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2. “The Feeling’s Mutual”: Student Participation in Leadership as Reciprocal Exchange
3. Research Paper
4. This grounded theory study builds understanding of leadership from the followers’ perspective in an educational organization. Data collected from twenty incoming college freshmen indicate that students conceptualized their participation as a process of reciprocal exchange. The findings suggested that organization members contribute significantly to the organization’s total leadership capacity.
5. Dr. Owens’ scholarly interests relate to leadership and followership, school culture, and organizational socialization issues within schools and other educational agencies. In particular, he is interested in how members of educational organizations participate in and reciprocally influence leadership practice, especially in organizations serving children in urban settings.
6. Yes, please print this proposal in the conference proceedings, if accepted.
7. Yes, please consider the proposal for a poster if not accepted.
8. Yes, I am willing to serve as a reviewer for this conference.
9. Yes, I am willing to serve as a session facilitator at the conference.

“THE FEELING’S MUTUAL”: STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN LEADERSHIP AS RECIPROCAL EXCHANGE

Introduction

In recent years, educational leadership scholars have examined the impact followers have on educational leadership and leadership practices (e.g., Leithwood, 2007; Spillane, 2006). Even so, relatively few studies have set out to build understanding of educational leadership from the followers’ perspective. Understanding how the led perceive their relationships with school leaders may provide important insights into our conceptual understanding of educational leadership, our understanding of constituents’ contributions to school leadership, and our ability to predict followers’ responses to the actions of those who lead them. This study uses constructivist grounded theory methods to develop a model of how leadership looks from the perspective of students in Western University’s Upward Bound (UB) Program. This study contributes to the field of leadership education by looking at how followers affect leadership in educational organizations. Understanding leadership from a follower’s perspective may help leaders of educational organizations to build collaborative leadership capacity. The following question guided the study: How do students enrolled in an educational opportunities program participate in the program’s leadership practice?

Study Description and Rationale

This study used constructivist grounded theory methods to build theoretical understanding of leadership by examining how students in the UB Program at Western University described their contributions to the program. The author conducted semi-structured interviews with participants, asking participants about leadership, whether they thought they participated, and (if so) how they participated in the leadership of the organization. Data were put together to form an incipient theory of student participation in leadership.

Sensitizing Literature Review

This study is focused primarily on examining leadership from the perspective of the led. Traditionally, followers are seen as those to be influenced rather than having capacity to influence in their own right. Moreover, several types of leadership have been proposed (Leithwood, et al., 2004). Literature relating to organizational, transactional, and distributed leadership brings out the role members play in the overall leadership capacity of organizations. Some of that work is briefly examined here to set this study within an existing research context.

Organizational Leadership

Literature on organizational leadership offers insight into concepts, categories, and relationships that seem relevant to this study’s key research question. Leadership in groups has been described in the literature as *shared leadership*, *collective leadership*, *systemic leadership*, and *distributed leadership*. Although the nuances differ, the general focus of this work seems to center on where leadership resides and on how leadership happens among constituents. According to literature foundational to current work in educational leadership, leadership may be viewed as an organizational quality that goes beyond the actions of a single leader into shared

organizational action and influence (Birnbaum, 1992). Studies that shed new light on this foundational claim are needed. Firestone (1996) noted that leadership is comprised of functions and tasks that must and can happen in many ways by many people. By examining leadership functions and tasks Upward Bound students do to promote the functionality of the organization, Firestone's claims may be tested. Ogawa and Bossert (1995) declared that organizations conduct activities to facilitate the development of shared meaning and values (i.e., culture). Pounder, Ogawa, and Adams (1995) built on this foundation and found that school leadership shapes the organization of the work, develops solidarity among members of the organization, manages schools' relations with the external environment, and builds member commitment to the school. More empirical evidence from a member perspective may verify or refute these assertions.

Transactional Leadership: Leader-Member Exchange

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975; Graen & Cashman, 1975; Graen, 1976), views leadership as an *exchange process* that takes place in leader-member dyads. This view seems helpful when studying student participation in leadership practices because it capitalizes on the importance of relationships and mutual influence to the exercise of leadership both on the part of leaders and on the part of their members. Moreover, it may provide useful clues about how participation varies from one member to another. Graen, Novak, and Sommerkamp (1982) noted that research on role-making in vertical leader-member dyads has revealed a consistent pattern of member commit to higher degrees of involvement in the unit's functioning (Dansereau, et al., 1975; Graen, 1976; Dienesch & Liden, 1986). Each supervisor-subordinate dyad results from the leader and each follower mutually establishing a unique interpersonal relationship through a social exchange, and the quality of the relationship the leader has with each subordinate affects the leader's efficiency and effectiveness (Burns & Otte, 1999). Krone (1991) described LMX theory as comprising subordinate relationships embedded in groups: the in-group and the out-group. In-group members enjoy greater work-related support and responsiveness from leaders, handle more administrative activities, and have greater communication with superiors. In-group relationships show high levels of reciprocal influence, friendliness, and trust. Out-group members develop more formal and restrictive relationships with supervisors and perform only routine tasks. Later studies (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Liden, Wayne, & Stilwell, 1993) emphasized the importance of high-quality leader-member exchanges in reducing employee turnover, enhancing organizational commitment, and garnering greater leader support and attention. Krone (1991) pointed out that subordinates use of upward influence tactics such as open persuasion, strategic persuasion, and manipulation when engaging in leader-member exchanges. Upward influence tactics are motivated desires for some alternative condition than what is already in force within an organization. Work that sheds light on whether and how upward influence tactics play themselves out may provide better understanding of how constituents exercise leadership in groups.

Distributed Leadership

Expanding beyond the confines of discrete exchanges between leaders and followers, the distributed leadership perspective (e.g., Gronn, 2002; Spillane, 2006) sees leadership as the aggregated goal-oriented behavior of some, many, or all organizational members. In other words, leadership is dispersed, not concentrated, and the sum of the actions of all organizational members. Work relating to distributed leadership opens the door to the possibility that all

members of an educational organization have roles to play in contributing to the total leadership of that organization. By studying how students both understand and practice leadership, a clearer picture may develop of the component parts they contribute to the collective sum of school leadership. Gronn (2002) noted that leadership is found in the relationships between people in organizations. Relationships that emerge over time as members develop close working relations and come to rely on each other comprise intuitive working relations. A shared role space emerges in the relationship. Spillane (2006) asserted that leadership is emergent in the work-related interactions of organizational members and is not confined to particular roles. Data from group members' experiences could either support or criticize these ideas. Spillane explained that leadership practice is what results from the interactions among leaders, followers, and their situation. Empirical evidence that students develop close working relationships with formal leaders and make their own contributions to the leadership capacity of an educational organization would support the idea that those members are participating in a type of distributed leadership. Identifying what types of work-related activities group members do that contribute most to leadership would extend the value of the above ideas to the field.

The above literature frames the current study and suggests that leadership is a deliberate goal-oriented social influence process that happens among all members of organizations. It suggests that actions of both leaders and followers contribute to an organization's overall leadership capacity. Understanding what leadership actions are undertaken by followers would help educators develop a comprehensive view of leadership in school organizations. This study attempts to identify such conscious acts of social influence on the organization's goals in one group and relate them to the leadership practice of an educational organization.

Methods

This study aims at exploring students' participation in leadership in educational organizations serving urban youth by looking at the experiences of one such group by using data drawn from the lived experiences of program members to explain how these youth show leadership within a program designed to assist them to achieve academic success.

Description of the Upward Bound Program

The Upward Bound Program refers to one of several grant-funded initiatives put in place by the federal government as part of the Higher Education Act of 1965. Upward Bound is one of six programs collectively known as the Federal TRiO Programs. These programs provide educational outreach designed to support students from underprivileged backgrounds. The classic Upward Bound (UB) program serves high school students from low-income families, high school students from families in which neither parent holds a bachelor's degree, and low-income, first-generation military veterans who are preparing to enter postsecondary education. UB's goal is to increase participants' post-secondary enrollment and graduation rates. The UB Summer Program is one of several academic supports UB offers. The UB Summer Program offers enrolled students an intensive immersion into the college experience by placing students in university dorms and giving them the chance to take classes for high school credit or remediation in a university setting.

Participants/Co-researchers

Twenty-four graduating high school seniors/incoming college freshmen enrolled in UB's 2006 Bridge Program at Western University the summer before their college freshman year. Of these students, twenty volunteered to participate in the study from which data were drawn for this analysis. Key informants were chosen from among the program staff. A majority of this study's participants were young women (75%, or 15/20), and nearly all participants were students of color (90%, or 18/20). Total students of color at the study site (comprising Bridge, pre-Bridge, and JumpStart students) were present in similar proportions, but the proportion of total young men and women at the site was roughly equal. Study participants represented a broad spectrum of racial and ethnic backgrounds (e.g., African (2), African American (1), Latino/a (3), Pacific Islander (4), Eastern European (1), Southeast Asian (4), Central Asian (1), White (3), and Multiethnic/Multiracial (3)). Moreover, many study participants were first generation Americans on one or both sides of their families (14). In attempting to capture the students' experiences in their own words, the author spent two summer Academic Enrichment Program sessions (2004 and 2005) and Saturday mornings throughout the 2005-2006 school year informally interacting with the study participants as a teacher and tutor prior to conducting the interviews. During the interview period and data analysis phases, students acted as co-researchers to derive meaning from interviews (Fontana & Frey, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 2003).

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected using procedures consistent with a constructivist qualitative approach (Creswell, 1998). Using tested interview protocols, in-depth interviews were conducted with the students and staff members starting at the beginning of the summer and followed up with individuals from both groups throughout the summer once interview transcriptions had been made. Multiple data sources were used to triangulate findings and identify disconfirming evidence (Creswell, 1998; Creswell & Miller, 2000). Daily site observations were conducted in areas where UB students and staff congregated. The author reflected on the data collection and analysis processes throughout the process with the aid of reflexive journals. Documents that related to students' experiences at the site were analyzed, including newsletters, correspondence with peers and administration, and students' personal journal entries relating to their experiences both within and outside the field site. During the process, coding techniques were used that developed and refined conceptual categories and their properties to develop a running theoretical discussion (Creswell, 1998; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Results

Results show a complex picture of the interactions that constitute student participation in leadership practices at UB and point to a model of participation in leadership that centers on *reciprocal (give-and-take) relationships*. Concepts emerging from the data produced a theoretical framework to describe student participation in leadership practices from their own perspective. Taking student's understanding of leadership into account, the question remained as to whether their actions constituted a type of leadership, or intentional social influence to help the program achieve its mission. In order to understand what participation in leadership practices meant from the perspective of students, the author examined the direct actions students described themselves doing that related to the conception of leadership they described above. Techniques

of data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing were used to build a narrative picture (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The data tell a fascinating story of how students saw their participation in Upward Bound's leadership practices as a *negotiated relationship* with program staff and administrators. Students shared that their participation in the program developed over time from primarily a set of receiving behaviors to a mix of giving and taking practices. Typically, students indicated that they initially participated by taking or receiving program-initiated services, then after a period of time they gave back in ways that contributed to the program. This may imply that student participation in leadership develops within the context of a series of reciprocal interactions. Students shared that their participation in the program came from a *take-then-give* interaction. In other words, student participation changed or developed over time from primarily a set of receiving behaviors to a mix of giving and taking leadership practices. Typically, students indicated that they initially participated by taking or receiving program-initiated services, then after a period of time they gave back in ways that contributed to the program. The description of results is written here with that developmental chronology in mind. By both *giving* and *taking*, students felt that they engaged in leadership practices that allowed them to act independently rather than react to their environment. Other more academically sophisticated terms exist for constructs such as giving, taking, and give-and-take, but their use in this work reflects the attempt to ground this work in the participants' own language and experience.

“Taking” Participation in Leadership

In the context of student participation in leadership, student participants described several behaviors that indicated a willingness or desire to take services offered by program staff and administrators. Students' taking activities fell under three broad categories: taking as signing up, taking as receiving support, and taking as taking advantage. The behavior of practicing leadership by taking demonstrated students' confidence that the program would be willing and able to provide students with promised services and supports.

Taking as Receiving Support

As described above, it appears that participants anticipated that by becoming involved with UB, they would receive some form of support. As would be expected from an academic outreach program, the primary support students took from the program was educational in nature; however, students interviewed also noted other supports they received from the program. As far as receiving academic support, students reported that on Saturdays during the school year they got tutoring, applied for scholarships, and received college entrance exam preparation. During the summer program, they completed assigned homework, studied, learned about scholarships, developed academic skills, attended late night informal tutoring sessions with TLs, attended classes, and participated in job internships. Students participated in these academic activities in order to schedule high school and college classes, find a career, receive remediation or extra credit, receive motivation to enter and finish college, get assistance filling out applications for scholarships and financial aid, connect with scholarship providers, and otherwise generally “do good” in school. Receiving tutoring and financial aid seemed to be a high priority for students. Receiving academic support seemed to be an essential part of students' experience in the program, and leadership practices that fall under this category denote the participants' activities that enabled them to receive academic support. Other supports received went beyond the academic. Students worked to receive these other supports. These nonacademic supports

comprised a part of the program that they could hope to receive. Participants noted that they played the role of beneficiary or recipient of things the program gives. Students seemed to understand that, if they asked for it, UB staff, especially TLs, would advise them, listen, and be available to go to for opinions and guidance.

Taking Advantage in a Negative Way

From the field observations, it seemed apparent that once involved with the program, students tended to receive a high degree of freedom, and some students felt tempted to engage in taking practices that took unfair advantage of what the program offered them. In terms of participation, such actions are described here as taking advantage in a negative way. Taking advantage in a negative way seems to be a taking leadership behavior that indicates a confidence in the goodwill of program staff and administrators, and such behavior may imply that the willingness to participate in leadership in other ways may result from confidence in the continued goodwill of others as limits are tested. This idea receives some support from evidence in the data of participating in leadership that denote resistance.

“Resisting” Participation in Leadership

Participants described a few leadership practices that indicated resistance to program staff, administrators and rules. These behaviors may be described as breaking the rules, vandalizing, rebelling, emotional distancing, and resisting. These leadership behaviors offer a glimpse into how complex and contradictory participation can be. Students acknowledged that they sometimes deliberately broke the rules: participants noted that some students would skip class, sleep in, party, or fall asleep in class. Resistance also demonstrated itself in acts of rebellion. Finally, resistance came up in resisting acts. Students would ask to be left out of an activity, comply just to avoid punishment, be resistant to or refuse to attend extracurricular activities, or complain. Within the context of understanding student participation in leadership, the above described leadership practices seem to show that students engaged themselves in behaviors that demonstrated resistance to the program’s efforts to build relationships and instill compliance. They highlight that participation in leadership can demonstrate itself in ways that empirically test the goodwill and capacity of the organization to meet students’ needs.

“Giving” Participation in Leadership

Study participants described several giving behaviors that indicated participation in leadership within the program. From analysis of the field observations and interviews, it seemed that these leadership practices tended to happen after students had spent a period of time taking from the program and resisting its rules and guidelines (Author, 2007). In many ways, the giving leadership practices described here denote “traditional” leadership behaviors in that these leadership practices overtly helped the program function and survive. Students’ giving activities fell under several categories that included making an effort, demonstrating academic progress, obeying the rules, participating in activities, taking responsibility, showing respect, giving input, advocating and recruiting, and strengthening the program. In a vague way, the data seemed to indicate that students’ giving leadership practices started with behaviors that focused internally and moved into behaviors that focused beyond themselves to assist the program as a whole. Students stated that they gave back to the program by taking advantage in a positive way, taking

things seriously, making an effort, taking responsibility, participating in activities, showing respect, obeying the rules, demonstrating academic progress, giving input, making friends in the program, helping others, advocating and recruiting, and setting expectations and strengthening the program. In the context of student participation in leadership, these giving actions demonstrate students' willingness or desire to give once they have developed confidence in the program's benevolence in their behalf.

Taking Advantage in a Positive Way

The idea of taking advantage showed up in student conversations as a giving type of participation. In this sense, taking advantage meant being disposed to "feel lucky," "have good attitude," and "realize what an opportunity this is." For students, taking advantage meant recognizing that being in the program was a gift.

Taking Things Seriously, Making an Effort, and Being Responsible

For students interviewed, to take the program seriously, like taking advantage, meant recognizing the value of the program. Participants felt that it was vital to know that this is important and not goof around. Taking things seriously resulted in students developing personal behavior norms. Some students interviewed described giving leadership practices that denoted a desire to try or to make an effort. Frequently, this giving behavior came as a result of a sense of obligation students felt toward program administrators because of the work administrators did on students' behalf. Students described actions that gave back to the program through taking responsibility. Taking responsibility meant different things to different study participants, but acting in positive ways seemed to be a common thread. By taking responsibility, students interviewed demonstrated a willingness to act on their beliefs that they should take advantage of the program and take things seriously. By so doing, they behaved in ways that gave back to the program.

Showing Respect, Obeying the Rules, and Making Academic Progress

For students interviewed, showing respect to program staff and administrators represented a clear way they could give back to the program. Students gave back to the program by placing themselves in a position to be guided by program staff and administrators. Obeying the rules seemed to be a handy way students could behave in giving ways. All students interviewed mentioned "obeying the rules" as a key leadership activity they demonstrated. The program places strong emphasis on obeying the rules, particularly during the summer program, as rule violations translate into liability issues that affect whether the program continues to be allowed to house students on the Western University campus. Participants emphasized obeying rules relating to performance in school. These leadership behaviors highlight the understanding students had of behaving rules relating to their classroom preparation and comportment and of how the program's longevity depended on their obedience. Students in the study showed awareness that demonstrating academic progress not only benefited them personally, but it was a giving leadership practice that affected staff and peers. Students recognized that the present work they did in school would affect future educational opportunities. Participants also showed awareness that demonstrating academic progress had effects outside the program. Showing

academic progress functioned as a giving leadership activity that helped the program in addition to providing students with personal benefits.

Providing Input and Helping Others

Providing input to the program seems to serve as an important giving leadership behavior students could use to assist the program in completing its mission. Students frequently noted how they give input by choosing activities, voting, evaluating, expressing their opinion about how the program should be run (both formally and informally), giving input to change classes and activities, providing feedback when asked, suggesting activities, and telling TLs what to do. Giving input may be a way the program tries to remain relevant to students. The program regularly solicits student input. Students gave input during student discussions with TLs at team meetings, and giving input also happened among peers. Providing input may allow students to give current and future peers an experience more tailored to their needs and may help them develop stronger bonds with program staff. More specifically on the subject of helping others, student data showed ways of participating that gave to the program by helping peers and program staff as well as by helping out in the community. Students interviewed gave back to the program and helped it meet its goal of providing students with educational opportunities by helping each other. Helping others extended beyond peers and staff within the program. Community service forms an integral part of the UB experience. The data suggested that, as students continue to give community service, they begin to recognize the value of serving others around them. Eventually, for some students interviewed, giving community service becomes intrinsically valuable. Giving community service becomes a way of giving back and of recognizing the program's efforts on their behalf.

Advocating/Recruiting and Setting Expectations/Strengthening the Program

Two other broad giving leadership behaviors drawn from the study data, *advocating/recruiting* and *setting expectations/strengthening the program*, encompass ways of participating that students used to deliberately build up the program for people beyond themselves. These leadership practices exhibited a move from self-interest to community interest and seemed to indicate that students felt high levels of confidence in the program's capacity consistently and competently serve their needs and the needs of people students knew. Advocating and recruiting happened in terms of students acting to refer other people into the program. Students interviewed understood that their advocacy was a potent means for building membership in the program. This advocacy extended beyond recruiting local students to encouraging friends and family outside the study city to join. UB is under constant threat of losing funding. Students interviewed felt they help it continue by advocating to the federal government. This advocacy came both by letter and through academic progress. As students reached out to others outside the program, they seemed to behave in ways that gave to the program and showed their confidence in its capacity to help themselves and others successfully prepare for college.

Study participants described several expectations they had for themselves and others that were intended to build the program and showed their belief that the program could help students get into college. Many of these expectations focused on peer behavior and attitude. The data showed that as students develop a personal appreciation for the program after having received its

services, they seemed to want other students to catch that same sense of gratitude. These students indicated a dissatisfaction with the behavior of some of their peers, and felt that students in the program should “take personal responsibility” for their own success and that of the program. Setting expectations involved persuasion and collaboration. In group settings, students realized they could contribute to establishing order and getting people on task. Many participants believed that giving back to the program involved being examples to others both within and outside the program of the benefits associated with being part of UB. Strengthening the program involved helping UB function in the present and continue into the future through student efforts within the program. Participants seemed to feel the impression that they had a legacy to preserve, that once they graduated from high school, they needed to “come back and help the program.” The concepts described by study participants that fell under the category of setting expectations and strengthening the program seemed to show that students gave back to the program by establishing norms of behavior and anticipating that by their efforts they could help the program in the future.

Discussion

The information cited above seems to indicate that student participation in the UB seemed to happen through actions that both took from and gave to the program. Three major themes that arose from the research questions (*taking*, *resisting*, and *giving*) were described and connected together into a broad theory sketch of how students participate in educational leadership. Taking, resisting, and giving actions by students each contributed to their participation in the program’s leadership in unique ways that aligned with its core purposes. By accepting UB’s invitation to join and initially taking part in the program’s services, students used what the program was made for: they became members of UB, experienced college life, and became more involved in school. On the negative side, by not taking advantage in a positive way, some students adversely influenced both their own and others’ experience in the program and negatively affected the program’s ability to meet its goals. Likewise, resisting leadership practices resulted in students influencing the program. Behaviors such as resisting, breaking the rules, and vandalizing property tested the program and caused staff and administrators to make changes in order to fulfill the program’s goals for *all* students. Because students resisted, TMs became angry, staff members changed or eliminated activities, program administrators developed more rules, and staff and students established new social boundaries, and each behavior resulted in some necessary change in the program to ensure its continued success.

Students participated in UB’s leadership in “traditional” ways by giving to the program. As students engaged in giving leadership behaviors, the program reaped many direct benefits that enabled it to fulfill its primary goal of encouraging students to attend college. By making an effort, student felt they would become successful in school and at college. As students demonstrated academic progress, they felt they would help the program successfully remain funded and help future students. By obeying the rules, students believed they would keep the program going and preserve it from liability issues that would cause it to be removed from its university site. As they participated in activities, they became oriented to the program. By taking advantage in positive ways, they recognized the opportunities the program gave them. By taking things seriously, they believed they helped fulfill the program’s end goal by preparing themselves for college. As they took responsibility, they felt they became willing to do what they

were assigned to do in the program and overcoming limitations to their college entrance. By showing respect, students demonstrated a willingness to be led. As they made friends in the program, students built a community to support them on their way to college. As they gave input, they believed that they directed the program to meet student needs and developed bonds with staff. By advocating and recruiting, they felt they contributed to keeping the program funded and adding new members. Finally, by setting expectations for themselves and their peers and strengthening the program, they believed they helped the program stay and become stronger. By putting together both sets of behaviors, a more complete description of student participation in leadership emerges. For these students, participation in leadership meant entering into deepening give-and-take relationships with program administration and staff as confidence in the program's capacity to act for their benefit grew with time. For students, a cycle of *take-then-give* (not give-then-take) interactions or relationships built as students became more involved in relationships with program staff and administration over time.

The Give-and-Take of Participation: Relational Reciprocity

The core concept of *reciprocity* emerged as a central idea from the data. This mutual exchange constituted the way in which things got done in the program, and the strength, direction, and timing of shared actions described how students participated in the UB Program's leadership practices. Participants' comments seemed to imply that program staff members engaged in give-then-take interactions, rather than take-then-give. It appears that *both* students and the organization seem to have participated in giving and taking leadership practices over time, and these behaviors appeared to complement each other. *Reciprocal feedback over time* may describe the way student leadership capacity developed in the program, and the strength, direction, and timing of these patterns also may describe how students became conscious of how they participated in leadership over the long-term. This piece adds to our understanding of what leadership looks like in practice by proposing a mechanism for constituent participation in leadership. This piece has brought to light how some self-interested activities that ultimately work for the organization's good may also be seen as forms of leadership. In the vernacular, leadership is seen by participants as a selfless, strong, dominant trait done by authorities. This work points out that members not only exert influence on formal leaders, but make their own decisions, both "selfish" and selfless, that bind the organization together and affect its work (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

Balanced Reciprocity

Distributed leadership theory emphasizes the reciprocal interdependency that exists among leaders and followers (School of Education and Social Policy, 2007). Literature from various social science fields that clarifies and expands on the idea of reciprocity lends insight into the way students participate in UB's leadership. From the cultural anthropology literature, Sahlins (1972) identified balanced or symmetrical reciprocity as a social relationship that happens when one party gives to another expecting a return at some future date. It is an informal expectation that the giver will be repaid based on trust and social consequences. Balanced reciprocity involves a moderate amount of trust and social distance. From students' responses, it appears that *balanced reciprocity* describes the social interaction that occurred between students and program administrators. Students received benefits from the program and returned favors to

the program based on egoistic as well as altruistic motives that (from an organizational perspective) allowed both their and the program's goals to be met. The structure of the organization created conditions of social distance that reinforced pre-established relationships and social norms of conduct. While students felt close to UB staff (TL particularly), enough social distance existed to allow students a degree of autonomy and voice into how some aspects of the program should be run and to allow the program to impose restrictions on students' behaviors that detracted from its overall goals. In this study, reciprocal exchange involved student and program practices that enhanced the students' capacity to receive college preparation and preserved the organization's longevity. In this case, student participation in leadership boils down to the intentional exchange of acts of influential goodwill that promote the maintenance of the UB Program and the future prospects of its participants.

Conclusion

Findings from this study highlight the ways constituent members contribute to organizational leadership and hint at how leadership as reciprocal exchange may happen through individuals' attempts to blend personal and social needs. This study makes a unique contribution to the field by using empirical data to describe concepts and relationships that define participation in educational leadership from the perspective of the led. Understanding how students influence educational leaders is vital to understanding how to prepare educational leaders for their roles in schools and other educational organizations and for empowering these organizations to develop their leadership practices to reflect the wants and needs of those they serve. In the UB case, to the extent that the program needed students in order to continue functioning, it responded to student inputs. It is possible that in order for organizations to work generally, they must strike a balance between being too personal and being too formal with their constituents: too familiar, and social barriers that permit needed social consequences dissolve; too reserved, and personal interactions that build trust fail to materialize. As UB fostered trust in students by consistently meeting their personal needs, these individuals in turn considered acting in ways that contributed to the social needs of their peers and the organizational needs of the program. As students made demands from the program, they tested its capacity to do its job. By doing its job, the program proved its mettle and provided students with necessary motivation to contribute in turn. Taken up to a broader level of abstraction, organizations cannot exist without a context, purpose, or set of necessary activities that provide social benefits to members. In this case, students participated in leadership by demanding that the program perform its functions as advertised and by contributing to its continued capacity to perform those functions over time. This study provides evidence for the notion of leadership as a purposeful mutual influence relationship that enhances organizational functionality and goal achievement. Findings from this study imply that having a formal academic description of leadership may not be as important for the success of educational organizations as having a comprehensive understanding of constituents' knowledge and expectations of leadership and the leadership roles they play. Part of understanding constituents' contributions to leadership in educational organizations is learning how to appreciate leadership in the vernacular. By describing student participation in leadership in those terms in this study, it is hoped that our understanding may develop of how all members build the leadership capacity and success of their educational organizations.

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