Managing Transitions in Systems Leadership Organizations:
A Case Study of Instituto Unibanco and "Education Management" in Brazil

Michael Barzelay* and Yifei Yan
London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)

Pedro Vilela and Diana Coutinho
Escola Nacional de Administração Publica (Enap)

Patricia Vieira da Costa
Universidade de Brasília

Abstract: Systems leadership is an emerging domain of professional practice within schools of public policy, public administration, and management (including the UN System Staff College). Within this domain lies systems-change initiatives, i.e., multi-organization campaign-like undertakings directed at living systems (such as global food supply) and institutional systems (such as mass education) that are implicated in the quest for human dignity and sustainable development. In accord with recent lines of purposive theorizing about systems leadership, systems-change-initiatives are generated, executed, and adapted through systems leadership practice. Such purposive theorizing provides a starting point for furnishing practical knowledge about systems leadership. In exploring ways to advance this agenda, the present paper presents a narrative case study where the systems-change-initiative is the Youth for the Future (Jovem de Futuro) program in Brazil and the institutional systems-domain is secondary-school-management. The case focuses on Instituto Unibanco, the organization that has been generating, executing, and adapting this secondary-school-management systems-change-initiative. The case narrative's main episode is framed as a managerial intervention that has played a practical role in achieving a realignment transition for Instituto Unibanco and has thereby reconfigured an existing systems-change initiative for secondary-school-management. In addition to presenting a preliminary case narrative, the paper indicates lines of case analysis that are under consideration for elaborating purposive theorizing about systems leadership (by recruiting ideas from the management field) and for defining an agenda for instrumental (and design-oriented) case study research about this emerging area of professional knowledge and practice.

*Corresponding author: M.Barzelay@lse.ac.uk

Paper presented at the 5th International Conference on Public Policy Research, International Public Policy Association, Panel on Studying Policy Interventions and Reform Initiatives as Campaigns, July 8, 2021. (Research funding provided by Instituto Unibanco to London School of Economics.)

As evidenced by a 2019 report published by Harvard's Kennedy School, Systems Leadership is an emerging title for an approach to professional practice in a domain identified with long time-frame, multi-organization initiatives concerned with big challenges that have to be tackled as part of making progress toward sustainable development goals and related collective purposes (Dreier, Nabarro and Nelson, 2019). A main thrust of the Dreier, Nabarro, and Nelson report -- by leading thinkers and organizers in the sustainable development field -- was that recognizing and then strengthening Systems Leadership practice is important because otherwise the big challenges will not be addressed adequately. In making this case, the report drew on many sources to give some measure of depth to the idea of Systems Leadership, not only by associating it with established bodies of thought (such as those concerned with formulation of shared models of systems tied to the natural world) but also with practical ideas about convening and mobilizing the stakeholders and actors who can make contributions to the development and achievements of "systems change initiatives." Among other features, the organized more than a score of maxims about systems change initiatives and courses of action by system leaders into a framework titled by an easy to remember acronym (CLEAR). All in all, the report conveys the impression that Systems Leadership is a meaningful idea and a promising focus for a field of professional practice directed at systems change initiatives. As a manifesto for Systems Leadership as a practice area, the Dreier, Nabarro, and Nelson report holds together and presents well.

Just this year, a similar perspective has been advanced in the *Journal of Change Management: Reframing Leadership and Organizational Practice*, under the title of "leading social transformation." As characterized by John M. Bryson, Bill Barburg, Barbara C. Crosby, and Michael Quinn Patton (Bryson *et al*., 2021), "Leading social transformation builds on strategic leadership of organizations and leading strategy management-at-scale initiatives by integrating and co-aligning the efforts of multiple organizations, collaborations, coalitions, and advocacy efforts guided by shared principles and animated by common purposes. The required changes are multi-issue, multi-level, multi-organizational, and cross-sectoral, and can cross national frontiers." The article presents a handful of case study vignettes to indicate what is involved in giving an analytical characterization of how leadership makes a causal contribution to the social transformation initiatives. As the authors say, the article focuses principally on "what leading social transformation is for, what it consists of, and how it works, especially from the standpoint of leadership." They also call for research on the domain titled "leading

social transformation", stating specifically that "what seems to be required most is a set of longitudinal, comparative case studies" while suggesting strongly that such research "can help clarify what works, how, and why, and what specifically leadership for social transformation entails. The promise of such work – in which practice is clearly leading theory – is that we may just be able to respond effectively to the planet-, peace-, and justice-threatening challenges – such as climate change and inequality – that demand urgent and necessary social transformations" (p. 199).

In connection with these manifesto-like statements by authorities on their subjects, this paper presents an in-depth case study – combining "historical" narrative with analytical commentary -- as means to furnish a measure of practical knowledge about Systems Leadership, to use the Dreier, Nabarro, and Nelson term. In being an in-depth case study about systems leadership over a period of years, this paper aligns with what Bryson et. al. have called for. There's also a similar character to this study in that we, too, are after a practical understanding of the kinds of undertakings that Bryson et al assimilate to social transformation.

At the same time, this study takes a specific approach to case studies that, while being consonant with what Bryson et. al. have called for, is arguably identifiably distinct. The present study engages with a specific collection of statements that Dreier, Nabarro, and Nelson arranged to give the idea of Strategic Leadership some size and depth, while being serviceable as reference points for professional practice.[1] The attitude we take toward these statements is that they are distilled argumentative discussions (Hitchcock, 2002) about important practical questions posed in abstract terms about Systems Leadership as an area of practice. In character, what is presented is purposive theorizing (Barzelay, 2019) about some kind of purposeful collective undertaking – what they call systems-change initiatives -- and about the professional practice involved in their generation, execution, adaptation – what they call systems leadership as such. Purposive theorizing has value, but its value is increased if it develops through reflective dialogue, where there's disciplined engagement and a willingness and ability to draw on reflective or critical traditions of thought such as argumentation theory and rhetorical

[1] See Appendix A for an analytical summary of the Dreier, Nabarro, and Nelson report that was developed as a working document for this project.

criticism. In this regard, we consider there to be some good precedents (Mintzberg, 1994; Moore, 1995; Barzelay, 1999; Crosby and Bryson, 2005; Freedman, 2013). Along the same lines, case studies can be used as a basis of such a dialogue, as is a well-established tradition, and not only in contemporary times (Jonsen and Toulmin, 1988). This paper's tent is pitched in this (genealogical) space.

In relation to the Dreier, Nabarro, and Nelson report, this study goes deep in an area where its discussion is thin. As background, they talk about systems leadership as being practiced by "leaders." While they list both organizations and individuals as abstract cases of leaders, their theory doesn't seem to include the idea of a systems-leadership organization as such. In keeping with this, their report doesn't bring professional knowledge about management in an organizational setting into the circumference of their practical theory; or if it is there, it's distinctly marginal. Against this background, we take "systems leadership" to be an archetype of professional practice that is organizationally situated and that involves organizations as sites for purposeful activity. In this sense one might say that systems leadership is an organizational practice, however else it might be characterized as well.

The substantive framing of this paper is around two distinct but interrelated practical questions. Stated somewhat colloquially, one is how should Systems Leadership deal with the imperative that systems change *initiatives* undergo *adaptation* over time, to be practically responsive to changing realities, changing intentions, and changing knowledge? The other is how should Systems Leadership deal with the imperative that system leadership *organizations* undergo *transitions*, considered as practical necessities in relation to generating adaptation in systems change initiatives? While these questions are intertwined, we give more attention to the second one, as that fits with a motive to bring the established field of public management (Barzelay, 2019) into close contact with that of the emerging field of Systems Leadership.

Introducing the Case Study of Instituto Unibanco and "Education Management"

The "system" with which the case study is concerned is secondary education in Brazil. The system-change initiative with which the case study is concerned is positioned as being about "education management" within this "system." As characterized, education management is a distinct aspect of this system from both education policy (such as curriculum mandates) and from pedagogical practices.

The main component of the system-change initiative that is covered within this study is known as the Youth of the Future Program or, in Portuguese, *Jovem de Futuro* – JF. While this program's identity has been preserved for over a generation, the program design has been reconfigured greatly: indeed multiple "generations" of JF are spoken of. JF has always involved collaboration with school principals. Earlier generations involved collaboration with the Federal government's ministry of education, while later generations have involved collaboration with state-level education officials. The systems-leadership organization for the JF systems change initiative is Instituto Unibanco (IU), founded more than 30 years ago. IU is a self-governing organization based in São Paulo, whose operations are funded through returns on an endowment, the original source of which was a major banking concern.

Thus, the case's systems-leadership organization is Instituto Unibanco; its systems-change initiative concerned with education management is (mainly) the Youth for the Future program; and its "system" is secondary education in Brazil.

As indicated in the introduction, the case study is about practical issues with which Systems Leadership should be concerned: namely, adaptation of system changes initiatives and transitions of systems leadership organizations. As the systems leadership organization in this study is Instituto Unibanco, the case is framed as being about a transition that it underwent as an organization. Correspondingly, the case is about adaptation that the Youth of the Future program underwent. Between the two, the relative emphasis in the case study is on IU's organizational transition.

Concretely, the study's main episode involves organizationally-situated activity that eventuated in changes in IU's strategy and practices as well as in main characteristics of the systems change initiative that IU leads. Temporally speaking, the case's main episode began in 2016 and ended in 2019 (however, we flashback as warranted to antecedent events and conditions). As we will see, some of the changes during this main episode involved enlarging and recentering the idea of education management, symbolized by the new official watchwords of "continuous advancement." Changes occurred in practices across many functional areas in accord with that enlarged and re-centered idea of education management. The changes were sufficiently marked that the case can be seen as one where the organizational transition was that of a (major) realignment (Watkins, 2009). The narrative is written with this plot structure (and even teleology) in mind.

To construct the narrative, we relied on both primary and secondary sources of data. Secondary sources include publications of IU, information from its official website, as well as internal reports and documents. Beyond that, to gain a more comprehensive and detailed picture of what happened within the main events, why and how, we have conducted interviews with all current and previous members within IU's senior leadership during the period of 2015 and 2019. The selection of this sample was purposive, as the interviewees are those who had direct experience, as "insiders", with the SLO-transition and SCI-adaptation that is of interest of this paper. Interviewing them would thus help "yield the most relevant and plentiful data" given the topic of our study (Yin, 2011: 88). Consent of being interviewed was acquired from each interviewee before the interview, who was also explained the purpose of the research and the interview. Due to COVID-19-related restrictions, interviews were all conducted and recorded on Zoom. The recordings were transcribed verbatim and translated accordingly. To encourage the honest and frank sharing of experience and perceptions, we assured the interviewees of their anonymity. What appears in the narrative is therefore all reported in an impersonalized manner.

PE1 (1982-2015) Managing IU and JF

PE1-1 (1982-2007) Building IU's Identity

Created in 1982, Instituto Unibanco – IU is an institution that supports and develops, free of charge[2], management solutions to increase equity and the efficiency, efficacy, and effectiveness of education in Brazilian public high schools. These solutions, which reach departments of education, schools, education professionals and students, are supported by a broader policy of production and dissemination of scientific and practical knowledge on educational management and policy, and by a robust strategy of articulation with the main actors and public policy decision makers in education.

The Institute's trajectory was marked by two inflection points that built its current institutional identity (Instituto Unibanco, 2007). In its first years, IU acted in a pulverized manner, financially supporting social projects developed by other organizations, in different

[2] IU activities are maintained by a heritage fund, created exclusively for this purpose. This endowment system does not depend on additional contributions and allows the establishment of long-term initiatives.

areas. In 2002, on its 20th anniversary, two fundamental decisions were made: to act exclusively in the educational field and initiate the development of its own projects. Five years later, another important decision: from that moment on, all the Institute's actions should be directed at improving high school education, which was characterized by the lowest learning and the highest dropout rates within the Brazilian schools' system.

PE1-2 (JF 1G, 2007-2012) Piloting JF

In 2007, the program Jovem de Futuro – JF, the most emblematic initiative of the Institute, was launched. Guided by the concept of "Educational Management by Results" (Instituto Unibanco, 2008), JF aimed to improve students' learning, increase the number of high-school graduates, and reduce inequalities in public schools. The objectives settled for JF would be achieved through an efficient management, oriented to results and equity.

With a scheduled duration of six years, JF offered different instruments to support the management of schools, such as technical advice, training, data analysis, technological-based management systems, as well as actions that fostered the sharing of knowledge and experiences among the professionals in the network (Instituto Unibanco, 2008). With technical and financial support from IU, JF 1st generation represented the testing period of a new social technology in a real environment: public schools, with low educational indexes, and high heterogeneity.

The project was launched as a pilot in three schools in São Paulo, being expanded in the following years to 46 schools in Rio Grande do Sul and 44 schools in Minas Gerais. In 2010, the pilot expanded to include 77 more schools in São Paulo and 30 schools in Rio de Janeiro (Henriques, Carvalho e Bittar, 2020). After the 3 initial years, called the laboratory period, JF advanced to a phase of consolidation and expansion, which extended until 2013 in the states of Rio Grande do Sul and Minas Gerais, and until 2015 in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. After the completion of the project, the schools went through a process of technology transfer, and became part of the Jovem de Futuro Network, created to sustain the program actions and results.

The JF pilot phase produced outstanding results. The impact tests demonstrated that the students of the JF partners' schools had a significant advance in relation to the students of non-participating institutions (Henriques, Carvalho e Bittar, 2020). The main learning results were

in Portuguese Language and Mathematics, the main components of the Brazilian Basic Education Index - IDEB.[3]

PE1-3 (JF 2G, 2012-2015) Scaling up JF

With the first impact evidence, JF gained visibility. In 2009 the program was certified as an educational technology by the Ministry of Education – MEC (Instituto Unibanco, 2009), and, in 2010, it was included in the "MEC Technology Guide", a menu of educational solutions directed to school managers (Instituto Unibanco, 2010). These events initiated a long and sensitive negotiation process, aiming to integrate JF with federal high-school educational policies, in what would be called JF 2nd generation.

As the negotiations between IU and MEC advanced, a complex governance arrangement was conceived, involving IU, MEC and the State Departments of Education - SDE, aiming to integrate JF to the program Ensino Médio Inovador – ProEMI ("Innovative High School") (Instituto Unibanco, 2011). In this new arrangement, the SDE should provide infrastructure and staff to implement ProEMI/JF, supervise, and monitor the schools. IU's role was to transfer knowledge and support the implementation process. Schools' membership to the program was voluntary, and should be processed through the SDE, leading to a direct financial grant from MEC. The schools that developed their "Curriculum Redesign Project" (Projeto de Redesenho Curricular – PRC) should report the related expenses to MEC to be awarded with additional resources, funded by another government program, called Programa Dinheiro Direto na Escola – PDDE (Direct Money at School Program).

The partnership between MEC and IU had the ambitious goal of attending, in five years, 2,500 schools and 2.8 million students, equivalent to two-thirds of the total number of students enrolled in the Brazilian public high school system (Instituto Unibanco, 2012). With the voluntary membership of Ceará, Goiás, Mato Grosso do Sul, Pará and Piauí states, JF would be simultaneously implemented in five distinct geographical, socioeconomic, and political

[3] The Basic Education Development Index - IDEB was launched by the Ministry of Education in 2007 to measure the quality of learning and set goals for improving education. IDEB components are the rate of school performance (approval), obtained by the annual school census, and the average performance in national exams. The goals established by the IDEB are differentiated for each school and educational network.

realities, in parallel with the consolidation and expansion of its 1st generation in four other states. In addition to the challenges of scale, quite unusual for organizations of this nature, JF 2nd generation represented a huge logistical, operational, and political challenge.

Wanda Engel, IU's Executive Superintendent, had been responsible for JF's design, development, and implementation up to that time. One year before the formal establishment of the partnership with MEC, Wanda started to prepare the organization for the forthcoming challenges (Instituto Unibanco, 2011). The entire Institute's structure was mobilized to ensure the program was correctly transferred to the states. Executive teams, support units and a dedicated area to training were created. Administrative and legal issues related to the implementation of ProEMI/JF were mapped for each state, resulting in integrated implementation plans. Methodologies and pedagogical processes were adapted according to local specificities and then published in manuals, distributed to public agencies and schools. Wanda's proximity to the researcher Ricardo Paes de Barros, responsible for JF impact assessments and, at that time, holding the position of Undersecretary of Strategic Affairs of the Presidency of the Republic, resulted in a cooperation agreement that delegated to the Secretariat of Strategic Affairs – SAE the responsibility for evaluating the program results (Instituto Unibanco, 2012).

The agreement with MEC was signed on 12 February 2012. After laying the ground for JF 2nd generation, in August Wanda Engel left the Executive Superintendence and became part of the Board of Directors (Instituto Unibanco, 2012). In her place, Ricardo Henriques, came into play. Henriques was a distinguished public manager and researcher and, among other achievements, was a key-player in the design and implementation of the internationally renowned Bolsa Familia program.[4]

Right after assuming IU's executive direction, Henriques initiated the building of a solid governance structure for the new ProEMI/JF, to ensure responsive action and preserve JF's essential features while being implemented at scale (Instituto Unibanco, 2012). Clear roles and responsibilities were defined, supported by information systems, monitoring and

[4] The Bolsa Família Program – PBF is an income transfer program of the Brazilian Federal Government that unified and expanded previous income transfer programs. The program was instituted in the first Lula mandate by the provisional measure 132/2003 and converted into the Federal Law n. 10.836/2004.

evaluation procedures. A restructuring process took place to organize areas, assignments, and systems, resulting in the creation of a Project Management Office - PMO, the launch of an information system database with high school students' socioeconomic data, and new technological platforms to support operations. With the restructuring, JF expenditures consumed almost 50% of IU's annual budget between 2011 and 2014, compared to a 10-year moving average of 20%.

JF 2nd generation operated between 2012 and 2015. JF's original governance model evolved into a shared governance model between IU, MEC and the SDE, with six levels of monitoring bodies and periodic meetings, involving the SDE, schools' principals and teachers. The PDCA (Plan-Do-Control-Act) methodology was implemented in a new protocol, named Management Circuit. The Circuit was supported by a panel of indicators and systematic monitoring procedures, a project management system (used by the schools and SDE), and physical-financial monitoring system. The number of schools participating in the program jumped from 581 in 2012 to 1,337 in 2013, and to 2,109 in 2014, reaching 920,000 high school students in 2015, 13% of the total student's enrollment in the public high school system (Instituto Unibanco, 2015).

Despite the advances in the program design and expansion, ProEMI/JF implementation faced several obstacles (Henriques, Carvalho e Bittar, 2020). Financial resources were delayed or not received by schools, due to backlogs in rendering accounts associated with other MEC programs. The fragmentation and duplicity of monitoring bodies and systems generated unnecessary bureaucracy, so the schools' managers did not have time to develop their analytical skills or redesign the curriculum. Due to the large amount of information and control instruments, mechanisms to correct deviation were poorly used. Also, the high-level bodies (MEC and SDE) were not held responsible for the results. As an outcome, fewer schools have reached the planned targets in comparison to JF 1st generation.

CE1 (JF 3G, 2013-2015) Responding to Emerging Policy Issues and Agendas

Besides the implementation issues, the political context did not favor ProEMI/JF's sustainability. In 2012, Aloísio Mercadante took charge of MEC, substituting Fernando Haddad, who left office to run for mayor of São Paulo. In 2013, the country began enduring a period of severe political instability, with hundreds of thousands of people occupying the streets all over Brazil protesting corruption and other diffuse agendas, affecting President

Dilma Roussef's mandate legitimacy. In February 2014, with the crisis intensifying, Mercadante left the command of MEC to take charge as Presidential Chief of Staff. When the impeachment process on the President started, in October 2015, Mercadante returned to MEC. Amidst Mercadante's departure and return, MEC had been commanded by four other different Ministers (Wikipedia, 2021).

During this stormy period, the Ministry of Education was able to approve the second National Education Plan (PNE). With a 10-year horizon, the PNE settled 20 goals to ensure access and learning throughout the educational system (Brasil, 2014). The PNE's goal #3, "universalizing schooling to all youngsters and expanding access to high school", would require overcoming obstacles such as teacher training, lack of full-time vacancies in schools, outdated curriculum, fragilities in management and infrastructure, and high rates of teacher absenteeism. The high school curriculum model, considered disconnected from the contemporaneity, was targeted by the first three strategies of PNE's goal #3: institutionalizing a national high school renewal program, developing learning and development objectives and rights for high-school students, and creating a national common curricular base, through the common agreement between the Union, the states, and municipalities.

The publication of PNE initiated two important processes: the elaboration of state and municipal educational plans, and a broader debate on the Common National Curriculum Base - BNCC. The BNCC was a policy aimed at establishing a minimum common curriculum for each one of the school stages (Brasil, 2014). The expectation was that BNCC would enable the design of more attractive curriculums and pedagogical methodologies, focused on the effectiveness of learning as well as on the preparation for the exercise of citizenship and professional life. As defined in the PNE, the BNCC's preparation should be completed by the term of June 2016.

This turbulent environment amplified the design problems of ProEMI/JF, and despite the good results presented in the states in which the program was operated, the partnership with MEC officially ended in 2015, maintaining the agreed work plans until the end of that year. This event created a quite different scenario for the Institute and JF's following years.

ME1 (JF 3G, 2014-2016) Strategizing IU and JF 3rd Generation

ME1-1 (JF 3G, 2014-2016) Reshaping IU and the Executive Team

Reckoning the end of the partnership with MEC, Henriques initiated major transformations at IU and JF. As observed by one of the interviewees, with the ambitious intention of "reconfiguring the collaborative networks of the IU to change the trajectory of Brazilian educational policy", a new strategic plan colligated IU's expected performance in three axes: intervention projects (design, implementation and evaluation of solutions applied to educational management projects), think tank (production and dissemination of knowledge through research, studies, and debates, focused on solutions and based on scientific and empirical evidence), and grant-giving (financial support and promotion of aligned initiatives aimed to overcome high school challenges) (Instituto Unibanco, 2014). The Institute's brand was revamped to reflect its new values: "connect ideas, accelerate transformations and value diversity" (Instituto Unibanco, 2015).

In 2014, IU was concluding the consolidation stage of ProEMI/JF in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, starting the consolidation stage in Goiás and Ceará, and reimplementing the program from scratch in Piauí and Pará. At the same time, JF began to be remodeled, aiming to implement its 3rd generation in the state of Espírito Santo, straight off in 2015 (Instituto Unibanco, 2015). The financial investments in JF had returned to 2010 levels, while operating expenses and grant-giving increased substantially. As JF was being consolidated in the partner states, the number of schools served by the 2nd generation was gradually reduced, from 2,100 schools in 2014 to 1,400 schools in 2015, and then to 900 schools in 2016 (Instituto Unibanco, 2016).

To enable the new vision's achievement, Henriques started to shape a new structure and a new executive team for the Institute. Up to then, IU had a President and a Vice-President, a Board of Administration, a Board of Directors, an Executive Superintendence, occupied by Henriques, and five subordinate departments: the Knowledge Management Department, responsible for knowledge prospection, curating, and dissemination; the Development and Content Department, responsible for transforming the knowledge into products and services, such as training programs, methodological guides and instructional materials; the Project Implementation Department, responsible for implementing JF and the related logistics (the materials were still printed at that time). A Project Management Office, responsible for

monitoring IU's projects; and a Finance and Administration Department, responsible for administrative support activities. In addition to the departments, the structure held dedicated staffs for Strategic Affairs, Communication and Volunteering (Instituto Unibanco, 2014).

Mirela de Carvalho, who had been heading the Knowledge Management Department since 2013, remained in the position, now with new challenges. In 2014, Marta Grosbaum left the Development and Content Department, being replaced by Lucia Couto, who was already part of the team. In the following year, Lucia would be substituted by Alexsandro Santos, who was part of JF's center for research and evaluation. Tiago Borba left the Implementation Department to lead the new Planning and Articulation Department, taking over project management office tasks and the Institute's grant-giving initiatives, which were being expanded at that time. In his place, the Implementation Department was then occupied by Maria Júlia Azevedo. The Finance and Administration Department included the term "Information Technology" in its title, and was still being managed by Fabio Santiago, in charge since 2011.

ME1-2 (JF 3G, 2014-2016) Designing JF 3rd Generation

Seeking adaptation to new context, JF 3rd generation has also undergone profound changes. As the partnership with MEC ended, the program no longer involved financial transfers to the schools. JF implementation stages were expanded to a period of eight years, which included a new sustainability stage. The PDCA cycle protocols were strengthened, by reviewing the Management Circuit methodology and through the creation of new procedures to connect and coordinate plans and activities among schools, regional offices and SDE. A new methodology for calculating indicators was developed, aiming at creating shared responsibilities within the system. This methodology was supported by a panel of multilevel predictive indicators, and by an online project management system, which was improved with new protocols, instruments, and educational analysis (Instituto Unibanco, 2015).

To operationalize the governance model, which now included the education regional offices, 35 operational committees were created (Instituto Unibanco, 2015), with a significant change in the supervision approach. Monitoring should no longer emphasize oversight, accountability, and punishment, but alignment, coordination, and information for decision-making. The new approach led to new challenges, such as how to balance accountability and

actor's engagement, how to develop critical thinking in school managers, and how to strengthen learning processes through practice.

To implement JF 3rd generation, in 2015 IU invested heavily in training and knowledge exchange among the network members, conducting more than 150 face-to-face training for more than 4,000 principals and pedagogical coordinators, as well as four state seminars on school management topics, which were attended by more than 1,800 managers (Instituto Unibanco, 2015). Also, 2015 held the first event of a new cycle of international seminars named Pathways to the Quality of Public Education (Caminhos para a Qualidade da Educação Pública).

The 3rd generation implementation began at the end of that year, in a gradual manner, in the state of Espírito Santo. In 2016, Goiás and Ceará upgraded to the 3rd generation. In 2017, Rio Grande do Norte was the first state in which the JF 3rd generation was fully implemented from the start.

ME1-3 (JF 3G, 2014-2016) Matching Evaluation with JF Theory of Change

The new vision and the new program configuration imposed the need to reformulate the evaluation processes at the Institute. Up to that point, impact assessments and randomized controlled trials – RCT, performed according to the evaluation "gold standards", had been responsible for producing important evidence that proved JF effectiveness and increased its legitimacy. However, according to one of the interviewees, these evaluations, tagged as "black boxes", were not capable of isolating and assessing the mechanisms that generated the program impact, nor explain how they worked.

The first step towards changing evaluation processes was the construction of the JF 3rd generation logic model. The model connected the determinants of good school management, represented by JF components, to the students best learning outcomes (Instituto Unibanco, 2015). Following the premises of the new model, two experimental impact evaluations were developed in 2015: the first explored in which extent leadership, focus and management methods impacted JF results, and the latter investigated in which extent JF contributed to schools' infrastructure, relationships, classes attendance, among other variables (Instituto Unibanco, 2015).

In addition to traditional and experimental impact assessments, the Institute also invested in alternative research methods, conducting ethnographic studies in schools and

interviews with SDE managers to comprehend the perception of different stakeholders and assess their alignment and engagement with the program (Instituto Unibanco, 2015).

Yet these changes were taking place, IU sent a strong message reaffirming its commitment to high standard evaluation practices. Among the efforts that were being made to strengthen the think tank identity, in 2015 the Institute created the Transdisciplinary Center for Education Research (Centro Transdisciplinar para a Pesquisa em Educação – CPTE)[5]. CPTE was constituted by researchers from different academic fields and IU's executive board. To establish dialogue between theory and practice, CPTE members met every two weeks with the Institute's staff.

Consolidating the changes in evaluation practices, in March 2016 was held the 2nd international seminar, themed as "Impacts and Evidence". The seminar sourced a publication with the same title, presenting "a virtuous dialogue between educational managers and science", illustrated by texts of Henriques and the CPTE member Ricardo Paes de Barros (Instituto Unibanco e Fundação Santillana, 2017). While recognizing the role of traditional impact assessments, Henriques advocated for the use of experimental impact evaluations, to isolate the impact of JF components on the overall achievements. He also supported the evaluation of implementation and stakeholder's perception and engagement, through the adoption of ethnographic and qualitative methods of observation. Finally, Henriques highlighted the importance of constantly inquiring and reviewing the logic model and its theory of change, in the light of the evaluation results.

ME2 (JF 3G, 2015-2019) Scouting International Practices

ME2-1 (JF 3G, 2015-2016) Initiating Scouting

The combination of a redesigned JF, a new institutional think tank identity, and the changes in the evaluation practices enabled important innovations in IU's knowledge

[5] According to CPTE's homepage on the Internet, its mission is "to generate and to disseminate relevant and applicable knowledge, from the JF program, focusing on the management of schools and state departments of education, as well as to produce recommendations based on analyses and evidence that lead to the continuous improvement of the Brazilian public educational program" (Instituto Unibanco, 2021).

management processes. These innovations were delivered from inside-out, and from outside-in the organization.

From inside-out, the innovation consisted in gathering, curating, and making available, on the Internet, all the information accumulated in the Institute throughout the years. This effort led to a major project named Observatory of Education, which engaged all the areas of the Institute. The Observatory was launched in 2017, during the celebration of Instituto Unibanco 35th anniversary, with more than 5,000 cataloged items, including news, papers, videos, and unpublished databases (Instituto Unibanco, 2017).

In its turn, the outside-in innovation was driven by the delay between implementation and evaluation results, and by the inadequacy of depending solely on past data to make informed decisions about the future. Therefore, the innovation consisted in the development of scouting practices at IU, aimed at exploring peripheral knowledge from new sources of information, future trends, new technologies, and promising innovations in the field of educational management.

After years of work and learning with IU's team of researchers, Mirela de Carvalho and the Knowledge Management Department team attained the task of establishing new knowledge networks. Nevertheless, the team had no protocols, expertise, or previous experience in conducting scouting activities, as stated by one of the interviewees, Economist and PhD in Sociology, Mirela de Carvalho was invited to the Institute in 2013. By that time, she worked as Special Advisor in the Rio de Janeiro Department of Education. During that period, Mirela became acquainted with the work carried out by the British Council in Brazil. Working in partnership with governments, teachers, and education professionals, the British Council offered a diverse range of programs and services aimed at fostering quality education (British Council, 2021).

That being the case, in 2014 Mirela connected with the British Council. Parallelly, the Knowledge Management Department initiated a comprehensive research work aimed at the identification of successful international cases in educational management. The research enabled the establishment of new relations, with representatives from Canada and Australia's educational sectors.

Resulting from these activities, in September 2015 took place the 1st international seminar Paths to the Quality of Public Education (Caminhos para a Qualidade da Educação),

with the theme “School Management” (Instituto Unibanco, 2015). The seminar was developed in partnership with Instituto Insper and Folha de São Paulo, one of the largest newspapers in Brazil. Attended by the Minister of Education Renato Janine Ribeiro and by more than 1,000 people in two days, representing the SDE, the academy, and education professionals. Besides national speakers and cases, the seminar presented three foreign successful educational management cases: Ontario’s (Canada) experience was presented by the Deputy Minister of Education Mary Jean Gallagher; the Australian experience was presented by Barry McGaw, former Council President of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority – ACARA; and the UK educational system was presented by Anthony McNamara, representing the National College for Teaching and Leadership – NCTL, and by Sir Michael Wilshaw, representing the Office for Standards in Education – OFSTED.

After being exposed to these experiences, IU staff members found that the Canadian, Australian, and British educational systems shared common elements (Instituto Unibanco, 2020): the adoption of a single basic curriculum and universal minimum learning standards; massive investment in principals and school managers’ training and certification; evaluation system tied to career-related incentives; mentoring mechanisms (best performing principals supporting his/her peers in low performing schools); in cases of low performance, the central bodies intervened using a predefined set of pedagogical practices, which lasted until good results were shown. However, there was one important difference, related to corrective actions taken on low performance schools: in the UK, the schools had more autonomy, but their managers were held accountable for achieving results, while in the Australian and Canadian models, the responsibility was shared among the schools and the central and regional offices.

According to one of the interviewees, at that time, considering the preceding experience of scaling up JF 2nd generation, standardization and control were still predominant approaches at the Institute. The British case, more focused on data transparency and accountability, appeared to be, at that moment, a better fit with IU’s needs and objectives.

ME2-2 (JF 3G, 2015-2019) Scouting UK's Practices

By the beginning of 2016, the Brazilian political agenda was captured by the impeachment process of President Dilma Roussef and the transition to the new government. As President Michel Temer stepped into the office, some controversial measures for social and educational policies were proposed: the constitutional amendment "Spending Ceiling" (PEC

do Teto dos Gastos[6]), the bill "School Without Party" (Escola Sem Partido)[7], and the provisional measure “New High School” (Novo Ensino Médio)[8]. These measures generated a strong reaction within high-school students, leading to the occupation of more than 1,100 high schools in 22 Brazilian states[9].

In September of that year, Mirela and her team conducted IU’s 2nd international seminar, themed after “Impacts and Evidence”. Later, in November, the 3rd international seminar, named “High School Curriculum Challenges” (Desafios Curriculares do Ensino Médio), channeled the educational policy agenda on that period. The discussion on the new curriculum model engaged representatives of MEC, State Departments of Education, schools, multilateral agencies, and universities. The international speakers were, again, the representatives from Ontario, as well as representatives from Finland, Germany, Australia, and Switzerland.

In that same year, the Institute intensified the dialogue with the British Council. Anthony McNamara, who spoke Portuguese, became popular within IU’s staff. In partnership with the NCTL, IU conducted training programs for SDE managers and for principals from Rio de Janeiro partnering schools. In a joint initiative with the British Council and the Itaú

---

[6] Constitutional Amendment No. 95, also known as the Constitutional Amendment of the Public Spending Ceiling, amended the Brazilian Constitution of 1988 to institute the New Tax Regime, limiting the growth of Brazilian government spending for 20 years.

[7] Senate Bill No. 193, 2016, aimed to include in the guidelines and bases of national education the School Without Party program, to prevent teachers from "doctrine" or "constrict" students "due to their political, ideological, moral or religious convictions, or lack of them".

[8] Provisional Measure n. 746/2016, converted in the law 13.415/2017 (Brasil, 2017), which establishes the Policy for the Promotion of the Implementation of Full-Time High Schools, and: a) promotes changes in the structure of high schools, through the creation full-time high schools; b) increases the minimum annual high school workload progressively to 1,400 hours; c) determines that the teaching of Portuguese language and Mathematics will be mandatory in the three years of high school; d) restricts the obligation of art and physical education to early childhood education and elementary school, making them optional in high school; e) determines the teach the English language from the sixth year of elementary school and in the curricula of high school, providing also the offer of other languages, preferably Spanish; f) allows content staked in high school to be used in higher education. The high school curriculum will consist of the National Common Curriculum Base - BNCC and specific training itineraries defined in each educational system which emphasizes the areas of languages, mathematics, nature sciences, humanities, and technical and professional training. It empowers educational systems to define the organization of knowledge areas, skills, skills and learning expectations defined in BNCC.

[9] The protests had begun in São Paulo schools by late 2015, in reaction to the proposed restructuring in the state’s school system (Politize-se!, 2016).

Social Foundation, IU promoted a set of workshops and discussions that informed the report "The Development of School Leadership in England – Possible Options for Brazil"[10].

Having established a close relationship with the British Council, the Institute started the arrangements for its first international mission. The mission was planned to explore three main topics of interest: the functioning of the OFSTED and the UK school supervision system, the schools' collaboration network, and the skills and requirements for school management positions.

In December 2016, the mission departed to London/UK. The mission team consisted of 15 people, representing the British Council, IU and the SDE. In London, they spoke with experts and education consultants from the British Council and OFSTED. They also visited different schools, assessed with high and low performances, as well as regional education offices, which coordinated the collaboration networks within the British educational system.

During these visits, the mission team members noted that British schools had a much higher degree of autonomy and flexibility than the public schools in Brazil. At the same time, these schools were conformed to the strict accountability standards settled by OFSTED. OFSTED, in addition to inspecting schools, provided formative feedback for low-performing school' principals and managers. According to one of the interviewees, this situation generated enormous stress on school managers, who felt pressured to deliver results, but lacked support from their regional offices.

After the mission, Mirela and her team organized workshops to share the learnings within IU, SDE and the British Council staff. In addition to the British high-level standards of performance and accountability, the mission team members highlighted the qualification called National and Local Education Leaders, granted to school managers who stood out for their good results. Along with the qualification, the leaders were entrusted with the mission of developing other managers, supporting on site the low performing schools (Instituto Unibanco,

---

[10] To build an educational leadership policy for the JF, the report indicated the following paths: a) whole system leadership development, including principals, teachers and situational leaders, linked to peer-to-peer development; b) professional development based on national standards for school leadership, focused on teaching and learning, linked to career opportunities and to national qualifications; c) early-talent spotting; d) national system of school inspection; e) abundant availability of school performance data, to drive school improvement and to help families to choose their schools (Instituto Unibanco, 2020).

2020). In the following year, Instituto Unibanco would become acquainted with a similar leadership experience, but with significant differences in terms of practices.

ME2-3 (JF 3G, 2015-2019) Scouting CA's Practices

Conducted by IU's Knowledge Management Department, the discussion on leadership development proceeded in the 4th international seminar, which took place in September 2017, named "Managers Professional Development" (Desenvolvimento Profissional de Gestores) (Instituto Unibanco, 2017). The international speakers were Elaine Hine, from the Ontario Principals' Council, Michelle Forman, from the Internal Coherence Project (SERP Institute), José Verdasca, former Minister of Education and Science of Portugal, and the Peruvian Luis Bretel Bibul, one of the founders of the Pan American Problem-Based Learning Network and the Ibero-American Case Study Program.

Earlier that year, the High School Reform provisional measure was converted into law (Brasil, 2017), initiating the implementation of the Common National Curriculum Base - BNCC. Therefore, the mission to Ontario, in Canada, was planned to reconcile the prospecting process initiated in the UK with the BNCC emerging agenda, aiming to explore the following topics: a) management of the school system, focused on alignment of purposes, balance between control and engagement, and collaborative problem-solving; b) competence standards for school managers; and c) flexible high school curriculum models (Instituto Unibanco, 2020).

Compared to the UK, the mission to Canada would involve more topics under discussion, more visits, and more staff. Visits were being planned to the Ontario Ministry of Education, the Ontario College of Teachers, the Ontario Board of Principals, the Toronto School District, and to four Canadian high schools. The mission team would be staffed by 26 people, representing IU, the SDE, and partner organizations, who were all directly involved in the debate of the high school curriculum base reform.

Aware of this complexity, Mirela and her team initiated a careful preparation process. To deepen the knowledge on the Canadian experience, Mirela commissioned an academic study on the Ontario educational system (Segatto, 2017). A previous field study was conducted, which gave rise to a briefing, with objectives, a glossary and documents related to the mission. The mission objectives and roadmap were discussed in preparatory meetings with the team that would travel to Canada. Since most of the group did not speak English, interpreters were hired and joined the mission team.

In November 2017, the mission landed in Toronto, capital of the Canadian province of Ontario. Canada's model was more collaborative than the British model, based on trust and mutual adjustment between the actors in the system. There was substantial support and investment in teachers and school managers' development, and the schools' annual planning goals were focused on few objectives.

Daily, after the visits, the members of the mission team had a meeting to reflect on the conversations they had had with the Canadians. In these conversations, the contraposition of Ontario's and the British experience was a recurring topic. One of the interviewees stated that the Canadians did not understand why Brazilians - still under the influence of the British experience - asked so many questions about monitoring and accountability.

One of the interviewees reported that the mission highlight was the Canadian mentoring model. As in the British National and Local Education Leaders program, in the Ontario's system, high-performing school principals devoted part of their time to mentor low performing principals. However, in the Canadian case, the collaboration was effectuated on a voluntary basis, guided by common objectives defined by the network members. Also, these principals were supported by a robust leadership program, called Leading Students Achievement: Networks for Learning – LSA[11].

Still seduced by the charm of the Canadian narrative, the mission team members began to debate how to adapt the Ontario model to the Brazilian reality. According to one of the interviewees, IU's approach was extremely focused on control, to the point of being

[11] Leading Student Achievement (LSA): Networks for Learning was a project developed by the provincial principals' associations, the Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario - CPCO, and the Ontario Principals' Council (OPC), in partnership with and funded by the Student Achievement Division, Ontario Ministry of Education (EDU). The project began in 2005 and continued until 2019. The LSA was constituted by a network of interconnected and mutually supporting networks, the Leadership Networks, The Innovation Networks, The Main Learning Teams and The Professional Learning Communities. LSA also developed main processes for Leadership Learning, using a concept of Teaching Learning Critical Pathways – TLCP and resources as Inquiry Collaborative tools, Learning Conversations Protocols and Knowledge Building, Knowledge Creation and Knowledge Forum. Throughout the years, LSA also developed content and training solutions on a wide range of Leadership themes, including Collective Efficacy, Instructional Leadership / Learning Leadership, Leadership of Math Learning, High Impact Leadership, Leadership as Influence, Leadership Problems of Practice, Collaborative Professionalism, Equity, Family Engagement, Monitoring, School Improvement Planning, Deeper Learning & Coherence (Creativity, Innovation and Design), Well-Being, Mental Health, Mindfulness And Voice, Conditions for Learning, Trust, and LSA (Ontario Principals' Council, 2021).

"disrespectful" with the schools' principals. On the other hand, it would be hard to achieve, in Brazil, a similar level of trust and collaboration found in Canada.

These reflections were debated in the mission balance meeting, held on the last day, and in two more meetings held after the mission, in São Paulo (Instituto Unibanco, 2020). According to one of the participants of these meetings, a lesson that should be transferred to the Brazilian school system was "(to emphasize the) importance of trust and collaboration in the relations among the various actors of the educational system, the strengthening of leaders within the system, and the search for greater equity." Another participant stated that the lesson was "the non-punitive, collaborative and joint knowledge building".

ME2-4 (JF 3G, 2017-2019) Assimilating International Experiences

After the internal discussion, Mirela and her team designed some informative diagrams (infographics) to summarize and communicate the results of the international scouting. Following that, they initiated a systematic process of dissemination and debate within the Institute's networks, using the British and Canadian experiences as references for the development of the new high school curriculum, a leadership system, and a national system of education.

The material produced by the Knowledge Management team was presented and discussed with the Council of State Departments of Education – CONSED, and in the 6th international seminar, titled as "Management and Leadership for the Continuous Advancement of Education" (Instituto Unibanco, 2020). Besides the national speakers, at the seminar were Linda Massey, head of the Leading Students' Achievement (LSA) program of the Ontario Principals Council, Sean Headford, from the British OFSTED, and Jose Weinstein, representing the Centro para el Desarrollo del Liderazgo Educativo, from Chile (Instituto Unibanco, 2020).

After the international seminar, the Knowledge Management Department held a workshop with experts and IU staff to discuss the UK and Ontario models. In the workshops, the group summarized their findings in six new imperatives to be developed within IU's initiatives: a) collective development of solutions, through the listening to different actors and based on evidence; b) inclusion of equity, well-being and students engagement as additional targets for the educational policies; c) systemic relationships based on ethics, respect and trust; d) leadership development and professionalization of school managers to enable the mediation

of collaborative learning processes; e) integration and coordination of multilevel system components (whole-systems approach); f) implementation of a flexible and diverse high school curriculum (Instituto Unibanco, 2020).

In parallel with the scouting and the narrated events, frequent meetings and intense discussions occurred among IU executive team, middle-managers, and external specialists. This group, constituted of approximately 20 people, met twice a month to debate not only the international practices, but how they would fit within other national experiences. One of the interviewees observed that "the meetings were very collaborative", and even if there was frequent disagreement, among the group, the diverse combination of points of view was recognized as a powerful asset for the institution.

After assimilating the international experiences, the relationship with the British Council and United Kingdom continued to be strengthened. Also, new scouting missions were launched to Portugal, Estonia, Poland, and Chile (Instituto Unibanco, 2020), enabling the further expansion and consolidation of IU's international knowledge networks.

LE1 (JF 3G, 2018-2019) Realigning IU Systems and Practices

LE1-1 (JF 3G, 2018-2019) Improving JF Theory of Change

As the learning obtained from the UK and Canada missions was being disseminated among IU staff and networks, the systems and practices at the institution began to be modified. In 2018, the former concept of "Educational Management by Results" was refashioned in a new concept called "Management for Continuous Advancement" (Instituto Unibanco, 2018). In practice, this concept would mean more experimentation, continuous practical learning, and internal coherence of actions within schools, regional offices and SDE. Later that year, IU published new research to support the alignment between the Management for Continuous Advance concept and JF's logic model, and to discuss the practical implications of the new logic model, a working group with the Institute's executive team was constituted (Instituto Unibanco, 2020).

In another series of workshops within IU staff, based on the improved JF logic model, new features were introduced in the program (Instituto Unibanco, 2020). These features aimed to strengthen the mutual agreement on goals, the sharing of practices and the coherence and systemic integration of educational actions, focused on collaboration and support to the schools. Consequently, the Management Circuit methodology was modified, to integrate the

six circuit stages and the three JF governance bodies (State Departments of Education, regional offices, and schools).

In this new arrangement, the supervisors' role would become more strategic. In addition to monitoring and tutoring school managers, a protocol of visits to schools was created, with a specific agenda of topics to accelerate the Circuito's implementation. From now on, supervisors should support and connect school managers, regional offices, and the SDE, ensuring the alignment and coherence among multilevel educational plans and actions (Instituto Unibanco, 2020).

LE1-2 (JF 3G, 2018-2019) Piloting Experimental Evaluation

Aiming at developing critical thinking and generating learning within the system networks, JF evaluation processes were reshaped based on the concept of "continuous processes of learning by practice". This concept would imply major changes not only in the evaluation processes, but on how solutions were developed and implemented at the Institute.

According to one of the interviewees, in 2018, the Solutions Development Department was still struggling to adapt to the 3rd generation model, and Mirela's team was still the protagonist in the development of new solutions at IU. To change this situation, Alexsandro dos Santos swapped places with César Nunes, who was part of the CPTE. In his previous professional experiences, César had worked with the Canadians of Ontario, and in IU, he had led an experimental evaluation project in the state of Rio Grande do Norte, which was based on the Design-Based Implementation Research approach and supported by methods and instruments developed in Canada (Vinha *et al*., 2019).

Right after stepping in, César initiated the implementation of JF Communities of Practice[12], inspired by the Canadian experience. His first step was to conduct a formation process within his team, which included a seminar with educators and managers who had previous experience with these communities, as well as an international workshop with Dr.

[12] Communities of practice are "collaborative environments aimed at promoting the sharing of challenges of practice and fostering the exchange of ideas, allowing each participant to learn from their peers and contribute to a collective construction of knowledge".

Zahava Scherz, researcher of the Department of Science Education at the Weizmann Institute of Sciences of Israel, who spoke about the difficulties and achievements in implementing these practices in teacher's training (Instituto Unibanco, 2019).

By the end of 2019, the first Communities of Practice were created in the JF. Face-to-face meetings were held to activate the communities in Ceará, Espírito Santo and Goiás. In total, 21 communities were activated, involving the participation of more than 1,000 people, among students, regional managers, and pedagogical coordinators (Instituto Unibanco, 2019).

LE1-3 (JF 3G, 2018-2019) Decentralizing Implementation Activities

One of the interviewees reported that the new management protocols, the expansion of coordination and governance bodies, and the need to create shared accountability mechanisms intensified information flows within JF, increasing the complexity of its implementation. In addition, while seeking to increase autonomy and sustainability within states and schools, IU began to use a more inductive approach to design the educational plans, generating new conflicts with schools, regional offices and the SDE.

The Project Implementation Department was then headed by Maria Júlia Azevedo (better known as "Maju" by her colleagues), who arrived at IU in late 2015. According to one of the interviewees, by that time, implementation activities were limited to the (logistical) operationalization of contents produced in the Solutions Department. Also, the data on schools were abundant, but they were missing on the SDE. Adding to that, in the SDE point of view, the Institute was considered authoritarian, and given the new configuration JF had been assuming, it would be unsustainable to maintain this approach.

The process of decentralization of implementation activities was initiated in 2018, eventuating in some important practical implications. An interviewee reported that the educational plans began to be prepared in collaboration with the states, in a customized way, to meet each individual need. Likewise, management information systems were adapted to each one of the states. The results were monitored through multilevel indicators and targets, capable of attributing the performance to each one of the bodies involved in JF's implementation.

In addition to the technical challenges, an interviewee observed that the major concern was changing the implementation's staff mindset from control to support. To overcome the issue, IU's staff began to be hired locally, as they had greater knowledge about the local reality.

The staff members were instructed to develop their own “work microprocesses”, and act with initiative within their "responsibility fields".

As related by one interviewee, once a week Maju met with program coordinators to discuss management issues. To plan training actions, meetings with the People Management team took place every two weeks. Within the implementation teams, "microtraining" was performed weekly, in small groups and over the Internet, in webinars. Also, twice a month, the program's supervisors organized wide open meetings with representatives of schools, regional offices and the SDE. To support schools that were facing enduring adversities, IU began to hire specialized consultancies, which would help them to solve their key-problems and then transfer the management knowledge and practices.

It was also observed that the decentralization of implementation activities produced immediate results. The work began to be executed in a more collective manner, and the teams no longer relied on reports to access information, which was being consumed as the program was being implemented. The task of creating multilevel indicators, to hold the different actors accountable, has not advanced, although the desired results were emerging in practice, channeled by the collaborative construction of the educational action plans and by the mutual adjustment mechanisms that have been implemented.

LE1-4 (JF 3G, 2018-2019) Preparing for the (Emergent) Future

In Brazil, 2018 was an election year for president and state governors, with a debate marked by a strong ideological polarization. Controversial questions about gender and race equity, and scientific denialism advanced towards the field of education. The command change in the national and state governments would also require the renegotiation of JF's partnerships, within new contexts. In Henriques words, "the election year required a clear position on issues essential to public education and the consolidation of partnerships with organizations that shared the same objectives" (Instituto Unibanco, 2018).

Soon after the elections, in December 2018, the National Council of Education – CNE approved the high school Common National Curriculum Base, creating flexible learning trajectories for these students (Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira - INEP, 2018). Also, in that year, IDEB results (from 2017) were disclosed, and exposed the Brazilian high school system fragilities: more than 70% of the students were evaluated with insufficient learning level in Mathematics and Portuguese (Instituto Nacional

de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira - INEP, 2019). At the same time, the results demonstrated JF's transformation potential: Ceará, Espírito Santo, Goiás, Piauí and Rio Grande do Norte grew in the index, and the first three were among the four best ranked states in IDEB (Instituto Unibanco, 2018).

The inability of the Brazilian governments to organize the educational system set the stage for another movement in the Instituto's strategy, marked by its engagement in the educational policy debate. In that period, IU participated actively in forums such as All For Education (Todos Pela Educação), the Group of Institutes Foundations and Companies (Grupo de Institutos Fundações e Empresas – GIFE) and the Movement For the Base (Movimento Pela Base). IU also led the consortium of civil society entities that supported the Front of New High School Curriculum within the Council of State Secretaries of Education, the High School Working Group of the Movement For the Base, and participated in the Collaborate Movement (Movimento Colabora), which advocates for the institution of a national educational system. (Instituto Unibanco, 2018, 2019).

In this period, IU kept expanding its grant-giving activities, promoting diversity and equity in the educational system through partnerships with dozens of non-governmental organizations, research institutions and social justice funds. In that period, IU supported initiatives like "Researchers Public School of Education: Challenges in the Production of Knowledge from the Peripheries" (Pesquisadores em Educação de Escolas Públicas: Desafios à Produção de Conhecimento das Periferias), "Racial Equity" (Equidade Racial), "Black Youth" (Juventude Negra), "Women Researchers in Public School Education" (Pesquisadoras da Educação em Escolas Públicas), "Women in Exact Sciences" (Elas nas Exatas), and "Afroscientists" (Afrocientistas), among others (Instituto Unibanco, 2018, 2019).

In 2019, the Institute built a new strategic planning, with the collaboration of IU staff and renowned specialists in the field of education. For the new cycle to begin, the Institute structured its initiatives into four axes of action: a) implement sustainable and scalable management programs in heterogeneous contexts and develop sustainable management solutions, b) generate evidence-based and public policy-oriented knowledge, c) strengthen and articulate actors and networks for the defense of educational management, and d) occupy strategic positions and intensify relationships with the main actors of educational field (Instituto Unibanco, 2019).

In that same year, JF was initiated in Minas Gerais, which had an extensive network of almost 1,300 schools and more than 400,000 students. After the inauguration of the new state mandates, the partnerships with Ceará, Espírito Santo, Goiás, Piauí and Rio Grande do Norte were re-agreed and renewed (Instituto Unibanco, 2019).

By the end of 2019, JF had evolved with new features and an improved theory of change. New evaluation processes were being implemented, and pilot projects were being designed and tested. The decentralization of implementation activities was showing the first results, and IU was leading and expanding important networks for the future of education in Brazil.

At that point, everything indicated that 2020 would be...

Case Commentary

The time has come to comment on this narrative report about a recent period of transition in Instituto Unibanco in relation to systems-change in secondary-level education in Brazil. The main purpose of the commentary is to add depth to the existing body of statements about Systems Leadership, with the additional purpose being to indicate how case study research can be part of a pathway toward expanding professional knowledge about this practice. As such, this section will involve (metaphorically) a dialogue between the case narrative, on the one hand, and specific lines of practical argumentation about Systems Leadership, archetypally, on the other.

We begin the dialogue with a statement about Systems Leadership, to quote: “The complexity and long timeframes of systems-change initiatives mean that challenges and setbacks are inevitable. The question is not whether these will occur, but how the network will react to them, adapt and course-correct when necessary.” The IU case fits this characterization rather snugly. In particular, the trajectory of the Youth of the Future program’s configuration of practices illustrates the archetype-idea that adaptation is a normal -- indeed, an apt -- characteristic of systems-change initiatives over long time frames.

System-leadership organization and Systems-change initiative: Conceptual clarification

Given this generally comfortable fit between archetype and case, we can raise and address some specific concerns as means to add degrees of depth. A first specific issue is analytical: we have examined systems leadership practice by introducing the concept of a systems-leadership organization (SLO), illustrated by Instituto Unibanco (IU) as it relates to the secondary education "system" in Brazil. An SLO is a different concept than a systems-change initiative (SCI), of which the Youth of the Future program is an example. The distinction and relation between an SLO and a SCI is open to many analogies. In the military campaign context, an analogy might be between a command headquarters and a campaign, considered as an organized assembly of organizational components. In a public health context, an SLO might be a national or international "center for disease control" and an SCI might be a national or international vaccination campaign.

Introducing the SLO/SCI distinction means that the above quoted statement from the Harvard report might aptly be revised so that the term "network" is used primarily to characterize either an SLO or a SCI, but not both indiscriminately. As a related matter of conceptualization and terminology, we suggest that "adaptation" be used to characterize SCI's, and that further adaptation be seen as an imperative of SCI's, considered archetypally, as adaptation is understood as needed to effectuate sufficient progress in systems change. Differentiating SLO's from SCI's poses another matter for conceptual clarification: if adaptation is characterized as an aspect of SCI's (but not SLO's), how should the concern for change in SLOs be characterized? We would opt for organizational transitions (Watkins, 2009) or SLO-transitions, specifically. Just as adaptation is an imperative for SCI's, transitions are imperatives for SLO's. Indeed, the imperative of SLO-transitions is a practical implication of the imperative of SCI-adaptation.

With this conceptual engineering, we can move closer to the IU experience as reported here, asking what sense we can give to it as a case of an SLO-transition, for purposes of elaborating the Systems Leadership archetype. A straightforward move is to characterize the change in both strategy and practices, since these terms were tied to the idea of a SLO-transition when introducing it a moment ago. *Strategy* is a verbal symbol within the professional knowledge of the management field. It has a range of meanings in archetypes of purposive theorizing of management. Suppose one stated that a strategy is a way of characterizing an

organization in a holistic manner, such that there is a meaningful understanding of the relation between its collection of practices, on the one hand, and the purposes and imperatives that they are meant to effectuate, on the other (Mintzberg, 1994; Freedman, 2013). You might edit that statement in your head and think of many more equally good statements, but you wouldn't likely reject it. Accordingly, let's run with it here. As for practices, let's run with the idea that they are practical means that play some identifiable role in an SLO, such as fulfilling a functional imperative or a strategic imperative or other necessity in effectuating the SLO's purpose or intent. (Note that this terminology belongs to a genre of professional knowledge formulation that has been termed mechanism-intent thinking (Barzelay, 2019)).

Supplied with this terminological equipment, let's look at the IU experience to exemplify an SLO-transition. Call to mind the line of work that we titled as scouting of international experience in the education field where the main places scouted were England in the UK and Ontario in Canada. We might say that the analysis of these experiences focused on their education fields' SCI's. Scouting played specific roles in IU's SLO-transition, one of which related to changes in IU's strategy in identifiable content-terms. These content-terms center on the notion of "continuous advancement in education management." Let's delve into this idea as it relates to the case of IU as an SLO and to the Youth of the Future as an aspect of the SCI in the case.

Sticking with the frame of "strategy change within an SLO-transition," we can say that continuous advancement in educational management is more than a strategy slogan. It is "strategy content" as that term is used in the management literature. Suppose we think of strategy content as an in-depth answer to a practical question that concerns how an organization's practices, in their totality, make causal contributions in effectuating the purpose that the organization means to fulfill. If so, we will appropriately associate the idea of continuous advancement in educational management with the advent of a range of practices that had not previously been present within IU. These included partnering with the education domain's subgovernments at state-level, generally, and with state secretaries of education and others in the headquarters and field organizations of state departments ("secretariats") of education, specifically. Another additional practice that is aptly associated with the strategy-content of continuous advancement in educational management was the experiment in convening communities of practice on a state-by-state basis where the community members

included school principals. A third new practice was to hold seminar-like meetings every other week to which IU's departmental leaders and others were obliged to attend. As this list is expanded it becomes ever more compelling to think of the idea of continuous advancement in educational management to have been given a certain depth and to think of the new practices within IU as being strategically oriented towards it. (This line of case commentary will hopefully be seen as giving force to the notion that SLO-transitions deserve to be seen as a significant topic-issue within an elaborated Systems Leadership archetype.)

Education Management as a Big Idea in SCI-adaptation

While continuing to gaze at the idea of continuous advancement in education management, let us now turn our analytic eyes from the topic-issue of SLO-transitions to the related but distinct one of SCI-adaptation. From the standpoint of SCI-adaptation, how might continuous advancement in education management be understood?

That question sends the mind in several directions. If one travels toward the public policy field and stops to take in the book, *Purposeful Program Theory* (Funnell and Rogers, 2011), then you might well assimilate continuous advancement in education management to the idea that titles the book, for the reason that purposeful program theories are in-depth answers to the practical question of how a program (however many organizations are involved with them) makes causal contributions in effectuating a policy intervention's purpose, and for the further reason that program delivery in relation to implemented policy intervention is analogous to a SCI in relation to progress in systems-change.

On a different trip you could travel toward the field of management of large-scale military undertakings, which are often titled as campaigns. An authority on this subject is General David Petraeus (Ret.), who commanded the counter insurgency "surge" involving coalition forces in Iraq in 2007-8. He has argued that an imperative of any campaign is to formulate a big idea. "As defined by Petraeus, big ideas are the overarching concepts that guide an enterprise or organization. Developing the right intellectual constructs to guide an organization's approach is critical—they are the principles that guide operations. If the big ideas are wrong (or they lose their validity over time), then all subsequent operational plans will be built on shaky foundations" (Denn, 2016). As part of Petraeus's strategic leadership

archetype (Petraeus, 2016), a campaign's Big Ideas have to be communicated and reviewed/ revised (if the campaign's tactical moves and other characteristics are to make causal contributions to effectuating campaign-intent).

The Big Idea concept seems quite apt as an imperative within the Systems Leadership archetype. Nevertheless, it is actually rather veiled. The most closely associated statement is associated with the Convene and Commit imperative, to quote: "Define shared interests and goals, and commit to working together in new ways to create systemic change." Thus, if one wishes to consider adding the Big Idea to this understated idea, then the specific Big Idea of continuous advancement in educational management would be worth examining in detail as a case of this aspect of SCI-adaptation.

This raises a question of how one would examine a Big Idea from this standpoint. There's a number of paths one might follow in doing that,[13] all of which are worth pursuing, especially if we would want to look to recover the design-practicality (Barzelay, 2019) of stakeholder-directed communication of continuous advancement in educational management in this case, taken as practical means for fulfilling a putatively universal imperative of SCI's: to have a Big Idea.

As a down payment on such a discussion, let's characterize the content of this Big Idea in a schematic fashion, using the tool of mind-mapping (Buzan, 2018). As shown in the mind-map (Figure 1), its root is the Big Idea of continuous advancement of education management. Its trunks match the two (molecular) ideas that form the (compound) idea in the map's root, namely, education management and continuous advancement. The education management trunk is split into two branches, one for each constitutive term. The inclusion of "equity" in the societal-level branch is an aspect of the "adaptation" of the Youth for the Future-centered SCI. As for the management branch, the case evinces as shift in orientation from one centered on

[13] These include following literature in institutional sociology that relates to organizations and new practice creation (specifically Lounsbury and Crumley, 2007); literature on what makes an idea Big, including that on the generation of memes (Heath and Seidel, 2005); and literature on what makes policy ideas safe from derogation (Hilgartner, 2000).

performing management functions such as planning and controlling using apt tools to channel thinking, decision-making, and communication (Simons, 1994), on the one hand , to an orientation that is associated with developing organizational capabilities and human talent through practices that involve individual and collective learning paths, on the other (Teece, Pisano and Shuen, 1997). The branches extending out from the continuous improvement trunk should be self-explanatory if the case narrative is kept fresh in mind.

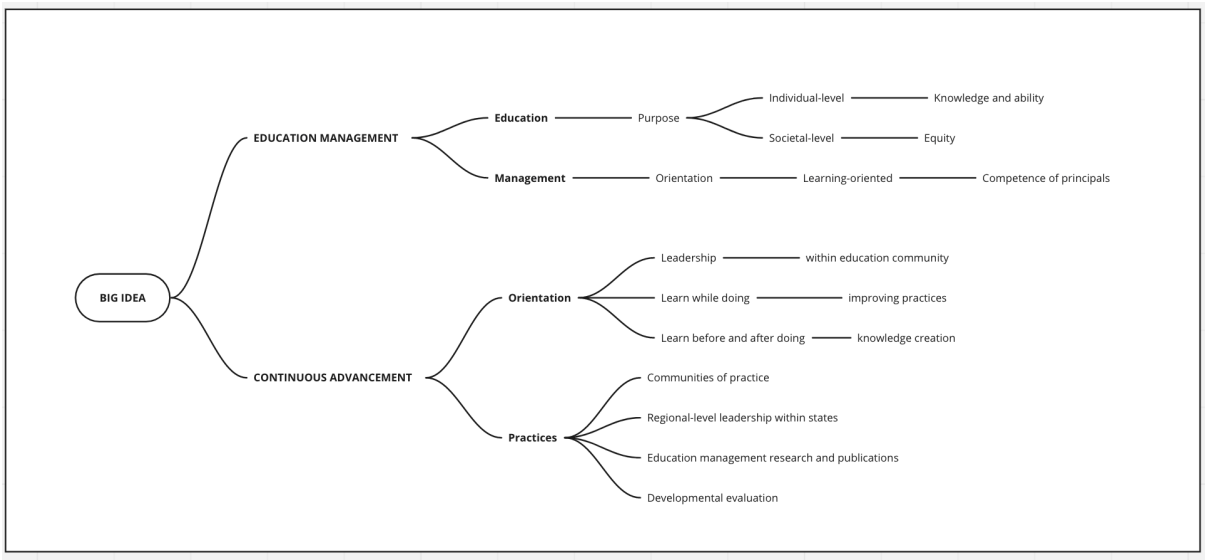


Figure 1. Mind-map of Big Idea

Note that in content the Big Idea element of continuous advancement in our case is highly consonant with statements in the Harvard Systems Leadership report, including: (a) “Individuals, coalitions and systems-change strategies will evolve and develop new capacities at the same time as an initiative unfolds”, and (b) “Adopting an agile, flexible, innovative and learning-centered approach allows for evolution and experimentation.”

In reflecting on the case in the light of the institutional sociology literature on new practice creation, one would want to consider a specific role played by “education management” in identifying the terrain on which the SCI is positioned (in relation to the system). The case evidence indicates that education management, as a Big Idea, made legible an aspect of the (secondary) education domain that had not been recognized in Brazil, if one looks back to the time of Youth for the Future’s first generation. The domain was then

constituted by two mind-map like trunks: policy and practice. Policy split into branches such as curriculum policies, while practice split into branches such as pedagogical methods. Policy was associated with government; practice was associated with classroom teachers. Management in schools (and principals) didn't have a place in this mind-map. Capacity-building practices for which education departments are a main institutional site were likewise off the map. Putting education management on the map was a foundation for this system domain's systems-change initiative (specifically, but not exclusively, Youth for the Future). The Big Idea of *continuous advancement* in education management was pitched on this terrain.

Pentadic Analysis of the Big Idea

The idea that education management is the terrain for the systems-change initiative directed at secondary education pre-dated the Big Idea of continuous advancement in education management. Indeed, if there was a big idea before 2016, it was different from the one that came into play starting around that time, as the case narrative makes clear. What merits exploration for purposes of deepening the Systems Leadership archetype is how to think about Big Idea-ness, considering that attaining clarity about that notion is a basis for crafting apt statements about SCI-adaptation as well as about SLO-transitions. We explore that idea now.

For this purpose, we make use of the literature titled "rhetorical criticism" (Kuypers, 2009).[14] As one of the survey of this literature goes:

> Perhaps the richest critical lens that has been used for rhetorical criticism is Kenneth Burke's dramatism…Most discussions of Burke's dramatism begin with his dramatistic pentad…The pentad is comprised of five parts of a rhetorical drama: scene, act, agent, agency (vehicle), and purpose. Burke stresses analysis through examination of a rhetorical drama's ratios, or relationships, between two

[14] According to one survey of this literature, "the best products of this methodology exhibit several common characteristics: (a) close attention to the communicative act, (b) a keen understanding of the context within which the communicative act occurred, and (c) an ability to articulate a rhetorical perspective that helps illuminate the persuasive art that resides in the communicative act being studied" (Leeman, 2017). These characteristics can be observed in our presentation of Big Idea using the Burkean pentadic method in the following paragraphs.

elements of the pentad; for example, scene–act ratio, or purpose–agency ratio. He argues that elements of rhetorical dramas are portrayed in relationship with each other, with one as foreground and the other as background, either more or less successfully" (Leeman, 2017: 7).

Accordingly, we engage in reflective rhetorical analysis of the Big Idea in our case with the aid of the holistic and highly analytical Burkean pentadic method (King, 2009). The premise here is that when statements are made to enunciate the idea of continuous advancement in education management, one motive is to characterize the *approach* being taken to "effectuating" (Sarasvathy, 2001) the strategic change initiative's purpose. This motive is indicated here by titling the pentagram's Act-Purpose ratio with the same words as the title of the Big Idea itself.

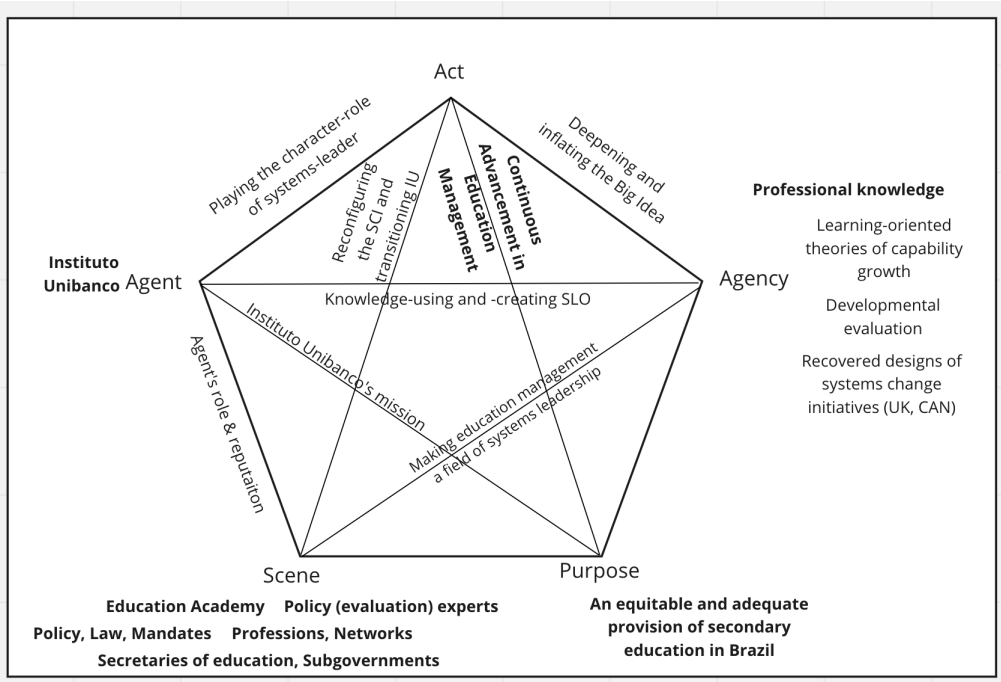


Figure 2. Pentagram of Education Management as a Big Idea

The diagram (Figure 2) makes the point that ideas associated with continuous advancement in education management have been brought into the Scene through encounters with stakeholders in the field. As such, stakeholders (such as those indicated by the terms assigned to the Scene pentode) come to associate statements titled by the Big Idea with ideas concerning (a) the SCI's terrain of educational management, (b) the SCI's and SLO's purpose

of making progress toward the adequate and equitable provision of secondary education in Brazil, and with (c) specific thematic characteristics of the SCI's approach, such as learning-based growth in the professional competence of principals and development of community capacity to achieve continuous advancement in educational management.

Continuing with the same line of analysis, this idea-association pattern is anchored in stakeholders' collective appreciation for the critically important notion that *educational management* is *a field of systems leadership*. This appreciation, in turn, has multiple sources. One source is buy-in to the Act-Purpose ratio that considers advancement in education management to be an undeniably apt approach for making progress towards an adequate and equitable provision of secondary education in Brazil. Another source of idea-association is the Big Idea's Agent-Scene ratio. Specifically, Instituto Unibanco – the SLO in Brazil's systems leadership for education management field -- embodied the Big Idea. This was accentuated by appointing notable academic authorities in the education field as associates and department heads inside the Institute. Yet another source is the Big Idea's Act-Scene ratio. Specifically, stakeholders could discern the Big Idea in the dance of the SCI's reconfigured practices, such as partnerships with particular state governments and the expansion of practices aligned with being a think-tank for educational management.

You won't be surprised by the suggestion that the Big Idea's "size" is also attributable to the remaining ratios in the pentagram. Consider the Agent-Agency ratio. The notion here is that IU became associated with identifiable assortments of professional knowledge (such as those listed alongside the Agency pentode). Turning to the Agency-Act ratio, the Big Idea's presentation pointed to reservoirs of knowledge that could be brought into play in deepening and maturing the approach titled as continuous advancement in education management. And, finally, the Agent-Act ratio points to the meaning of the Big Idea that came from IU performing the character role of a systems leader, whether through seminars, meetings with IU authorities, publishing reports and so on.

This exercise in rhetorical criticism using Burke's dramatistic pentad should have given some heft to the idea that Big Ideas are SCI-imperatives and that, correspondingly, changes in big ideas are SCI-adaptation imperatives.

There's much more to be garnered from a dialogue between analyzing this case and theorizing Systems Leadership. Some of that dialogue can be seen as going deeper into the question of how a Big Idea can acquire both size and depth through SLO-transitions. For this purpose, a close analysis of the specifics of the case's line of work in international scouting is highly pertinent, with one of the features having been the direct involvement of selected state secretaries of education in scouting visits to England and Ontario as well as in sifting information and synthesizing views about SCI-adaptation in Brazil in report form.

No less so, some valuable dialogue can be seen as going sideways toward issues of identifying and tackling challenges associated with SLO-transitions. That dialogue would aptly involve admitting professional knowledge about organizations and their management into the inner core of Systems Leadership theorizing, research, and practice. As an indication of the relevance of the IU case, consider the idea that any given organizational transition involves *challenges* (Watkins, 2009), marked by incongruities between the intent to accomplish the transition's purposes and the reality of adverse tendencies (such as resistance to change) possibly coming into play. IU contended with transition-challenges. Thinking in terms of archetypes, IU's challenge was to accomplish a "realignment transition" (Watkins, 2009). Transition-challenges, such as this type or those titled as start-up, turn-around, success-sustaining, or growth transitions, deserve to have a place within the agenda of furnishing professional knowledge about Systems Leadership.

In conclusion, Systems Leadership would aptly aspire to becoming a professional discipline whose domain includes systems leadership organizations (SLO's), strategic change initiatives (SCI's), and the "systems domains" in which progress towards sustainable development and human dignity is aptly sought over extended time frames. If there's buy-in to this aspiration, then a question arises as to how to meet the functional imperative of furnishing professional knowledge about Systems Leadership. This paper has illustrated a practical means for doing so.

References

Barzelay, M. (1999) 'How to argue about the New Public Management', *International Public Management Journal*, 2(2), pp. 183–216.

Barzelay, M. (2019) *Public Management as a Design-Oriented Professional Discipline*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.

Bryson, J. M. *et al.* (2021) 'Leading social transformations: Creating public value and advancing the common good', *Journal of Change Management: Reframing Leadership and Organizational Practice*, 21(2), pp. 180–202.

Buzan, T. (2018) *Mind Map Mastery: The Complete Guide to Learning and Using the Most Powerful Tool in the Universe*. London: Watkins.

Crosby, B. C. and Bryson, J. M. (2005) *Leadership for the Common Good: Tackling Public Problems in a Shared-power World*. 2nd edn. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.

Denn, W. J. (2016) 'Strategic Command: General David Petraeus and the Execution of Strategic Leadership', *Military Review Exclusive Online*, (September), pp. 2–7.

Dreier, L., Nabarro, D. and Nelson, J. (2019) *Systems Leadership for Sustainable Development: Strategies for Achieving Systemic Change*. Cambridge, MA: Corporate Responsibility Initiative at the Harvard Kennedy School.

Freedman, L. (2013) *Strategy: A History*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Funnell, S. C. and Rogers, P. J. (2011) *Purposeful Program Theory: Effective Use of Theories of Change and Logic Models*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.

Heath, C. and Seidel, V. (2005) 'Language as a coordinating mechanism: How linguistic memes help direct appropriate action', in. *Academy of Management Meetings*.

Hilgartner, S. (2000) *Science on Stage: Expert Advice as Public Drama*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Hitchcock, D. (2002) 'The practice of argumentative discussion', *Argumentation*, 16(3), pp. 287–298.

Jonsen, A. R. and Toulmin, S. (1988) *The Abuse of Casuistry: A History of Moral Reasoning*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

King, A. (2009) 'Pentadic criticism: The wheels of creation', in Kuypers, J. A. (ed.) *Rhetorical Criticism: Perspectives in Action*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Kuypers, J. A. (ed.) (2009) *Rhetorical Criticism*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Leeman, R. W. (2017) 'Rhetorical criticism', *International Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods*. Edited by J. Matthes. Hoboken, NJ, USA: John Wiley.

Lounsbury, M. and Crumley, E. T. (2007) 'New practice creation: An institutional perspective on innovation', *Organization Studies*, 28(7), pp. 993–1012.

Mintzberg, H. (1994) *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning*. New York, NY: Prentice Hall.

Moore, M. H. (1995) *Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Petraeus, D. (2016) *David Petraeus on Strategic Leadership*. Cambridge, MA: Belfer Center, Harvard Kennedy School of Government. Available at: https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/david-petraeus-strategic-leadership.

Sarasvathy, S. D. (2001) 'Causation and effectuation: Toward a theoretical shift from economic inevitability to entrepreneurial contingency', *Academy of Management Review*, 26(2), pp. 243–263.

Simons, R. (1994) *Levers of Control: How Managers use Innovative Control Systems to Drive Strategic Renewal*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Teece, D. J., Pisano, G. and Shuen, A. (1997) 'Dynamic capabilities and strategic management', *Strategic Management Journal*, 18(7), pp. 509–533.

Watkins, M. D. (2009) 'Picking the right transition strategy', *Harvard Business Review*, 87(1), pp. 46–53.

Yin, R. K. (2011) *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish.* New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Appendix A - Analysis of Report

Lisa Dreier, David Nabarro and Jane Nelson, "Systems Leadership for Sustainable Development: Strategies for Achieving Systemic Change," Corporate Responsibility Initiative at the Harvard Kennedy School, September 2019. URL

General background: Many organizations, from companies to social entrepreneurs and nonprofits, are integrating systems-change goals and strategies into their programs or messaging. In response to growing interest, a number of organizations are working to build capacity, deepen knowledge and share experiences on leadership skills and tactics for advancing system change. This paper does not provide a comprehensive mapping of the field, instead seeking to present highlights and syntheses.

Specific background: In 2017, the United Nations' Chief Executives Board identified Capability for Systems Leadership as a necessary core strength for the United Nations system. Since then, the UN Staff College has incorporated Systems Leadership into its curriculum, and individual agencies including UNDP have piloted systems-change approaches in select programs.

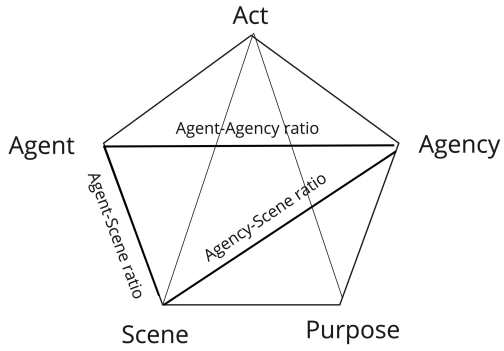
Recognizing the need for broader field-building for systems change and Systems Leadership, Darcy Riddell of the McConnell Foundation and Anna Birney of the School of Systems Change convened a group of Canadian and international stakeholders in a 2018 workshop on "Global Field-building for Systems Change." The group discussed key needs such as curating and connecting knowledge and networks; strengthening capacity through learning and support systems; engaging new voices; attracting funding; and stewarding field-building efforts. More and broader efforts like this are needed, ideally linking together major experts and initiatives and providing an easily accessible platform to share and access knowledge about systems change and Systems Leadership.

A vision for the desired future of Systems Leadership as it relates to supporting the SDGs would include:

- Widespread understanding of the concept and core principles of Systems Leadership among the international community, including global, regional and local leaders;
- Universal access and availability of information, tools and training programs to help develop and strengthen Systems Leaders;
- Robust and systematic evaluation and sharing of experiences and outcomes of Systems Leadership initiatives;
- High-level leadership support for the approach among respected individuals from diverse sectors and regions, clearly embracing it as a tool for empowerment and systems change.

Achieving these goals will require a coordinated effort among proponents of Systems Leadership to further develop, study and refine the approach and encourage its mainstreaming. However, the nature of Systems Leadership is that it is not a theoretical or academic construct; it is a strategy and set of tactics to be applied and refined through real experience. As a result, a larger number and diversity of both systems leaders and Systems Leadership initiatives are needed to build critical mass and capture learnings that can benefit the field as a whole.

Dramatistic Text Analysis



1.0 Agent-Agency ratio

1.1 Systems Leadership is a set of skills and capacities that any individual or organization can use to catalyze, enable and support the process of creating change on complex, systemic issues related to shifting systems toward sustainability.

1.2 A combination of knowledge, skills and mindset, create systemic transformation defines a Systems Leader.

1.3 A Systems Leader's ability to enable collective learning – and to help capture, articulate and share the resulting insights – is more important than their individual technical expertise.

1.4 If a Systems Leader is an expert in their field at the start of the process, maintaining an open mind and learning mindset is key.

1.5 Systems Leadership draws upon familiar skills – such as subject expertise, strategy development, program management, coalition-building, and collaboration.

1.6 Systems leaders require strong skills in process design and facilitation.

1.7 Systems Leaders who expect challenges and see them as opportunities for learning and growth are more likely to survive and thrive.

2.0 Agency-Scene ratio

2.1 Linking project activities to the goal of system transformation is increasingly common on projects related to the SDGs.

2.2 System change initiatives must be grounded in knowledge and insight about how the system functions.

2.3 Most often complex systems are viewed, understood or experienced differently by their various stakeholders. No single stakeholder has total knowledge of the system; the only way to gain a broader overview is to pool knowledge, insights and data from many sources.

2.4 The tactics of building and mobilizing multi-stakeholder coalitions and alliances have been refined over centuries, particularly through advocacy campaigns, social movements and community-based development programs led by civil society, faith-based organizations and political parties.

2.5 Developing collective understanding of the system involves debating its boundaries, mapping its elements and dynamics; and considering the environment around the system that influences and enables it, from institutional policies and incentives to personal choices and behaviors. Articulating the role of power dynamics within a system, and identifying who benefits or is disadvantaged by those dynamics, is an important aspect of the mapping and insight. Exploring potential avenues of action and their implications, based on analysis and stakeholder experience, is key to shaping pathways to action.

2.6 Systems change initiatives require strategies that are emergent, adaptive and flexible, because complex systems are always changing.

2.7 Individuals, coalitions and systems-change strategies will evolve and develop new capacities at the same time as an initiative unfolds. In this way individuals, institutions, networks, and a broader system can all experience change and growth in the course of a systems-change initiative.

3.0 Agent-Scene ratio

3.1 Diversity is essential to generating a collective understanding of the system, developing effective strategies for action, and perceiving and adapting to change as the initiative evolves.

3.2 Systems leadership involves widespread collaboration, innovation and action.

3.3 The explicit goal of alliance-building is broad and long-range system transformation.

3.4 Systems Leaders, which can include both individuals and institutions, serve as catalysts and enablers of this process – a role requiring optimism, flexibility and endurance, along with the ability to understand and empower stakeholders with very different viewpoints and incentives.

3.5 Systems leaders play a crucial role in facilitating reflective conversation, learning, and knowledge-sharing.

3.6 Individuals take risks in committing their influence, resources, trust, and reputations to engaging new partners, often using untested methods.

3.7 Systems leadership involves mutual accountability for progress to shift systems towards sustainability.

3.8 The complexity and long timeframes of systems-change initiatives mean that challenges and setbacks are inevitable. The question is not whether these will occur, but how the network will react to them, adapt and course-correct when necessary.

SYSTEMS LEADERSHIP ARCHETYPE

Domain

- *Systems-change* to fulfill SDGs and attain a sustainable future (purposive phenomena)
- *Systems-change initiatives*[15] (overall working phenomenon type)
- *Professional practice* involved with systems-change initiatives and directed at systems-change to fulfill SDGs ("*systems leadership*")

Functional-teleology

Theory of change – conceptual organization

- *Systems-change* makes causal contributions to fulfilling SDGs
- The *community-level* is the locus of systems-change
- Systems change *initiatives* are practical means to support the collective journey of systems change.
- *Practices* within systems-change initiatives are sources of community-level systems-change phenomena (including 'growth' during them)
- *Functional imperatives* for systems-change initiatives include developing initiative strategy, developing initiative practices and systems, and leading/managing initiative execution
- *Professional practice* makes causal contributions to fulfilling the functional imperatives of systems-change initiatives
- *Systems leadership* is professional knowledge about systems-change initiatives and their leadership/management
- Staff training colleges and universities have roles to play in developing and spreading *professional knowledge* about systems leadership within the community.

(Functional) Imperatives for System Change Initiatives

- Developing strategy
    - Pentad ratio statements: 2.1, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 3.8
- Developing practices and systems
    - Pentad ratio statements: 2.4, 2.5, 3.1 3.6
- Leading/managing execution
    - Pentad ratio statement: 3.7

---

[15]"A systems Leadership initiative" is a project, program or campaign which aims to contribute significant, lasting impact on one or more complex issues by mobilizing action among a diverse array of relevant stakeholders."

Design-practicality

Challenges

- Systems-change
    - Complex systems are always changing
    - The complexity and long timeframes of systems-change initiatives mean that challenges and setbacks are inevitable.
    - Recognizing inequitable power dynamics and seeking to transform systemic injustice
- Systems-initiative challenges
    - Value complexity/equivocality-ambiguity-uncertainty/frame rivalry
        - Most often complex systems are viewed, understood or experienced differently by their various stakeholders.
        - Stakeholders with very different viewpoints and incentives.
    - Deficits
        - Many practitioners currently lack the competencies to lead systems change initiatives
    - Traps
        - Demands for coordination spike as systems-change initiatives move downstream – risk of dependency upon key individuals
    - Personal risk-taking
        - Individuals need to take risks in committing their influence, resources, trust, and reputations to engaging new partners

Systems Change Initiative Design-references

- Functional-teleology statements
- Principles
    - Systems Leadership draws upon familiar skills – such as subject expertise, strategy development, program management, coalition-building, and collaboration. (Ratio statement: 1.5)
    - The system leaders' role requires optimism, flexibility and endurance. (Ratio statement: 3.4)
    - Adopting an agile, flexible, innovative and learning-centered approach allows for evolution and experimentation.
    - Individuals, coalitions and systems-change strategies will evolve and develop new capacities at the same time as an initiative unfolds. In this way individuals, institutions, networks, and a broader system can all experience change and growth in the course of a systems-change initiative. (Ratio statement: 2.7)
- Framework and Guidelines
    - CLEAR describes five key elements of the systems change process that may overlap or repeat in cycles throughout the course of an initiative.
    - **C**onvene and Commit
        - Key stakeholders engage in moderated dialogue to address a complex issue of mutual concern.
        - They define shared interests and goals, and commit to working together in new ways to create systemic change.

- **L**ook and Learn
  - Through system mapping, stakeholders jointly build a shared understanding of the components, actors, dynamics, and influences that create the system and its current outcomes, generating new insights and ideas.
- **E**ngage and Energize
  - Diverse stakeholders are engaged through continuous communication.
  - Incentives and milestones help drive progress and maintain momentum.
- **A**ct with Accountability
  - Shared goals and principles set the direction of the initiative
  - Measurement frameworks help track progress.
  - Coordination and governance structures can be developed as initiatives mature.
- **R**eview and Revise
  - Stakeholders review progress regularly and adapt the initiative strategy accordingly.