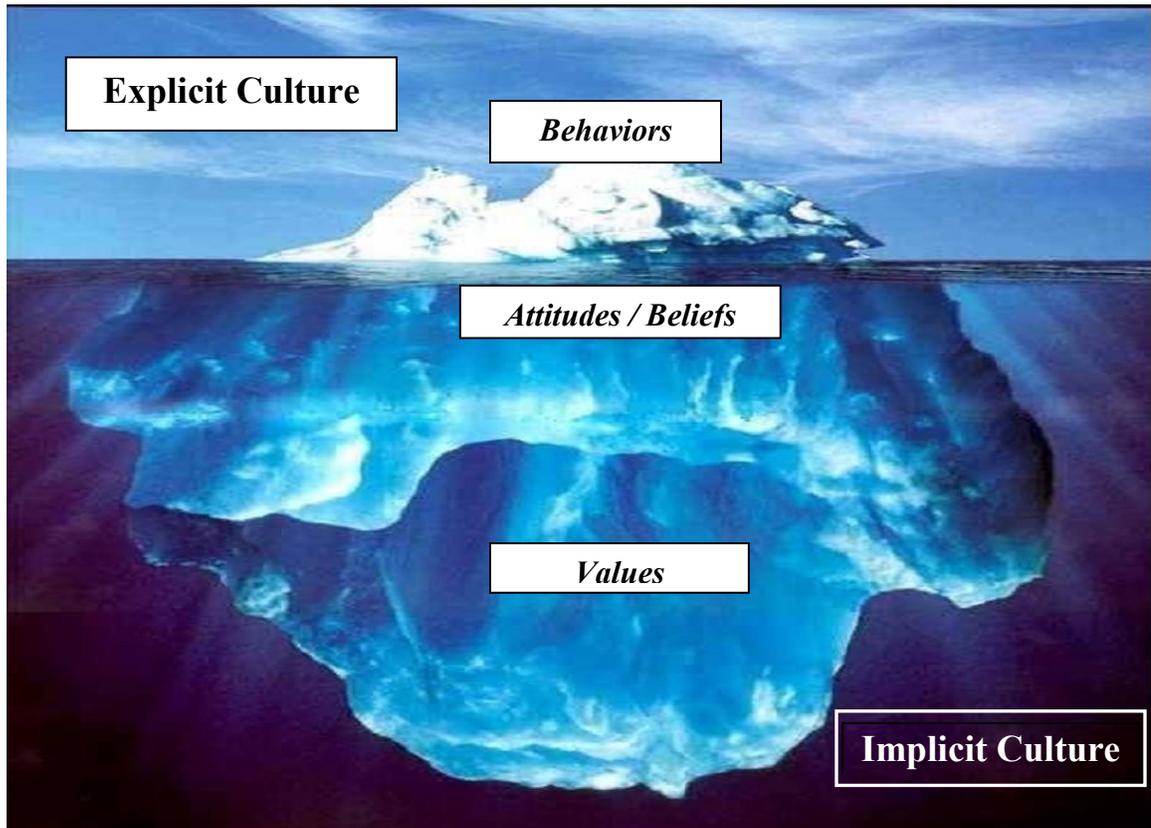


Figure 4: Iceberg Theory of culture

that many cultural factors occur and have import at the level of subcultures (Dahl, 2004)—be they inborn (ethnicity, gender), passed on by the childhood environment (language, regionalism, religious practices and values) or acquired through unique life experiences of schooling, work setting or in the case of this study, overseas training. It is

more useful in understanding the context in which an individual can be expected to be found—what one participant (C4)<sup>5</sup> in this study defined as the “operating space.”

Intercultural definitions at the individual level have derived primarily from the research of M.J. Bennett and J. Bennett (2004), whose most recent work derived from M.J. Bennett’s initial framework (1986) for conceptualizing dimensions of intercultural competence along a continuum based on insight and experience across cultures. Hammer, M. J. Bennett and Wiseman (2003) operationalized the framework through the development of an assessment instrument, the Intercultural Development Inventory, which measures with high proven validity an individual’s orientations and sensitivity toward cultural difference, and predicts capacity to engage with and appreciate the differences operating across cultural boundaries and margins.

#### Intercultural studies

The intersection of two cultures has often been compared to the meeting of two icebergs, as depicted below in Figure 5 (Weaver, 2000). The above-water appearance of each berg (representing behaviors, and in some cases, beliefs when explicitly expressed) reveals only a small portion of its mass. The balance below sea level—not only larger, but also much wider than the tip—lurks undefined and impossible to perceive from

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<sup>5</sup> In the interest of confidentiality all references to research participants will use their project codes and not their names. Primary sources in the core sample are composed of a letter plus number (e.g., *AI*); secondary sources are two letters (e.g. *CB*); focus group sources are noted by a letter plus G (e.g., *AG*).

above. Should the two bodies approach one another, the intersection and possible collision of the two bodies threaten an unpredictable encounter and unknown result. So is it with individuals from different cultures coming together. On the surface, they may each evaluate the similarities, differences and potential synergies they perceive about the other—often reflecting tacit assumptions and learning—without fully accounting for or comprehending the values, attitudes and beliefs that truly drive the other. Today’s technically well trained individuals from non-western cultures may adopt many western appearances through clothing, style of doing business, language of business communication and familiarity with food, customs and pastimes of western people. This can lead the person of western background to jump to the conclusion that the rest of that person’s “iceberg” must also be just the same.

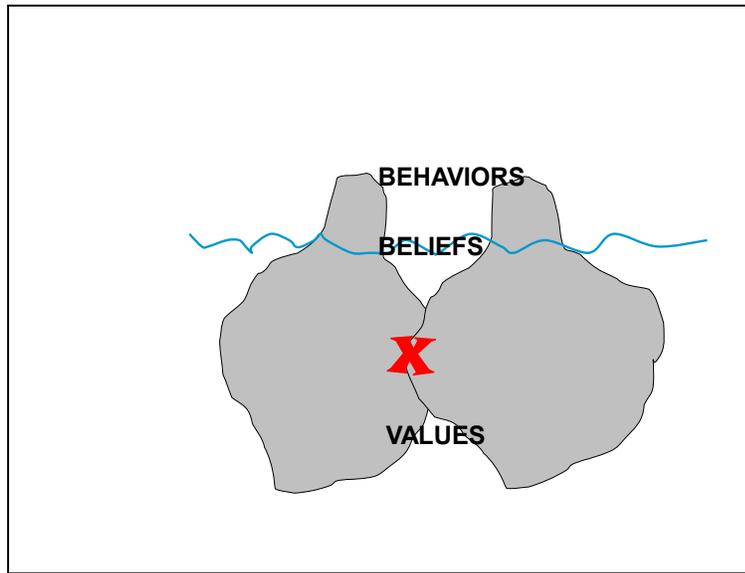


Figure 5: Cultural clashes often happen below the surface (Weaver, 2000)

In some situations a similar “clash of cultures” can be observed within one person who straddles two cultures, a frequent phenomenon among people of non-western cultures who undergo extensive education in a western cultural environment. This phenomenon was first examined by psychiatrist Frantz Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952). What may result from such western-based educational experiences is what Mutubazi (2002, p. 19) calls “*coconut managers*”—professionals whose behaviors and attitudes are “black” on the outside and “white” inside. Derr, Roussillon & Bourgeois (2002) point out how much this phenomenon results in conflicting work and personal behaviors of managers that can appear contradictory and confusing to subordinates.

Such has been the lived experience of all the participants in this study, educated and exposed to both indigenous and western cultures and traditions through their home

upbringing, western-grounded education and international experiences in study and work. Cultural factors, as we can see from the above discussion and will hear later directly from participants' interviews, certainly do play their part in the participants' views. Self-perceptions, one of the key lines of inquiry, contribute to the theory emerging from this study. However, as demonstrated above, through the participants' perspectives and initial analysis of them, it became clear that culture plays a highly interactive role with politics in defining the macro-context, practices, responsibilities and viewpoints of all the participants who were part of this project.

#### Dimensions of Culture as Related to Africa

Hofstede's (1980, 2007) work on cultural dimensions is a useful tool for looking at prevailing work values within a national culture, and for comparing those values across cultures, both highly pertinent considerations for this study. Based on a large, multi-country survey of work styles and values across employees of a major multinational corporation, Hofstede integrated his industrial psychologist's perspective into this anthropological base. He developed an analysis model using four cultural dimensions that generated distinct cultural values profiles at the level of the nation-state for some 43 countries or groups of countries.

Hofstede's original four dimensions of analysis were *Power Distance*, *Individualism*, *Masculinity* and *Uncertainty Avoidance*, further defined below. A fifth dimension, *Long-term Orientation*, was added later. Each dimension was assigned a

value (range 1~100) resulting in a unique profile for each national culture included in his study.

Hofstede's research produced the first significant—and still considered fundamental—model and set of theories specifically about the global diversity of cultural values in the workplace. Others' work in this vein enriched and buttressed Hofstede's findings (Badawy, 1979; Griffeth et al., 1980; Redding, 1976; Ronen & Kraut, 1977), but generally did not cover the range of countries (especially not African countries) nor include the quantity of respondents in Hofstede's study ( $n = 40,000$ ).

Hofstede's five dimensions (1980, 2007), are defined as follows:

**Power Distance Index (PDI)** is the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. This represents inequality (more versus less), but defined from below, not from above.

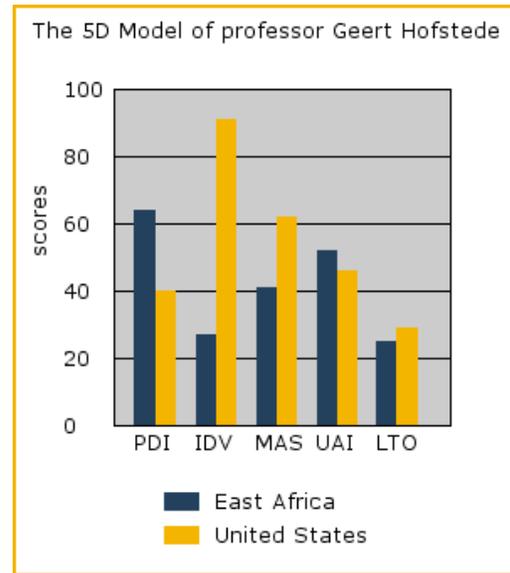
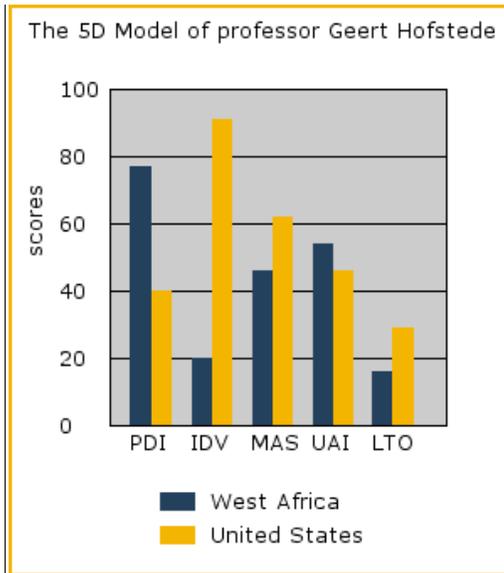
**Individualism (IDV)** on the one side versus its opposite, collectivism, is the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups. On the individualist side we find societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after him/herself and his/her immediate family. On the collectivist side, we find societies in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, often extended families (with uncles, aunts and grandparents) which continue protecting them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty.

**Masculinity (MAS)** versus its opposite, femininity, refers to the distribution of roles between the genders, which is another fundamental issue for any society to which a range of solutions are found. The women in feminine countries have the same modest, caring values as the men; in the masculine countries they are somewhat assertive and competitive, but not as much as the men, so that these countries show a gap between men's values and women's values.

**Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)** deals with a society's tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity; it ultimately refers to man's search for Truth. It indicates to what extent a culture programs its members to feel either uncomfortable or comfortable in unstructured situations. Unstructured situations are novel, unknown, surprising, different from usual.

**Long-Term Orientation (LTO)** versus short-term orientation... can be said to deal with virtue regardless of truth. Values associated with Long Term Orientation are thrift and perseverance; values associated with Short Term Orientation are respect for tradition, fulfilling social obligations, and protecting one's "face."  
(Hofstede 2007)

The graphic comparisons between U.S. and East/West African work values, in Figures 6a & 6b below, provide a useful summary for this cultural analysis. While the data displayed there are only illustrative as an introduction to the context and often-prevailing values within this study, they do point out some significant contrasts between the U.S. and African respondents of Hofstede's study (all of whom were local IBM employees at all levels in each country, controlled for nationality).



Legend: **PDI**: High/Low Power distance **IDV**: Individualism/collectivism  
**MAS**: Masculinity/Femininity **UAI**: High/Low Uncertainty avoidance  
**LTO**: High/Low Long-term orientation

Figures 6a & 6b: Hofstede Cultural Dimensions compared between West Africa and the U.S.A.; East Africa and the U.S.A.

The African values for Power Distance (PDI) far outstrip those of the United States, reflecting a much stronger sensitivity to and value placed on hierarchy, rank and power in professional relationships. On the other hand, a massively different attitude is observed towards the importance of individualism (the U.S. value for this dimension is higher than any other country Hofstede studied) vs. the collective spirit prevailing among African respondents in the Hofstede study, reflected in the concept of *ubuntu* (Enslin & Horsthemke, 2004; Ramose, 2003) discussed earlier.

Schein (1985) and Derr & Laurent (1989) further elaborated on Hall's model discussed above, arguing that at the professional level, the underlying values and thought patterns, though ingrained during childhood, may be altered through strong experiences in new corporate cultures or significant cross-national experiences. These arguments are pertinent to this study, offering understanding the observations and settings of this study's participants.

More recently, House, Wright & Aditya (1998) and House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman & Gupta (2004) have built on Hofstede's theories through the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) Research Project. Their work redefined Hofstede's five cultural factors to nine narrower categories, using specific quantitative indicators to support their theories.

The nine core GLOBE cultural dimensions, as summarized by Lokkesmoe (2009), are:

**Uncertainty Avoidance** is the extent to which members of an organization or society strive to avoid uncertainty by relying on established social norms, rituals, and bureaucratic practices.

**Power Distance** is the degree to which members of an organization or society expect and agree that power should be stratified and concentrated at higher levels of an organization or government.

**Collectivism I** (Institutional Collectivism) is the degree to which organizational and societal institutional practices encourage and reward collective distribution of resources and collective action.

**Collectivism II** (In-Group Collectivism) is the degree to which individuals express pride, loyalty, and cohesiveness in their organizations or families.

**Gender Egalitarianism** is the degree to which an organization or society minimizes gender role differences while promoting gender equality.

**Assertiveness** is the degree to which individuals and organizations or societies are assertive, confrontational, and aggressive in social relationships.

**Future Orientation** is the degree to which individuals and organizations or societies engage in future oriented behaviors such as planning, investing in the future, and delaying individual or collective gratification.

**Performance Orientation** is the degree to which an organization or society encourages and rewards group members for performance improvement and excellence.

**Humane Orientation** is the degree to which individuals and organizations or societies encourage and reward individuals for being fair, altruistic, friendly, generous, caring, and kind to others (pp. 23-24).

House et al.'s survey results also provided not only a measure of the practices respondents identified (Hofstede's approach) but also measured and analyzed the ideals they said they held for each cultural dimension. This two-dimensional approach, going beyond Hofstede's original construct, is reflected in the cultural dimension scores presented in Figures 7 and 8 below.

Based on alignments observed across these nine cultural scales, the 62 cultural societies were grouped into ten cultural core groups. This analysis of cultural factors presents us with a sharper lens through which to consider culture and work values. Thus, in considering African culture and work values, one can compare the practices vs. values distinctions through the following figure (House et al., 2004, p. 34)

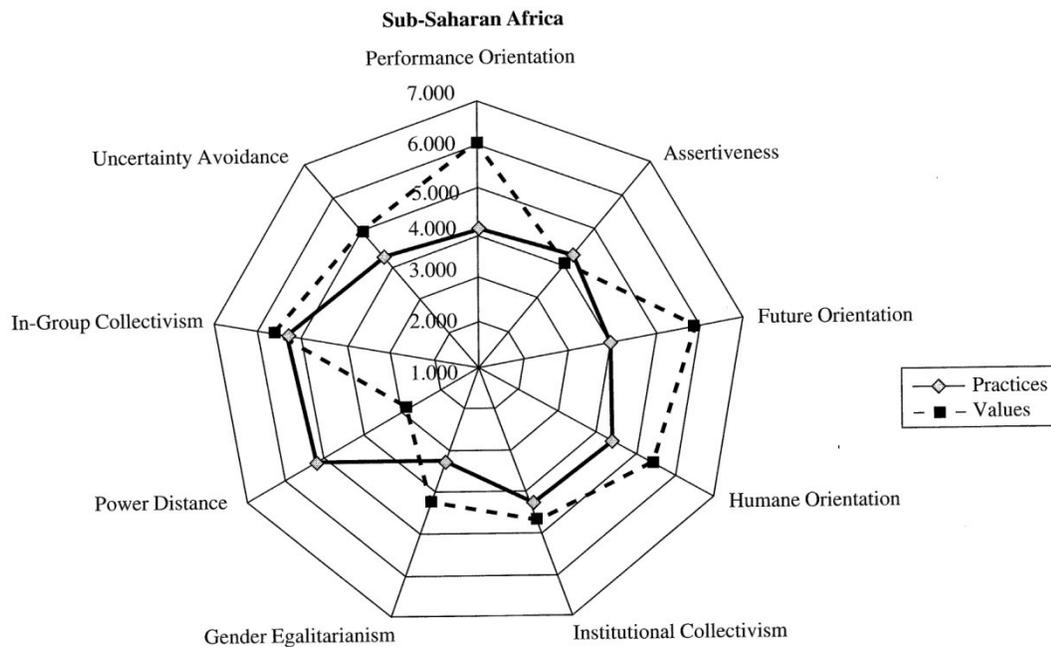


Figure 7: Cultural Dimension Scores for the Sub-Saharan Africa Cluster

It is noteworthy that the African respondents in House et al.'s (2004) study appeared to hold stronger values than true practices in the areas of performance orientation (value: 6.0; practice: 4.2), future orientation (value: 5.9; practice: 4.0), humane orientation (value: 5.3; practice: 4.3) and gender egalitarianism (value: 3.2; practice: 2.2). On the other hand, the gap is reversed and at its most extreme when considering *power distance* (practice: 5.1; value: 2.0). Such contrasts offered some useful frames for interview queries and prompted discussions on participants' own related reflections.

The same analysis performed on the cluster of countries that includes the U.S. (included in the cluster defined as “Anglo” countries in the House study: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the U.K. and the U.S.A.) makes clear some significant differences of values compared with the Africa cluster, as illustrated below (House et al., 2004, p. 32):

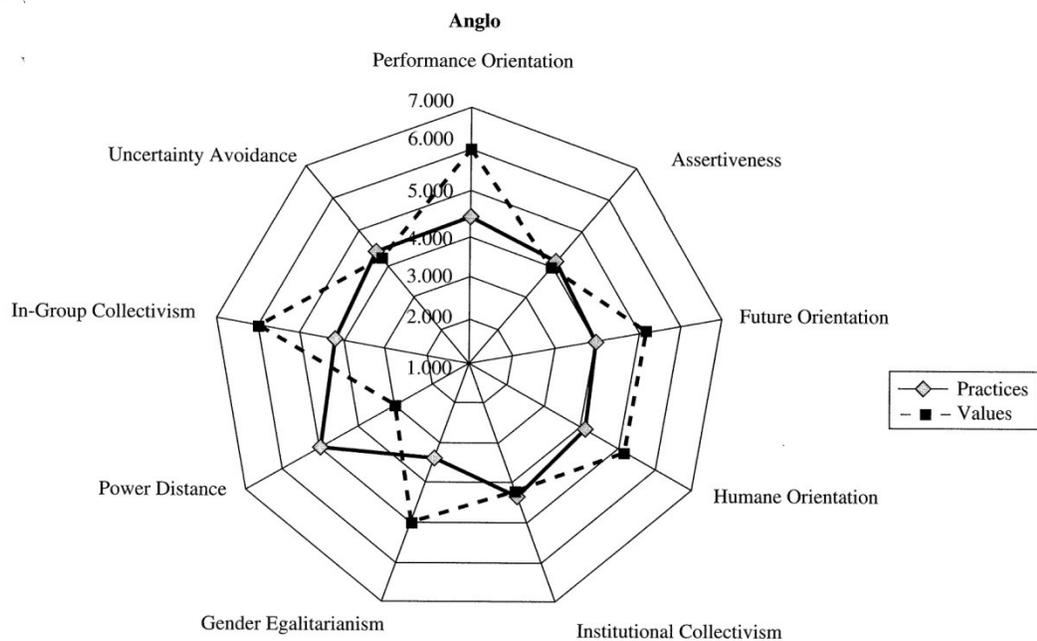


Figure 8: Cultural Dimension Scores for the Anglo Societal Cluster

House et al.'s (2004) analysis above suggests areas of exploration that no other literature I reviewed had considered. It particularly pointed out issues of gender and agency within and across cultures that Hofstede's earlier approach did not reveal. It still is limited, I would argue, by using Hofstede's same nation-state unit of analysis. Thus the

dimensions expressed can only be suggestive of aggregate national trends for motives, attitudes and action—key lines in this study. Yet societies around the world are ever more diverse internally. At the same time, they also are growing more globalized across regions, professions, networks and shared experiences afforded by greater movement and interaction, reinforced by today’s instantaneous electronic communications.

Mutubazi’s (2002) analysis of different management models in African-Western management teams neatly summarizes and contrasts (see Table 2 below) the different styles and value systems reflected in such teams. Some or all of both value sets and styles potentially make up the overseas trained transnational professional’s repertoire of approaches and choices at the workplace:

<i>Imported Model</i>	<i>Circulatory Model</i>
<b>Segmented approach</b> to life and to collective action	<b>Integrative approach</b> to life and to collective action
<b>Rationality:</b> segmenting and organizing life and collective actions ( companies) around work and continual research of wealth	<b>Relationality:</b> organizing life and collectives projects around family and social networking individual’s families, clans...
<b>Individual development</b> is central	<b>Community</b> (or clan) development is central
Primary objective: <b>economic profit</b>	Primary objective : <b>social profit</b> . It is not opposed to economic profit
<b>Time is money</b> : avoid wasting it ( material or financial security)	<b>Time is relations with other persons</b> : It is never lost, it is a social investment (a health security )

Table 2: Summary of Mutubazi’s (2002) imported western and African circulatory models of management .

## **Conclusion**

The literature review in this chapter covered the four areas of scholarship that contributed to the initial design and implementation of this investigation: grounded theory methodology, program evaluation with regard to training, leadership and intercultural communications. These areas were considered to be foundational to this research.

From its outset this study's design assumed that further investigation would ensue as part of the study's implementation. As propositions and initial findings from field work and analysis came to light that the above areas did not explain fully, or suggested deeper understanding of aspects covered, further literature review ensued. As findings are reported and discussed in the next two chapters, additional literatures that were explanatory to these findings will accompany those discussions.

## CHAPTER 4: DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This chapter reviews the implementation of the study's methodology, described in Chapter 2. Data collection, transcription, coding and initial analysis are first accounted for. Also included is an overview of the profiles and backgrounds of the study's participants. Finally, this chapter presents a step-wise discussion of the data analysis process, findings from each step and additional literature that is explanatory or supportive of the findings. These findings led to the final stage of grounded theory methodology, selective coding and theory generation, which will be discussed in the following, final chapter.

### **Profile of Primary Participant Sample**

Each interview followed a pattern of life history inventory at its outset. This permitted participants to “warm up” to the interview process and provide an update on their lives and careers. After verifying the information on record, interviews went on to cover additional key areas related to the research lines of inquiry that often were not in the participant's program application files. This process also allowed the inquiry to respond to areas or clusters of influence as reflected by the participants' lines of discussion.

Those participants whose return home was relatively recent often provided the freshest and most detailed reflections on their re-entry experiences across the sample.

These reflections sometimes offered the deepest insights into the personal development and self-redefinition process that unfolded back home after the fellowship. The insights of those a bit farther from the experience, however, also enriched the study's findings by offering a longer view and more integrated sense of their leadership perceptions and practice.

This first phase of the interview also provided the basis for the data collection to be organized using a qualitative research software program, NVivo 7, providing "attributes" that assisted at a later point in running data reports and cross-case analyses along specific variables (gender, age, religion, sector, etc.).

The primary participants in the sample numbered 16: four each in Ethiopia (two males; two females) and Madagascar (three males; one female) and eight in Ghana (six males; two females). The gender breakdown closely reflected the number of male and female African participants in the Humphrey Fellowship in the 1990s, the period when most of them came to the U.S. as Fellows.

#### Shared U.S. Training Background

The participants of the study all attended similar non-degree programs organized especially for cohorts of Humphrey Fellows at each host campus. Each Fellow had been placed on the respective campus according to area of expertise. In this sample, nine of the 15 graduate-level university professional schools used by the Humphrey Program were represented: three Fellows had been based at American University in Washington, DC,

either in its School of International Service or College of Law; two each attended the University of Minnesota's Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Special Program for Urban and Regional Studies and the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas-Austin. Of the remainder, one each was based at Cornell University's International Institute for Food, Agriculture and Development, the University of California-Davis College of Agriculture, Pennsylvania State University's College of Education, the University of Maryland's School of Public Policy and the University of Washington (State) Evans School of Public Affairs.

On all Humphrey campuses participants undergo a program combining graduate-level coursework, a series of special seminars, field trips and workshops that aim to develop their leadership and other professional skills. All Fellows also participate in work attachments ("professional affiliation") of at least six weeks' duration in a U.S.-based organization in their respective fields. In keeping with the program's goal of providing people-to-people contact with U.S. citizens as part of the fellowship, Fellows are also matched up with community welcome families. In their interviews, several Fellows described having experienced significant ongoing relationships and influence with these families. Almost all likewise reported that they had frequently spoken as invited guests at campus, community and professional events as well as in nearby K-12 schools, thereby

broadening the networks of contacts and contexts for observation of U.S. professional settings beyond their campuses.

#### Earlier Relevant Experiences

While all participants completed their education through their first university degree in their respective home countries, almost all had already undergone at least one overseas training experience at the graduate or advanced training level prior to the Humphrey Fellowship, none of which had been in the U.S. (A broader review of Humphrey Fellow backgrounds reflects that this trend was the general pattern in the backgrounds of all African Fellows). Eleven had lived and studied or worked for one year or longer in Western Europe—eight in the U.K., two each in France and the Netherlands and one in Austria. One of the two participants who went to the Netherlands for a second master's degree had earlier lived and studied for her first masters in the erstwhile U.S.S.R., sent there during the socialist period of her home country. Beyond the United Kingdom and the rest of Western Europe, two Fellows had previously studied in other Commonwealth countries (Canada and New Zealand) and one in Israel. One participant attended a short course in Japan, which he said had a strong impact on his career practice and world view. Only one participant had had any significant prior study/training experience in another African country (a Ghanaian who as an undergraduate went to neighboring Côte d'Ivoire to study French).

Numerous Fellows reported having attended short courses across other African countries, but these were mostly organized by international donor agencies and held in a given country as a matter of proximity and convenience for the participants. These events' content and delivery came mostly from experts outside Africa and the venues themselves or the residents there did not generally play a significant direct role in the content or influence of the coursework presented.

The impact of the first overseas study opportunity often first opened participants' eyes to a broader professional context and empowered them to take more initiatives upon their return to the workplace back home. One participant (project code name "A1"<sup>6</sup>) commented on her re-entry challenges at work after a master's course in the U.K.:

When you go abroad and you get extra competencies, you feel you are better equipped to hold a position. But people never think about "you might be managed and not a manager"... Maybe just keep them in a situation where they could be managed under someone's supervision. They don't necessarily have to take initiatives, but they have to carry out as technicians the initiatives of others (A1).

In sum, exposure to western training in most cases dated back to earlier experiences. These participants' evaluations and perceptions on their U.S. Humphrey experience therefore was often framed by their perceptions of earlier overseas stays—

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<sup>6</sup> In the interest of confidentiality all references to research participants will use their project codes and not a name. Primary sources in the core sample are composed of a letter plus number (e.g., *A1*); secondary sources are two letters (e.g., *CB*); focus group sources are noted by a letter plus G (e.g., *AG*).

whether different, better or worse. In most cases, they qualified the Humphrey experience as better, or at least more comprehensive, given its broad range of activities and exposures. A1 made this observation:

This kind of program is what the HHH program has given me—integrating different elements, being able to push yourself forward but be realistic about possibilities and constraints.

[The faculty coordinator at A1's host university] wanted us to attend an agricultural fair, and we said, "Why do that—we are civil servants—not farmers! Why take us to an agricultural fair?" And he said, "Look, you are from rural countries. You need to know understand what kind of resources you have; where do you get them from. This will give you a broader perspective on the people you are to lead." He told us what is important is not where your organization is slotting you in terms of your position, but what you can do at your level. From any position you can perform and do brilliant things.

This is what matters, and this is something that has stayed with me (A1).

National Service

All of the participants, regardless of country or field of study, reported having participated in one to two years of compulsory civilian national service in the home country shortly after attaining their bachelors-level degree. This shared experience, less prevalent across Africa nowadays than it was in the 1960s-1980s, was still a widely applied policy at the beginning of those participants' professional careers some 20-25 years ago. Molefe & Weeks (2001) describe national service in Africa as the opportunity benefiting the "educated elite group who needed to 'pay back' to society [for free higher education] through a form of compulsory service—and as a form of political control and socialization to the condition of the masses" (p. 108). National service kicked off all of

these all participants' careers, and provided a significant source of inspiration for several. C7, for example, described his national service assignment as a schoolteacher in a rural district distant from his home in this way:

C7: It was very exciting...people are getting to you and you see a deprived region and for me it was one of the most eye-opening chapters of my life.

*Researcher: Well, what did you bring back from that that kind of experience?*

C7: Let me say that you know it brought to me a lot of humility; a lot of understanding.

*Researcher: How the other half lives kind of thing?*

C7: Precisely; and better appreciate the world, our human nature, the commonality of us as one and the same people. People who didn't have the wherewithal and were still, you know, making efforts to live. It brought me a better appreciation of life and that convinced me that perhaps my career should be built in the public service.

The national service experience also launched or confirmed most of these participants' career tracks in the public sector and ultimate professional focus that often led them to advanced training at the graduate education level. With only two exceptions, participants reported that their initial undergraduate degree was not the determinant of their career track (several majored in liberal arts but hold advanced technical/professional degrees and have targeted technical expertise in a specific field). Consistently, it was the national service experience that seemed to have led them to a field of practice through the assignment they held for that period, and ultimately led them to graduate studies in a related sector (agriculture, finance, law, public policy, teaching, urban planning, etc.).

Figure 5 below reflects participants' descriptions of the typical career tracks of public- and private-sector African professionals in parallel. It is of note that in both cases, almost all university-trained professionals begin their post-university careers with a stint in the public sector.

Virtually all participants in this study had career track, as illustrated at the top of Figure 5 (below). After the required short-term assignment in the public sector through national service, they sought to remain in government service to build their career rather than opting for private sector opportunities, which at the time of these individuals' early careers (1970s-1980s) were extremely limited. It is of note that the private sector workforce across sub-Saharan Africa, while expanded today, still is quite small compared to other world regions.

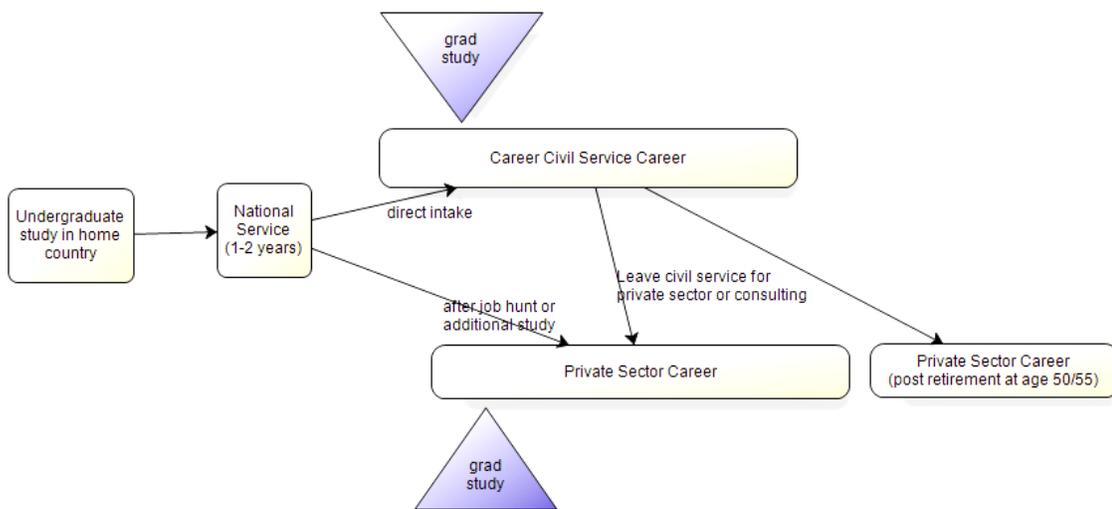


Figure 9: Career track and options of African professional elites

### Types of Leadership Positions

Participants’ current or recent job assignments broke down to two types of leadership positions: positional and policy. In some individuals’ cases, assignments in one or the other category have alternated, often due to changes in political leadership—a key finding that will be discussed in detail below and in the next chapter. At the time of the field work, 13 of the 16 interviewed held high-level positional leadership roles, often heading up large staffs or in one case, leading a whole government agency. The remaining three held positions of significant influence and leadership through the responsibilities given them in policy formulation—advising or creating national policies such as currency reform (C3), English language curriculum and instruction policy (A1) or early childhood education policy reform (A3). Several of these individuals had shifted

from one type of role to the other in their careers. Such shifts are likely as well in the future for many, as other factors may evolve, a key phenomenon of this study, described and discussed below.

### Participants' Family Backgrounds

The two pilot studies detailed in Chapter 2 reflected that many Humphrey Fellows especially valued the influences of their family and upbringing. All attributed to that experience a strong inspiration to leadership. The design of this study therefore emphasized this aspect in its line of inquiry (an aspect little-mentioned in the literature review on leadership).

Growing up, participants were members of families whose size ranged from two to 12 children, with the majority having a large number of siblings. Several reported losing siblings or their fathers at a young age, requiring them to assume parental roles of mentoring and even financial support, in some cases at a fairly early age in life.

All participants had children—most of whom were already adolescents or young adults at the time of the interviews. While all 11 male participants had spouses with professional-level careers and children schooled in strong academic institutions, two of the five female participants were single parents. They described positively a certain independence this reality brought to their careers and lives. A common cultural reality for these busy African professionals was that all had close connections to an extended family, both a valuable source of support and an inevitable burden of responsibility for

them. Partnered or not, all mentioned reliance on extended family support—particularly described as a significant help to many while they were on their overseas training assignments, when most had left their children behind for the year.

### **Preliminary Analysis**

Using NVivo 7 qualitative research software, interviews and other relevant documents were uploaded and associated into a single project document. First attributes and initial coding assigned to each participant's data case permitted an initial cross-case analysis of attributes and backgrounds, which assisted in developing the overview provided above.

As preliminary insights emerged from the early review of the first fieldwork transcripts and reports from NVivo, a more formal coding structure for analysis emerged as more data were reviewed and linked across cases (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Recalling the depiction in Chapter 2 of the coding process used for analysis, the detailed steps of this analysis process are now outlined and illustrated in Figure 10 below.

#### **Open Coding**

The initial open coding process used a code list of potential themes drawn from this dissertation's proposal as well as those suggested in the lines of inquiry, resulting in some 20 codes. As the first few interviews were then reviewed and coded using this initial list, nine additional codes suggested themselves (see Figure 13 in the appendix for a detailed

display of first generation coding). Among the new categories coming from the transcript reviews were four “in-vivo” codes—categories whose names are directly generated from or inspired by the participant’s own words (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In-vivo categories are considered especially important in grounded theory, as they directly reflect the voice and meaning-making of the participants who are the source of the theory generation. They often are powerful explanatory tools for analysis, and were indeed helpful to this study.

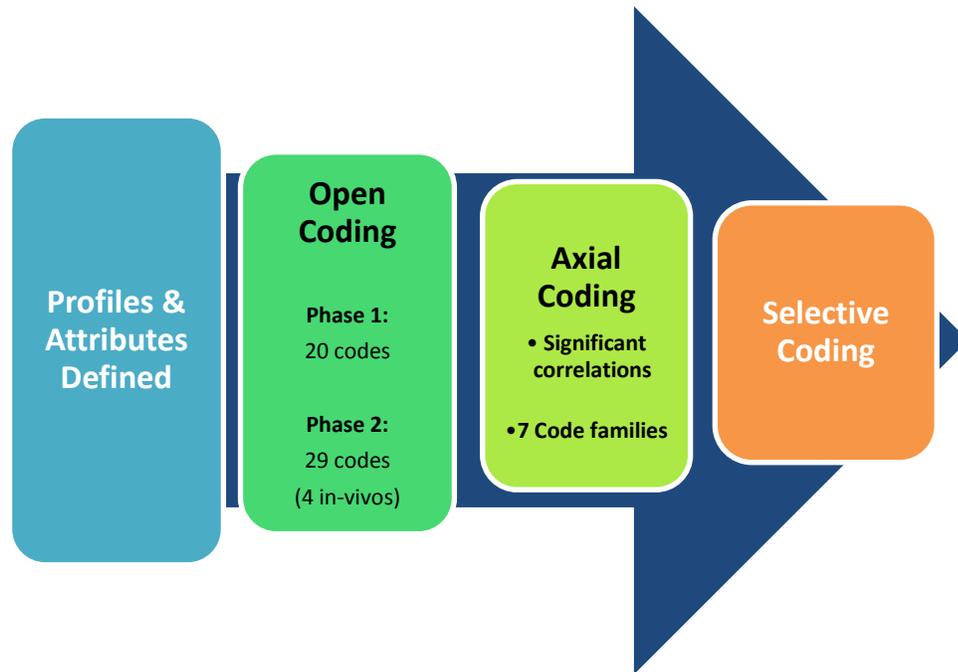


Figure 10: Detail of open and axial coding processes in the data analysis

The 29 open codes used in this step generated several hundred references distributed unevenly across the codes. These codes and their patterns were next analyzed and the coding was consolidated in the subsequent phase on the basis of their frequency and apparent patterns and connections across interviews.

### Axial Coding

For the next iteration of analysis, based on additional input and feedback from participants who had reviewed their interview transcripts in the first field work visits, seven “tree nodes” (code families) were created to allow the grouping of two to four related areas under each family. I then applied other less descriptive and more conceptual codes to larger chunks of interview discussions (see Illustration 4 in appendix).

This stage of analysis began to reveal additional linkages and connections across cases, creating some clear patterns through what grounded theory calls *axial coding*. My goal was to identify more central phenomena and to explore the associations across cases, causal conditions and specific strategies for them (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). For example, at this point, the significant relationship between “career success/career failure” and “political impacts” categories emerged. This led to additional connections accounting for the number/quality of leadership approaches participants said they applied according to different political macro-environments.

The open codes that evolved at this point in the analysis began to include many more conceptual features and took the analysis farther away from simple description of

what was captured through the interviews (see Illustration 3 in appendix). The 18 months following the first phase of field work offered a good period of time to work on the findings of those first visits. This time lag facilitated the move from the *open coding* developed during the preliminary studies to fuller axial coding as the project analysis matured.

By the time of the second round of field visits (late 2008), interviews and other data-gathering done *in situ* could be more focused with the second-generation coding already in place. From this set of interviews I could initiate a more fine-grained discussion and description of leadership practices based on early analysis of the interviews the first field trip interviews. This was also an opportunity to determine the importance and generalizability across the sample of the generated “in-vivo” codes.

By way of example, one participant in this study spoke about his practice of “coupling”—pairing up a more experienced and less experienced staff member to ensure that peer mentoring and learning was taking place:

C4: ...first of all, knowing that this was a challenge that had plagued my organization all over the years, the leadership style I adopted was...what I call coupling.

I knew this was a challenge in the organization so when I took up this position ... what I did was that I was attaching myself to the case officers. Legal officer investigators are case officers. So in coupling, attaching myself to them, I was unconsciously passing on my own skills to them and also trying as much as possible to make them become adaptable to other situations.

So when those resignations happen I try to juggle the staff around. Some resisted and I showed them they could do it and gave them all the necessary encouragement, etc.

He later described his highly interactive project leadership style—what he had dubbed “door-to-door”—by which he visited key staff members on site rather than employing the more common practice in his environment—calling them into his office for a formal report.

Another participant spoke during a focus group of the challenges of ensuring transparency and consistency in application of standards and regulations. He described the challenge as going beyond dealing with the regulations themselves, which he thought were framed in a consistent manner. This issue was that the realities of the political and regulatory “operating space” existing in the country and culture did not provide reinforcement of these best practices:

I think it all boils down to norms and laws and everything that pertain in the society. If you take the U.S. laws, they work there... There you could have some abuse as well, but it should not be that pathological as we have in our society here.

There are a lot of things you cannot take for granted in the U.S. And if you have laws working then in your leadership role, you are more effective rather than what we have in our set-up here. I mean, you can have all of the vision you have but in our set-up you go from where you want to start to where you want to end in our society.

*Researcher: So the vision maybe isn't different, but the space that the vision has to operate in is not as well defined?*

KA: The vision might be the same but *the space within which we operate* might be different (CG).

In sum, all three of the above situations were confirmed as valid and useful *in-vivo* codes in the second generation of coding. In going back to review earlier interviews, I observed similar approaches or perspectives related by other participants that had not always come to my attention in that vein, and thus re-coded their cases, adding these *in-vivos*.

While the first two *in-vivo* categories described above were not widely mentioned by others and were therefore grouped under a more general family of individual strategies, the recoding process made it clear that the last one was significant. Notable to the analysis and theory generation we will examine later, *operating space* as a concept (expressed in a variety of terms and settings that described this challenge) ultimately appeared 76 times across the majority of the 16 cases.

Other codes, when searches on them were paired with other parameters, began to yield patterns according to condition of the “operating space” at the time the event related occurred. Hence a pattern of the “self-promotion” and ”networking” codes matching with narrow (political) “operating space” began to appear, providing clues that there was more to the dimension of leadership practice for these non-political professionals than simply personal competence or culture.

## Selective Coding

As Creswell (1998) outlines, analysis subsequent to axial coding should lead to *selective coding*, which seeks to develop “story lines” integrating the categories of the axial coding (pp. 55-58). This process next led this study to developing some *conditional propositions*—some of which have been cited above, However, others just as important emerged that were not anticipated. These propositions and story lines provided the structure leading to the development of this study’s grounded theory.

Once the preliminary work began to take more form through deeper interaction with coding, analysis and theory generation, the areas needed to refine and reshape the literature review became clearer. This called for more inquiry along the lines of African political history, democratization and post-colonial theory, to be discussed below.

Additional data also were gathered in a more targeted manner as these themes emerged, , including more focused conversations with later participants and with follow-up queries/interactions by e-mail to previous participants. As conceptualization began to take form, I was able to look for relationships connecting statements and events within the whole context of the inquiry. Such relationships often suggested directions for additional literature review.

By the second round of interviews, there was a high level of confidence concerning the points to be explored in depth. This is a point which Glaser and Strauss (1967) define as “two major requirements of theory: (1) *parsimony* of variables and

formulation, and (2) *scope* in the applicability of the theory to a wide range of situations” (pp. 110-111). This meant targeting how the field work in the third country could aim for *category saturation*—“the development of categories in terms of their properties and dimensions, including variation, and if theory building, the delineating of relationships between concepts” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 143). The term “saturation,” Dey (1999) argues, means that no possible lead has been exhausted. However, he suggests that “it may be more appropriate to refer to category ‘sufficiency’ rather than ‘saturation’ as the appropriate point at which coding can be stopped” (p. 117). For this exploratory, multi-site study, it seems fairer to say that sufficiency rather than saturation was reached—it is likely that a narrower, more in-depth study still could yield more insights in the future.

In the section that follows, the results of the analysis and responses to the lines of inquiry and their subquestions will be reviewed. This will be followed by a more detailed description of the final, selective coding stage leading to the generation of the grounded theory.

### **Data Analysis**

From the first interview undertaken in the first site, a regular process of review, reflection and memoing took place. This occurred over the 18-month data-gathering phase as well as during the subsequent six months of data analysis. As my reflections and memos considered the emerging data and offered initial hunches about what was there to be learned, so did the inquiry incorporate those areas of exploration (some anticipated

and some not). Likewise, initial observations in early interviews were incorporated as a way of early verification of the data collected and the preliminary analyses made about them.

For example, the analysis of data reported in this chapter is the outcome of a very long, iterative and reiterative process. My early memo log from the first days of field work included this entry:

Wednesday 5/23/2007:

I had conjectured in my proposal that politics is a backdrop Fellows deal with in direct ways that we don't appreciate, but both of the Fellows I've interviewed thus far have had to confront politics close-up and had their professional tracks directly held up or blocked despite their competence. And these are both career people, not political appointees.

A bit later on, the notes then mention a review of one participant's application file, wherein the official recommendation for his candidacy from the nomination committee is framed and rationalized. It included this comment:

When the previous Marxist regime closed the (agency employing this participant), Mr. \_\_\_\_\_'s professional future looked worse than glum. With skill, expertise and determination he is now an important player in the government headed by the former Marxist, now democratically elected head of state. In short, Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ is both leader and a survivor.

Thus the above triangulating references led to further findings that suggested that under stress, most participants in the contexts under discussion resort to a "survival mode"—using the skills and strategies that allow them to remain within their career

setting rather than dropping out and moving to the private sector. This theme will receive further discussion later in this chapter and in the next.

### **The Original Lines of Inquiry**

*1) Self-perceptions, 2) Expectations of Others; 3) Received Definitions and 4) Policy/Definers*

In Chapter 2 the original research design was presented, likening the anticipated areas of influence on African Humphrey Fellows across four areas that, like a mobile, were considered to be in free variability over time in their levels of importance. The initial interview approach and inquiry into other sources of data used these lines to seek insight into the participants and their at-home contexts and to clarify understanding of the research questions. As described above, initial data collection and analysis started to reflect certain emerging patterns of importance. However, it soon became clear that the original model used was too simplistic to provide deeper insight into the research question. Clearly certain areas of influence were having a causal impact on other areas; this factor had not been accounted for in the initial inquiry model used.

While some data and their analysis ultimately guided the study in unanticipated directions, the findings relevant to the research questions are grouped below under the four original lines of inquiry. However, what was reflected in the participants' discussions often did not fit neatly into these four areas, nor were they at all of equal importance. Therefore, specific sub-categories identified as significant are provided

under each of the original four categories. Where the original subquestions of the lines of inquiry did not yield much insight, it is so noted.

The sub-categories appearing below are reflective of the way participants perceived their realities and experiences. In each case highlighted, the issues expressed and insights gained by participants were quite common across sites unless otherwise noted.

### **1. Self-perceptions**

- How have the Fellows' personal lives and careers helped them define a leadership style?
- Has this definition evolved through their career paths?
- How have the fellowship or other experiences changed the Fellows' self-perceptions?
- What possible "halo effect" exists in their minds due to having been chosen for a prestigious fellowship?

#### Perceptions Based on Upbringing

Across many discussions about long-term influences on their values and leadership capacity, participants spoke of the importance of their families—both nuclear and extended family members, some of whom often played the role of surrogate parent to participants in personal situations that called for it. Three of the participants had fathers who were educators; several others had mothers or fathers who were entrepreneurs; a good number of parents were involved in agriculture (farming or fishing) and a few had a parent with an administrative career track. But all spoke with more frequency and passion

of the impact of the home and parental role models than they did of school or teachers from whom they could draw inspiration.

Four of the five women interviewed spoke specifically of the role modeling that their mothers had provided. This aspect differed from male participants in the sample, who mentioned male family members, professors and early career bosses as key mentors. The women's mothers were described as strong, dynamic women who, despite their own modest (if not inexistent, in some cases) background in formal education, took initiatives and encouraged their daughters to advance in school and on to professional careers. B5 said:

B5: My mom has education only at the elementary level, but you know, she is—I don't know what to say—she used to be independent, and she went to school by herself. She went to like teachers from America, like that, so she became friendly [with them]; they took her to school. Like after marriage, my dad doesn't know how to proceed anymore, but she is excellent on making decisions. She is excellent to consult with like that...

*Researcher: I see. Do you think you learned that from her then?*

B5: I think so, I think so, yeah.

Several participants were in turn actively involved in playing a mentoring or support role for younger generations across their families. A3, who had himself been raised with a sister by his divorced mother in a single room, is now raising three children with his spouse, and said, "We need to ensure they will be well launched in life and expect that they will live at home with us until marriage." This kind of commitment

included not only nuclear family, but care for extended family members or even village “brothers” or “sisters” from their families’ regions of origin. B3 explained, “In my case, as a matter of chance, I am the only person [in my family] who is very successful in relative terms.” Thus, he was constantly looking out for his extended family who live in the countryside, hosting them in his home in the capital city, paying for their doctor bills and medicines they could not afford, and helping some of the younger extended family with their school fees. Likewise, C8 explained how the costs of the traditional three-day funeral celebrations common across much of Africa (as elaborate and costly as a large wedding celebration might be for some Americans) were borne by him, not other family members (“they”):

I bear all the expenses of the family problems. You know we have the extended family and where there’s a funeral they wouldn’t [be able to] pay up. Now we have to take care of my father because they don’t bring any money—it’s a heavy burden (C8).

All of the examples above suggest how African professionals often encounter significant opportunities for leadership development within the context of their extended families in early adulthood or even in adolescence. And yet, no participant framed those responsibilities and experiences as a source of leadership formation, nor perceived it as such in their discussions on leadership perceptions. Neither does any leadership curriculum encountered (in the many U.S. universities and training courses I have observed over my years working with these Fellows) account for or build on family leadership roles as a significant opportunity to develop leadership skills and apply them

in professional settings. Given the prevalence of this family leadership role, there well could be a benefit in leadership training and practice if this African reality were explored with trainees and fostered in their practice.

#### Perceptions Based on Schooling

Probing the leadership impact of teachers or educational administrators yielded no exemplar from any participant's K-12 experience. Just two Fellows cited a university professor who had served as a significant mentor or role model. Even then, this seemed to link more directly into a future career track than a mentoring role inside the classroom. For example, C4 mentioned a career judge who, as an adjunct classics professor in C4's university, took a special interest in him and offered him a national service position as a court clerk after graduation because he recognized his strong writing ability. This mentoring relationship led to C4's ultimate career in law.

By and large, however, schooling was viewed by these participants as building knowledge and technical skill leading to access to a higher educational level through excellence. This was always an accomplishment in itself, as these participants all attended school in their home countries in the 1960s-1980s, when universal education was still a dream. Public school systems in Africa at that time generally could promote only the top half of students from primary to secondary and only a small percentage of secondary students were afforded the opportunity to pursue university-level studies (*UNESCO Education Data Centre, 2009*). By the time these participants completed

secondary school, their acceptance alone to a university ushered them into a probable future status as elites.

#### Halo Effect

The subquestion dealing with the possible halo effect accompanying the status of being a Humphrey Fellow was not directly observed in these participants. All have had more than one opportunity for overseas study and training, and as such the Humphrey Fellowship does not distinguish them from others who qualify for other such training opportunities.

The situation in Madagascar was found to be somewhat different, in that mastery of the English language in this French-speaking country (as with other non-English medium countries across Africa) is a key requirement for access to overseas training opportunities in English-speaking countries. Most Malagasy elites join other bright and promising undergraduates and young professionals from the dozen or so former French and Belgian colonies of Africa for extended training in France.<sup>7</sup> A3 referred to many of his government's leaders as "Francophones," people who were particularly attached to the cultural and educational tradition of France, Belgium or Quebec. Madagascar's former colonial power. In this vein, he differentiated himself and others who had gone for

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<sup>7</sup> Of the 95,000 Africans registered in French universities in 2002-2003, 65,000 were directly subsidized by the French Ministry of Cooperation with French-speaking Countries (Radio France Internationale, 2004).

training in English-speaking countries. The administration, led by then-President Marc Ravalomanana, himself not identifying as a “francophone” was so committed to opening up Madagascar to the world that he declared that English would be a third official language of the country, although only a tiny percentage of the population currently speaks or understands English.

Likewise, A1 mentioned a ministry superior with whom she was negotiating a new assignment, who spoke of re-assigning staff after they returned from overseas training, “it can be difficult, because *you people who have been abroad...*” A1 evaluated this comment in this way: “it seems like we threaten them, but at the same time they have decided that ‘you are ambitious people, and you can’t settle for less’” (A1).

In the end, the halo effect accompanying Humphrey Fellows generally did not seem to be different from any other prior overseas training opportunity for the Ghanaian or Ethiopian participants. The reality in the African context is that most of the upper-level civil servants benefit from multiple donor training opportunities and the simple factor of being a Humphrey Fellow (rather than the beneficiary of some other foreign fellowship) did not appear to be viewed as a unique element in their backgrounds.

The halo effect conveyed by the Humphrey Fellowship seemed only to be particularly significant in Madagascar, where the fellowship offered an overseas training opportunity in an English-speaking country and signified the participant’s competence in English.

## 2. Expectations of Others

- How do employees, peers, supervisors, family, friends and community members perceive Fellows as leaders, and why? What impact do people farther afield have on their role perception (*e.g.*, overseas contacts, professional peers who are not work colleagues, community members who are impacted by the Fellow's actions)?
- Does a halo effect color these individuals' perceptions over-positively? Or on the contrary, does Fellows' credibility suffer because of others' resentment about their receiving a prestigious fellowship and a chance to travel overseas?

The perceptions of these Humphrey Fellows by others were reflected in a number of ways. The answer to this first sub-question actually overlaps somewhat in the findings previously presented. However, while the Humphrey Fellowship may have been just one of an array of overseas grants in the eyes of others, it was noted by the Fellows themselves to be an especially rich source for expanded personal and professional networks. These Fellows noted a distinct ability to reach out across the Humphrey Fellowship network of alumni within the country, in Madagascar and Ghana especially, where picking up the phone to short-cut a more usual, hierarchical process was noted as a common practice. (AG, C3).

While participants considered their status as leaders with people farther afield as noteworthy at times, it did not seem to correlate directly with their status as a Humphrey Fellow *per se*. Whether the Fellow's contacts or actions had a positive impact could not be attributed to the specificity of the Humphrey Fellowship.

## Gender and Leadership

Just one female participant (A1) worked in a sector that could be considered traditional for women—education—and was therefore not a gender minority in that setting. Two other women in the sample worked in the field of agriculture and one in finance, where they were among the only women at their level of responsibility and faced gender issues regularly. The remaining female interviewed (C6) was a generalist with public administration training who had moved up in responsibility in positions in general administration across several ministries and sectors (including agriculture, education, finance and at the time we met, justice) over the course of her long career. There did not appear to be a difference by sector, however, in the way these five women discussed the gender aspects of their leadership experiences. Two female participants (A1 and C3) mentioned that their rise to leadership positions was in part due to being recognized in international conferences they attended as official representatives of their countries' delegations, where they had been called on to fulfill the role of conference rapporteur, often a role ascribed to a woman. They noted that this assignment had showcased their intelligence and sense of organization, leading each to being recognized as ready for a move upwards, followed by a promotion to a leadership position.

All of the women in the study spoke of the special burdens and responsibilities they held as female professionals and leaders. C3 mentioned that in her workplace the gender differential was “very subtle—but it’s there. It’s a man’s world.” A1, B4 and B5

all spoke of the challenges of work/life balance, not unlike those challenges professional women face over much of the world. While they sometimes observed more role equality in North American families during their fellowships, they also saw the challenges that two-career couples in nuclear families face in striking a work/life balance. In their own cases, they recounted how they came back appreciating the benefit of the African extended family for support, having little difficulty relying on their mothers, cousins and “aunties” for child care as they went to work and even went overseas.

C6 pointed out that the way was open for women in her country, and that she did not personally experience roadblocks at work. But at home “the man still is in charge.” C3 pointed out that as a single mother, she had a much freer experience in her personal life choices than some of her female peers who were married and also in high-level professional positions.

The impact of the overseas training experience also brought unique experiences to some female participants. Coming back to her home country from overseas training, C3 realized that

... it’s still a man’s world. It doesn’t matter at all. And when you try to... if you’re a woman and you kind of make it, they try to give you all kind of names like “Margaret Thatcher”—like you know, “Iron Lady”! (C3).

The strategy of “treading lightly” at work was consistent across all female participants. Some held the practice as primordial to their success; others seemed to recognize the strategy as pertinent but in their own cases, not needed.

B5 was one who did not personally experience workplace challenges based on her gender upon returning from the U.S.—her challenges came on the home front. She explained that she found her workplace welcoming and appreciative of her increased skills when she returned from her fellowship. However, she spoke at length about the huge challenge she faced at home in returning to her leadership role as parent to four young children, who for a year had been in the shared care of her husband, extended family members and employed help.

B5 told me that she had a clearer idea of what her children's needs were through this experience of being away, seeing other parenting models and having time to reflect. With an outsider's eyes gained through her year away, B5 she was immediately aware that the children's discipline, sense of responsibility and school performances had slipped while she was away. But her credibility at home as a parent had slipped during her overseas absence. She felt especially stymied when her teen-age daughter said to her, "sometimes I am thinking that it looks like that you wear my mom's mask; but inside, you are someone else" (B5). She reported that it took more than a year's time back home for everyone to feel things were back in balance.

All of these women across three African countries had attained leadership roles in their professional career settings, even in non-traditional sectors for women. Yet none offered much hope in the near future for a top role for women in elected office. C4 and C6 both lamented the poor showing of women in the recent local elections taking place

just prior to the research visit to their country, including one of their fellow Humphrey alumnae occupying a seat in parliament who had just lost that seat in the last election. This loss came despite a strong media campaign launched by the country's center for human rights, actually initiated by C3, a male Fellow who had a fervent commitment to women's access to political power. C6 commented on the poor showing this way:

Maybe there should have been a lot of campaigns so that people will support them, because in Africa the concept is that women are supposed just to be with their husbands in the kitchen and all that. So maybe they didn't see why a woman should go and then stand [for office]... so I think the education was not too much (C6).

I asked C4 whether the role model of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia, since 2005 Africa's first elected female head of state, could be imagined as a future reality in C4's country. "I don't think it's time yet", she replied.

### Community

Looking more broadly at the communities in which these Fellows live that hold expectations of them, many participants' spoke of how important such communities were to them. Extended family and personal connections through kinship, hometown or ethnicity played just as important a role in their perceptions as did nuclear family members or colleagues at work. This was similar across all three locations, but expressed differently given the particular cultural practices of each country site.

The Malagasy culture, with a single national language and island environment, has a specific word for this concept of broad-reaching kinship—*fihavanana*—which has a highly complex set of relationship categories across bloodlines, lines of marriage and lines of origin—defined by the location of one’s ancestral burial grounds (Dubois, 1978). In each of Madagascar’s four constitutions since its independence in 1960, *fihavanana* has been specifically cited as a fundamental value, and is even featured on the country’s coat of arms (Rakotoarisoa, 2002). *Fihavanana* was frequently mentioned and depicted by participants as a two-edged sword: the tight kinship networks it creates offered positive mutual support through all stages of life; yet at times, it imposed burdensome, hard-to-avoid obligations. Mutual support was cited as an important element for personal and family affairs, while in professional matters, it was depicted by most as a problem or roadblock, and often seemed to complicate appropriate decision-making and due process.

As an island-state whose human population first settled there less than 2,000 years ago—the first humans coming from Southeast Asia and later from East Africa and Arabia—Madagascar features a unique blend of race, ethnicity and tribe. All Malagasy are united through speaking natively some version of just one national language. This is unlike Ethiopia and Ghana (and almost any other African country), which feature several if not dozens of local native languages. Just as uniquely across Africa, the Malagasy language has Southeast Asian rather than African roots. This linguistic anomaly comes from the founding population of Southeast Asian traders who first discovered the island

in the 7<sup>th</sup> Century and progressively settled in its highlands over the ensuing millennium. Somewhat later, East Africans and Arab traders began to inhabit the island's coastal area, coming from the African mainland and the Arabian Gulf. Until the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, coastal and highland groups lived mostly separate existences, with the *Merina* of Southeast Asian heritage occupying the highlands and Africans or Arabs predominating in the coastal areas (Brown, 1978).

With the unification of the island, first by the Merina royal family in the early 1800s and reinforced by the arriving European colonial powers later in that century, the resulting class/race divide was reinforced through French colonial policy that codified the population into 18 tribal identities. They further singled out the lighter-skinned Merina for basic education leading to local administrative positions in the French colonial administration.

The ensuing factors of prejudice and distinction persist today, some six decades after independence from France. It was not possible to measure these significant issues in any depth through this study of Humphrey Fellows, however, since all of the participants of this study—and apparently all the Humphrey Fellows available for the study—were Merina from the highlands. Their sense of community and obligation, therefore, may only reflect the Merina perspective and practice. As elites in their own society, none expressed any particular concerns about these issues.

Ethiopians also mentioned the spirit of community as an important value in their upbringing, especially those whose families were still rooted in rural settings. As a multi-ethnicity, multi-lingual society that has a broad range of cultural practices by region and tradition, however, the concept was more diffuse in the Ethiopian setting. Some participants spoke of the fact that under the socialist Derg regime in the 1970s-80s, the spirit of community at the grassroots level had been “co-opted for political gain” (B1) by political cadres such that the use of community in inspiring leadership could easily be perceived as political manipulation.

Ethiopian participants of this study who discussed this point all noted that they felt allegiance first and foremost to their identities as Ethiopians (B3, B4, B5), but acknowledged that this was not necessarily a prevailing opinion across the population. B5 expressed it this way:

B5: Actually, when we are living together, it is only way that you can see the differences. And it gives you strength. But you know, when always you are told that you are like—you are Amhara, you are Oromo, you are... For me, it's too much. I don't like it.

For example, I am Amhara and my husband is from another region. So my kids sometimes ask me, “Who are we?”

*Researcher: What “label” should we have?*

B5: Yeah. I always tell them, “You are Ethiopian.” You just make it simple.

Nevertheless, at the personal level, the same reliance on extended family for support, solidarity and connectedness also came through participants' comments and depictions of their lives and networks.

A sense of community and connectedness was expressed by participants in Ghana as an underlying value of "what it means today to be Ghanaian." C3 explained it this way:

C3: But Ghanaians love life. And they love a good life. So you'll see somebody who is working as a menial worker, but he wants the best for his child. He wants to send him to the best school. He wants to struggle to make money to be able to pay fees in a private school so his child can grow up and be somebody. And I think basically I don't know where that comes from, but Ghanaians love life.

*Researcher: So when you think of national identity it's not Akan or Ashanti or Ewe or whatever. It's really Ghanaian.*

C3: For me it's Ghana. Sometimes I don't even think about my tribe. My tribe doesn't cross my mind.

This notion was less linked to an indigenous or tribal identity than it was to feeling part of a modern nation-state. The sense of community had, it seemed, evolved to a national identity without presenting a dilemma of identity that was more apparent in Ethiopia or Madagascar. This distinction is also observable in the political evolution of Ghana, which will be examined below.

## The Dual Identity of the Transnational Professional

For the participants in this study, the degree of challenge varied in juggling the two types of value systems affecting their identity, lifestyles and work realities.

In the Ghana focus group, the following recurring dilemma of these professionals' daily lives was described:

CGA: ...so these are the things that people who know the right thing—and want to do the right thing—face on a daily basis.

*Researcher: Connections...and pressure?*

CGA: The connection works against [us and] the structural changes we need to make. It works against the institution. Because when the person doesn't get there on time to the workplace, you have a plan. And then the person doesn't come in; and you know, the policy is [after] two-three times being late, you go home—stay away for two weeks.

The number of people that will come to you. [growing laughter from other focus group participants]... and *beg* on behalf of that person!

Then you battle with doing the right thing and taking care of all your networks. So it's a big balance[ing act] and at any point in time, we face it.

And on an individual level, you either choose to do the right thing and offend all your partners, or you please them and let your work suffer, or you do the work [yourself]. So these are the struggles.

Such challenges clearly loomed very significantly for some participants, whereas others seemed quite at ease with juggling the pressures created by this dual identity. This appears to be a factor of personal style, networks and individual resilience rather than a consistent trend for these transnational professionals. As elites based in the capital cities

of their respective countries, they share this elite identity with many around them and benefit from the opportunities to discuss and in some cases, commiserate about the predicaments such cultural tensions present.. Had they been returning to a smaller locality with few or no peers, they may well have suffered stronger feelings of alienation.

More to the point of leadership impact, Ndura (2006) points out the effects of this dual identity of elites on the population at large whom they lead or effect through their acts and policies. The tension between the desire for personal advancement and wealth grounded in Western values, tastes and styles and the interests and advancement of the population at large through economic development of sustainable products and industries is a topic of further discussion later in this chapter.

### **3. Received Definitions**

- What definitions of leadership do Fellows acquire through their upbringing, observation, modeling and discussion within their own cultures?
- Do they belong to a subculture of their home society that defines this differently?
- Does this definition differ from what they perceive to be a western definition?
- What roles do politics and political evolution in the home context play in this definition?
- Are there other leadership definitions from other cultures that have impacted on their perceptions?

Some of the sub-questions in this category have been covered under self-perceptions: Fellows' upbringing and the modeling they observed, which resulted for many in significant leadership training in the family setting. Therefore, the received

definitions of leadership discussed here will focus on religion and the contrast and tension between African and western cultural influences.

### Religion

All three research countries have a diverse faith demographic. Christianity predominates in both Madagascar and Ghana, with a small or moderate minority population professing Islam. The latter populations are a stable minority with majority concentrations living in the North of Ghana and parts of coastal Madagascar due to Arab in-migration of long date. The Muslim population within Ethiopia, now nearing 50% of all residents (citizens and refugees combined), is made up not only of a stable minority similar to the other countries, but includes a recent, faster-growing population of Muslims. This growth is largely the result of the large recent influx of refugees and their descendents from the neighboring countries of Djibouti, Somalia and Sudan that are predominantly Muslim (U.S. Department of State, 2009). None of the participants in this study, however, were part of any non-Christian religious minority. Several participants did recognize the roles of Muslims in their societies, but none of them described the issue of religious minorities as problematic as it has become in some other countries in the region (e.g. Nigeria or Sudan).

All participants reported membership in a variety of Christian denominations (Roman Catholic and Protestant in all three countries along with Ethiopian Orthodox, the predominant Christian denomination in Ethiopia). Regardless of faith, an important

source of values and inspiration for the majority of the participants was a strong religious background in childhood and continued active practice of formal religion as adults.

Three participants reported that they had made personal spiritual discoveries—one as an adolescent and two as adults—that led them to convert from one Christian denomination to another. They spoke of how this process had marked them and provided a source of inspiration and strength in all that they did—both privately and professionally. Three others were themselves the children of religious clergy.

While all three research sites are in countries whose governments are secular and subscribe to the separation of state and religion, many participants nonetheless had experienced strong religious influences via their public schooling. Prayer groups, catechism or religious study were present in the school lives of many growing up and were referred to as a source of strength and insight. When mentioned, traditional religions or religious practices (spiritualism) seemed to be more of a blended reality with Christianity than a set of practices that were in conflict with the latter.

Religion and religious leaders have played a particularly important political role in Madagascar. The last two presidents called upon the intervention of the national Council of Christian Churches in Madagascar (FFKM ), a coalition of religious leaders, to help sort out the crises that followed disputed presidential elections of 1991 and 2002 (Marcus, 2004). This is a factor that will be discussed more fully in the political analysis later in this chapter.

## U.S. Cultural Influences and Experiences

While every participant in this study spoke at length of wonderful, instructive and useful experiences they had enjoyed while on their Humphrey Fellowships, several participants commented on aspects of U.S. culture that presented special challenges to them while on their fellowships. Many also contrasted their North American experiences with European study assignments they had previously experienced. By and large, they had felt less integrated into life in the U.K. (or other European host countries) than in the U.S. This was usually attributed to social norms and cultural barriers that were higher in Europe than in the U.S. It would only be fair to state, however, that these Fellows came to the U.S. at a more mature point in their lives and also may have benefited from the halo effect of being distinguished fellows in their U.S. campus communities rather than “ordinary” graduate students.

In contrast to the hierarchical structure of their own societies, some Fellows were neither familiar nor comfortable with the lower emphasis on hierarchy that they observed in the U.S., a factor clearly documented in the studies of Hofstede (1980) and House et al. (2004), discussed in the last chapter. A3, whose Humphrey fellowship provided him with an assignment in the City Manager’s office of his U.S. host university community, found that he could not easily bring himself to greet the manager in the same casual way his American colleagues did—“Hi, Joe!”

Some participants also felt that there was at times a lack of cultural appreciation of their home realities by the western faculty they studied under. C1 related that

...one professor, when I told him about my own goals for coming to pick up this Humphrey, he rather thought that I was perhaps too ambitious. When I talked about publishing material, training material, the processes, EIA [Environmental Impact Assessment] in Ghana and that kind of thing, he... didn't take it seriously. Don't underestimate [us] because really... Ghana in particular because, I mean, our standards are high! (C1).

A2 talked about remaining silent in a course he attended in the U.S. along with another fellow from Vietnam, whose instructor misunderstood their quiet demeanor in her course:

We don't get too actively involved in things at the beginning—we came in and were fairly passive. And she noticed that. But we prefer staying quiet and listening—that's the Malagasy way. We want to listen to someone who knows more than we do (A2).

Participants found these cultural “surprises” or challenges useful to their future professional practice back home in a very practical way. Many reported their direct dealings with western donor agencies back home, and spoke of their improved abilities to understand and anticipate such donors' needs, work styles and priorities. For example, C3 reported that she was sent to Europe to negotiate secretly a planned national currency reform on the basis of her having developed familiarity with and ease in international settings.

## Integrating Culture: Squaring Their Roots—Building a House

The challenges of *fihavanana* in Madagascar and the similar phenomena as expressed above in the two other country cultures generated the theme of “squaring their roots.” This was my own term, devised to describe a seeming disconnect: while often proud of the indigenous cultural heritage their country offered, this pride often did not extend to participants’ professional practice.

When discussions of culture moved to the modern work setting, participants generally did not seem to place great value on widely found indigenous African social/community practices. The use or impact of such African traditions as village-level collaboration, a sense of collective rather than individual responsibility and accountability, or extended family solidarity were not mentioned when it concerned their possible role and advantages in official settings. Yet somehow, the practices of networking, collaborative consultation and collective decision-making, observed and practiced while in their overseas assignments, were widely perceived as positive tools that participants had experienced, appreciated and wanted to bring home to integrate as new behaviors in their professional practice.

These practices appeared (to me as the participant observer) as “modern” manifestations of very prevalent indigenous behaviors. Yet sharing this observation with the study’s participants yielded mostly negative evaluations. For example, in Ethiopia the following interchange occurred:

*Researcher: I mean, you describe things as the outside, western thing that you liked, but when I hear people talk about the roots of Ethiopian rural communities, it sounds similar.*

B5: Yeah, even my grandmother used to [do that]. Nowadays, I don't know what the problem really is. It really is the political situation of the country. In the Derg period the system itself created something with it that was very, very, very bad.

As described earlier, the repressive socialist “Derg” period co-opted indigenous grassroots community networks across Ethiopia to build a socialist political hierarchy which then was used for intelligence and policing purposes (Pausewang, Tronvoll & Aalen, 2002). Clearly, this residue of skepticism about community activism seems to persist almost two decades after the Derg's demise.

In Ghana:

*Researcher: If you go to a small village out in the country, you still see a sort of a traditional way of living, people make decisions like that. You know, for many generations that has been the approach, right? ...You know, bringing people around in a circle and listening. It's not a foreign approach.*

C8: No, it's not. But you see, we didn't introduce it into the modern state... I think it is power. You know, we tend to use power to hurt and to make a statement. Everyone wants to be powerful. And we tend to look down at things from our culture. Thinking the western way is superior to the way we do things.

Thus, the initial findings clearly identified the challenge and discrepancy between the elites and the populations they lead. Bulhan (1985) and Peterson (2007) both speak of the rejection by the educated elite of indigenous values in post-colonial Africa. This also was Fanon's (1952) observation about western-educated Africans and Caribbeans, who

returned from university studies in Europe having “gained an education but lost their souls.”

In Madagascar:

*Researcher: I heard a lot about this concept of “fihavanana” and how it could be a problem.... Could it be an advantage? Is there a way to make it an advantage?*

A4: Advantage as solidarity? It can... [but] when there’s too much consensus, so it is not in the win-win situation, but the win-lose, or lose-lose!

*Researcher: Why do you think that’s the case?*

A4: Because it is in the Malagasy mentality. For example, we have a saying, “It is a fight between two bulls.” I will explain in French: « Faites comme le combat entre deux zébus familiaux, vous n’avez pas à condamner celui qui a perdu et vous ne devez pas porter en triomphe celui qui a gagné. » [Act the way two bulls put together for a fight act—then you can neither blame the one that lost nor congratulate the winner.]<sup>8</sup>

*Fihavanana*, Dubois (1978, 2002) tells us, with its complex sets of hierarchy defined by blood and marriage affiliations and related social obligations, does not easily square with a Cartesian approach to logic, procedure and fairness inherited from a 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Century French public administration tradition. Like the Malagasy traditional bullfight with no winner, the approach to leadership there often has been one of compromising to a point of “least worst” solutions for all involved. Every Malagasy

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<sup>8</sup> Traditional Malagasy bullfights put two Brahma bulls in a large field with their horns covered to prevent them from injuring each other or humans nearby. The sport consists of watching them run after each other and parry, but neither animal is allowed to seriously hurt or kill the other (Fomba malagasy, 2009).

presidential administration since 1990 has faced a coup d'état or election dispute leading to a constitutional crisis that is then solved by such compromises. The resulting political positional leadership practices in this environment do not offer the career professional robust models for leadership at the mid-level! This political reality seemed especially strong in Madagascar during this period of research. However, it has been a factor in all three countries' recent histories, as it has in most post-colonial countries of sub-Saharan Africa.

The above complexity is a key contributor to the grounded theory discussed in the next chapter. The seeming disconnect in recognizing that traditional African cultural practices and values at times parallel approaches in "modern" imported managerial practice proved to be a significant theme in this study and has important implications for those working with such professionals as mid-career trainees. Some of the literature cited above along with the participants' own observations, offer explanations for the root of these incoherencies, but do not offer any solution.

As a transnational professional from such a culture, how does one manage to "square one's roots"? That is to say, to develop an appreciation of traditional values and leadership approaches which may be more authentically applied and ring truer for those being led than an imported style that has a less natural fit with tradition?

As capable, insightful and committed as these individuals seemed to be, only one of 16 study participants was able to articulate an integrated understanding of the cultural

blend he had inherited and education he had acquired as a modern elite in his developing country:

And I think, I always say that when it comes to my personal development or the development of my village—traditional, traditionalism is the base. Then colonialism came to raise the structure, and my Humphrey Fellowship put on the roof. That is the way I see my life (C2).

Over the course of all the discussions held in this study, C2's conception of his transnational experience, European-inspired education and indigenous roots was unique across all participants. This one person who articulated an integrated understanding of his multi-cultural reality is therefore an outlying case. This finding is a key to the implications section. It suggests to this researcher that in future training, other similar individuals might benefit from being engaged to reflect on this type of cultural integration as a useful exercise. Possibilities for this will be discussed in the implications section of the final chapter.

#### **4. Policy/Definers**

- Becoming a Humphrey Fellow subjects these individuals to scrutiny and a whole range of expectations. How do these possibly have impact on the Fellow's perceptions?
- What role do these layers of expectations or limitations play in framing or influencing the Fellows' leadership beliefs and practices?

The final area of investigation, labeled “Policy/Definers,” sought to cover the broader context of government policy, political realities and other contextual forces and

power that define the overall environment in which the career public servant must operate at any given time. This area proved by far to be the most predominant in setting the stage for any other current or past reality that the participants related, be it in terms of personal leadership style, agency, practice, choices or impacts.

#### Hierarchy: “Top-down”

Related to community, and in some cases apparently in dissonance with it, is the importance of hierarchy across all three research sites. Hierarchy at the indigenous level is defined all across Africa through leadership by inherited chieftaincy or community-designated leadership outside of an electoral process (Levy, 2004; Osei, 1999; Shillington, 1995). In the literature review in Chapter 3, we also observed the findings of Hofstede (1980, 2007) concerning the high level of *power distance* (importance accorded to hierarchy in the workplace) in both East and West Africa. House et. al’s (2004) findings, built on Hofstede’s, reflected that Africans’ actual practice of hierarchy was strongly outstripped by their perception of it as a positive value.

The management literature offers further insights into this complexity. Several researchers from this domain have considered the environments around western professionals in a contextual vein. Mintzberg (1973) focused on the importance of looking at workers’ outputs to understand the nature of their work, differentiating *roles* and *propositions* (managerial behavior). Stewart (1982, 1997), further elaborates on the

manager's<sup>9</sup> choices as driven and defined by *demands, constraints* and *choices* (p. 11).

She argues that the choices available to a manager are those allowable between the fundamental demands of a position (its core responsibilities and accountabilities) and the constraints from within and without that are imposed on it.

More recently and pertinent to this study's findings, Mintzberg (2006) considered the realities of the challenges of national development in Africa, criticizing the "*top-down*" (p. 14) mode of state intervention inherited by past socialist tradition in command economies, often reinforced more recently by multi-national corporations' importation of a standard business approach from their western headquarters. (Mintzberg's depiction closely echoes Sangmpam's "overpoliticized state", discussed below.) Mintzberg argues that such an "outside-in" approach to developing enterprise cannot work without the learning nationals go through when the development is indigenous. This is an approach he calls "*inside-up*" (p. 12). His arguments directly addressed the dilemmas of the private entrepreneurial sector he observed in Africa, not directly those of the public sector.

Several participants revealed that they or their ancestors held chieftaincy status in their traditional society. They valued the status and admiration it afforded them and took seriously the responsibilities they bore to their home communities in this role. Yet they found the transfer of a respected "chieftaincy" mode in an indigenous sense to the "big

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<sup>9</sup> Stewart prefers the term "manager" to "leader", but the focus of her studies considered individuals similar to Humphrey Fellows and a wide variety of behaviors and functions that are nowadays more usually considered within the domain of leadership choices.

man” model of modern leadership problematic. B1 found that most of his peers relied on “the big guy” to deal with difficult challenges rather than taking on a leading role in their resolution—“He pushes decisions higher.” B5 also noted that “you have this kind of vertical style that you have to work under—‘top down.’”

In a more practical vein, A2 described how this sensitivity to hierarchy meant that he had never made a “cold call” by telephone before his Humphrey Fellowship. His U.S. experience exposed him to this common North American practice, one he was encouraged to try for professional networking purposes:

It’s just not done here; you do not have the right to call your boss on the telephone. You need to present yourself personally to him to tell him this or that... Now these traditions endure. I would not dare speak to the Undersecretary [of my ministry] by telephone. My branch chiefs are afraid to call me by phone, even to ask me for advice (A2).

A1 likewise related that requests are normally done in writing and go up a hierarchical chain. B1 spoke about having devised a way to “set up” his objectives in an informal manner in anticipation of their being presented formally in a meeting with a cabinet minister—a widely familiar practice elsewhere, but which seemed to him to be innovative in his home environment.

In sum, there is a dynamic tension between the perceptions participants had about the role of hierarchy and honor they inherited through their indigenous traditions and the discomfort often expressed about the power and oppression that can be experienced through the modern phenomenon of “top-down” administrative bureaucracy.

### **The Final Phase of Coding and Analysis: Selective Coding of the Data**

At this point, the initial areas to be investigated, reported above along the lines of the original research model and sub-questions, had served to lay out the concerns, experiences, policies and contexts surrounding the participants studied. The next stage of the analysis was to discern which themes, or combination of themes, were strongest in their explanatory power and their ability to generate substantive theory responding to the research questions. Democratization and its impact on leadership modes were key to this process.

As conceived, the inspiration and initial focus of this study was to explore the perceptions and practices of leadership by these participants as career civil servants in three countries of Africa. Issues of culture were clearly an area to be explored, yet the predominating importance of political context as it related to cultural conditions was impossible to ignore through the field investigation. As this element became progressively clearer through the constant comparison methodology, the role of politics and the macro-context of democratization soon took on an increasingly preponderant role in the investigation. When the same references to political context emerged in the data analysis of participants' interviews, it became clear that deeper investigation into the political history and evolution of sub-Saharan Africa was needed in order to focus and sharpen the analysis of these elements. The following sections provide that background and relate it directly to findings.

## Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa since 1960

Since the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century the evolution towards democratization has moved cyclically forward and backward in virtually all countries across sub-Saharan Africa (Bayart, 1989; Diamond, 1988; Gros, 1998; Levy, 2004). From post-colonial infrastructures inherited from European colonizers that sought to endow the newly independent colonies with a Westphalian-style system of democratic structures, many newly independent African countries soon devolved towards “neopatrimonial” models of hierarchical dominance (Levy, 2004, p. 5). This was expressed in both democratic and socialistic frameworks which were imposed by the neo-colonial influences of Western powers (buttressed by the western-created international agencies of the IMF and World Bank) and Soviet bloc influences in the last three decades of the Cold War era, led by the U.S.S.R. and its allies (Eastern European bloc countries and Cuba). The proxy cold war between the two superpowers at the time played out across most of Africa in the period between 1960 and 1991 (Kerr, 2004). It manifested itself through political alliances, trade and strategic defense relationships and development assistance, the latter of which included training and study scholarships that earlier had benefited at least two of the participants in the research sample. While the ostensibly positive correlation between democracy and economic development has been frequently argued (Przeworski, Alvarez, Cheibub & Limongi, 2000), Bardhan (1999) suggests setting a higher bar for this

definition. He argues that whatever economic realities prevail in such countries, truly democratic environments must present evidence of three factors:

- A. Their citizens must enjoy some basic minimum civil and political rights;
  - B. There are some procedures of accountability in day-to-day administration under some overarching constitutional rules of the game; and
  - C. They have periodic exercises in electoral representativeness
- (p. 3; letter headings have been added for ease of reference below).

As we examine the case of the three countries in this study (and practically speaking, any country in sub-Saharan Africa today), each of the three aspects has been in dynamic variation over the past half-century. All three countries included in this study had a period of experimentation with socialist and military governance; this socialist governance lasted a decade or more in two cases (Madagascar and Ethiopia).

Using Bardhan's above three criteria, we might chart out this progress as illustrated in Table 3 below, which reflects the movement from semi-democratizing status back to non-democratic environments and forward again to semi-democratizing across all three sites. In just one country (Ghana) can it be said that the context has moved solidly towards a fully democratic environment and has maintained this environment over a sustained time (such periods in all countries are represented by gray shading). This stability is evidenced by the peaceful transition of national leadership from one party to another and back again over four, four-year presidential term elections (1992-2008). In the other cases and in Ghana before 1992, the fluctuations in context offered a hope and

intention of democratization. That is, a process, *democratization*, more than truly democratic settings.

<i>Year</i>	<i>1960</i>	<i>1965</i>	<i>1975</i>	<i>1985</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2009</i>
<b>Country</b>							
Ethiopia	x B C	x B C	x x x	x B x	x B C	A B C	x B C
Ghana	A B C	x B x	x B x	A B x	A B C	A B C	A B C
Madagascar	A B C	A B C	A x C	x B C	x B C	A B C	x x x

Legend: **A** = basic minimum civil and political rights

**B** = some procedures of accountability in day-to-day administration under some overarching constitutional rules of the game

**C** = periodic exercises in electoral representativeness

Table 3: Fluctuation over time levels of democratization in research sites.

Not until recently could the democratization process in Ghana have been confirmed as a true accomplishment. During my visit there in the 2008 presidential election period, I could observe how the hopes and enthusiasm for this continued success in democratization were still tempered by a “hold your breath” atmosphere. Ghanaians were hoping that once again, a peaceful transition would again take place. The final outcome resulted in a narrow margin favoring the opposition party to the party of the departing president. The newly elected president peacefully took up his term and appears

assured to lead democratically for the next four to eight years. Democratization's progress in Ghana was reconfirmed.

The historical overview of each country's recent evolution was instructive to this study in that it painted a clear picture of the evolving context in which the study's participants matured and moved up in their careers. Since 1992, Ghana's new constitution has guaranteed free and open multi-party elections and limited the head of state to two four-year terms. As of 2008, the two largest political parties have alternated leadership through four presidents who each peacefully stepped down and passed the torch to his successor from an opposing party. The reformed laws also have guaranteed freedom of press—which now exists there in deed as well as in word. In addition, human rights have been enforced, as evidenced through interviews with participants working in that country's human rights agency as well as its rapidly reforming penal system.

Looking back over five decades, we can observe the fluctuations taking place. While Ghana and Madagascar both inherited the infrastructures and constitutional framework for democracy at their independence, these imported European governance models soon unraveled. In the third research country (Ethiopia), the leadership was a single peaceful emperor 1916 through 1974 who modernized the country.<sup>10</sup> However, by the 1970s in the face of famine and economic failure, a growing Soviet-inspired

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<sup>10</sup> Fascist Italy played a semi-colonizing role in Ethiopia in the 1930s-1940s, but its impact was not significant in the way the French and British colonial powers influenced their respective African colonies.

socialist/military regime took control and the Emperor was deposed and remained under house arrest until his death in 1975 (Shillington, 1995).

#### Post-Cold-War Africa

Only in 1990 did conditions truly favoring democracy start to emerge across Africa. With the collapse of the Soviet empire, support for African nations playing the Cold War proxy game came to an abrupt halt. The regimes in both Ethiopia and Madagascar soon adopted an appearance of burgeoning democratic structures, even if the leadership at the outset did not immediately change (Fawole, 2005).

At about the same time, Ghana's military leadership saw that the time was ripe (and necessary) to move to open elections. Once again, the military leader in power, Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings, stood for open election against opposition party candidates and won. After Rawlings complied with the new constitutional requirement to step down after eight years in the presidency, Ghana's democratization withstood the test and its people peacefully elected a president from the main opposition party (Amoah 2007). This next president again served the maximum term time and stepped down in 2008, to be replaced by the candidate from the country's other major party.

This move towards re-democratization in African states that started in the 1980s-1990s was not unlike the same trends occurring at that time across much of Latin America and Southeast Asia, which continues to this day. Sangmpam's (2007) *overpoliticized state*, a phenomenon discussed in Chapter 3, provides a key to

understanding why this issue of politics is so dominant in this context. However, that is not a unique feature of African emerging democracies, as Sangmpam clearly demonstrated. He also points out that the case of Africa does present certain particularities, compared to other regions, which have made its full transition to democracy especially challenging. Of note is the much more recent impact of European colonialism on Africa (outside of the Western Cape of South Africa<sup>11</sup>) compared to other deeply colonized regions of the developing world. Latin America's and much of Southeast Asia's European colonial experiences pre-date that of Africa by more than one and sometimes two centuries and its colonial antecedents (primarily the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal and the United Kingdom) are now allies more than post-colonial threats.

Furthermore, the societies in the other regions Sangmpam included in his arguments have had a much longer time to integrate and adapt the western influence to the indigenous social and cultural realities of their continents. Southeast Asia experienced economic colonialism, but the cultural and social impacts so strongly observed in Africa's case were often countered by the strength of religious or ethical traditions in Asia. Young (1994) observes that the later arrival of European colonizers in Africa meant that their means and methods of subjugation were at their most developed—mechanized,

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<sup>11</sup> The arrival of the Dutch East Asia Company in South Africa's Cape of Good Hope in the late 17<sup>th</sup> Century makes South Africa's colonial legacy closer to that of Java, Indonesia, also colonized by the Dutch at the same period, than that of other colonized regions of sub-Saharan Africa (*South African history online*, 2009).

efficient and brutal. Understanding these antecedents as broad contextual factors of the “operating space” contributes to better understanding the realities and challenges facing this study’s participants. This challenge continues broadly to this day, and was widely observed in two of the three research countries.

Seeing more clearly how these backdrops may have affected the context in which the participants grew into leadership positions over time led to a deeper consideration of a key theme they had identified in their own words, the “operating space.”

### Defining and Measuring Democratization

Freedom House, a non-partisan, independent NGO, annually categorizes all countries of the world according to a seven-point value system, with over 200 questions on the survey and multiple survey representatives in various parts of every nation. The point totals place each of the countries in one of three categories: *Free*, *partially free*, or *not free* (Freedom House, 2008). Vanhanen claims that these metrics parallel closely the polity scores generated in his work, last updated in *Democratisation: A Comparative Analysis of 170 Countries* (2003, p. 70).

Ghana is in a group of just four nations on the continent’s mainland<sup>12</sup> designated as fully democratic, “free.” Of the remaining 32 countries, 23 are designated as “partially

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<sup>12</sup> Only four major sub-Saharan countries are designated in this survey report as “free”: Ghana, Lesotho, Mali and Lesotho. Five additional small island nations surrounding Africa are also in this category: Cape Verde, the Comoros, Mauritius, the Seychelles and São Tomé & Príncipe.

free”—moving towards (or in some cases, backing away from) full democratization. The 12 remaining are currently classified as “not free.”

Freedom House further assigns within-grade ratings scaled at 1 through 6 (1.0~1.9: “free”; 2.0~5.4: “partially free” and 5.5~7.0: “not free”). While Ghana is rated 1.5 along with Japan, Latvia and Taiwan in other world regions, Madagascar’s “partially free” rating at 3.5 put it in 2008 on a similar plane with Guatemala, Moldova and the Philippines. Ethiopia’s lower rating of 5.0, according to Freedom House, makes it comparable in the relative freedom of its population to that of Afghanistan, Thailand or Yemen.<sup>13</sup>

### **Leadership modes**

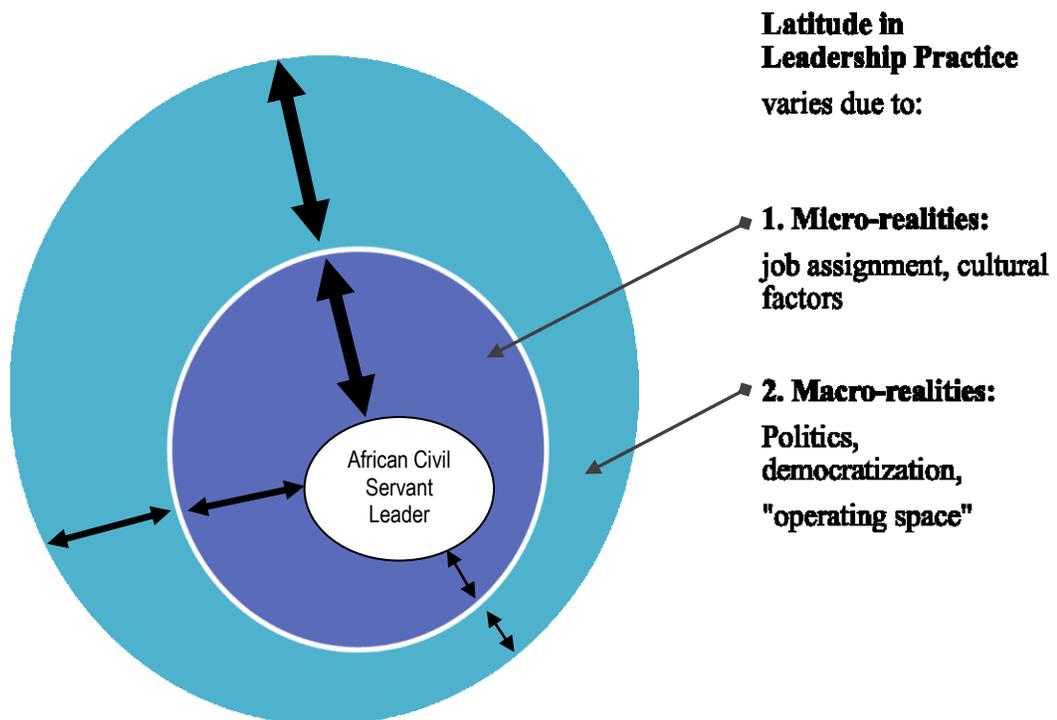
Considering the significance and instability of the levels of democratization at the macro-context level in the concerned countries just discussed, the range of possible leadership implementation modes as options for participants appears to fluctuate accordingly at the micro-context level. This is illustrated in Figure 10 below.

As the figure suggests, the remote space (political leadership and level of democratization) expands, depicted by the variable outer ring, so does the opportunity for the proximate space (the variable inner ring) to allow more creative space and self-

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<sup>13</sup> The 12 African states in Freedom House’s 2008 “Not Free” category include Angola, Republic of the Congo (Brazzaville), Democratic Republic of Congo (Kinshasa), Cameroon, Chad, Côte d’Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Swaziland, Somalia, Sudan and Zimbabwe.

assuming approaches to leadership practice for these individuals. Significant examples of these modes, as related by participants in their interviews, are discussed below. They illustrate how the same individual can traverse a shift in modes due to the change in the remote space.



**Figure 10:** Variable leadership approach observed based on macro-level realities—arrows indicate the fluctuating "operating space"

## Fight or Flight

In each research site, participants noted experiences they and their colleagues had undergone in times of political distress. The theme emerging from these stories is one of survival, a category I named *flight or fight*, inspired from Cannon's (1929) description of survival reactions that all animals (including humans) display in times of acute stress. For some (often secondary participants whom I interviewed or who attended the focus groups but were not selected as primary participants), the political circumstances they faced had precipitated flight from a government career, moving them towards employment in the private, international development or NGO sector. This included in some cases expatriation to another African or western country towards such professional goals. Such was also the case for B1, who extended his European graduate study stay by several years of work there until the repressive Derg regime fell and he felt free to return home without fearing jail. For others—notably those participants in this study—"fight" was the choice as they remained in their public sector careers. And for most in these circumstances, they were fighting for their professional survival.

During the period when he was head of development planning for the capital city of his country, B1 explained to me how he had taken the initiative to bring uncooperative municipal officials and the business community together on an urban renewal project of the city's master plan. He used a series of evening happy hours to allow colleagues on both sides to take off their official hats, get to know one another over a beer and break

down official barriers leading to collaboration. As Chief Financial Officer of the city later on, he described his approach to leadership this way:

My idea on leadership is the leadership entrepreneur. You should risk... [be] a risk-taker. Some of my colleagues, they are not ready to take risks. Most people who are not taking a decision, they are lagging, you know? They don't want a decision. But they [should] decide and move forward. (B1)

B1 told me that he had become inspired to approach his work this way through observing the benefits of such a practice in his overseas training experiences (prior to the U.S. experience, he also lived in a Western European country for eight years while doing his masters degree and further worked there as he awaited the fall of the socialist regime). When asked about the role politics played in municipal-level public administration, at the time of our first meeting he felt assured that competence would prevail: "At the municipal level, I would say it's more professional, you know? When we took over [after a failed election that was declared null], that was a pre-condition" (B1).

And yet, when we spoke again 18 months later, a municipal election had brought new leadership to the top of the city government. B1, as a non-political appointee to his position as CFO for the capital, had been relegated to a less important role and new office location. When I returned to interview him this second time, his new job assignment had taken him to a side building to the main municipality headquarters building. When I arrived at his floor, so decrepit was the elevator in this building that I had to forcefully open the elevator doors with both hands to get out. There I found him, sitting in a very

dusty office at the end of a long, dark corridor. Over his shoulder, I could see across the way the shining tower of the mayor's executive offices where he has previously worked.

He gave me an update on his career:

B1: After that, there was a transition, so I was formerly working in this department...

*Researcher: And this is the Finance Department?*

B1: Finance department, it's called Policy and Analysis...Currently I am doing the estimation of the economy—the GDP.

*Researcher: So what do you think about that as an assignment?*

B1: So I'm doing this since July, and between May and July-September, it was the worst time, because they kept the new institution [open] just for quotas.

*Researcher: OK, [you were] just pushed to the side?*

B1: Yes.

*Researcher: So who's doing your old job now—a party member?*

B1: A party member, exactly.

*Does he know finance well?*

B1: No.

As we completed our discussion, I learned from B1 that he had actually just resigned from the municipality after 18 years there:

And then we had work [on the] transfer formula for the subsidy, you know...and then we transferred the money from the central government to the municipal, local level ...when you do the analysis, especially every forecasting, it doesn't fit the politicians. The politicians want to see big figures; in reality the tax collected

is less. Because really, there's no reason. So we have problems in government, and it has to be...

And that incident I... [pause] ...this is my last day in the Bureau. (B1)

Facing the lack of opportunity to apply the broad array of skills he had developed through his training and high-level responsibilities prior to the last election, B1 summed up his new leadership's now-unappreciated approach to his work: "I used to defend those human values. ... I tried to work honestly and tried to correct some irregularities. I mean, that is the kind of thing that I risked... and they punished me somewhere."

B1 then related that he had met former Harvard University president Larry Summers at a seminar while on his U.S. training. In recalling Summers' relating of his unsuccessful experience as a university president, B1 was now inspired to see his own situation clearly:

He [Summers] was teaching [us]... The one thing that I remember was, "if you are forced to change values..." and he said, "then you go away."

This is what was happening for me, you know. ... We had a housing program, run by the institution. But the problem is the money ... not getting back. So we have... 4 billion birr [US \$40 million]. But so far [they] only transfer 1 billion. But the rest is just in someone's pocket.

So I always remember his [Larry Summers'] advice, you know, "it's time to go away" (B1).

Clearly, the earlier available leadership strategies of collaboration, risk-taking and competence were no longer available options for B1. Reduced to this level of functioning

due to the changed macro-context, he resorted to “fight and flight” as the least unfortunate of the few ethical options available to him. He left his career to teach undergraduates in an urban planning program.

### Self-promotion and Networking

When facing the “flight or fight” mode that was related above, the most basic interpersonal strategies were frequently described as the most useful—and in some cases, only possible—tools for survival.

National elections often triggered the shift into this mode, as I learned from the experiences of A1, a career educator in the national ministry of education in her country. First trained as a classroom teacher at the secondary level, she soon became a resource teacher and after going abroad to do a master’s, was brought to the national education ministry to lead English curriculum development. After her U.S. Fellowship several years later, she was next appointed as national director for teacher training and began to represent her country’s ministry at important international events, both in Africa and further abroad.

One such mission took her to a World Bank seminar in the U.S. that lasted several weeks, during which time there was a national presidential election back home. Its outcome was disputed by both lead candidates and ultimately decided by the constitutional court after weeks of uncertainty, strikes and unrest. Upon her return home,

A1 found that the election results had shaken up leadership at the top levels across the whole government:

A1: I don't know if I am just speaking for myself or for the situation worldwide—why not, if not just in developing countries. There is such a fine line between technical position competence and political kind of alliance, and you have to “give a job to the boys,” don't you?

Anyway, when we came back we had a new minister—he didn't know me. I felt—this was terrible. And so, well, well, I lost the position! So for some time I didn't go to work because I had nowhere to go, and yet, I was paid—on the dole, you know!

*Researcher: Just on the payroll, but no assignment?*

A1: Uh-huh.

After 18 months during which A1 continued to draw a salary despite sitting at home, the newly elected government issued an order that there would be a national census of civil servant employees. Each employee on payroll needed to provide documentation of an active assignment by the census deadline or be permanently terminated from a career in the civil service.

Desperate to find a way to resolve her exclusion from work, A1 used only her available tools in this restrictive operating space: self-promotion and networking:

A1: But my former director in 1995 had become directeur général de l'enseignement [national director for instruction—“DG”]. I had been one of his chefs de service [division heads], but we didn't get along very well—just a personality clash. But I said to myself, “I have no other choice; I have to go and see him.”

The DG said, “What do you want?” I said, “You know me; I want to work, but I don’t have any assignment right now. You can put me somewhere in some office.”

The strategy worked. Finally back in an education position where she was developing curriculum again, A1 was working side-by-side with the leadership from the newly elected president’s administration:

A1: In a country like mine, there’s a very thin line between politics and anything technical. By this time the election was decided; we had a new president...and all the former staff from the ministry had gone. I knew no one except one person—basically I was the technician. All of them are new; they don’t know much about the education system. As a technician I had to comply with my bosses—what else could I do?

I’m quite good at strategizing, but somewhere, I felt very much frustrated. They are talking about things—but do they know? (A1).

While A1 did not leave her government career despite its new political leadership’s refusal to appreciate her capacity and willingness to serve, she managed to return to work only through those most basic leadership mode skills of self-promotion and networking. She explained to me that she had only managed to keep her sanity over those 18 months by teaching as an adjunct faculty member at a university. Still, her commitment to her civil service career was enough to inspire her to fight her way back in. As we wrapped up our interview, I asked A1:

*Researcher: So your competence protected you from the political complications?*

A1 : Yes. But this can protect you only in some way, because as they say: *La compétence sans autorité ne vaut pas grand-chose ; et la même chose dans l’autre*

sens : *l'autorité sans compétence est fragile*—il faut les deux. Et me voici !  
[*Competence with no authority is not worth much*—and the same is true in the other direction—*authority without competence is fragile*—you need both. And here I sit!].

## Politics and Religion

As was related earlier in the overview of the study sample, almost all participants spoke of the importance of religious values and practice in their upbringing as well as their current adult lives and those of their families. At the macro-level, likewise, the role of religion, religious alliances and the authority of religious leaders in all three research countries surpassed what one encounters (especially at the national level) in most western industrialized democracies.

For example, we saw earlier how the democratization process in Madagascar was instigated in the early 1990s at the insistence and with the support of the Malagasy Council of Christian Churches—*Fikambanan 'ny Flangonana Kristinina Malagasy* (FFKM), a coalition of the four largest Christian denominations in that country. This involvement ensured multi-party elections following the downfall of the socialist period. Had the FFKM not intervened, the forces that were advocating a return to the earlier, socialist status quo with the old dominant party probably would have prevailed (Murison, 2003). A decade later, after another disputed presidential election in 2001, the intractable presidential election dispute opposition-disputed finally was resolved thanks to the FFKM's intervention, when they demanded a vote recount which confirmed the election

of one candidate. Again in 2009, when Madagascar faced yet another political crisis, the FFKM's leadership was called on as an honest broker in the midst of an acute political collapse.

As noted earlier, none of the three countries in this study has any record of religious repression or overt interdenominational conflict. While the majority of each country's population, as well as its population, remains Christian or (in the case of Ethiopia) its leadership is still mostly Christian, the growing Muslim demographic in each suggests that future interdenominational cooperation might be more challenging. Nevertheless, the religious networks in these openly tolerant societies may offer additional avenues for innovation in leadership where politics and policy do not.

#### A Broad "Operating Space"

As reported earlier, stories of the clash between professional and political interests prevailed in the participants' careers in both Madagascar and Ethiopia. Ghana, however, presented a different picture. When I engaged with Ghanaian participants on the same topic of political impact on their professional practice, the stories were quite different—at least as they concerned their own current realities. I first met with them during the interim weeks between the first and second rounds of the 2008 presidential election. As the first round had given none of the eight official candidates a plurality of votes to win office, the country awaited this second-round election, which pitted just the top two vote-getters in the first round each other.

Polling and public opinion in those weeks were quite intense. As I made my way across the capital city of Accra to meet with the various participants in this study, I found practically every tree, light pole and billboard across town festooned with some sort of campaign promise or smiling politician's face. I was engaged in conversation about the candidates and their proposed policies by everyone—from the high level elites I was there to interview to taxi drivers, waiters and even the lady who sold me delicious fresh fruit on the street corner. All had an opinion and not a second's hesitation to share it!

C3: People have become very, very politically-minded and they demand results from their MPs, from their president...it is amazing.

*Researcher: And that wasn't the case 25 years ago? [Under the military regime heading the country at that time]*

C3: No, no, no. People wouldn't even bother to go and vote.

Having seen the repeating pattern of civil servants' careers going up and down to the beat of these electoral shifts in two research countries, I engaged this group of participants I met in this third site on the topic of their country's future, wanting to know more about the "operating space" they anticipated. Given the openness of opinions offered, I could see that both final presidential candidates enjoyed support from different participants I interviewed.

C3: Here we have freedom of the press. Opposition says anything and they get away with it. It didn't happen under Rawlings [military ruler in the 1980s]. It didn't. We didn't have democracy.

*Researcher: That's more recent. That's a change in the law?*

C3: Exactly. Criminal Libel Law.

*Researcher: Do you think it's good that it's this way?*

C3: It's good that it's that way. If you go to the markets right now they can tell you what they want and if they don't have it—the politicians who disappointed them, they'll no more vote for them.

And yet, one response was unanimous—it would make no difference in their careers:

C3: As it is now, for me I don't really care which party wins because I know that the populace will make demands of whoever is there. And if you become too arrogant we'll kick you out!

*Researcher: And what's going to happen on the 28th?* [December 28, 2008—date of the runoff elections].

C4: The 28th? Oh no, I cannot say. It can go either way. Because one way or the other... we are here as umpires.

C4: Yes, we are prepared to serve. I'm prepared to serve... So whoever comes, provided you do your work well without any infractions or violations on the rights of the people, we'll peacefully co-exist.

*Researcher: So you're not worried about which party wins in terms of your work here. You don't feel it's going to change?*

C6: (Laughs). Oh no, that one I don't really worry about it. Because we are neutral. Whoever comes, we serve the person.

Such was not always the situation in Ghana, either. C8 related the experiences of his father—also a career civil servant—in the 1960s, where as a young boy, he witnessed his father's career rise and fall:

C8: Ah, because when I was growing up when my father used to work for the State Security, things were very good for us. But when he lost the job—because I was the first born—I saw the reversal in our fortunes. It affected us.

*Researcher: So Nkrumah<sup>14</sup> went out and your father then was unable to get a job?*

C8: That's right.

Thus we see the same pattern of career instability in earlier years in Ghana that we still observe in the other sites today. Referring to Figure 5 earlier in this chapter, the event took place at a time when the three key elements for democracy were not in place in Ghana. This observation supports the line of analysis that the macro-context of democratization is a key element to the individual non-political leader's ability to exercise leadership creatively and democratically.

#### Negative Cases

While considering the individuals interviewed as part of a group that represented a phenomenon I sought to better understand, it was also important to account for variability and possible “negative” cases—those that did not completely fit the emerging patterns observed or seem to react to the same conditions in a predictable way. It is important to account for such cases as reflecting the realities of the variability in the human condition (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000;

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<sup>14</sup> Kwame Nkrumah, founding president of post-colonial independent Ghana, held office from 1957 through 1966, when he was deposed by a military takeover.

Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Unlike quantitative research, which may consider such cases as problematic “outliers” possibly weakening the proof of a hypothesis, this methodology is inclusive of such situations or individuals and seeks to understand how they operate within the conditions and theory being generated. This is a way to strengthen the credibility and trustworthiness of the research at hand.

A2 presented a picture of exercising his leadership skills in a situation of limited democratization that others interviewed who had experienced similar situations did not. While two other participants facing similar political contexts were significantly sidelined in their careers under these conditions in drastic ways, A2 seemed to move forward and quietly exercise some creative leadership approaches despite this environment. Further analysis of his case revealed a very creative approach to overcoming difficulties: “I always try to work informally in advance of any meeting to make sure that everyone involved knows what will be discussed and we can make the outcome go in the direction we want” (A2). Later, when facing a change in political administration, he reported that he stressed his technical capacities and “avoided politics” (A2). The document review of all participants’ application files for the fellowship also reflected, as cited earlier, that A2 was appreciated by the fellowship nominating committee in his country not only for his talents overall, but specifically for his “survival skills.”

It seems likely that some Fellows do possess the skills and abilities that the above arguments propose are not provided through their fellowship. Whether they are innate

qualities that have had a chance to develop through the right experiences or they were modeled by mentors is not a question pursued in this study. Nevertheless, I would argue that identifying the bright lights of talent and capacity across this population could indeed serve as source of peer mentorship and inspiration for the development of the training materials to be discussed in the chapter that follows.

### Leadership in the Private Sphere

In considering further the research question, *To what extent do participants incorporate U.S. leadership approaches into their practice back home?*, a distinction appeared between findings concerning the Fellows' workplace and those of their private lives. The pattern of variance observed in the professional choices of participants within their broader context was not observed in the private lives of these Fellows. A consistently reported activity by a number of participants was the impulse to "do more" as a contribution to their civil societies through individual initiative. While some participants had been so inspired earlier in their careers, several reported that the experience in the U.S. and their observation and participation in its highly developed civil society and grassroots citizen movements had inspired many to take additional leadership initiatives once back home. Unlike the professional settings in which they operated, such initiatives seemed to occur whether or not the political space was supportive.

Examples of such initiatives were evident in all three research sites. A1, who faced such difficulties in her career track due to the political upheavals at the national

level, had first sought a parallel outlet for her professional skills by teaching as an adjunct lecturer. This strategy was first coded as a survival tactic under the category of “fight or flight.” However, when her professional circumstances (and the national political situation) settled down and her opportunities to shape national education policy through her skill and leadership, she nonetheless continued teaching. She attributed this to her commitment to challenging young minds through developing their critical thinking skills, a capacity that she deemed missing in the current educational approach in her country. Hence, a survival tactic evolved into a commitment to mentoring the younger generation of future professionals.

B3, despite his enormous challenges in the workplace, found ways to initiate a green initiative in the capital city of his country. When workplace challenges caused by a political shift pushed away this avenue from his range of leadership choices at work, he nevertheless remained committed and active to this effort on a private basis.

C1, who had just retired at age 50 from the public sector a year prior to our meeting, had moved into a post-civil service phase of his career as a private consultant. As such, his career track reflected the overall trend observed for African civil servants, who can (and sometimes must) retire in their 50s (see Figure 9 in Chapter 3). Parallel to this potentially lucrative consulting practice, C1 had initiated an NGO in environmental issues, offering both a policy advocacy arm and a volunteer-based youth mobilization

arm for toxic clean-up of coastal areas. He went so far as committing a percentage of his consulting profits to support the NGO he had created.

Finally, the importance of the informal network of alumni of this fellowship itself was cited. Fellows in both focus group countries cited the informal network of alumni as contributory not only to professional dealings (informal collaboration across ministries or agencies to streamline or coordinate shared issues), but also an inspiration for civic action, the raising of public debates and awareness, and mobilization behind important issues in their societies. The alumni of Madagascar had formally registered their network as a national association (and invited me to join their meeting while visiting). They stated that this organization allowed them to maximize the power of their shared experience and often similar leadership styles and approaches. With just as much pride, the alumni group in Ghana held an ad-hoc meeting combined with their focus group. They presented me with a copy of the agenda of a public conference that they had organized in 2008. This was just the latest in a series that they and their colleagues had initiated since their alumni association first was founded in the 1980s.

## **Conclusion**

The category of culture was initially identified as the probable way to seek answers to the research questions of this study. The literature review therefore had considered the domain of intercultural studies and previous studies on culture in Africa with some depth.

In the process of the field investigation, however, it became clear that insights grounded in culture alone were not sufficiently powerful to fully explain the participants' descriptions of their realities and operating choices. Side-by-side with culture stood the complexities of political reality in these individuals' lives, which emerged in selective coding as the in-vivo category of "operating space." Together these two categories of culture and operating space offered the strongest themes and findings in the data analysis. Once suitably juxtaposed by defining "operating space" as the core category for the generation of theory, a more complete answer to the research questions could be developed. This synthesizing process, the theories it generated and their implications will be presented in Chapter 5.

## CHAPTER 5: SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS, SUBSTANTIVE THEORY AND IMPLICATIONS

The previous chapter explored each aspect of the study's findings: the participants' profiles, the collected data, presented along each of the primary lines of inquiry, and the analysis of these data, linking them to relevant literatures that provide additional explanatory power to these findings. The results overall sought to respond to the two research questions—a) *How do U.S.-trained Africans perceive the relevance of their U.S. leadership training in their home-country practice?* and b) *To what extent can they incorporate U.S. leadership approaches into their leadership practice there?*

Chapter 4 showed how the initial themes, first identified through description and open coding, were then refined as they emerged through axial coding and the constant comparative method. Briefly stated, Chapter 4's findings showed that the U.S.-trained Africans interviewed a) saw great potential for the relevance of their U.S. leadership training in their home-country settings, and b) generally sought to apply it to their leadership practice. The extent to which this was possible, however, particularly in their work settings, was often beyond their own agency. Outside factors of the broader political space frequently were seen to regulate this agency.

Those findings included the contextual phenomena needed to develop the ultimate intended goal of this Grounded Theory study—its explanatory substantive theories responding to its two research questions. In the final stage of data analysis, two dominant

themes emerged: 1) cultural factors impacting the practice of participants and 2) political realities related to democratization, expressed as “operating space.” While cultural factors can be observed as evolving over time and can be expected to continue to evolve somewhat predictably, the political dimensions observed and their impact on individuals’ work and careers fluctuate over time along unpredictable patterns and rates. The challenge in analyzing these key categories, then, is to define the two in relationship to each other and in relationship to the other findings outlined previously.

In this final chapter, the generation of the substantive theories devolving from these findings are described, discussed and applied. They include a potential theory about the methodology chosen for this study as well as very clear theoretical constructs relating to politics and culture and the interaction of those two contexts within the settings of the study. Lastly, the academic and professional implications of this series of substantive grounded theories are discussed.

### **Generation of the Substantive Theory**

The focus of this study at the time of its conception was to seek through empirical means to understand the perceptions and practices of leadership by these U.S.-trained participants from three African countries, using a set of four lines of inquiry. All four lines were considered at the outset as potentially equal sources for shedding light on the research questions. However, once the interviewing process was underway and initial data collected began to be scrutinized, early analysis pointed to the importance of an

overarching political phenomenon that could not be discounted if the other aspects observed were to be fully understood. Therefore, the study's scope and focus evolved as it unfolded, and findings broadened as data were unpacked and analyzed, as just described and discussed in Chapter 4. This resulted in an increased challenge in defining the most useful central theme of this study (i.e., that theme which can best serve as the linchpin of explanation for substantive theory-generation).

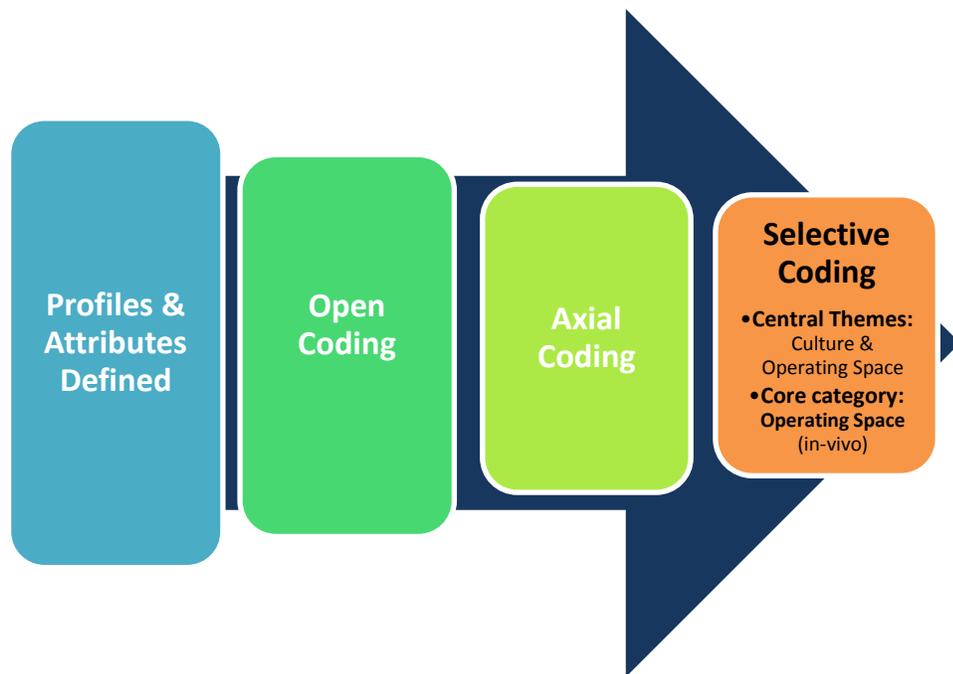


Figure 11: The final stage of data analysis: selective coding

In order to define this central theme, the grounded theory methodology moved data analysis and coding to a higher level of abstraction—known as *selective coding*. Referring to the model introduced earlier, this final step is again depicted above, showing

how the central categories of “*operating space*” and *culture* ultimately emerged as the strongest explanatory themes. After first giving some theoretical consideration of the methodology *per se*, these two central categories will then be discussed in more detail and related to one another and the emerging substantive theories they suggest.

### Grounded Theory Methodology

A first potential theoretical construct to be drawn from this study’s set of grounded theories is the power of grounded theory methodology itself. As related in Chapter 1, the study was originally inspired by an African Humphrey Fellow whose perceptions of leadership were associated with power and domination. In looking for explanatory literature that dealt with the overseas training and development of African professionals, however, only quantitative studies and program evaluations were in evidence, leaving a “black box” hiding the details of how, how much, why and when professionals perceived and applied leadership practices in their home contexts.

The grounded theory approach of this study has allowed for a deeper understanding of this phenomenon. It has offered an opportunity to look not only at the personal perceptions and practices of the individuals studied, but also at the dynamics of their environments. As discussed in Chapter 3, previous studies referenced from the literatures of the domains of education and professional training offered only rather static snapshots, or series of such snapshots, mostly rendered through quantitative and

evaluative studies. They did not consider with any focus the dynamic between the individuals and their evolving contexts.

Therefore, the experience and product of this grounded theory study suggests that qualitative, grounded theory methodology is an effective means for getting a deeper contextual understanding of complex and dynamic situations. Its ability to allow for flexibility, and to capture evolving contexts as they unfold, offers more interpretative power for such situations than hypothetico-deductive approaches, which tend to analyze snapshots of situations and therefore cannot account thoroughly for their dynamic aspects. Grounded theory offers an avenue for developing useful and predictive theoretical constructs concerning contexts.

***Grounded Theory #1:** Grounded Theory is a powerful methodology when investigating complex contexts, where individuals and their environments both evolve over time.*

### Culture

A second category of finding in this study was related to issues of cultural values, their interpretation and the recognition of indigenous values as significant factors for developing an effective style of leadership, a problematic area for many of this study's participants. This finding is important, especially inasmuch as the issue—defined earlier as “squaring one's roots”—seemed so unresolved in the majority of these Humphrey Fellows' minds. When engaged on the topic, participants generally did recognize that

there was value in accounting for traditional cultural values and incorporating indigenous approaches to modern practice in order to make the environment more comfortable for those operating within it. However, this perspective was only acknowledged when the researcher engaged with and challenged most participants on this point, giving his outsider's view of disparate pieces of experience that almost no Fellow appeared to have integrated completely.

Only one of the 18 participants, C3, managed to articulate a clearly integrated appreciation for the diverse cultural influences that have shaped him over time and now drive his approach to professional practice today: the "house" whose foundation was based on African beliefs and values, its walls built with the educational traditions of the British colonial heritage of his country, and the roof over it that represented the U.S.-based fellowship experience that this participant felt had capped his professional training.

This factor of culture can affect the individual leader's skill and hamper or enhance the potential for leadership, especially for those followers whose own background is not as transnational as that of the overseas-trained leader, and whose upbringing and daily lives are more solidly rooted in the traditional layers of their respective societies. We saw this in the lively discussions in both focus groups, where all agreed that there is a constant tension between making the right supervisory and policy decisions at work and doing right by the tight cultural network of colleagues' relatives, kinship and connections. In another conversation, A4 likewise had talked about the

challenges of “setting a good example” for junior staff who often assumed the African cultural values of community would offer tolerance for late arrivals, sudden disappearances from the office, and generally attenuate their professional accountability.

While the anecdotal understandings cited revealed multiple culturally driven layers of values, styles and priorities, only one participant had the ability to articulate this complexity without being carefully led to it. This finding may offer some important feedback to those leadership educators who work with such professionals in the future. The implications section below will include a fuller discussion of this factor.

***Grounded Theory #2:** African transnational professionals’ personal comfort with crossing cultural modes does not necessarily predict their capacity for integrating indigenous values with “modern” practices in professional leadership settings.*

#### Politics—the “Operating Space”

The next key category that emerged through the research and analysis in this project was that of the macro-level political space within which these professionals operate at any given time.

However, the contexts of most published research on this topic were within largely stable western democracies. Those studies did not need to account for external, “overpoliticized” environments that can become highly unstable. As discussed in the previous chapter, the constraints and choices Stewart (1982) described are limited to variability within companies or within fluctuating (but not highly vulnerable) market or

economic settings. They offered some useful tools for constructing a better understanding of the variability of contexts observed in this study, but did not address issues of national politics or instability of democratic infrastructure.

Tsoukas (1994) highlights the layers of a manager's concrete reality, delineating *roles, task characteristics, functions* and *causal powers* as distinct dimensions of influence that reflect more or less variability according to their proximity to the core of the manager's responsibilities. Korten (1980, 1984) recognized the importance in developing-world contexts of a *bottom-up process* that matches organizational competence with on-the-ground realities of beneficiaries. He later argued for people-centered development which is value-driven and includes the realities of developing-world contexts.

Nevertheless, Mintzberg's (2006) "inside-up" premise, discussed in the last chapter, is pertinent to this discussion. It reinforces the need this study identified for training career professionals to see the importance of "squaring their roots" in developing leadership and management approaches that "make sense" and lead to learning up and down the line across both leaders and followers.

Warwick (1974, 1980) observed the importance of power settings and operating environments vis-à-vis the capacities of actors confined to operating within those settings. He argues that even career professionals must strike a balance between the technical expertise they bring to their work and the political aspects within which they

operate. He defines this reality as a *remote environment* (social structure, culture, political institutions and historical experiences) setting the boundaries around which the *proximate environment* (issues, complexity, actors) can function.

As was demonstrated in the previous chapter, the remote political environments in each country in this study have shifted multiple times, often in sudden and unpredictable fashion, over the past half-century. Contemporary history shows the same phenomenon in virtually all sub-Saharan African countries. These shifts have occurred over the decades during which this study's participants were born, educated and matured into their professional practice. Virtually all participants of this study some way related the impact and environment they experienced at different points in their lives and careers. At times they found themselves in moments of despair, frustration and powerlessness in the face of an unsupportive or restrictive "operating space." As Figure 11 below demonstrates, in two of the three countries included in this study, no clear long-term pattern of stable and sustaining

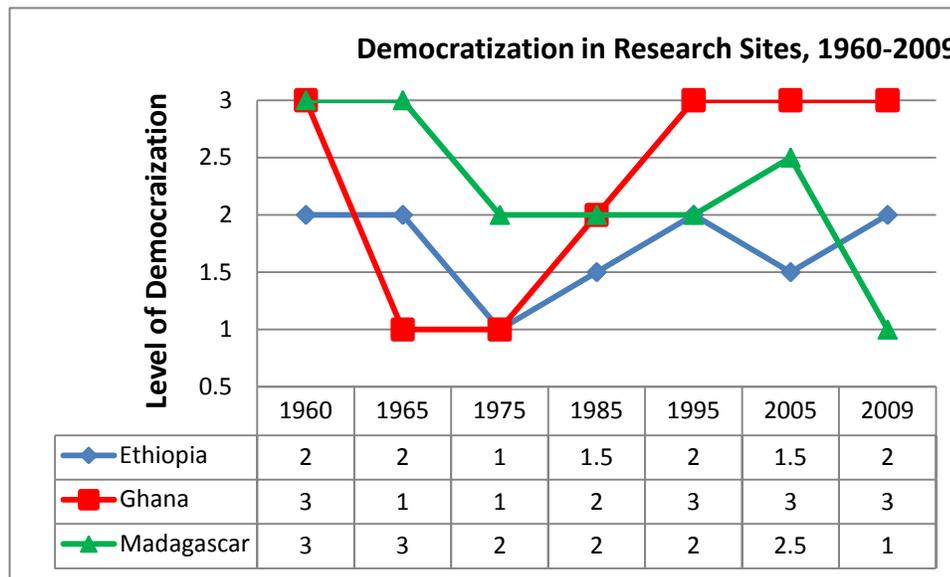


Figure 12: Evolution of democratization levels over time (High = 3; Medium = 2; Low = 1)

Data adapted from Freedom House (2009)

democratization has yet been achieved, reflecting the analyses on this topic presented in Chapter 4. Data cited on democratization, discussed there, clearly showed that such is the case for all but five of the 44 nation-states of sub-Saharan Africa.

Nothing in today's current state of world affairs suggests that this pattern will diminish anytime soon. As this manuscript was being written up, the emerging democratization of one study site, Madagascar, completely failed. The elected president in office at the time of the field work for this study was forced into exile after violent street riots were fomented by a political rival whose subsequent unelected appointment to the office of interim leader was buttressed by the country's military forces. Such a turn of affairs was never anticipated in the extensive political discussions I had with participants

at that site and others familiar with the country's political status and evolution. There was a strong consensus at the time that "*those days* [e.g., the previous non-democratic political upheavals of 1975, 1991 and 2001] *are over.*"

Looking beyond the three research sites to the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, the situation is no less troubling. Zimbabwe, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon and Mauritania are all states that in recent times appeared to be successfully advancing in their evolution towards democratization. Yet, each of these five nations has descended in 2009 to political disarray through botched or disputed national elections. Even the miraculously democratized post-apartheid South Africa now faces diminishing evidence of free and undisputed elections, less space for multi-party legislature and local governance, and increasing tears in the fabric of safety in the streets and homes of its citizens.

Consequently, the factor of a variable operating space is likely to be a daily reality for most U.S.-trained African professionals in their foreseeable future careers. While many participants of this study related how these tectonic shifts of political context have already affected their careers (and in some cases, those of their parents or grandparents' generations who also had public sector careers before them), none was able to relate any formal educational experience or training they had undergone that had equipped them to manage their way through this significant factor in their daily professional lives. Numerous opportunities to attend a wide variety of technical training courses were

mentioned by every participant, and the impact of leadership coursework and on-the-job observation certainly also were related as powerful influences. However, in no case did such leadership experiences that were provided ever seem to encompass the challenges of operating in a much-less-than ideal political space or enabling environment.

U.S.-based leadership training, and most of the scholarship around it, widely presumes a stable, democratic enabling environment on which the leader and those surrounding the leader can rely. When unreliable, avenues are usually firmly in place to ensure fairness or recourse (internal audits, whistleblower laws, etc.). These avenues were mostly found to be lacking in the research sites, or when legally such institutions were in place, practically they were not being applied with any reliability (CG discussion, cited in Chapter 4). While some participants, through their career stories, had spoken of some successes despite the most challenging of political contexts they had experienced, none linked it with any formal learning experience. Perhaps the closest “teachable moment” of informal learning heard was the chance conversation B3 had with former Harvard University President Lawrence Summers and his advice about being true to one’s values in times of political conflict. Hence, the category of “operating space” was deemed the central category for the development of the substantive theory.

As this study was being designed, it was not anticipated that political issues would take the lead in the investigation, nor was politics reflected in the original framework of the study as anything but one of a number of contextual factors. The initial model devised

to help guide this investigation, a free-floating mobile featuring various elements that might come and go as important factors (illustrated in Chapter 4 as Table 3) could not suffice to bring full meaning to the research question. A better model emerged, discussed below, reflecting the hierarchical dominance of the “operating space” in the construction of the theoretical findings of this study.

***Grounded Theory #3:** When the remote environment (“operating space”) of career African professionals in the public sector is unstable, these individuals’ agency and potential for applying creative leadership and management practices is limited, or even impossible.*

### **Hierarchy of Central Themes and Overall Substantive Theory**

We now can “connects the dots” between the various findings and discussions that precede in this and the previous chapter. In the case of this particular study, the initial data collection in the field required the researcher to broaden the scope of the inquiry, both in seeking participant input as well as in considering the domains of knowledge that could help focus and explain the findings that were emerging.

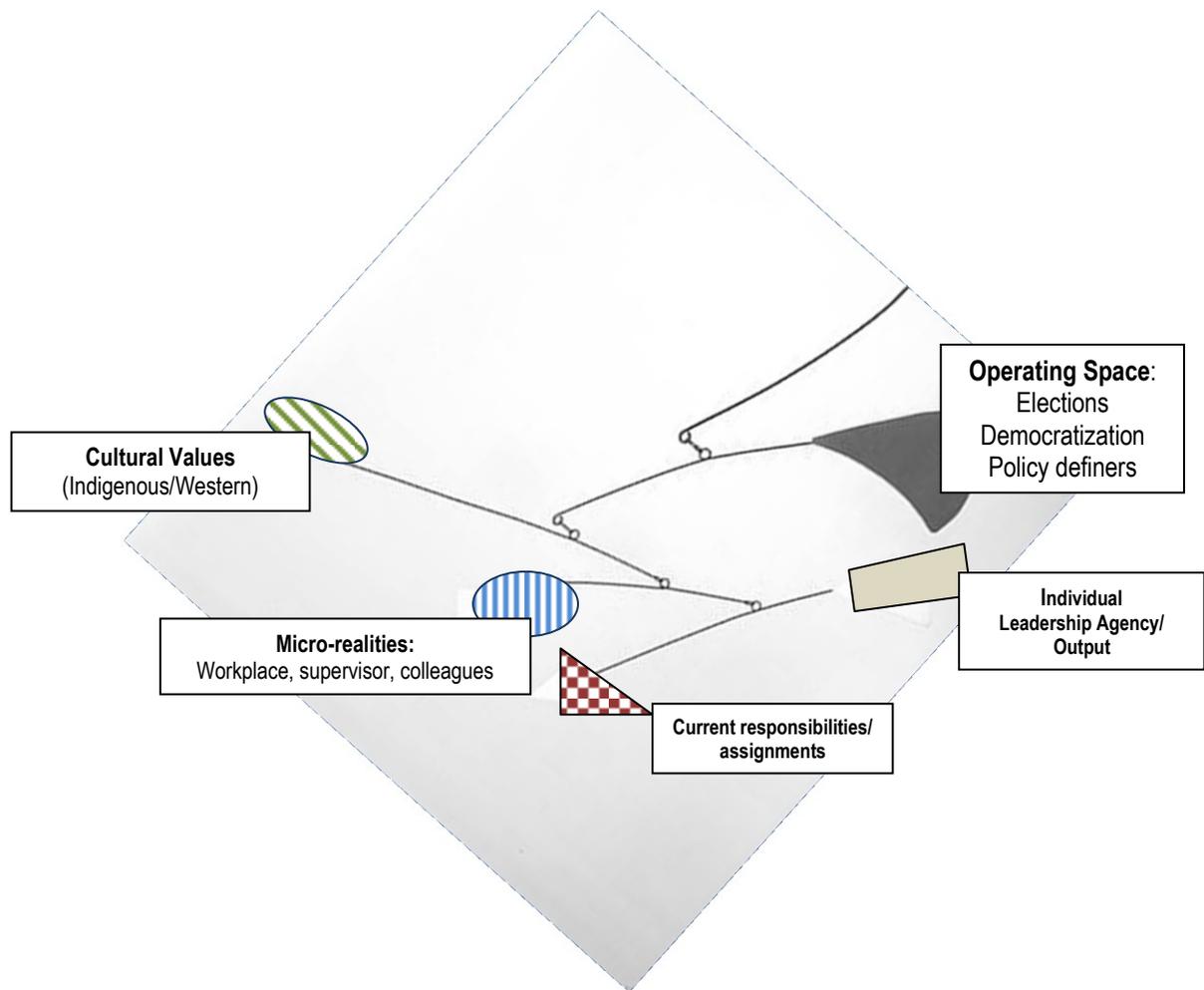
Ultimately, it became clear that the array of findings discovered could best be accounted for when the remote environment of politically driven “operating space” was defined, its variability understood, and the impact and frequent lack of agency for participants around that reality was considered.

Recalling the original approach outlined at the outset of this study, it is important to review those lines of inquiry and to account for what they did and did not yield in the ultimate product. While all of the original areas of inquiry yielded useful information and insights, it would not be a fair representation to depict them as equal in value nor to attribute to any of them equal power over the research questions. As discussed above, the macro-context, “operating space,” clearly emerged as a definer of those other factors which it surrounded at a given time. In the hierarchy of elements affecting leadership practices of this study’s participants, it predominates and defines what is below or within it.

The final substantive theory emerging from the selective coding and analysis of this study is that “operating space” is the central category surrounding and supporting or limiting the elements affected by it. This key category is the driving force that defines the framework within which the subjacent categories of work setting and personal practice can operate. Cultural issues also operate in the individual’s choice of leadership style and values. While these two variables cannot be described as literally dependent and independent as they might be in a quantitative analysis, there is certainly a recurring pattern by which the macro-level realities at a given period of time (often triggered by the outcome of elections or coups d’état) dramatically impact what happens—or even can happen—at the micro-level, over which participants have more personal agency.

Considering the apparent lack of explanation when the original mobile model featured four areas in free variation, I sought a more helpful explanatory model in the same genre of mobile art. With appreciation to Alexander Calder, whose mobile art often suggests inter-relationships and hierarchy, the model below is explanatory for the next substantive theory of this study.

While many elements in the study were indeed variable over time, the hierarchy of impact of some elements was preponderant in their effect on the perceptions and practices of leadership in the participant sample. The larger “winds” of political change in the remote environment suggest a driving force over all of the variable elements in the participants’ context. This includes the extent to which they can creatively exercise leadership, the amount of freedom and competence present in their workplaces when individuals are brought in for political reasons rather than their technical or managerial competence, and the independence and creativity they hold in terms of structuring their work, their staffs’ work, collaboration and problem-solving. All of these factors determine and define to a greater or lesser degree the leadership agency for these participants. As is reflected through a mobile below, when the “winds of change” do not blow too strongly, the ensemble of its pieces settles down and each element becomes more stable, as in the context of Ghana over the past two decades. When turbulence prevails however, as we saw in both Ethiopia and Madagascar nowadays, this individual agency diminishes and participants are forced into a different, less independent



**Illustration 2:** Hierarchical mobile illustrating the predominance of the “operating space” (with appreciation to Alexander Calder).

mode of leadership agency, creativity and potential for impact. The variability of the operating space in each of the research countries follows a similar pattern. In addition, participant experiences around more or less flexibility in their practice also are mirrored in similar fashion to these changes. We also can map out the participants’ anecdotal

experiences with such challenges, as illustrated previously in Figure 11 . The variability of the “operating spaces” has been frequent and unpredictable across all three research sites of this study, except for the apparent trend towards stable democratization in Ghana since 1990. Thus, while some individuals may possess greater survival skills and better personal networks supporting their capacity to survive and even thrive despite these times of limited operating space, there is a significant need to address these realities in a more direct and empowering manner. Those possible strategies will be discussed next.

***Grounded Theory #4:** The remote environment (“operating space”) affects the potential for indigenous cultural values to be appreciated in public sector work settings. When the remote environment is unstable, the cultural dimension is more likely to cause dissonance than offer an opportunity for career civil servants’ creativity in management and leadership.*

## **Implications**

The substantive theories generated by this study were buttressed by the findings that emerged and were refined through a process of repeated analysis. As a result, some significant implications both for future academic research and for the professional practice of leadership training are offered below, and recommendations proposed on the basis of each discussion.

## Implications for Research

The implications for further research could take several possible directions. First, all of the countries included in this study continue to be dynamic and complex in terms of their national development, their fragile processes of democratization and reversals thereof. There are further variable factors at play: globalization and dynamic economic changes and the intricacies that these factors present to the often uncharted spaces in which these public sector professionals operate. Any one country could provide an excellent setting for an in-depth case study. Many of the individual participants could serve as instructive subjects for portraiture or ethnography studies, individually or as groups.

In another vein, this preliminary substantive grounded theory as generated could be explored further and refined (or even refuted) through additional studies encompassing other countries, other periods of activity, or other professional sectors (for-profit or NGO) than were included in this project.

Finally, while grounded theory as a research tradition has most frequently been employed to frame qualitative work, it should not be so limited. In their original book on the GT method, Glaser and Strauss (1967) devoted a full chapter to theory generation grounded in quantitative data as part of their conception of the methodology. The empirical basis for this current study included a small amount of quantitative data to assist in its conceptualization as well as to help interpret the core concept of “operating

space.” Building a large-scale quantitative study correlating the country-level data sets mentioned with finer-grained individual survey data, further testing the transferability of this study’s findings, could well offer a rich source of additional and more generalizable theoretical constructs for a future researcher.

#### Implications for Leadership Training

The findings related to the participants’ views on their U.S. fellowship experiences with formal (classroom-based) and experiential (field-based) leadership development activities were reported as extremely positive in almost every case. The implications for leadership educators and mentors for future Humphrey Fellows or others like them, however, suggest at least two areas of focus that may enhance what appears from all reports to be an excellent overall educational experience. I will discuss these implications along the lines of the principal findings about these professionals’ realities back home— first at the micro level and secondly at the macro level.

#### “Squaring their roots”—Building a House

Only one out of 16 primary participants of this study had a clearly articulated framework through which he related how he had integrated the various facets of his upbringing and formal educational and overseas training experiences. This brings to light an area that seems not well articulated by most African Humphrey alumni, if the sample

of participants reflects a broader population of African Humphrey Fellows. The question of whether it is an important one for them personally or not is best judged by themselves.

From an external perspective, however, it would seem that those issues of indigenous African values, practices and attitudes that many of the participants viewed as problematic deserve more attention by western leadership educators who might work with such individuals. Curriculum could easily include specific presentations on the cultural dimensions of society, such as recognizing and exploring the importance of African extended family leadership experiences observed through this study.

Drawing on the intercultural literature outlined in Chapter 3, as well as on the wealth of experiential learning approaches already developed by numerous intercultural scholars and practitioners, a rich array of materials and topics could be developed. Instruments such as the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) (Hammer et al., 2003), which measures both intercultural competence as well as the subjects' perceptions of their own competence (the latter self-perception often is significantly higher than actual measured competence) could well serve as a tool. The IDI has a strong proven ability to assist participants in understanding their own level of intercultural competence and avenues for self-development. Such awareness can narrow the gap between perception and actual awareness, and sharpen intercultural competence. Further, by providing opportunities for structured reflection and discussion of the role those indigenous traditions may play in a subconscious way, individuals in training could also have an

opportunity to deepen their own self-understanding and what it is that makes them and those surrounding them back home really “tick.”

Finally, it is of note that this study’s participants consistently framed their discussions on culture and leadership concepts and practices in anecdotal and metaphorical, rather than theoretical or abstract, terms. A4’s likening the cultural dynamics of *fihavanana* to a Malagasy-style bullfight was just one reflection of such metaphorical meaning-making among the participants. Thus, approaching the topic of leadership practice and values through anecdote and concrete example rather than theory or abstraction may also be a key to opening avenues of useful reflection on practice.

#### “Operating space”

As noted earlier, the challenging realities of the remote environments surrounding these African public sector professionals in their daily lives are not soon likely to disappear. Such variability of power settings does not figure prominently, however, in most of the leadership literature and training to which they are exposed on U.S. campuses. The review of leadership literature provided in Chapter 3 likewise did not identify much concern for this reality, nor is it predictably a key part of any professional training workshops they attend while in the U.S.

Consequently, I would argue that “learning how to operate in a political space” is an additional skill-development opportunity that would enhance the leadership capacity of such African professionals. Ferris, Treadway, Perrewé et al. (2007) argue that all

career managers must develop effective political skills in organizations, and can best do so through on-the-job experience, mentoring and other learning exercises. On-the-job experience and mentoring are already integrated components of the Humphrey training approach and were highly appreciated by this study's participants as well as other Fellows in earlier impact studies (Dant, 1997; Kuchak et al., 2000). Additional learning exercises in political skill-building might best be achieved through collecting and sharing personal accounts of challenge, failure and success as well as the development of case studies for analysis and discussion—both of which could be developed simultaneously. Such an effort could be modeled on some of the stories collected through this study and easily augmented by many others that could be provided by other alumni of the Humphrey Program and other similar programs.

## **Conclusion**

This concluding chapter has taken the findings developed through the analysis of the data collected and identified the core data categories through which this study's substantive theories have now been generated. The theories produced were then reviewed against the various elements that framed the study—its methodology, its epistemology and the literatures that helped focus understanding of the data as they were being analyzed and connected.

As this final step was carried out, the standards for quality, outlined and discussed in Chapter 2, were recalled, checked and reviewed in light of the data collection, analysis and theory-development generated by those processes. While this line of investigation has great potential for expansion and enrichment through future endeavors, it is my hope that its outcomes, framed as an exploratory study, can serve as a robust foundation for future efforts.

The second half of this chapter has discussed key implications of this study, considered from both a researcher's and a practitioner's point of view. As a practitioner-researcher, the implications from the professional aspect are ones I personally can develop and apply immediately in my current work. The opportunities to pursue follow-on research flowing from the implications of this study, also lay out a stimulating list of follow-on research for myself. In this way, I hope it may inspire others to contribute their own work in this direction as well.

## APPENDICES

1. Sample Interview Protocol
2. Samples of data coding steps using N-Vivo software
3. Excerpts from interview transcripts

## Sample Interview Protocol

Interviewer: William Dant

Tape no.: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Country Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Current position of interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_

Program year/campus: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of interview: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

### Semi-structured discussion guidelines:

#### 1. Recap cover letter and consent form:

*As I wrote to you, this research project seeks to understand the concepts of leadership held by Humphrey Fellows, mid-career professionals from developing countries who spent a year in the United States in professional updating and leadership development, and to understand the impact their Humphrey training had on these concepts. As agreed, I am going to tape-record our conversation. Later I will transcribe it, and will send you a copy of the transcription to read and comment on.*

*Did you have any further questions or concerns before we get started?*

#### 2. Questions:

##### a. Show participant copy of his/her leadership essay from the program application:

*The Humphrey Program has as a key objective the development of participants' leadership skills. Before you received the fellowship, you were asked to write an essay on your thoughts about leadership as part of the fellowship application. With your previous permission, I obtained a copy of this essay. Please take a couple of minutes to look it over.*

(Pause for a couple of minutes)

##### b. Initial discussion points:

- *By the end of your fellowship what was your feeling about leadership?*
- *If it changed, why and how?*

- *Can you think of any particular things that happened that caused a change?*
- *If it didn't change, was that an outcome of your experience as well? Or not a focus of your experience?*
- *When you returned home, did your concept of leadership match the expectations of others around you?*
- *How did the experience in the U.S. change your concept of leadership, if it did?*

c. Follow-on questions depending on line of discussion that develops:

- *In retrospect, what can you say about the process you went through?*
- *What do you think it means for U.S. leadership educators and the way they approach theory and training in the field of leadership studies?*
- *Can you compare the concept(s) of leadership you observed/experienced in the U.S. with the concept of leadership that is prevalent back here in your home setting?*

d. Topical subquestions/triggers:

- *How did your meaning of leadership differ from those you understood from other Fellows you met – from your own country/region? From other countries/regions?*
- *Describe one person that you think exemplifies leadership*
- *Is your own leadership concept nurtured here back here in your home country?*
  - *At work vs. at home?*
  - *Examples from your own life?*
  - *Impact you make that you may have observed around you?*
- *Some Fellows have reported that leadership includes learning to “lead up”—they lead by being proactive followers. Does this make sense in your own experience/context?*
- *How/when did you perceive yourself as a leader (if you do/did)*
- *How/when did you perceive that others view(ed) you as a leader?*
- *Does this discussion bring any other points to mind that we haven't yet discussed?*

f. Final wrap up: *Thank you very much for your time and candor. As agreed, I will transcribe this conversation and get back to you with a copy of the transcription for your review and further comment, if you have the time and agree to help.*

## Samples of Data Coding Steps

Look for: Search In Free Nodes Find Now Clear Options

Name	Sources	References	Created	Modified
~MODERN~ CONCEPTS	2	4	3/21/2008 7:10 AM	3/23/2008 5:26 PM
"WEDGE" PHENOMENON	1	1	3/21/2008 7:09 AM	3/21/2008 7:12 AM
BACKGROUND	14	68	10/3/2007 1:48 PM	4/15/2008 12:07 PM
COLONIAL	3	7	3/23/2008 5:19 PM	4/8/2008 10:26 AM
CONCEPTS OF LEADERSHIP	14	163	3/21/2008 7:08 AM	4/15/2008 12:12 PM
CULTURE	10	86	3/22/2008 1:52 PM	4/15/2008 12:11 PM
CURRENT FAMILY	4	18	4/7/2008 7:22 AM	4/15/2008 11:56 AM
CURRENT JOB	9	48	4/3/2008 9:58 AM	4/15/2008 11:51 AM
EARLY CAREER	12	64	10/3/2007 1:49 PM	4/15/2008 11:57 AM
ETHIOPIA	3	13	3/23/2008 5:30 PM	4/15/2008 12:12 PM
FRANCE	4	14	3/23/2008 5:19 PM	4/15/2008 9:42 AM
FUTURE PLANS	5	6	4/3/2008 10:42 AM	4/15/2008 9:28 AM
GENDER	7	19	3/22/2008 1:35 PM	4/15/2008 11:46 AM
GLOBALIZATION	7	29	3/21/2008 7:09 AM	4/15/2008 10:08 AM
HHH IMPACT	14	92	10/17/2007 3:27 PM	4/15/2008 11:45 AM
HHH PRELIMINARIES	9	21	10/3/2007 1:56 PM	4/15/2008 10:54 AM
INDIGENOUS CONCEPTS	6	33	3/21/2008 7:10 AM	4/15/2008 12:00 PM
ITALY	1	1	3/23/2008 5:29 PM	3/23/2008 5:29 PM
KNOWLEDGE INTEGRATION	2	10	3/21/2008 7:09 AM	3/27/2008 6:03 AM
LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE	10	35	4/1/2008 10:16 AM	4/15/2008 11:54 AM
MADAGASCAR	3	26	3/23/2008 5:21 PM	4/15/2008 10:00 AM
OTHER OVERSEAS EXPERIENCE	10	32	10/3/2007 1:52 PM	4/15/2008 10:50 AM
POLITICAL IMPACTS	17	109	3/21/2008 7:09 AM	4/15/2008 12:12 PM
PRECOLONIAL	1	1	3/23/2008 5:23 PM	3/23/2008 5:23 PM
RESEARCHER'S PERSPECTIVE	10	68	3/22/2008 1:15 PM	4/19/2008 11:37 AM
ROLE MODEL	7	18	4/1/2008 10:04 AM	4/15/2008 11:46 AM
UK	1	1	3/23/2008 5:27 PM	3/23/2008 5:27 PM
US	3	9	3/23/2008 5:31 PM	4/10/2008 12:12 PM
WESTERN CONCEPTS	2	17	3/21/2008 7:10 AM	3/27/2008 6:20 AM

29 Items

Figure 13: Open coding of data (first generation)

Dant Dissertation.nvp - NVivo

File Edit View Go Tools Window Help

Look for: Search In Free Nodes Find Now Clear

**Nodes**

- Free Nodes
- Tree Nodes
- Cases
- Relationships
- Matrices
- Search Folders
- All Nodes

**Sources**

**Nodes**

**Sets**

**Queries**

**Models**

**Links**

**Classifications**

**Folders**

40 Items

**Free Nodes**

Name	Sources	References
ASSERTIVENESS	1	6
ASSUMING NEW RESPONSIBILITIES	6	16
BLAME	5	10
BRIDGING	6	11
CAREER REALITIES	17	251
COLLABORATION	16	66
CONTINGENCY PLANNING	2	2
COUPLING	1	2
CURRENT JOB DESCRIPTION	11	60
DETERMINATION	1	3
DISCIPLINE	6	7
DISPUTE RESOLUTION	3	4
DOOR-TO-DOOR	3	5
EMPATHY	4	8
EMPLOYER DESCRIPTION	8	23
FAILURE	12	21
GENDER	12	48
INSPIRATION	12	34
MOTIVATION	15	35
NETWORKING	5	8
OPEN-MINDED	5	7
OPERATING SPACE	8	76
PARTICIPATORY	11	43
PATIENCE	4	7
PERSISTENCE	1	1
PERSUASION	8	14
POWER	16	47
RESEARCH	3	5
RISK	9	24
ROLE-MODELING	14	45
SELF-CONFIDENCE	6	15
SELF-MOTIVATION	1	1
SELF-PROMOTION	2	3

Figure 14: Open coding (second generation, with addition of in-vivo codes)

Dant Dissertation.nvp - NVivo

File Edit View Go Project Links Code Tools Window Help

Nodes

- Free Nodes
- Tree Nodes
- Cases
- Relationships
- Matrices
- Search Folders
- All Nodes

Sources

Nodes

Sets

Queries

Models

Links

Classifications

Folders

37 Items

Look for: Search In Tree Nodes Find Now Clear

Tree Nodes

Name	Sources	References
CULTURAL INFLUENCES	0	0
CULTURE	19	164
GLOBALIZATION	10	33
WESTERN CONCEPTS	9	34
CURRENT REALITY	0	0
CURRENT FAMILY	11	74
CURRENT JOB	18	147
FUTURE PLANS	11	27
POLITICAL IMPACTS	26	171
EXTERNAL INFLUENCES	0	0
COLONIAL	4	13
GLOBALIZATION	9	34
HHH	0	0
HHH IMPACT	23	179
HHH PRELIMINARIES	17	59
LEADERSHIP CONCEPTUALIZATION	0	0
CONCEPTS OF LEADERSHIP	22	190
INDIGENOUS CONCEPTS	15	90
LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE	18	85
ROLE MODEL	15	63
LEADERSHIP INFLUENCE	0	0
CULTURE	19	122
HHH IMPACT	22	172
OTHER OVERSEAS EXPERIENCE	16	46
POLITICAL IMPACTS	26	172
PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND	0	0
EARLY CAREER	20	291
OTHER OVERSEAS EXPERIENCE	16	58

Figure 15: Axial coding, including tree node coding. At this point the key themes of cultural and political impacts began to emerge clearly.

## Excerpts from interview transcripts

Below are excerpts from three of the 18 interview transcripts. They provide a direct example of the research approach, some sense of the topics covered and ways participants interacted with them.

1. This transcript is from an interview in the early stages of the field work. It explores issues more broadly than later interviews because the researcher only had a preliminary idea of what participants would consider important and relevant in their responses to the prompts provided.

### TRANSCRIPT/NOTES

### A3 INTERVIEW #1

5/24/07

Interview starts with discussion of consent form, signing and dating it, and verification of A3's current employment and contact information

0:01:50 – START

BD: I thought you were in the Ministry of the Interior, but you actually moved into the President's Office. So tell me a little bit about what you are doing now.

I should say—si vous préférez parler en français ou en anglais, indifféremment, ce qui vous vient à l'esprit, ça n'a aucune importance dans notre causerie. Le plus important, c'est de vous exprimer le plus profondément possible

A3: Oui, donc.... I think I'm going to start in English.

BD: Great—because your English is pretty good.

A3: I don't think so! (Laughs. BD: You are doing quite well) So, I'm at the President's Office. There is a special structure called "Secretary General for the MAP—the Madagascar Action Plan [MAP]. So this structure is in charge of coaching ministers and stakeholders to make the MAP advance. In general, it's like that. It's about coaching high public officials.

BD: Right. And what is your job?

A3: So, in the MAP, there are eight commitments, and I'm on the third commitment, about educational transformation. So it's about coaching the Minister of National Education, the Secretary General, the Director-Generals, the staff, I mean high position staff.

BD: Now, when you were at [US host university], did you work with \_(name of faculty member) ? (Yeah) Was the MAP already designed before you...

A3: It was designed last year.

BD: OK, so this is new since you've returned (Yeah) OK, so before you went to [US host university], you were at the Ministry of [name of ministry](Yes) And you were doing what then?

A3: At that time I was an inspector, I mean investigating about financial and administrative mismanagement within the ministry and within decentralized communities, like the communes.

BD: So you must have been working with A2 at that time, then. (Yes) Because I know that's his area. And so, we'll talk more about your—I'm very interested in hearing about the MAP, but I worked with about 1,000 Fellows in ten years, and as I said, my last year was 2003-2004, so I was the chair of the selection committee for you (Thank you very much—laughs).

I have to confess, I don't remember all the details of your background—that was four years ago. So remind me – tell me from the beginning—your background, from family and school and training, growing up and studying. What's your background early in your life. Are you from Tana itself?

A3: No, not really from Tana, there is a small town, say 50 miles from here.

BD: So you're from around here—the region.

A3: Yes, I'm from the Plateau. So going to of course to ... secondary school, and so to the university of Antananarivo. I studied Economics, and I've got—there's a kind of... it's the French system (une licence ?) Yes, a licence, but not a master's. And then I moved to the National School of Public administration to study public administration.

BD: So that was immediately after your licence? (Yes) And you were admitted directly as a sort of *fonctionnaire* [civil servant]?

A3: No, there is a kind of training. There is a competition to get into this school, and then I worked for the Ministry the Interior for let's say eight years. And after, I studied in the UK.

BD: That's when you were an inspector already?

A3: No, at that time I was in charge of , for the checking and control of the use of budgets, I mean the public funds allocated to the ministry. (Auditing?) It's not auditing—it's not after, it's before.

BD: Budget approval, budget control?

A3: Yes. So I have to control every expenditure, I mean, the documents of expenditure, before signing the authorization for the payment of the expenditures. For eight years, and then I studied in the UK, at the University of [UK university]. There is an institute called Institute for [name], and I got a master's in public policy and management.

BD: OK. Now how did that happen? Were you nominated for that, or...?

A3: Well, no, no, there is another story. It's like, I like English language, so when I was working at the ministry, at the same time I was studying English at the National Centre for Study of English Language, and then after I moved to the American Cultural Center. So the British Embassy—at that time there was a British Embassy here—they advertised in the newspapers a scholarship called the Cheevening Scholarship Program. So I applied, and I got it.

BD: So just out of the newspaper? (Yeah). Your own initiative?

A3: Yes, it's like the Humphrey [Program] too.

BD: You did the same thing. (Yeah). OK, so you applied for that, and they send you to [name of UK university] for public policy studies

A3: One year, yeah. So when I came back I was appointed as inspector.

BD: So the ministry, even though they didn't initiate it, they were happy—it wasn't a problem for you

A3: Yeah, there's no problem, cause I think this is a normal part of career development for a civil servant.

BD: Was there anything specific that inspired you to do that—to go to the UK or go to [name of university]—the diploma or the subject, or...

A3: Because first, it's linked to my background as a public civil servant, and because I studied public administration. But it's really different, I mean it's more focused on the economic side, I mean not really on the administrative side. And it's like widening my horizons, my professional skills and knowledge.

BD: So what did you come back with—you know, the takeaway?

A3: Of course, skills and knowledge. It's not very explicit, but this is the... It's not like a package that's given to you like this. It's more diffuse, implicit.

BD: I mean do you have to be specific. Is the Cheevening only for public policy or does it give you a choice?

A3: It's very broad.

BD: You had the choice to do public policy? (Yes.) And were there many other students like you from different countries?

A3: Yes, it's like the Humphrey Program.

BD: OK, so it's very similar. (Yeah.) So you came back, and you were promoted automatically. (Yeah). Before you even worked, you had a new job.

A3: So, it's like this in the public sector. Once you come back, then they have to appoint you to, I mean, to a position.

BD: Somebody took your past job?

A3: Yeah, and because at that time the minister wanted to appoint me to this position because of the fact that I studied abroad.

BD: OK, so he appreciated the additional skills. (Yes). OK, how did your work change—I'm not talking about the job; obviously the responsibilities were different—but did you see or feel a difference in your approach to doing your job?

A3: I think first it's a different environment from finance, because controlling expenses like that, it's about a financial area. So you move to another position, administrative and financial investigation. So I think it needs first to know to scan the environment—what's going on here,, because the people are different. The people you are working with are different. The system is different, because you are investigating, you've got a nation like that. You've got to investigate the culprit (laughs) and send them to.. (laughs)

BD: You're not everybody's friend, right? (Yeah!) You've got to be very fair and very straight... OK so you did that how long before Humphrey?

A3: Two years, from 2002 to 2004.

BD: And then, what happened then?

A3: And then I applied for the Humphrey Fellowship Program Because before I applied for the Cheevening, I had already applied for the Humphrey but I didn't succeed. (Cheevening was another opportunity you were also pursuing?) Yes. So maybe this time I could get it, I told myself. So I applied for it.

But there is another reason. The work I did there was quite difficult as an inspector. (Frustrating and a lot of pressure?) Yeah, frustrated, a lot of pressure...

BD: How did you cope with that?

A3: So, that's why I thought maybe it's time to look for something else...

BD: So you re-applied (Yes) and that time you were accepted (Yeah). Now,

A3: A very... thing I would like to mention here—because it's confidential—is at that time, we investigated about someone here very high position person, and they and she sued us in court for libel. But we said something very bad about him, so the guy is very very smart. He didn't sue us about our work, but something that is related to our work. So we went to court, so it was very very difficult.

BD: And what happened in the end.

A3: So what happened—and I think that was a very bad thing about it—the ministry didn't support us. So we had to pay for lawyers, all our personal costs. So that was something that I felt very very bad about. So maybe, I told myself, "I think it's time for me to go now." And then I applied for Humphrey...

BD: Do you remember when you filled out the application—I guess you filled it out two times (Yeah) I don't know if you did it over or you did the same one again.

A3: Oh, it was very different.

BD: In there there's one question—you have to write some paragraphs—and each year it's a little different in its wording—but something about if you had a challenge or a problem and how you solved it or how you addressed it. Do you remember that?

A3: Yes, of course (And do you remember what you said?) Yes, it's about the election process here, because at that time we had a ministry of Home Affairs (Interior) in charge of election preparation. So we had to take part as civil servants [for the] monitoring of elections. Not only monitoring but to make it go the right way, if I could say it like that. So at that time, we had to collect the results—it's not really the results, because the high constitutional courts are in charge of giving the official results of elections.

BD: So what was your challenge?

A3: The challenge is like this—there was a time, a presidential election at that time; a second round. The run-off. So one of the candidates complained that we gave the wrong results; that we [searching for right word]

BD: You falsified the count?

A3: Yes. So what I did at that time was I asked the representatives of the two candidates to come. And we had all the results from the different constituencies at the Ministry of the Interior, let's take it from the beginning and work together and recount the results. So one night we had to do that, and in the morning we got the results and I told them, "let's sign on this paper stating the results of the election" on that date, because it's like we got the results from one constituency today and another one tomorrow, because there are many constituencies from the far-away parts of the country. So we didn't get it at the same time. So when we got some results today, we published [them].

BD: And the results were the same...

A3: Yeah, the recount was the same. So they signed the paper. It's over.

BD: My reason for asking you that is I'm wondering if your way of solving a problem then was the same as your way of solving the problem today. If you were confronted with that now, would you do it in the same way, or would you understand it in a different way?

A3: Yeah. I think there are some values that are permanent, like you have to be results-oriented like that. I think it's the same. (There are deep values that you have?) Yes. But there are some... Like that or how to mobilize all the people around you to get that results. These are values also.

BD: And how did you mobilize people? Do you remember what approach you took? What was your way of mobilizing them?

A3: Like I said, are you talking about that example? (Yes) I called them and told them about the problem. "Here's the problem, you said that he got it wrong, so let's work together"

BD: So you just engaged with them (Yes) So now I want to talk about Humphrey in a minute, but first, I want to go all the way back. You said something very important which was that you had—you know there are certain values you have deep inside. Tell me a little about how those things developed for you; tell me, give me a little background about your family, how you grew up, your school when you were a boy.

A3: Maybe because I grew up in a Christian family. And I think that's the main reason...

BD: What was your family like? Small, big family?

A3: Big, very big. We are—of course my parents, they've got seven children. So I've got six siblings—three sisters and three brothers.

BD: And did you all grow up in the same place all the time, or did you move?

A3: Of course we moved! I think as far as I remember—one, two, three, four times.

BD: Was this because of your father's work? (Yes) What kind of work did he do?

A3: He worked in an agricultural center. He was of course a civil servant

BD: OK, that was already in his generation (Yeah) Your family tradition—was it a tradition? (Yeah) So he was a sort of agricultural worker or agent? (Yeah, agent) Technical? (Yes)

So what did your father study? Did he study in a college?

A3: Yes college (BD: *collège* [middle school]?). Only *collège*! But not at the university. So we are not very rich family. Middle-class; not very in the top.

BD: And your brothers and sisters, what do they do now?

A3: One is working in a project financed by the World Bank; another one is a doctor; another one is a teacher at a lycée (high school) yes; and the fourth—we've got a degree called agricultural engineer—*ingénieur d'agriculture*. That's four; the fifth has got a studio about music—a musician. And the last one, she's got a small shop—a shopkeeper.

BD: She has her own business—it's her shop. So she's an entrepreneur (Yes). So your whole family is professional (Yeah) Where did you get this inspiration to be successful like this? It sounds like every one of your siblings is doing very well...

A3: It's because of my parents, especially my father. Because as far as I know, he wanted all the time to give an example for the family. Honestly, very disciplined, even in the family.

BD: So that was an inspiration you think for you and your siblings (Yeah). And your mother, did your mother work also? (No, no) So she was at home? (Yes, she was at home)

And you said their religion was an important element in your growing up...

A3: Yeah. Because we grew up all the time in the church—choir, the different activities in the church...

BD: It was a central part of your day-to-day life, it wasn't just going on Sunday...

A3: That's right! I asked to be interviewed today not to do it on Sunday!

BD: That's fine—I had suggested Sunday just thinking that during the week you were busy with your job. I mean for me it's fine any day...

Now let's see. I'm learning—I've spent a lot of time in other parts of the African continent. I lived in Africa in North Africa, in West Africa; I've worked in South Africa and all around. But it's my first visit to this unique place called Madagascar. (Welcome then!) But of course, I've worked with Humphrey Fellows for many years. I didn't know you but I know many of the Fellows here because I was their director when they were in the U.S. But it is my first time to come here personally, and I'm learning a lot, you know. But one thing that I appreciate, and I'm thinking, A3, for someone your age, let's see, you're in your 30s, late 30s? (Forties.) Oh, you're looking pretty good! (Laughter) I was going to say maybe 38... (Forty-two now. Not so young)

I was going to say, when you were growing up, there were a lot of political changes going on. (Yeah) And I think school transformation also, didn't the schools change a fair amount? Let's see, when you were in elementary school that would have been 30 years ago (Yeah). So that would have been in the 1970s, when the Cultural Revolution took place. So that was your school base (Yes) when the malgachisation was going on.

A3: Yes, I went through that.

BD: What I'm very interested in understanding is, you know you've talked about your family values and your faith values, and clearly those were very important. I also was wondering about the cultural values that maybe you grew up with, or that were presented to you through school or your own sense that you make of your identity. Because you—other Fellows that I have spoken with were a little bit older. So they were done with [elementary] school before the big cultural revolution—you know, they were in the First Republic. So you're the first Fellow I've spoken to who went through school during the Second Republic (Yeah). And I'm just interested in your thinking back about what your own sense of that experience was and your sort of value system—what you got from that, or...

A3: I think, just if I could say something just about discipline, this is beyond the value that I got from school. Because I think family is another way of educating people. I mean in my family, my father has got a lot of books. And I liked looking at [them] first.

BD: So you didn't have to go to school to be exposed to the world of knowledge—your father had it there in the house.

A3: He just put it there. But I was curious. So I looked at it, and later, because they are in French most of them, so I read them...

BD: Because when you were in school they weren't teaching very much French. (Yeah) They were teaching [using] Malagasy medium, right?

A3: Yeah, and another thing, maybe because I liked reading. And because third thing, maybe because I like singing. Especially songs in foreign languages, like English. (It's a good way to learn pronunciation...) Yeah. Maybe that's my chance. That was my chance.

BD: So you're not telling me much about the impact of school. Maybe it wasn't a big one?

A3: Ah, because I didn't really feel school had this big impact on me. The school as school. Maybe schools have given me—of course—skills and knowledge, but not really values.

BD: As you look now at your job, which is about educational transformation, which says that school is important for the future generation. (Yeah). But it didn't have a big impact on you—why?

A3: (Thinking) Maybe because I've already got something from my family (It's superfluous—you have the base) Yeah. Yes, maybe. That's the only answer I could say.

BD: There's not a right answer—you know I'm curious. Because I've heard so much about these different periods of Malagasy political development. The impact, the policy, all of those things seem like they were very radical changes. (Yeah) But the impact was maybe not so radical...

A3: Better thing I like subjects like—of course foreign languages like French and English—I was very good at those subjects. But also some subjects like geography. Not really about physics or mathematics (Hard science) I wasn't good at those subjects.

BD: And yet you went into economics.

A3: Yeah. Because Economics here, it's not very, very... (theoretical? Conceptual?) Conceptual and it's about dissertation, not really... Of course there are parts that are linked to mathematics, but

BD: It's more talking about resources than calculating them.

A3: Yeah, so I was fine with that. And that's also why I moved to the public administration field, not into applied economics or something like that.

BD: OK, so now let's talk about—you had this very stressful job. And you knew that you wanted to apply for Humphrey because you had already attempted it (Yeah) And so obviously you gave a very persuasive argument about solving this problem. That question is a major point of decision in the selection committees—they really, really read that very carefully. Because you know when you write a letter of reference, normally it should be brilliant—it's a formal thing. But when you say, "OK, just describe in your own words a problem and how you solved it," it's an opportunity for you to tell us not only the solution to the problem, but what you consider a problem. So it's—what is your vision of the world, not just what is your solution to the problem (Yeah).

[BD tells an anecdote about an applicant's example where it didn't work out]

So, you went to [US host university] and what were you expecting to get from that? You had just come back from a master's program, so maybe someone would say, "well, why do you want to do this? You already have a master's degree; Humphrey won't even give you a degree." Do you remember what you were kind of expecting?

A3: Because when I applied for Humphrey, I knew from my experience in the UK that I would get something different, because at any time you go abroad and find another environment, another country, you learn a lot on it, and it gives you additional skills, knowledge, wisdom, something like that...

BD: OK, and so what did you bring back? Do you remember, what would be the essence of your – I don't know what you studied, what courses, or [what was] your professional affiliation – tell me a little bit about what you did...

A3: So in the Humphrey Program I took, let's see, eight subjects first. I don't remember all of them (So many subjects!) Yeah, but most of them were on economic development and some on governance. About all of them, if I could say just one thing, it's like the role of the state, the public sector in the process of economic development.

My professional affiliation—I think I got a kind of problem, because I didn't find a very suitable [placement] that matched my expectations. So I went to the city hall (Cambridge?) Yes, Cambridge. It's about a department – I don't remember the name—about giving permission, authorization for buildings. (Construction permits?) Yes, construction permits. Because they have to follow rules about zoning—that's it zoning, codes, yeah. And this was very interesting

BD: What did you learn from that? I mean if you say “that was interesting,” I'm sure it was interesting to observe, but I mean, what did you take from it, you know, for yourself?

A3: Yes, once again, a kind of discipline and order in things. It's very, because you look at the city here, we don't have that...

BD: So when you face, I mean you are in a kind of—so you're in the president's office, you're in a kind of rarified atmosphere, right? I mean I'm guessing top people and best people or whatever, right? (A3 laughs) I'm guessing—I don't know! You don't have to say anything—just smile! (Yeah) So let's put aside that, but I'm sort of interested, you know, whether it would be the observation or application of discipline and structure, or some other set of ... values, or style, or management technique... Um, how does that fit with the Malagasy reality?

A3: That's a problem. I think that's the main challenge here in this country. First, we don't have this vision of things. People don't travel a lot, even around, within the country (They stay close to home) Yes, so they don't see things like me, I've got the opportunity to go abroad, like that. So that's the problem...

BD: Do you feel, um that opportunity sets you apart, right? From the average civil servant (Yeah). Does that make you feel alienated, does it make you feel empowered, what's (Empowered) So you don't feel pushed to the side (no, no) or an object of jealousy or resentment...

A3: Of course! (So how do you...) Because when I came back—and that is another thing—this is really powerful for the public sector system here. I came back in June 2004; I got only a job at the Ministry of Interior in January 2005.

BD: So you were without an assignment.

A3: Yeah! But I got my salary, because I am a civil servant—they didn't appoint me to any position. So I just stayed home...

BD: So what would be your explanation for that? I mean I'm just arriving, saying, "OK, taxpayers are spending X million ariany on you," who's accountable for that?

A3: I think it's a part of the values of an organization called the Malagasy public sector—it's part of the system. Because when I came back from the UK, one of the guys of the directorate of the ministry told me—I went to the UK the first time I went abroad—he told me, "well, you know these English people, they are very smart. They know you are not going to work for them; that's why they gave you the degree!" So, I felt very (meaning you didn't really do the work; you just have the paper to put on the wall?) Yeah. So this kind of things really hurt you.

So when I came back from the U.S., from the Humphrey Program, I knew that I would face some problems back home. So I felt very, very ready to face anything, so when that thing happened (You weren't ready for that?) I wasn't surprised (Oh, you weren't surprised...) Yeah (You even expected that in the range of possibilities, this would be a possibility?) Yeah (So you were prepared. OK)

So I applied for a job at the President's office.

BD: So how does one do that? You don't just go up and say, "Can I have an application?", right? You have to be introduced, or nominated?

A3: No. They advertised the position in the newspaper—once again! So I applied for it, and I moved to the President's office in February 2005.

BD: OK, so you've been there a little bit more than two years now. (Yeah) And that was the first job you had after Humphrey. (Yeah, it was). That must have been very frustrating for that long a time...

A3: (Laughs) I can't tell you really...

BD: Because we try to prepare you to go home and expect challenges, but I don't think I know of any Fellow with a story as frustrating as that one.

A3: It's incredible, really, it's incredible...

BD: OK, so tell me a little bit more, you know you've talked a couple times about the Malagasy...I guess mentality, or style. And we've talked about some of the external approaches or sense of discipline—I don't know if you studied leadership at [US host university] at all—did you take any courses? (no) OK, so when we talk about leadership or what you gain from it, it would be just your observation and sense...(Yes) OK, did you see or observe, or did you integrate anything beside your sense of discipline in your learning when you were in the U.S.? Was there anything else that you thought was useful or interesting?

A3: Discipline first. And then this willingness to learn—I mean when you go on the bus for example and see people reading, we don't have this culture.

BD: Just in your free time (yes) taking the bus or the train and reading—reading the paper or reading a book (yes). A sense of curiosity I guess you could call it.

A3: This is one of the main bases for foreign progress or development—you have to be very disciplined. Not only at the university, but I mean in your everyday life. Going through the street, you don't have to throw your rubbish here. You have to...(put it in a basket?) Yes, that's it.

BD: I'll tell you something—I'm older than you. When I was a little boy, in America we threw things on the ground, too! We weren't born with that—we learned it. We did learn it—there was a national campaign when I was a boy about throwing things on the ground. Before that, people did it! But anyway, I don't know if it is something that was inside of U.S., but it was something that we were inspired to do...

What do you see possibly as a dissonance between a Malagasy way and this kind of other way that I think, you know, Professor Williams and the President are very strongly supporting. What's the challenge for people to think or maybe act in that way? Are there things they have to adjust or make a trade-off about in terms of looking at work values and leadership values in a different way.

A3: I think one thing is just one question—how to make people face their reality. When I—you know, Malagasy people—let's say 60 or 70% of Malagasy people are Christian. I mean they say they are Christian (They were baptized and so on) Yeah, but in their everyday life, are they really Christian, or only on Sunday? (Are they living their values?) Yes, that's a big question. It's like people, they say “we are like this or like that.” But they don't show it in their activities and their actions—their interactions with other people.

BD: We have an expression in the U.S.—I don't know if you heard this—“they don't walk the talk.” (Laughs—yes) They talk the talk, but they don't walk it. So it's all talk but it's not necessarily action (Yes)

But what about any specific values—I know that the past is a very important value here (Yes). And we know that in the West, and certainly in the U.S., it's mostly about the future. I don't know if you observed that. What would you do about that or what would you think about that? When you think that a lot of the modern leadership theories assume that you're thinking about tomorrow (Yeah). But if you have a tradition that thinks about last year (Yeah) or your ancestors (Yeah), and cherishes them (yeah, yeah) what would be your idea about how you make those two needs, you know, symbiotic?

A3: I think we have to get rid of some values. I mean I said it like that. I think we have to rely on the younger generation for that. Educate them how to get rid of—how to say it—wasteful values if I could say...

BD: Wasteful values? (Yeah). For example, what would be the ones that you would eliminate?

A3: For example, (pausing) because most of the people this is one particular value. People here don't want to be held responsible, accountable individually. They like to be held accountable... (As a group?) As a group. I think it doesn't work like this. Someone should take responsibility for one thing that he or she did, something like that. For other people to learn...

BD: And ye there are societies where the group is responsible (Yeah). I don't know if you have ever been exposed to Japan? (Yeah—I've heard but not...) where collective responsibility is how

they succeed. You know, if you have a work group—China is the same thing. They criticize us because we're too individualistic (Yeah) The Chinese and Japanese criticize Americans because they say, "you're not worried about the other people in your team."

A3: The process is not, is different, I mean maybe for the Japanese as you said, maybe they try to help one another inside the group. It's not the same here (What do they do?) Because some people just think their own interests. So it's like—there is an anecdote about that...

BD: Is that fihavanana?

A3: Yeah. Fihavanana. But fihavanana relationship between families to be... It's a kind of friendship or something like that, so that you can hide from one another...

BD: Professor Williams was saying, you know, there's this concept of fihavanana that's an important key to understanding Malagasy style

A3: Yeah, that's true.

BD: But you're talking about a different—what you're describing, is there a term for that in Malagasy?

A3: No, no, it's just like... (Just the way it is?) Yeah. But fihavanana ... did Dean say, it's like you are afraid of offending members of your family or members of your society. You don't really push them hard (You let them do whatever?) Yeah. That's the bad thing about fihavanana. And that's a part of I say the responsibility.

BD: Heavy kind of ... that goes beyond individual accountability. (Yeah, yeah.) Interesting. Well, so now in your job tell me what's a big challenge for you in your current job?

A3: A big challenge is if I could say just how to transform the country.

BD: You're dealing at a macro scale (Yeah) So that's in terms of policy and implementation. And can you say a little bit about how you're approaching it at this point? What's the most problematic thing in that challenge?

A3: Yes. Dean is very, very involved in it. (Yeah, I understood that. He's invited me Tuesday to the Madagascar Leadership Institute—I'm coming to speak to some of the faculty.) Ah, well, as I said, the hard thing to cope, deal with here in Madagascar is just values. That's the importance of leadership—how to change values, how to change mindsets, how to change attitudes of people at ... (At any level? Top to bottom) Yeah.

BD: And how are you doing that? What actions are you taking? What's your approach at this point?

A3: So, we've got very, I mean not very, but a little bit different approach, trying to make people aware of the difference between adaptive problems and technical problems.

BD: This is like Ronald Heifetz's adaptive leadership? (Yeah) OK, does that make sense here? I mean, you're a "global professional" but how does it make sense to the usual person?

A3: Of course at the beginning, it was very, very difficult. But, I mean when you talk globally. But for the Ministry of Education, I mean I'm working with the Ministry of National Education, the people there, they are already aware of this different sets of values, different sets of leadership: adaptive leadership and ....

BD: So they are fairly sophisticated in their thinking...

A3: I mean, the top level—but not at the...

BD: School leaders, principals?

A3: Not yet. The ministers or the secretaries general, it's OK, but

BD: [Not yet] at the school level? (No) How are you going to approach it?

A3: So, that's why we work with the minister and the secretary general. One thing they are going to—of course this is the usual way to do it is like retreat, I mean getting these people together for let's say two or three days and give, not lectures, but exchange and communication. (Group work and then discussion?) Yes.

BD: Is that a new thing here? (Yes) It is. And how is that received or understood?

A3: So, we are just at the beginning of a process now, because it started in May, April.

BD: OK, so what did you do first.

A3: We began at the ministry level first, and then it's going on...

BD: So you're still at the planning stage for the sort of mid-level. (Yes) And when will that happen?

A3: We asked, because we are not acting on behalf of a ministry, we asked the people at the ministry to make a program, let's say for this year, the next year about these things.

BD: As part of the adaptive leadership, they have to figure it out. (Yeah, so we are here to help). So what's the background of the minister now, the minister of education. Is he a career person?

A3: He has studied in the U.S., maybe computer science, something like that. I don't know much. He's very fluent in English, and it's the same for the Secretary General.

BD: So everybody's comfortable with being around [name of foreign consultant]<sup>15</sup>, they can speak with him...

A3: I think it's just the beginning of changes here in Madagascar. The introduction of English as an official foreign language.

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<sup>15</sup> the President's advisor/coach on leadership and the Madagascar Action Plan

BD: What do you think about that?

A3: I think it's good because it exposes people to another kind of culture. Of course there is always the negative effect, but I think we have to say that there are many positive parts.

BD: What would people consider or perceive to be negative effects in your context?

A3: It's very, very basic, like "how could we learn two foreign languages at time?"

BD: You mean adding English in on top of French?

A3: French, yes, something like that, yes.

BD: Too much time on learning foreign languages instead of other things? (Yes) So it's a kind of practical thing, not... You know in some places, people have been saying, "well, that's globalization; you're taking our identity away. We should have a national language."

A3: Yeah, I think globalization is at the same time a threat and an opportunity. So you have to, you don't have any alternative. You have to face it like this.

BD: Manage it rather than be crushed by it (Yeah, this is my point of view)

What do you think you'll do next?

A3: Ah, because I'm very busy now! (A3 laughs. BD: You can't even think!)

BD: No, I'm just curious. You're starting a new process; I don't know if it's of a determined length, or you are doing this indefinitely, or you are supposed to go back to the Ministry of the Interior, or just how things are working...

A3: I know that sooner or later I have to go to another step of my professional career, but I don't know when. Because I'm just here for a limited period of time. I've got a contract for one year at a time. So last year, this year, and

BD: That's a different model [from what you are used to]

A3: Yeah, a different model (laughs)

BD: You have to pay attention, I guess.

A3: (Laughs) Of course you have to!

BD: Well that's interesting that you work directly with [name of foreign consultant], because I was explaining to him the Humphrey Program, and he hadn't heard of that (AH? Expressing surprise). And I told him, "oh yeah, we've probably trained 25 Malagasy" And I didn't have the list with me to show him the names. So the next time you see him you could tell him, because he was curious.

A3: Because he knows me personally.

BD: I had said to him, because you know he was at [name of U.S. university], and I said we work with all of these American Universities, “not Harvard, but MIT.” So I mentioned [name of host university], but he didn’t make any connection with you. Does he know that you were at [name of U.S. host university]?

A3: There was a time we talked about it, but maybe it passed by like this.

BD: This has been a very interesting conversation. It’s nice to talk to a newer Fellow, because I didn’t “direct” you. You know it was nice to see the other Fellows because I knew them, but you’re providing me with three new perspectives: a Humphrey Fellow that’s more recent, a Humphrey Fellow whose life experience was a little bit different because of your ... history, and then somebody who’s working directly with MAP and [name of foreign consultant], because that’s the other thing I’ve been looking at while I am here. So that’s been great.

(Discussion upcoming focus group meeting and possible follow-up)

I don’t know if there’s anything that comes to mind through this discussion that we didn’t talk about. Is there anything that you think I should have thought about, but I didn’t?

A3: No, I don’t know. Because we talked about many things (laughing).

BD: See I am trying to weave a big picture, so you know you say certain things and he said these other things and how do I put them together to understand things more broadly...

A3: Ah, just one thing. The importance of network, as you said with Humphrey alumni. I think this is another useful way to promote any values and something like that.

BD: I read this in Dean’s book, too. Have you read his book? (Not yet) He talks about the importance of having networks. So was something that you gained from your experience as a Humphrey?

A3: So that’s a thing, I mean it’s a shame, a pity we didn’t have the network of Humphrey alumni. Because in the U.S. it was very strong, even in the UK, too.

BD: So why isn’t it strong here?

A3: I don’t know. Because people are busy, I don’t know. They are just (laughing) how to say it—self-interested in life and maybe (preoccupied by family or...) Yeah, maybe.

BD: So maybe the network works when you’re in the UK or U.S. because you’re all alone. Is that possible that it’s a replacement for a family?

A3: (Laughing) I don’t think so. I think it’s that way because it’s just complimentary.

BD: I just thought that maybe, because otherwise, you know, you’re the same person. I’ll have to think about that. Maybe you can think about that, too. Maybe that’s a question I should ask to the group (Yeah, yeah) Or you can ask it, too, I don’t have to ask it. Because it would be interesting to hear what people have to say.

We've seen that in a number of countries. I don't think it's a unique Malagasy problem. So yeah, the importance of networks, and how does one create and sustain a network? What does it take? That's for sure in U.S. culture it's easy to do, why is it so easy to do?

A3: Or maybe some people don't want it to spread like this, because it might be lobbying or... (dangerous or politically threatening?) Not politically, but for some ... (not part of your fihavanana?) Yeah. (It's a different one?) Yeah, because of some vested interests, it could hurt some people's interests. That's a possible way to look at it...

BD: What I was going to say was that in the U.S., most of us are from small families, not big families, and we move a lot. (Yes, that's it!) And we're used to meeting new people (Yes!) But you know your families... (Yes) We're used to going to a completely different place and meeting strangers and creating a network. So it's a skill that we grow up learning for survival.

A3: Yes, it's not the same here. And that's a value—people are really very very focused on their land of ancestors. So it's really like a curse, I mean, to sell the land of your ancestors, it's like... That's why people don't move, really...

BD: The tombs of your ancestors are sacred.(Yeah) And you always go to that place then, or...

A3: But families are spreading like this, but you just stick to this small...(perimeter?) Yes, I don't know, but it's crazy. I could say it like this, because I am Malagasy!

BD: Well, it's crazy but it's your reality to be accounted for—to say, “OK, that's not going to go away; how do we improve things around that reality?”

A3: And people are very linked to the same tribes. You've got 18 tribes, so, “This area this is for such tribe, so don't go there...”

BD: There's a lot to think about. You've given me a lot of good input, I appreciate it.

(Wrap-up on follow-up and process for reviewing transcript later) 01:15:46 END

2 . This is an interview mentioned in the findings section as a “negative case”—the only participant in the study who had a well articulated statement concerning an integrated understanding of his cultural identity. This is not to say that others did not grasp the concept; but no other had the capacity to express it without prompting:

**TRANSCRIPT/NOTES**

**C2**

**INTERVIEW #1**

**12-12-2008**

BD talks to C2 about his academic and work history, and his reason for getting a Ph.D. Explains he works part-time and goes to school. BD explains the research project, rationale for topic, and consent forms. BD encourages C2 to be open and honest with his responses.

START TRANSCRIPT 05:45

BD: Now, I'm trying to remember... You know, I worked with 1,000 fellows, but 97-98, and you were at [US HOST UNIVERSITY]?

C2: 97-98?

C2: At [US HOST UNIVERSITY], yes....

[BD provides C2 with a brief update on his U.S. host university.]

BD: You know, things evolve.

C2: Yeah, that's good!

BD: That's what's going on. Have you been back to the States...

C2: Oh yes, yes.

BD: When was the last time?

C2: Oh, about a month ago. The World Bank invited me [BD: Uh huh...] and I think a representative of the Ministry of Finance for...

BD: So you were on a mission kind of?

C2: Yes, for the program on this anti-money laundering law. [BD: Oh, OK.] Yes, because Ghana, we are now trying to set up the Financial Intelligence Center at the Bank of Ghana. So they thought it was useful to expose us to the business of it. But I came about a month ago.

BD: So anyway, I guess what I wanted to find out a little bit was, you know, since you got back. So you just mentioned it was before I turned on the recorder, so I'll just say again that one of your initiatives you were telling me about was the fact that you started this law and finance journal.

[C2: Yes.] Is that what it's called?... [C2: Financial law.] Let me just read it again for the record so I get it: *Banking and Financial Law Journal of Ghana*. [C2: Yes.] And that was your own initiative?

C2: Yes.

BD: Must have taken some capital to start it.

C2: I'm mentioned as the Humphrey Fellow. And on this page also, where you have the Editor-in-Chief...And I put it there...

BD: Yeah. Humphrey Fellow, that's great. So you came back in 98, and about 2 years later you were able to put this journal together.

C2: Yes.

BD: And that was just your own initiative. It wasn't anything with the Bank.

C2: No, no, no.

BD: And how did you get the financing to...

C2: That is the issue. What happened was, when I came up with the idea, I informed friends and somebody said, why don't I speak to the... Karem Press. I went there and I told them, one, I love writing. Two, this is an idea I really think I have to implement because it will benefit the country. So, but I don't have the money to publish. [BD: Yeah] They said yes, bring it. We will publish it for you. [BD: Really?] We will print it for you. Get people to sell and come and pay U.S..

BD: So it was a risk on their part but they were willing to take it?

C2: Exactly. And when it came out, the people embraced it, particularly the judges.

BD: Was there any Ghana-based scholarship going on before this came out?

C2: In this area, this is the first of it.

BD: Everything was from outside.

C2: Yes.

BD: OK. That's terrific. Congratulations!

C2: Thank you very much. And even when it came out, lawyers in practice, lawyers in the financial institutions, the judges, the universities, lectures--all became interested.

BD: So is it self-supporting now? You have enough subscriptions?

C2: Now, for the past one year we have not been able to publish. We have not gathered the materials... because of the difficulties because of finance. And I have realized that it is something Ghanaians have embraced, and while they say "I am the authority in this area of the law in this country." So

when government prepares bills, but I have been the Chairman of the committee that drafts financial laws of this country. [BD: Yeah.] And between 2002 and today, Parliament has passed 14 of such bills. [BD: Oh really?] So these bills have drastically transformed the financial laws of this country. Some of them, the initiative came from the IFC.

BD: So this was the inspiration.

C2: The U.S.AID. That is through the governmental side, they will help us or will help the government side get the relevant literature on a particular law that we want to draft. Then maybe government will give it to a consultant, and a consultant will come up with something. And Ghana too we will come up with our version, then we sit down and put the two together.

BD: OK, so there's a kind of a... civic sector voice....

C2: Exactly....

BD: ....feeding into the government and it echoes back.

C2: Exactly. And after the drafting the Bank of Ghana will organize workshop for the Finance Committee of Parliament where I'll be there to present, to explain the principles and to align the bill for them to prepare their report when the bill is gazetted. So that it is on the basis of that report which would inform the debate on the floor of Parliament.

BD: In the early days, because the law on public speech changed, right?

C2: Hmm hmmm.

BD: But before that was there ever any complication with anything that was published here?

C2: Uh, before then.

BD: Yeah, before the law changed.

C2: Before the law changed? You mean...

BD: Just in what people's opinions or whatever...

C2: Oh yes!

BD: Was there ever any problem created by what was published in your journal?

C2: No, no, no, no, no!

BD: It was always acceptable, or...

C2: In reality, some people sometimes criticized this issue or that. But on the whole, it was the leading--In fact, the only journal in this area for the country. And I must add that I think my interest in this area has developed such an extent that, let's see here. I have decided to make it my main occupation in the sense that I think the time has come for, for the private sector to be able to,

you know, be more critical in saying that, “maybe the public direction is this way, but the private direction is the other way.”

And one thing I’ve observed, when you are in public service, you are being influenced to take a particular line of action which may not necessarily be the correct [one]. But if you are in private-- the view I have or the vision I have in mind is that that there is a need for a bridge between the ideas of the private sector and the ideas of the public sector. And somebody should be able to synthesize this for public use [BD: OK] And I think...

BD: You’re the guy? [Laughter]

C2: ...from the experiences I have from Humphrey, I think that the impact is the vision.

BD: You have a vision that allows you to see those connections and the need for that public-private dialogue.

C2: Exactly.

BD: Good for you, that’s great.

C2: And I must add, that from this basis, I have become the Chairman of the Legal Committee of the West African Monetary Zone [BD: Oh really?] that seeks to establish a common central bank. I have been the lead person in that group drafting the statutes, governance...

BD: And one thing leads to the next. It not only gets into national but it gets into regional and international issues.

C2: And they used... in drafting this international one, they used what we drafted for Ghana as the base. And then they made the, they bring in ideas left and right—particularly the Nigerians, they say they don’t have this. And they think this is a base which can be developed and be improved upon for that region.

BD: That’s great. Your LLM, did you get that while you were at [US HOST UNIVERSITY] or did you already have the LLM?

C2: No I did that in Britain, I did that before I came for the fellowship.

BD: Was that a long time ago?

C2: Yes, 1988. 1985-88....

BD: Ok, some years ago. And how did you get to Birmingham from uh...?

C2: What happened was the Bank of Ghana sent me there to do a master’s program in insurance law, computer law, and banking law.

BD: So you were at the Bank of Ghana before your LLM? [C2: Oh yes.] And your bachelor’s was in what?

C2: Political science, law and history.

BD: And the Ph.D.?

C2: Ph.D., banking law only.

BD: And where did you do that?

C2: Same. Birmingham.

BD: So you went first the LLM, and then the Ph.D. All in one stay?

C2: Yes. When I finished the LLM, the university wrote the bank that they felt I had done exceptionally well and they wanted to even encourage me to do the Ph.D. at once. Eventually the bank said they sent me for LLM so they couldn't support that so I had to come home. Immediately when I came back home, the university, they had offered me a bursary [scholarship].

BD: Oh. OK. So with the bursary you got permission to go back out.

C2: Yes. [OK.] And when I finished I came back to serve Ghana. [Laughter]

BD: So you were gone for some years then?

C2: Oh yes. I was there for 3 years. [BD: For three years. Wow.] And the first year the bank sponsored me, as I said, the first two....

BD: So with all this good education and experience, what inspired you to apply for Humphrey? It seems like you already had all this training and degrees.

C2: Yes. What really inspired me is the professional development aspect. Yes. In fact, when I saw the publication in The Daily Graphic, the newspaper....

BD: The announcement, the call for applications ...

C2: The Humphrey...So when I saw that, I thought, Ah! This is just in line with my aspirations in life. [BD: OK.] I think the Ph.D., the LLM were more of academic...

BD: ...Technical training...

C2: Uh huh! And now I see this opportunity I can take to improve my skills and other things in that area.

BD: And what were you doing at that time you applied? Now you're a director and head of the legal department. But when you applied in 96 or something....

C2: I was then a junior officer...I was a deputy manager.

BD: A manager. So you were just mid-level. [C2: midlevel, exactly.] So when you think about the responsibilities and expectations that they had for you, what were you seeking specifically that was missing in your, uh, capacity to do that kind of work?

C2: As Humphrey?

BD: Before coming to the U.S.

C2: Oh, before coming to the U.S. I saw a handicap in the work I was doing. I was then, you know, the junior officer responsible for international agreements and those transactions. And I noticed that I did not have a great exposure.

BD: Even being in the UK for some years?

C2: Yes. But that one was more academic as I said.

BD: You weren't out and around meeting with legal professionals.

C2: No...

BD: ...Judges or....

C2: No, it was only when I finished the PhD....

BD: You didn't have an attachment....

C2: When I did the Ph.D. a law firm employed me for 6 months in London.

BD: OK, so you did have some exposure.

C2: Yes, but it was more of paralegal work as opposed to real...

BD: Pushing papers... [C2: Uh-huh Laughter] Somebody has to push the papers!

C2: Exactly!

BD: That was you! So you didn't necessarily have what I would maybe call meet-and-deal experience. You know, meeting people and, negotiating things, or.

C2: No, not then. I had that in the Humphrey years.

BD: So that's what you were seeking. [C2: Yes.] OK, alright. And so we'll talk a little bit more about then what happened or whatever.

You know, C2, what I really don't know much about is your deep background, like where you were born, where you grew up, your family, you know those kinds of roots. Could you just give me a little background? Are you from Accra area or...?

C2: No.

BD: Where are you from?

C2: I am Ekweyu. The Ekweyu are the people from the Eastern Mountains, Eastern Region. But my grandparents went to the northern sector of the Volta Region. Where, that is an area where we

have the Akans. [Yeah.] That is the Ekweyus, the Ashantis, who have migrated. [BD: OK.] And it is the only community outside the Akan Region in this country where you have even a constituency called the Akan constituency.

BD: Oh really. [Yeah.] Your grandparents were... what kind of work did your grandparents do? Why did they move?

C2: From cocoa farming.

BD: So they had their own farm or they were working in...

C2: No, their own farm. Essentially, when my great grandparents went there, they went and took over the land and became the chiefs like they were....

BD: OK. So it was kind of like development. I mean it wasn't established when they moved.

C2: No.

BD: They went to open the cocoa farm.

C2: Yes, they were starting there.

BD: So they were very industrious.

C2: Yes. I come from pure rural background. My parents never went to school.

BD: So as a boy you were on the farm?

C2: Basically. All the time.

BD: And there was a school in your town or village?

C2: Yes. And I think what helped my village is that during the colonial days.

BD: Was this before independence? Before 57?

C2: Uh huh, before I was born, the colonial administration organized all the people in that area to establish a school. And a school was established in my village. My grandfather, who was the chief, when they went to the local council meetings, some of the chiefs were fighting for markets, some for police station. Then my grandfather said when he saw, uh, the life of the white man, he realized that it was good to be educated, to interact with them, so he wanted a school. So they put a school...

BD: So he wasn't resistant to the colonial...

C2: Not at all. So the school was put in the village and all the community, the villages around, had the benefit of that school. And I think it was that background which also helped me to go to school. Otherwise I would have been a farmer. [Laughs]

BD: You would have been a farmer like your father.

C2: My father, yes.

BD: So your grandfather was chief, your father wasn't chief.

C2: My father was.

BD: Then he inherited chieftdom.

C2: Yes.

BD: So does that make you, uh, by, uh...

C2: Yes, but I say I don't like [it]. But my father he is dead, and now they want a successor. They have fronted me all around, but I say no. That's one thing-- political positions I don't like. Because even that constituency... Last elections, all the political parties in the area went to my family and they wanted me to be their member of Parliament and they were not good. All the governments they do no good. If it was me, I said no, I'm not interested.

BD: Was that difficult for you to say that?

C2: Yes, I told them I know... I told them I can as well serve them from the national level, some will serve from the local level, others will serve from the national level.

BD: They understand that, you think, the people back from your home region? Did that make sense to them? They accept that?

C2: Some could not understand me, but I told them, if your child completes school in the village, I am here also. I can guide your child to take this route, take that route, to further their education.

BD: To mentor them?

C2: Exactly. And I think I have been doing that. And I participate fully in communities in the village.

BD: Ok, so you go back?

C2: Oh, almost every month. Even last week I went home and see my old mother.

BD: Do you have family still there? I mean direct family, do you have siblings?

C2: My wife and children are here.

BD: OK, and do you have brothers and sisters?

C2: Yes, they are there.

BD: What do they do?

- C2: One was with the forestry commission, he is a forest ranger. They are the forest guards.. And one, my brother, my second brother is a teacher.
- BD: Up there?
- C2: Yes. Not in the village itself.
- BD: Ok, but in the region?
- C2: Yes.
- BD: So are you the only one who came to the capital?
- C2: Exactly.
- BD: Sometimes they say that's a big role for, uh, you know, you're kind of the big brother. It's kind of a heavy responsibility.
- C2: A heavy responsibility. And you have to support them in the education of their children.  
[Laughter.]
- BD: Yeah. They come and stay with you in Accra, too, right?
- C2: Yes! [Laughter]
- BD: Well I know that's the tradition for many African countries. [C2: Yes.] So Ghana is in sync. When I lived in Ivory Coast it was like that. [C2: I see.] When I was a teacher, you know, I was a Peace Corps teacher and I made the same salary as my Ivorian, you know, peers, which was not very much for an American but it was a good salary for an Ivorian. Except I got to keep all of my money, and they had a whole extended family that was living with them, they were sending money back to the village. Maybe they had a little brother that they were paying to go to school. It was, that money went out the window very fast. [Laughter.] So I'm familiar with that kind of thing.
- So now, um, so you grew up in this small town, and your schooling was there. For secondary school did you stay there?
- C2: I did all my education in the village.
- BD: Ok, up to? [Yes...] GCE, or O Level?
- C2: The typical rural secondary school. We called it "XXX" Secondary School
- And I think, I always say that when it comes to my personal development or the development of my village--traditional, traditionalism is the base. Then colonialism came to raise the structure, and my Humphrey Fellowship put on the roof. That is the way I see my life.
- BD: Ok, base, structure and a roof. [C2 laughs] And all of that is coherent for you?
- C2: Yes.

- BD: I mean, because those are quite different elements. You don't feel like your house is tipping over on one side or anything.. You're comfortable with all those different...
- C2: Exactly.
- BD: You've brought them all together. Well, that's really interesting because that's kind of my research is how do you take all of these different influences and backgrounds and put them together for yourself. So you've got it, it looks like you've conceived this house surrounding you.
- C2: Yes. [C2 laughter.]
- BD: OK. Were there other influences when you were growing up? I don't know, for some people it might be social movements or religion or, you know, other opportunities in their early life that influenced them. Is there anything special, you know, outside of parents and school...?
- C2: Well, I will say, the school really influenced all my life. [BD: Ok.] In the sense that, uh, my father, my father is a non-Christian.
- BD: A non-Christian?
- C2: Yes.
- BD: He has a traditional religion, a spiritual religion...
- C2: Yes, exactly. My mother is a Christian, a Catholic like me. [BD: OK.] But my father was the type who was a friend to all the teachers, and the teachers....
- BD: Even though he didn't go to school?
- C2: Even though he didn't go to school.
- BD: He spoke English?
- C2: No, only sometimes he said, "money here for my pocket"
- BD: He knows the most important answer!
- C2: [Laughter] Yes! So these teachers used to tell my father that, "this your little boy, take very good care of him."
- BD: These were Ghanaian teachers or foreign teachers?
- C2: Ghanaian teachers. So my father said, "ah, if that's the case, you will get a crack-- a scholar--so my father started all the time asking about my progress in school from the teachers. And he was very encouraged by the teachers. So when I qualified to go to the secondary school, I always remember my father for it. That week he went to sell his cocoa. You know the cocoa is seasonal. He didn't have money, but he went to sell the cocoa beans, and the money he got that day was the day I was going to school. [Yeah.] So the head teacher, who was my father's friend, came to my father and my father gave the money, all the money, to the head teacher who said, "Save this

money, take out whatever will pay for C2's school fees and his travel, and give the balance to me." [Wow.] And so I always recall this, the memory of him. So the teacher did that and the teacher--I was then a tiny boy--took me to the secondary school.

BD: And where was that?

C2: Wima Secondary School

BD: So you didn't have to travel far.

C2: No, no, no. Some 30 miles away.

BD: But you had to stay over. You were a boarder.

C2: I was a boarder. I spent all my school days in boarding house, which I like. I like boarding house.

BD: You didn't mind living independently as a young boy?

C2: Exactly. And I was very subservient. I don't go out, I don't go out when students were running away. The type of training my father gave me, he was a disciplinarian. You couldn't tell lies, you couldn't steal, you couldn't just be dishonest, and I think it has followed me throughout my life.

BD: So your father was a big influence....

C2: Yes, very...

BD: ...And his commitment to your education. Obviously he you know, he made that a priority.

C2: Exactly.

BD: OK, and religion, did that play a strong role? You said that your mother is Catholic? Was she converted to Catholicism by missionaries or was it before that?

C2: No, after, later, when I was even grown. I was then in the secondary school when she became a Catholic.

BD: But your school was not a Catholic school?

C2: No, no no. C2: [Public school.] Public school.

BD: OK.

[BD's cell phone rings]

BD: Hold on, let me just, um, do you mind if I just take this call in case it's another Fellow?...

[Phone conversations ensue]

BD: So anyway we were talking about religion and your mother converted to Roman Catholic as an adult, and so was that the influence on you as well, or were you first....

C2: When I was born, I was baptized, so at birth

BD: You were baptized by two parents who were not! [laughter C2: At that time...] How did that happen?

C2: Well, you see in those days, when you are the son of a chief like my father was, it's not easy... you know becoming a Christian, and also because my father was illiterate. Because the little boys who went to school automatically became Christians.

BD: OK, and were there missionaries there, or sisters, or brothers?

C2: Not missionaries---yeah, in a way, I think the colonial government. The officials were coming to my village—they liked my grandfather. I think so, I think...

BD: He had a good relationship; knew how to work with the colonial officials, the district officials

C2: District commissioners.

BD: Yeah. So there were good relations

C2: Very good relations, that's what my father told me. And because of that, they had an influence on my village becoming a Catholic town.

BD: And you think it was genuine?

C2: Yes

BD: You know there is this sociological concept they call “rice Christians, do you know about that?

C2: What?

BD: Rice—you know rice that you eat?

C2: I see, no, I didn't hear that before

BD: In some parts of the world where there are missionaries, they say, if you get baptized, you get rice. So some people get baptized for the rice, not for the religion.

C2: Oh, I see...[laughter]

BD: But that wasn't the case in your town...?

C2: No, no, no.... [BD: But you were genuine for people?] Yes, genuine.

BD: So, that was an experience, too, and your family... But you were the only one who went away...

C2: Yes, the rest stayed at home.

BD: So when you came back, what was that like for you to come back to the village.

C2: Oh, every holiday I came back to the village to help my father on the farm. So I was .... Available.

BD: Happy to do that... OK.

And let's see—your BA, you were even farther away from home then for your bachelor's? I forget what you said; where you did your bachelors studies

C2: University of Ghana

BD: Here in Accra? [C2: Uh-huh] So you came to the capital...

C2: Yes, from the secondary school. The first time I came here to the capital was when I was coming to the University of Ghana.

BD: Did you have family here?

C2: Right now [misunderstands. BD: When you were a student.] No, no, no...

BD: So you were just on your own? [C2: On my own] And you were happy

C2: Yes, because I was in the university residence.

BD: OK, university res. So you did that.

OK, so that's helpful background, because every fellow has, you know, a different kind of profile, and background, and you know, those kinds of early life influences, sometimes they come out later on just in terms of your style.

So let's, so now you're the director and head of a legal department. Fast forward to the present—can you think of any recent—in the job, you talked to me about the challenge of getting this journal [going]—but in the day-to-day, you know, job that you have job in the Bank of Ghana, any recent time when you had a particularly difficult challenge, problem, to solve? Can you think of a specific example of something that has come up...?

C2: Yes, uh, in the legal area, 2000... last year, when by policy the Central Bank was going to re-denominate the currency of Ghana (BD: The new cedi.) The new cedi. The parliament and many politicians said the Central Bank must wait—without a new law—you have to give... so my Governor, a man who I must say, trusts me so much and I also trust him, said “what we do?” And I should you should give me a day; I'll do the relevant research and see what the position of the law was.” So I examined the constitution and all the relevant bank governance the policies of the Central Bank and currency laws of this country. And I also got some literature from my governor who took them from the Central Banks of Mexico and Turkey, because apparently they had

planned that exercise before. And in those countries, particularly Turkey,... they had to do a new law. So that's what the parliamentarians and some were using against the governor.

BD: So the dilemma was, "were going to change the denomination of the currency; do we do it by regulation or by law? -- that was the debate?"

C2: Yes, exactly. Whether the existing law allowed the Central Bank to do it, or a new law should be...

BD: ...promulgated by the parliament. [C2: Exactly] So your governor said, "you're the person who's going to give me the advice.?" [C2: Exactly] And that was the challenge...

C2: And I did it—I did a comprehensive memo. For once, I told the governor, "this memo,..." Generally when I do a memo, I don't say, "have the Attorney General look at it. But this memo, I said, "you should give it to the AG also to look at also. Because my conclusion was that the constitution and the relevant laws existing already had enough provisions and empowered the Central Bank to do it, because the Central Bank of today, since 2002 is not the same as all the Central Banks of Ghana before that date. Now, because of .... Independence...

BD: So you had to break off from, ah, what, Treasury or...?

C2: Exactly. And in the past, everything they had to go there for approval, but now... [BD: Minister of... Finance?] Minister of Finance. But now the Board ... invested in the board. The Board of the Bank of Ghana... and I draw our law and the constitution. And what I noticed was that in the case of the Turkish one, the minister of... the Central Bank just sum up impeached of the minister of Finance, which situation the Bank of Ghana was in the past, and we have moved away.

BD: You're a free standing agency?

C2: Exactly. So, the Governor read my memo; he agreed with me. I said, "Give it to the Attorney General" and he gave it to him. The AG wrote to the Governor that he gave his permission and Parliament agreed.

BD: OK, so there was no law. [C2: No law.] Just an adjustment of regulation. [C2: Exactly] And really all you did was take off three zeroes, was that ... [C2: Yes] OK—that's pretty straightforward. Just makes more room on the page; save a little ink on the spreadsheets [laughs]

C2: Yes. We have the eternal dollar! [laughs]

BD: OK, so when you think about facing that challenge, tell me, why was it a challenge to you? What were the hard parts of that?

C2: What were the...?

BD: You know, when you say... You described that as a challenge—so it wasn't the same thing as something you did the day before or something you did the day after. [C2; Yes, yes] So for you, what was it a challenge, and to solve it, what did you draw on to be able to meet that challenge?

C2: OK, it was a challenge because they felt that Ghana had never redenominated its currency, and this was the first time. And before the commencement of the whole exercise, a segment of the

society is saying no. [BD: Why?] You must have the law before you proceed. [BD: It's procedural.] Yes, if the advice I was going to give got fired, it means...

BD: You were on the line! [laughs]

C2: Exactly. And the entire Central Bank would be at risk. So, I said no, let me do the best I could... Yes

BD: And what do you draw on to do the best you can. I mean, we talked about all this background that you have; what do you draw on?

C2: Basically, I try to look at research. Look at my two...

BD: So you use your brain...

C2: My brain, ah... The knowledge culture in particular. Which I think in a way it gave me some edge over even the government's own lawyers [Laughs] To the extent that the Governor called me once and said that they wanted to make me the Attorney General of Ghana. And I said, "I couldn't leave my Governor—I'd miss him" And the Governor would not agree.

BD: So the Attorney General is, um... Ministry of Justice? [C2:

C2: Yes, in fact, the real work itself, he's the real man in charge. And the AG is...

BD: Did you have a big hesitation about that decision, or was that clear?

C2: I didn't have any hesitation at all.

BD: That was based on your relationship with the guy, or...

C2: The relationship with the Governor, I didn't want to leave the Governor. Secondly, the Attorney General's department itself was for the lawyers there—my mates. And some were my seniors. So I said, "Why should I go and be impose on all of them. If that's my ... make me a ... if he's not there tomorrow looking at ... happened to me. I said... the Governor intervened... went for higher discussions and one similar official asked him, "Why do you want to make it a one-state institution and send on another?" [Laughs] I think that was the end.

BD: OK, so it sounds like you're drawing personally on a lot of wisdom... [C2: I think so] And, uh, so it would be interesting for me to have you maybe think about, where does this wisdom come from? Is it just from, uh, so many years you've spent in life? Or what is it that, uh, you know it sounds like it was a very wise process that you went through. I'm sure that your governor leans on you because he knows that you...

C2: I'm the right man, I must say!

BD: But... you know, tell me more about where you think... maybe you haven't thought about this, but where do you think that wisdom, you know where is that—where do you pull that from? Inside of yourself? Outside? You know, where does that come from?

C2: I think... Basically, I have said in my former secondary school when they were organizing the prizes, you know I was right there as the guest of honor. And I told them, that in my view once intellectual success in our environment depends essentially on--apart from the intelligence given by God--on what I call native intelligence. [BD: Native intelligence. And for you...] Upbringing, there's sort of training you get at home, you discern the right from the wrong, you... my father was able to say that if you take too much orange juice, you can have fever. An illiterate—I don't know how he came by it. Then the time the doctor was saying, "It's possible, because the acidic content of oranges is high."

BD: Too much vitamin C...[C2: Ah-hahh] A little is good; too much is bad. [C2: Exactly] So your father knew that.

C2: Yes. So my observation he was able to you know, make these sorts of propositions. So I turned right from the village, I think I started developing that intelligence from home. And to crown it all is, I said, my Humphrey Year was the first time in my life, but I had the opportunity to meet people from diverse professions, from diverse institutions, who were prepared to share ideas with us, for us to learn from them, and that was a big plus

BD: OK, so we've talked about before the Humphrey Program, we've talked about after the HP, so tell me a little bit about that process or that experience, the year that you spent at, uh, you know in Washington at the American University with the different... You know, it's a program that has many different elements. [C2: Yes] When you think about your personal, ah, benefit or experience, what element or what experience do you recall?

C2: Well, personally I have understood the way Americans lead their lives. But at the time I had not gone there...

BD: OK, but you don't work with Americans directly...?

C2: No, you meet them... You know, before I went, you go there, but the whole social set-up is your wife, your children, finished, so you don't make social you don't ... but I realized...

BD: Your family wasn't with you, right?

C2: My wife joined me later. [BD: Your wife came] Yes. So I said, "this one, I think, this country, it's a model of ... everybody, they are like us. So, I thought no, I think it was a wrong notion I had here before going. Which I was bound by from what I observed. Then, I think, the adjustments I made or the different Humphrey Fellows I met [BD: From different countries...] Yes, one from Ethiopia for example, he was in Development Credit, in the NGO area. And like me, we were always sharing ideas. But particularly new ideas. And so I thought, yes, this is what I should get then. But the down side of it, which I even stated to our ....., before leaving was, uh, the way some of our colleagues, particularly the Muslims showing hatred Americans. Why... the Americans have paid for your ticket, they have brought you here, why do you have them? So I told Steven, Ah! You leave these people and give these fellowships to Africans and others who seek your interest. These people, no matter what you do...

BD: They were skeptical about whether... [C2: Exactly] ...genuine...

C2: Exactly!] When my ... come, I told my wife, "You see what I was saying?" [Laughs loudly] Is ... so, this is something I must say I have some love for America.

- BD: Uh-huh... Well, Ghana and the United States have been good friends for decades [C2: Yes] Generations! So they paid me, I said no, no, no, no, this one, I think one thing if I were now a Humphrey Fellow I would have suggested was that supervisors in the various universities should listen to the adverse and positive comments, but Humphrey Fellows why do they need to let the authorities, to let them know?—I said it! [Laughs]
- BD: So my research is, um, as I think I said it, I'm not really evaluating the HP as a program. What I'm trying to learn is what are the voices of the Fellows? You know you have given me some really interesting insights, about who you are as a professional from, you know, with a strong background who has had this very diverse international experience and how you have, you know you talked about your house—your base and your structure and your roof—you know, it's a wonderful kind of picture, that represents your own experience. When I write this up, the audience that's intended is not really you as a HF, I'm going to write something that—you know it already—it's more the other professors that work with Humphrey Fellows [C2: Mm-hmm] and other international professionals. And what I'm really asking each Fellow is, "what would help them to do their job more. And when you think of them—and not just Professor [Name of faculty member], but any of the professors who taught you, or were your advisors or whatever, did it ever occur to you to say, "You know, if they understood this about my reality, maybe they could help me in a different way..."
- C2: Yeah. Uhh, I think before HFs left, for the program, [BD: Left the United States?] Yes, before the commencement [BD: Before going home then] Yeah. We were to write some project proposal and I think the professors at the universities where HFs are should also have access to what we write before going, so they know where each HF is coming from and what each HF is thinking about outside the program.
- BD: That's interesting you say that, because we send your application to the faculty [C2: Oh, I see!] They get a copy [C2: I see] So maybe what you were saying is they don't read them [laughs]....
- C2: Or they don't give them to the others [BD: Circulate them] to the other teachers.
- BD: So when you think about another teacher, I mean not :Professor Lockwood but a teacher that you had, what is it that, if they knew this about you they would be able to help you better—what would be an example of information that was missing?
- C2: Uhhh...in the case, in my case, I had more that were not missing [laughs] Professor... The professor at Washington College of Law that you mentioned...
- BD: [Name of faculty member]
- C2: Yes, he taught me International Financial Law, and at that time because I was handling... international agreements, who were always using the Ghanaian experience in class. And he knew that I was a Humphrey Fellow in class ..
- BD: So he was learning from you...
- C2: Yes, but the missing link would be those who did not know why I was there, or why other HFs were there...

BD: “Who’s that guy in the corner there?” [C2: Uh-huh?] I’m saying, your there and the professor is saying, “Who’s that guy in the corner?” You’re just like everybody else.

C2: Everybody; everybody. And because they considered we were... they call it “auditing courses”... but if the occasional tutorials were held for Humphrey participants in that particular course, it will fill missing gaps.

BD: OK, I mean that’s really, you know, the voice I want to give is for the next group, so your saying, more information, more sensitization about their background. [C2: Yes] But when I say you should have more information, what kind of information should they know? When I say, “well, he’s a banker from Ghana” so OK he’s a banker from Ghana—what does he need to understand about a banker from Ghana?

C2: Yes, uhhh, how different is our environment from the environment in which the textbooks that we are going to use are written. [BD: OK] Uh-huhhhh.

BD: What would be a difference in that environment?

C2: A typical example would be, say the type of rural banks we have here. I don’t think you have the same over there. So that if you come in here to draft laws or banking, you don’t just write laws that would be blanket—applicable to everybody.

BD: A standard system everywhere...rural banks are very different. [C2: Yes—exactly] Microfinance, or?

C2: Uh-huhhhh. Yes, like recently we had a non-bank financial institution to take care of the microfinance. And once, and I must say, of all the laws that I create for the country there is one I am always very happy with, and I want to share it with you. ...what we call Apex bank. It’s advising the rural banks on behalf of the Central Bank.

BD: And this is a public sector institution? [C2: Exactly] So is this part of C3’s work?

C2: Uh-huh. And after my Humphrey studies, I was called [on] to conduct a study into the legal and regulatory framework of such—we have over 100 rural banks in Ghana—and they wanted to .. supervise. So the Bank of Ghana and the World Bank identified me as capable of doing that study.... Regulatory framework. So I did it... World Bank, all of them.... Eventually ...empowerment . Now it is .... Bank regulations covering the institutions of all these rural banks in the country... Apex Bank

BD: And it fits that kind of institution [C2: Exactly] International, more industrialized countries, they would think about that..

C2: Uh-huhhhh. Exactly. The principle, some of the principles may be the same, but must be modified to the rural needs.

BD: And who was your advisor at [US HOST UNIVERSITY]? Did you have an academic advisor—a separate academic advisor from Professor Lockwood. [C2: Professor Lockwood] She was your advisor? [C2: Yes, she was]

OK, great well, that's really interesting. I'm trying to think, like when you think of leaders, do you have role models that come to mind for you? You talked about your father [C2: Yes] He was a traditional chief [C2: Yes] Is there any other person that you draw inspiration from?

C2: Yes, my role model in Ghana has been one Nana Dr. .... In fact he was one time Director General of the UNCTC (UN Center for Transnational Corporations) in New York and then he worked at the World Bank. I'm not sure if that center is still there.

BD: And he came back to Ghana? [C2: Yes, he did] And what did he come back to do?

C2: He's a chief man [laughs].

BD: Oh, he's a traditional chief! [C2: Yes!]

C2: He was still a consultant, and when we had working for the bank and I have so many legal issues, I contacted him for advice. Uh-huhhh.

BD: And was that because of his knowledge, or something else?

C2: Because of his knowledge, basically. I loved reading his writings, but simple, straight to the point, as a student I read his books. [BD: He didn't teach you though?] He didn't teach me but I read his books. So it was in that process that I said, "Oh, this is the type of person that I want to be one day." But I didn't meet him, but when I heard he was in UNCTC I wrote him a letter that he was my role model, and he replied! [Laughs]

BD: Did you meet him then?

C2: Since then, he has been a personal friend in this country. [Laughs] So...

BD: So you have a strong, professional model. And is there something else? I mean he's a traditional chief like your father

C2: Yes, maybe. And humble, very humble, very, very humble man. Recently, for example, when we were going to give national awards to people, because he was the person, the chairman who drafted Ghana's .... I remember I wrote to our president to give him a ward. And I went for his CV and I said, traditionally he has served his country, internationally he has done this, on the legal front he had done this. And I just prayed that... and he was awarded...

BD: What more could you ask?! [C2 laughs loudly] So now, when did you enter the Bank of Ghana—was it right after university studies or did you do.... [C2: National service]

C2: National service, I went to teach for one year.

BD: Where did you teach?

C2: Government. [BD: Where?] My former secondary school! [BD: Really?!] Yes, my former school [laughs loudly]

BD: You arranged that, or did they just say...

C2: They just came to the National Service Secretariat and he said he wanted me in that school [laughs]

BD: And what did you think of that? [repeats] What was your thinking about having to do that, I mean were you thinking you could stay in Accra?

C2: Yeah, I just took it because generally speaking, I love rural life, I love my nature.

BD: So you weren't unhappy to be back?

C2: No, no, no, no, not at all

BD: And you probably got to teach the children of your friends?

C2: Yes, and that is where I developed or I strengthened my interest in writing. The lecture notes I gave to the students.

BD: And you said you taught Government? [C2: Government.] In senior secondary school... [C2: senior secondary school]

C2: The lecture notes I gave to the students—after national service, I developed it into a book. And it became virtually the textbook for this country [BD: Really] but ... did not have funds ... But now headmasters have come to me to try and revive it and I've said, "I can only do it if ... service will consent to it on what I said earlier. And that ...

BD: You should talk to these guys over here [Other guests staying in BD's guesthouse, where this interview took place] they're all from the European Commission doing democratization support [C2: Oh, I see] working with the election and publishing democracy.... [C2: I see] But anyway, um, so that was you know, a really good combination the whole experience of going back and connecting...

So you only did one year of, uh, National Service. It's not two years? Just one?

C2: At that time it was just one year

BD: OK, so then you went to the Bank of Ghana, or did you go to Birmingham immediately?

C2: I worked at the Bank of Ghana for five years before I had the...

BD: So, let's see, that was what year? What year was that when you started?

C2: That was 19, 1997

BD: You started at the bank of Ghana in 1997? You did Humphrey in 1997—1977

C2: Oh sorry! 1977

BD: So when you think about 1977 and the situation in Ghana [C2: Yeah] was not brilliant in those days, right? [C2: mmm] ...the economy, and, you know it was very different [C2: Oh very!]

Because I lived in Ivory Coast in the 1970s [C2: Totally different], and IC was up and Ghana wasn't up. [C2: Not at all.] So, what was that like to work in the Bank of Ghana in the 70s?

C2: Seventies, as a junior officer, coming from the village I was just happy to be in the Central Bank [laughs]. Nobody in my village had been there before.

BD: So you didn't have any expectations one way or another

C2: No, all I told myself when I joined the bank was to improve myself and my academic performance; that was my main objective.

BD: And the Governor at the time?

C2: The Governor at the time was one who also apart from one Governor, all the Governors in the Bank have liked me. The one who didn't...

BD: And you liked them? They thought you were competent?

C2: Yes! That's the point

BD: Technically well trained [C2: Yes]. Even under the military regime?

C2: Yes...even at that time. Yes, all the Governors... The only one who I think did not—and it's not... he did not like people who were shining...

BD: He was threatened? [C2: Yes] So that was a personal trait or a personal flaw? [C2: Uh-huhhh] He wasn't the government's decision or anything like that? [C2: Exactly]

OK, so you've had a career that has pretty much afforded you, inspired you, brought you up [C2: Certainly]; sent you out for training [C2: yes], it's been a great career...

C2: Yes, I think so. And I even have contributed more to them than they have even done for me! [laughs]

BD: OK, so now, I told you that this is a multi-country study [C2: Uh-huh] I've been to other countries; I've met... [C2: checks time; makes a brief call to spouse in Twi] What's your home language?

C2: Twi. [BD: and your wife speaks the same dialect?] Yes [BD: She's also from your same region?] She's from my roots

BD: OK, well it's interesting in my recording and I have some of your words in Twi! [C2: Oh, sorry!] No, it's interesting, because I have some of the flavor of the national languages...

No, what I was going to say is, you know, this is a three-country study. What is similar is they're all African countries, they all have HF, the Fellows are all civil servants. [C2: I see] So there are many commonalities in the conversations, but in both of the other countries, I hear huge obstruction, frustration, um, challenges of the political context that surrounds these career people [C2: Mm-hmm] So they have all the background that you have, um, they have all the potential that you have, but the political situation in their country means that sometimes it makes no difference.

[C2: I see] They are either sidelined at the end of a hall, or even in one case, I'll tell you, a Fellow went to M.I.T., worked for the Ministry of Regional Government, so supporting the small, local governments. Went to M.I.T., studied planning, they were doing road planning. He came back—there had been an election when he was in the U.S., so he came back and, uh, his department director, the ministry said, “well, we don't need you, you know, right away, so just go home and we'll let you know.”

He sat at home for 16 months [C2: Oh, no!] collecting his, um, the bank every month he received his pay—no assignment—16 months. That's an extreme, [C2: Yes] but that's the reality in many African countries.

C2: Mine was mild—OI had, I wasn't surprised but when the program was ending they told us we would have the return shock or whatever...

BD: Yeah, re-entry, or re-entry shock

C2: The Governor at the time, the week I arrived, I was then the acting head of the ... department. The week I arrived, he said he had transferred me into non-fund financial institutions. So, well, I came and said, “What am I going to do there?” He said, “That is for...” And I said I didn't like it. He said if I didn't like it he would send me back to the legal department, but I would work under the then-legal department head. I said I wouldn't mind.

BD: Right. So you negotiated that—you were humble.

C2: Yes. I went back and you know, when I went back to the legal department, that was the time Ghana started to reform its .. they thought they had given me a non-active.... I started drafting the law... people. So all of a sudden I started developing some skill in that area. And sooner or later I was recognized in the government circles.

BD: OK, so we have this expression, I don't know if you have the same one in English but “when life gives you lemons, make lemonade!” [C2 laughs] Sounds like that's what you did...

C2: Yes, and today it is ... to clash which has promoted my image in this country and internationally. The Central Bank of Ghana, when they have a legal problem and they... they will call me ... how would you advise the governor, because we meet at these regional confidences.

BD: OK, so that was a frustration, but you weren't completely sidelined. You were given a situation that you didn't particularly agree with, and you negotiated an option. [C2: Yeah] But this man was at home with no assignment! [C2: I didn't have that!] M.I.T.-trained! So you know his government could use something of his skill. But there was a change of party. He's a career civil servant, he's not strong in the party, but he was perceived as from the old regime. [C2: mmmmm] So here's my question—why doesn't this happen in Ghana the way it happens all over Africa? What's going on in this country?

C2: I would say that in the case of Ghana, one—the, your interpersonal relationship counts a lot. By the minute...lose the election because you... and our society, we are bound to respect everybody, particularly the senior ones. If you do that, you are OK. Secondly, somebody advised me in my early career that always let your competence speak for you [repeats] and not leaning on princes [laughs] So I took that advice and I noticed it has—in my case—it has helped me a lot.

BD: Do you think it's unusual that people do that?

C2: It's unusual.

BD: So that, um, I respect that in terms of your own personal philosophy; I think that's really good. But I'm seeking the answer of why as a nation, Ghana has not fallen into these traps of politics, of rampant corruption, of huge internal conflicts. You look at every country around this one, that is made of people who are not that culturally and ... different. You look at Nigeria—it's richer than Ghana. It was colonized by the Europeans who had the same style. The people on the coast and the people in the savannah are not very, very different from each other. And yet—look at the results. What's going on here?

C2: Ghana—it is historical. In the thing that sometimes I ask myself, “what is unique about Ghana?” ...that in the colonial days, the colonial administration referred to the Gold Coast as a ‘model colony’ So there is something unique about...

BD: They already had this sense that there was something unique... You know, they drew the lines [C2: Ah-hahh, laughs] Ghana didn't draw the lines for herself The lines were drawn [C2: Exactly] So once those lines were drawn, what happened inside—that's what I'm not understanding.

C2: What happened was Kwame Nkrumah, you know when Nkrumah—one thing this country owes to him is that he tried to create that national cohesion, forming government and people from all tribes.

BD: And yet he failed as a president [C2: yes]

C2: Yes, but socially, that feeling of cohesion was already imbibed in the people.

BD: By Nkrumah. Even before independence then? [C2: Before independence] Because he started his provisional government in, what, about 1951? [C2: Yes, '51]

So is there anybody before Nkrumah? Before the British, the Fanti, or any, you know, in the past indigenous history of Ghana, was that already there? I'm just asking your opinion...

C2: Yes, before then, I would say education is also the... because Ghanaians are people who respect the educated people. In the colonial days the educated tiny goals who tried to motivate the people along a direction and the people followed. And the movement we all we were created as one people. Occasional rubbing of shoulders was OK

BD: So that tradition of education was strong.

C2: Exactly and people this in our current election, in this election, look at the way everything went

BD: I know—you are the admiration of Africa! [C2: Yes!]

C2: Yes, and it is because we have the type of people sometimes we say “nobody wants to die.” [Laughs]

BD: It's a big question in my mind, because you know I see so many similarities—the people, the climate, the crops, the potential, the, you know, historical traditions that are similar to neighboring countries, and yet the outcome is so distinct. [C2: Yes]. Inter-marriage, so Ghanaians are not so afraid of mixing up their ethnic backgrounds [C2: No] Well it's a big question, I'm trying to piece it together, you know I think if you could take that, put it in bottles and sell it [C2 laughs], you wouldn't need to drill for oil, you could sell this magic Ghanaian potion of good governance and national unity. It's truly, you know, quite unique. You know the other countries that I have visited and worked in, it's not there. You know, they don't have it in bottles. [C2 laughs] And they're, you know, they're grappling. So I'm trying to understand, my question is much broader. I mean, you know, you're a very talented guy [C2: Thank you] but, in these other countries have met similarly talented people, and they're tearing their hair out in some cases, in frustration in a political space that doesn't recognize their intrinsic talent, that doesn't care about good governance. It's about power [C2: It's true, yes] And so what are the lessons learned from Ghana? I don't think that you and I will solve it this afternoon, but it's been interesting to talk with you about it.

BD wraps up and talks about follow up meeting of Humphrey Fellows later in the week.

01:17:38 – END

3. This focus group transcript picks up themes that emerged from a series of individual interviews previously undertaken, and took place late in the field work.

**TRANSCRIPT/NOTES CG FOCUS GROUP - GHANA**

12/17/08

BD introduces project, research objectives and focus group concept. Reviewed the terms of the consent form orally with all participants and asked to clarify any questions they had; with no questions obtained oral concurrence with these terms and passed around a sign-up sheet to record everyone's name and signature.

0:05:10

BD: Have some of you participated in focus groups? You have, CX? So I'm not sure in what context you did so; it's probably in your capacity in your work with the UN, or...?

CX: It was before (goes on to explain—in audible). I have used focus groups as a tool for qualitative evaluation of social service programs.

BD: I've done a number of individual interviews and I have a number of themes. My research is also qualitative, so having this group discussion helps me broaden my understanding of what I think that I'm hearing. It's a way for you to clarify to me or even correct me on an impression I've gotten that you have a different opinion about—I recognize that there could be a number of different but valid opinions around the table. And also if there's something I say that makes sense to you, it's way a for me to ensure verification when I tell people that I heard one person tell me this and then I hear you say that it's what you think, too, then that's verification of the work that I'm doing.

So I have about six themes that I want to throw out.

BD: So I'm just going to throw out a few statements. And whatever it is that any of you think, I would invite you to say whatever your reaction is to what you hear.

*"Ghanaians need to learn more about time, timing and accountability in their work."*

(Pause....)

The floor's open...

C8: Well, that's very true.... Because we all go by this African punctuality...and we don't even know where it came from. But if we get to a meeting or get to an appointment, and nobody has, you know, shown up. So we take this as—we consider or we handle that all the time. And then, \_\_\_\_\_ responsibility.

And we want the power, we want the glory, but we don't want to the responsibility of the office. And things are like that.

BD: Are there any counterpoints to that?

- C3: Is this comment specific, or very general? What you just said?
- C8: Yeah, yeah, it's general.
- BD: So what you're saying is that in your experience in the [name of agency], where you work, it's the case (C8: Yeah, that's right.)
- CX: Could you repeat it again?
- BD: *"Ghanaians don't have enough of a sense of time, timing and accountability."*
- C3: I think it's a very sweeping statement. (Laughter) Not ALL Ghanaians. (More laughter)
- BD: Say something about that.
- C3: Well, if you say *"Ghanaians"*, it assumes that everybody does that; SOME people may do that. I think in certain organizations you cannot do that. I mean, if you have a meeting with my governor (head of C3's agency) at 8:30, he's there at 8:35; you dare not be there at 8:30[?]. So, it's not everywhere, and you should be accountable for every responsibility he assigns you.
- So, I think it depends on the leader in the office or the home where you're working. If he's lackadaisical, you also will be like that. But if he's strict and you don't even want to account for... what you have to account for, and you don't keep the \_\_\_\_\_ [word blocked out by someone else coughing]. Because you see people running when they have a meeting with him—nobody walks, because we all want to get there before he does. So I think that it's not "all Ghanaians."
- C5: Yeah, that's very true because I've sat in the Parks Commission. Now we deal with the enterprises. So if you look at the problem we have with the executives of the Cocoa Board, or Ghana Ports Authority—they can be late. Well, it is unethical as a professional to be late, so, you know, we keep to our time. Because, it's true that that executives' time is measured. When we say it is 10 o'clock, sometimes we think that \_\_\_\_\_....
- BD: (To CY) I think you were possibly going to say something...
- CY: Yeah, I think I want to add to what others have said. I think it's specific; I mean you find people who are very time-conscious. I mean you can't generalize that, because it depends on your upbringing. Even for me, if you are not punctual like me—I mean that's my way—that is the sort of discipline I put out at my workplace. And people find that very difficult with me on timing. Of course, you might find... I work in a hospital; you find some group of nurses, a group of doctors, even administrators who come to work late. I have a problem with that, if we go for meetings. You are an administrator and you call a meeting for 9:00 and you get there at five to nine and then you come in at about 9:30, and when you come in you don't have any sense of apology. Before you start the meeting I take you to task.
- So I mean if you find yourself in that leadership position where you can change things, then you can go ahead to do that. Although you still have certain people in the society who are not too, umm, high-culture or they don't care too much about punctuality or about time. And we don't want to generalize because depends on the institution in which you work; it depends on the position in which you find yourself and how your subordinates actually listen or look up to you. If

you are the lead then they also will look up to you, as Catherine said. So we need to, I mean as you said we need to make a difference, as we are all making a difference all the time.

BD: So if it's modeled, it can be followed.

CY: Yeah. If it's modeled it can be followed, yeah.

BD: *"The chain of influence is very important to understand in this society—hierarchy and connections."* (Repeated at the request of one participant)

C3: I think there is a lot of networking going on in this society, as in every other society. I mean, you need to be well connected to be able even to get certain kinds of information. Not even goods and services, or whatever, or positions. But say, if I need something from [C8's agency], and I know he's there I won't go through a whole lot of formalities, but I'll just call him, and yes,...

BD: So it's a lateral connection...

C3: Exactly. So I think it's part of the networking—world-wide networking. (Laughs) It's everywhere!

(Pause around the table)

BD: Any other thoughts about that?

C3: But sometimes it can be abused. I mean some people abuse those positions. When they are in positions and um, ... Well, not in those positions but when they know people in positions, [such] that they feel they are well connected—well, they can abuse it. That happens. I think it must be being done about everywhere. Even at the UN—it can happen there.

C8: I agree with your view. Because it can become pathological to institutions. There's so much interference from those who have the connections. You take the decisions on transfers and they come in with so many other... and the culture... (C3: Permits it?) Yeah, you can really hurt the organization.

BD: OK.

*"There is fundamentally no difference in a U.S. style of leadership and a Ghanaian style of leadership."*

(Reflection time. Some smiles, chuckles).

CX: I think it all boils down to norms and laws and everything that pertain in the society. If you take the U.S. laws, they work there. Like the initial statement preceding this [C8's story]: you have abuse of networking. There you could have some abuse as well, but it should not be that pathological as we have in our society here.

There are a lot of things you cannot take for granted in the U.S. And if you have laws working then in your leadership role, you are more effective rather than what we have in our set-up here. I mean you can have all of the vision you have but in our set-up, you go from where you want to start to where you want to end in our society here. But because of those networking, I'll give you just a simple example: I have been trying to get lairs without reaching... \_\_\_\_\_ for almost

three years now. I conceive the program as a whole vast complex we don't know what is happening all the ..... they put up. .... (BD: They put up what?) They put up roadblocks ..... general hospital. You go and there were a lot of ups and downs going on. But if it is settled you can see that ... a particular hospital you can say that.... These are some of the problems you might... So it all boils down to....

- BD: So the vision maybe isn't different, but the space that the vision has to operate in is not as well defined.
- CX: The vision might be the same but the space within which we want to operate might be different.
- BD: There's not as much to support you? (CX: Yeah). So the systemic support isn't there. So that has to be more strongly...you have to "be your own package." Is that what I'm hearing?
- C5: And this is can be attributed to our custom, our culture and the way we do things. (BD: Yes). That can also influence how things happen.
- BD: Can you say something more about that, C5, I mean or even give an example that comes to mind?
- C5: Yeah, ahh, what I'm trying to say is that now if a group of people behaves in a certain manner, the leadership role reflects what pertains within that group of people. So it may be different from one group to another group to another group, depending on what they think; the way they do things; the way they perceive themselves; the way they respond to situations and things like that.
- BD: Taking C3's example; her governor—everything works great because the governor
- C8: Earlier CY had made a statement that the administrator calls a meeting; and he's late himself. And you see that at all, almost all public functions. The special guest of honor, the chairman, you get there before they do and there was a minister about addressing \_\_\_\_\_; that was the Minister for [name of ministry]. [Voices around the table agreeing] .....he's very—he invades the space and go away. But it's our culture—we are late to functions and we don't care....
- CY: You say that's the culture; I would say it's an attitude you see...
- C8: No, but I'm saying it's so ingrained. There are quite a number of people who wouldn't want to do that, who stick to time like in our situation. You know it's a total society—you have to go by the rules. Even then—if you try to maintain the standards, the thing you .... To something else. Ah, something else. You are weird, you are out of, you're coming from space. So I think over the years it is ingrained and changing attitudes is not that easy—it's not easy.
- CX: I think when we look at it, there's one thing, probably .... You mention of culture. If you look at our financial system. When there is a public event, the most important person has to be the last person to show up. [Others: Sure]. That's like, let's say you take the White House briefings—the President doesn't come and wait for the pressmen to be there. So they have, OK...
- BD: There's a sense of drama—walking into a full room.
- CX: Exactly. So the time you come depends where you are on the social ladder. Unfortunately, this has been more or less adopted in our professional work environment. Therefore, in our thinking—

probably unconsciously—a lot of people are thinking, “Or, maybe no one will early. So I don’t have to go and sit down.”

So everybody’s waiting their turn. So one basic thing that comes with that is a sense of thinking, “If all of us were here, who was going to think that one of us was more important than the other? And therefore who’s going to decide to go early and who’s going to decide to come later on?” And it’s become part of an unwritten culture in a lot of areas.

Now what that presents—both of them have talked about it—is people who know their rights and they want to do the right thing. What are the challenges that come with that in terms of leadership? Because when you are coming to work at 7:30, and your secretary is coming to work at 9 o’clock and you make sure you are there ... at 7:15, 7:30, and then the person come at 9 you have good grounds to ask the person to go home, to warn the person; to reprimand her. [BD: Right]

But as you do that there is also another piece—which again, we all fight on a daily basis. We’ve talked about networking. So, my secretary is probably the nephew, the daughter, the friend’s daughter [BD: You’re helping them out.] Yeah—so you ask this person to go home. And you get a call from Dr. \_\_\_\_\_: ”I hear this has happened...”. From the police. So in changing [Laughter]

C5: I’m not interrupting, but... working [BD: Thank you, thank you.]

CX: ...so these are the things that people who know the right thing and want to do the right thing—face on a daily basis.

BD: Connections...and pressure.

CX: The connection works against .... The structural changes we need to make. It works against the institution. Because when the person doesn’t get there on time to the workplace, you have a plan. And then the person doesn’t come in; and you know, the policy is two-three times being late, you go home. Stay away for two weeks.

The number of people that will come to you! [Laughter from others] And beg on behalf of that person. Then you battle with doing the right thing and taking care of all your networks. So it’s a big balancing act and at any point in time, we face it. And on an individual level, you either choose to do the right thing and offend all your partners, or you please them and let your work suffer, or you do the work. So these are the struggles...

And if I’m talking about time—you come to realize that I don’t know how other people adjusted back from the Humphrey Program...

BD: You felt time pressure there?

CX: It is still there. And therefore you know, you work, you travel with somebody. I get there; there’s no problem. So .... You wait for 10-15 minutes, no problem, you are on your way. ... [laughter around the table] it’s not proper—it’s too strict!

So again, even looking at what we get at different levels, it is so... a daily struggle, to make sure that you want to do the right thing. You struggle with yourself; you struggle with the policy; you struggle with the culture. So it’s an ongoing refinement which we all try to work on a daily basis.

- BD: OK, so the question maybe is... I put "U.S.-style leadership and Ghanaian-style leadership are fundamentally not different." What I'm hearing you saying is that the context that leadership operates [in] in both countries is fundamentally different. Maybe the style doesn't have to be different, but that space around it is quite different. And that presents different challenges [words of agreement around the table].
- C3: I'll give you a specific example: On Sunday when I was supposed to meet you, I had a visitor just before I left. [BD: laughter] And I can't say, "Oh, I have to meet somebody at 3 o'clock, and I have about 10-15 minutes' drive." I mean, they were so relaxed [laughter all around the table]...
- BD: She called me at five minutes to three and she said, "Oh, Bill, I've been with this friend; I kept telling her that I had to meet you; she didn't move!"
- C3: I came back from church and they were waiting, you know.
- CY: You don't leave them.
- C3: You don't leave them. The same they've come all the way and I've just snubbed them. Meanwhile I was sweating, because... So it's the space within which we operate. Sometimes you seem to be culturally rude if you do things this way.
- BD: Maybe I'll throw out another theme that I heard:  
*"Ghana's tradition of peace and collaboration is unique in West Africa."*
- C3: Well, and I think it's my \_\_\_\_\_ [laughter all around]
- CY: Peace and collaboration
- C3: Yeah, when I think we cannot manufacture it. Because you know we have pockets of, ah, conflicts all over. We are only lucky that it doesn't spill over, because in other countries it has caused so much, you know....
- C5: Well, I think it can be attributed to the fact that in that time when we go to secondary school, you see that your next, your bed-mate is from the North and the next person is from the border. So maybe the boarding system; bringing people [from] all around also has helped, because we are \_\_\_\_\_ up. Yes, this is a person I have never met.... For that reason...
- C3: .... Are understanding
- C5: Yeah, are understanding.
- Can we say that in the other West African countries they don't have that? Incomprehensible group comments
- C3: But there's another element, too. You know, Ghanaians love life. And we try to protect the few good things that we have. We have one mall. Every Saturday everyone in Accra troops down there, you know. And I think that's why we've been able to ward off some of these conflicts, and I don't know... it's...

- C5: I agree with what you are talking about. Yes, there are boarding houses, but if you go to... If you investigate into around.. most of them ... Unlike here, if you go to Ghana national, you get... There are more Ga's in Cape Coast
- C3: Than Fantis
- C5: So people go to secondary school to learn Ga, for example
- CA: I think generally .... learn like conflict. If you take the tro-tro; if the driver is misbehaving and one person there complains. You realize it can't be so... ... he learns... [others add agreement] Uh-huhh. Less...
- BD: Don't rock the boat. [Group: Yes...]
- CA: People like their peace and they just go along
- C8: I would say a lot has to do with... And foreigners from another country. You know, .... Process. And I .... Like, you're right, .... School you saw yourself differently. You saw yourselves just [as] one... and old boys .... So .... Together.
- C5: And this ... remember on the same theme...Dr. K.... when he had a chance to send people around, he went to Akim and took the former president, Kofi \_\_\_\_\_, he went to buy ... Dr. Kofi .... And the third.... Because he felt he had to touch anther to work together. So I think this matter also.... Some \_\_\_\_\_ to that coalition and now the way we do this I think that also contributes...
- CY: I think ... also comment ...the sister. We have the structures in place, and if you compare to the other countries.... Although they don't have too much .... Support, but the little that they have...
- C5: Uh-huh. Very effective...
- CY: Because without them, you could still have problems.
- CA: Yeah, I think you are right.
- C8: I would also tend to support the view that by nature we are peaceful. We are... because... contexts. Unless visitors are amazed by the way we are so calm, they .... We don't have this violence. I cannot imagine working there in a Nigerian prison. .... It's a ... full
- CZ: But a Ghanaian prison is cool!
- C8: It's so cool, you walk in... You have ladies working in a men's prison, and nobody is molested [CA—agreement] And we have a .... The prisoners call me...
- CA: What do they call him? [BD: "Daddy"!]
- C8: ... harmony. [CA: That's good]... [Laughter]
- CX: People from conflict zones...
- BD: Yeah, you [would] have a lot of insight on that from your work...

CX: in the area, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, The Ivory Coast. I think I've come to appreciate the fact that Ghanaians have something that we probably don't know, and that is the ability to debate each other without letting it spill over. And I will explain that.

Um, talk to Liberians who went to war—I mean who have gone to war all these years—and they will tell you they are amazed at the way Ghanaians exchange views on issues from politics to the economy to everything. And then you ask them, “How was it done in your country?”, and they will tell you, “Nothing!”. And so we go to school, we know we could be from even the same region, and politically, I, or we always cite the example of Acheampong, who was from the Ashanti region. The fall of the Acheampong's government started from the Ashanti region. [Laughter around the table.] His own people did not look at him as the person from this region and therefore, blindly supported everything that he did. People rose [up] against the Acheampong.

Besides, if you check the track of diversity or ... diversity, for lack of a term. What we have is—I have seen, or we see a lot of cross-cultural activities. People from the South create business in the North. People from the middle belt coming to Accra, not only to do business, but some of us coming here to work as professionals.

And it hasn't ended there, we have cross-ethnic marriages, which have survived the test of the times. And so we have a lot of—I wouldn't call it structures—[but] a lot of factors bring us together.

And in times of crisis, when we sense danger, as she said, “People love life”—there is one thing that I think interestingly will bring people together, and that is death. When one person dies, it could be from the enemy camp, all of us will jump in and sympathize. If you don't go, you are the worst person.

So these are unwritten things which are part of our socialization. So we grow up with some of these things; it doesn't mean potentially with everything that we have seen around us... People also don't want us to be part of the statistics when it comes to conflicts, and in our own thinking and as we are now... chance, sometimes we say that “Where do we run to?” Because truthfully, Togo...

C8: We run to the sea! (BD: Start swimming!)

CX: Togo would not accept us. We cannot go to Burkina Faso; we cannot go to the Ivory Coast; Nigeria—forget it! Liberia—no way! So we know we are Ghana and the sea. And unconsciously people also are aware of this simple fact that we better let it go and make peace

BD: You know that your true options are limited...

CA: The devil and the deep blue sea... [Laughter]

BD: The devil and the deep blue sea! Very good, OK.

So, I'm going to throw out another observation:

*“Many Humphrey Fellows come back convinced that democratic and horizontal management and decision-making is a very useful thing they learned, but they don't connect that with the*

*traditional processes that happen in their own rural communities of group discussion and decision-making.*” [Repeated at group request.]

C3: Can we go all back to the community, or whatever, some of us need assistance [laughs], continue working on the city. I think that whatever we learned in communal and collective decision-making; for some of us it is the same—it’s a \_\_\_\_\_ of kind of work.

I do memos in my work and I give it to my junior officers to review, and most of the time I get a tick from the Governor on most memos that I send. That’s because I share it with a lot of people. Not just my department, but sometimes I bring it to my fellow heads of department to review.

BD: As you said, it’s a process of connecting...

C3: Exactly. And people always give you great ideas.

BD: How about the connection with traditional values? [Pause]

Did anybody grow up in a rural setting, or have grandparents and go back to the family village?

CZ: I did... (muffled) I relate to that...

BD: So would you comment on the observation I just made?

CZ: Well, I ... decision-making in ... is done ... [Right] .... Outside the beginning .

BD: So it’s a natural approach... [“Yes” around the table]. So I guess what I’m trying to sort out is that numerous times I’ve heard, “Well I saw a style of management that I really liked that I brought home.” But it seems like, it’s already home, but it’s not being applied.

CZ: Yeah, it is enhanced [Others: Enhanced, yes]

CX: Maybe the other thing is that it is not necessarily often to the ... past this kind of ... traditionally and culturally, that is the process. That was how our villages were even organized and created. The chief sits in council and everybody comes around and they talk about issues and family .... Probably the issue would be the conscious effort to even look at it in terms of comparing it to what one may read as something written down in a book with all the factors. But practically we realize that it is something that takes place...

BD: Because if you look at that (if I could just insert something)... If you look at that approach in North America, it’s a learned approach; it’s not a natural approach.[CX: OK] Fifty years ago, offices did not work the way you observed them now; [CX: OK] they were very hierarchical. And modern management theory said, “You know, there are people around the world who do things communally, and maybe we should think of that as a way to have people be more engaged and involved.”

It’s not natural in North America to do that. So it’s just to me a very interesting observation that we’re both, somehow, that we are borrowing something [laughter around the table] that might have been there all the time, and we just didn’t validate it.

OK, I have one more:

*Will Ghana be the only country to have a fully democratic electoral process in the next ten years in Africa?*

[laughter around the table]

- C5: Well, I think... has passed. I just want to comment on Liberia, .... Benin has passed.
- C3: Since we are now in the political arena, I beg for my leave—I don't want to be late for my next appointment. [Laughter and goodbyes]
- CB: [Arriving as C3 leaves]
- C8: .... Normal, welcome. We will be democratic.
- BD: But Ghana is becoming recognized as a leader outside. I mean, the world's eyes are on you. They admire Liberia for overcoming a really bad period. But you've been in a good period since 1992, right? [Mm-hmm of agreement around the table].

Liberia hasn't been doing this for 15 years. So, will Liberia be where Ghana is [now] in 15 years?

- C8: Liberia, I think the challenge will be when the UN withdraws. I was there a few months ago. This undercurrent, this unfinished business and the system they have now is not helping matters. The \_\_\_\_\_ Report still believes that ... Liberia... and the spoils of wars whatever they are suffering now The adults are still going now and they are... So it's like ... the rest of the UN cities. You feel the animosities from the grass roots. I traveled all over Liberia, and I was very glad to come back [Laughter all around] in peace!

- BD: [Tells a pertinent story related to previous comment—removed here for confidentiality]

- CB: Was that (name) ?

- BD: Yes, (name) . He was in your group. Did you know that story—that he did all that?

- CB: Yes, he told me.

- BD: So I saw him when I was in [place], we got together just like I'm getting together with you. And he came for dinner that night.

It's quite a story, and you know, I'm at the end of my questions or comments. You understand a little bit about what I'm working on now; is there something I haven't touched on that you think is significant to the kind of topic that I am exploring?

- CX: I just wanted to comment a little bit on the last theme. Apart from the history, I think one basic thing that is also making Liberia very vulnerable right now is the social system, the economy is very fragile, the social system is very, very fragile; so much so that we asked them... conversation why they are still here. Right now, as of two years ago, out of 46,000 refugees, when UNHCR [helped with their] evacuation, only 6,500 of them went home. The fear is that if they overwhelm the system, it will create a vulnerable situation and the situation will explode. Then you have as

we said, those who are going back unfortunately are done in. And those in refugee camps here are hearing those stories and then...

BD: From violence... [CX: No...] From health?

CX: No, people are homeless, basically. You're on your own after Monrovia. And UNHCR will help you go to Monrovia, and give you \$100, and then you are on your own... So you have no idea how to get to your village. And you have the same history... in the people in America. So part of the story we worked with refugees there were that there were times that we all would collect money to come and support the war. The more they saw war in Liberia, the more relaxed was the immigration status for people who did not have any status to come, so it's multiple number of factors. So Liberia is so fragile it would be difficult to predict where it would be a few years from now. I met one of the former leaders who to my biggest shock was fighting for a federal system of government for Liberia and you have been there, and you ask yourself, where are the structures? And the UN, counties... support the ministries. They haven't finished the program. So when you talk about a federal system, it's a catastrophe.

BD: Yeah, it's a tough road. And of course, Liberia, Sierra Leone, it's the same thing. Fourah Bay University has 5 campuses. There are six professors left who have a doctorate. They're all gone. The brain trust of the country is not there. They're not there. And so to find a way to get people to come home. To be important contributors I don't know what it is going to take. Well I'm at the end of my list and I appreciate your thoughts. Maybe we can talk about what you're doing, what's going on with the alumni association. I don't hear too many things about the newer returnees.

Recording stopped at 47'55

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