How are you Managing, Ethically Speaking?
A Typology Proposal of Ethical Culture

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Abstract

Over the past 20 years, improving ethical awareness within organizations has become a priority in the public and private sectors. Ethics is formalized in the workplace, within structures, policies, and practices. However, few studies document the formalization of ethics with regard to its relationship to leadership. Findings from our previous research projects show that the type of culture prevailing in an organization is a determining factor for the promotion of ethical leadership. Based on these findings, we propose four types of ethical cultures: indifferent, controlling, supporting, and capacitating. To verify the theoretical validity of the typology, we conducted a study in a large Canadian high school. Results support the relevance of the typology, which highlighted the challenges met when changing school culture from hierarchical and controlling to ethically capacitating.

Keywords: ethical culture, ethical leadership, capability, typology, capacitating ethical culture.

Ethical awareness has become a social and political priority for many governments and organizations (Michaelson et al., 2014; OECD, 2009; Proenca, 2004), as ethics underlies legitimate, trustworthy, and effective governance (Boisvert et al., 2011; Paquet, 2011). Following the OECD proposals (1996, 2000) and the work of scholars in this area (Genard, 2009; Lacroix, 2009; Mercier, 2004; Mercier & Muller, 2009; Roy, 2009), ethics is implemented alongside other regulation mechanisms such as law, work contracts, codes of deontology and administrative rules (Boisvert et al., 2011). Organizational structures, policies, and culture are the principal means through which these changes are implemented (Applebaum, 1999; Donaldson, 2003; Koonmee et al., 2009; Mercier, 2004; Sims, 1991; Tenbrunsel et al., 2003; Treviño & Nelson, 2011; Treviño & Weaver, 2003). However, few studies document the formalization of ethics within organizations and its relationship to leadership. More specifically, the links between these initiatives, leadership, and the development of an ethical organizational culture are poorly understood. This paper aims at contributing to a better understanding of this issue.

Problem Statement and Research Questions

In their exploratory study, Ardichvili et al. (2009) identify some of the main factors that appear to facilitate organizational ethics. One factor, also substantiated in later studies, is the implementation of an organizational culture that supports ethics at work on a daily basis by enhancing members' ethical com-

petencies (Kaptein, 2009; Park & Blenkinsopp, 2013; Ruiz et al., 2014). With regard to the concept of organizational culture, Langlois and Lapointe (2014) note that contemporary scholars still ground their work in the key conceptual definitions provided by Clegg (1981), Smircich (1983), Schein (1987) and Mills (1988), who suggest that an organization can be compared to a micro-society where values, norms, rules, and procedures, as well as traditions and stories, are created and adapted over time, resulting in a particular value-based guiding system called organizational culture. According to Brown and Treviño (2006), Cuilla (1998), Schminke et al. (2005), and Yukl et al. (2013), ethical leadership by top managers is a prerequisite to creating an ethical culture within an organization. However, precisely what type of organizational culture fosters the formalization of ethics? How do leaders support or prevent the development of a culture that empowers individuals to act ethically?

Over the last 25 years, our empirical research has hinted at the existence of a strong link between the actualization of ethical leadership and organizational culture. Notably, we observe that some individuals demonstrate potential ethical competency, yet cultural rather than structural characteristics of their organization prevent them from expressing it (Langlois & Lapointe, 2010, 2014). Our results also suggest that the successful implementation of ethics within an organization requires a type of culture where employees are encouraged to challenge the established modus operandi, which in turn ensures fair treatment of all and the highest respect of human rights. These findings led to the study of what we have called capacitating ethical organizations, namely organizations where the culture supports the actualization of ethics in professional practices.

Conceptual Framework

Ethics and Ethical Leadership

Two main approaches exist with regard to improving ethical awareness and the integration of ethics within organizations: the heteroregulated approach and the autoregulated approach (Langlois, 2008; Langlois & Bégin, 2011). The heteroregulated approach consists of external control through laws, rules, and jurisprudence, as well as a code of ethics, the purpose being conformity, and obedience to rules. In contrast, in the autoregulated approach, regulations come from within through internal deliberation over one's own personal and organizational values, aiming at responsible and autonomous judgment. In our research program, ethics is framed in the autoregulatory approach as a reflexive capacity to discern what is the correct thing to do (Langlois & Lapointe, 2010). In the same vein, ethical leadership is defined as a social practice by which professional judgment is autonomously exercised to make responsible decisions (Langlois & Lapointe, 2014).

Through the work of Starratt (1991), educational administration was the first field of study to generate a conceptual framework for ethical leadership. While two notions related to the development of moral judgment, namely Kohlberg's ethic of justice and Gilligan's ethic of care, have been portrayed as being in opposition, Starratt demonstrates their theoretical complementarity while adding ethic of critique. This model was later validated empirically, first by Langlois (1997), and then by other researchers (Eyal et al., 2011; Furman, 2003; Shapiro & Stefkovitch, 2011). Hodgkinson (1978), Sergiovanni (1992), Willower (1999), Duigan (2007), and Strike (2008) also write about the ethical and axiological foundations of educational administration.

Ethical Competency and Capacitating Organizations

Legault (1999), Patenaude et al. (2003), and Bégin (2011) define ethical competency as the mobilization of knowledge supported by the development of heightened reflexive capacity. According to these authors, this competency prompts an analysis and deliberation capacity that refers to the concept of competency as initially proposed by Le Boterf (2001) and Zarifian (2004). Concerning the actualization of ethical competency, Rabardel (2005) underlines the need to consider the specific conditions of the situations in which people engage. Centeno (2016) takes this theorization further by integrating Le Boterf's (2001) concept of competency in Starratt's (1991) and Langlois' (1997) three-dimensional model of ethical leadership, highlighting the importance of ethical empowerment. These authors all consider ethical competency as a complex skill that combines and mobilizes a set of personal and environmental resources, creating the potential for ethical action in the workplace. Our approach draws on this perspective,

as well as on Amartya Sen's work (1993, 1999) on capabilities. Indeed, Sen (1993) asserts that the social environment determines individuals' abilities to act according to their priorities. Societies, or organizations in the case of this paper, must, therefore, strive to promote the capacities of all individuals, which potentially includes their ethical leadership, by offering what Mahbub ul Haq (1996) calls 'enabling environments.' It is important to note that Sen's vision does not aim to make people more productive, but rather to give them access to possibilities and the position they desire as active members of society.

Sen's capability model can be applied to organizations (Salais & Villeneuve, 2004). As early as 1995, French philosopher Paul Ricœur (1995) expanded Sen's concept of capability as a moral orientation, specifying the possibility of speaking, acting, feeling responsible, and even failing. Genard and Cantelli (2010) corroborate this view by describing

> An individual who is both 'capable' and 'competent,' but at the same time 'fragile,' 'vulnerable,' potentially 'suffering,' while remaining 'resilient,' who is able to take charge or retake charge, to compose oneself, never totally stripped of resources when faced with hardship. (p. 6, our translation)

Falzon (2005) argues that the expression of this capability requires an empowering environment. The construction of enabling environments thus becomes a goal for organizations. However, our results show that consideration of the organizational culture is essential to understand better the factors that promote ethical reflection and conduct at work.

From Organizational Culture to Capacitating Ethical Culture

According to Ouchi (1981), Morgan (1989), and Martin et al. (2004), the concept of organizational culture emerged in business administration in the early 1970s, when analysts who were trying to explain Japan's commercial success found that cultural rather than structural factors were salient. Lapointe (1998) mentions how, during the same period, Sarason (1971) and Pettigrew (1979), scholars in educational administration, wrote about the relevance of the concept of organizational culture to school management. Research and training programs based on the concept of organizational culture have since become mainstream, both in the private and the public sectors (Balcı et al.,2012; Frick, 2009; Höög & Johansson, 2005; Kythreotis et al., 2010; Somech & Ron, 2007; van der Westhuizen et al., 2005). More recently, a number of researchers have focused on the notion of ethical organizational culture and the role leaders play in promoting or preventing its implementation (see Kaptein, 2008, 2009; Treviño, 2007; Treviño et al., 1998; Treviño & Weaver, 2003). Ethical culture is thus seen as a particular form of organizational culture that, when created, guides individuals in solving ethical dilemmas (Sachet-Milliat, 2003). Treviño (2007) asserts that an ethical culture exerts informal control over individuals because it supports their reflections, attitudes, and conduct at work. Following an analysis of over 100 cases, Kaptein (1998) specifies eight essential values that define an ethical organizational culture: 1) clarity, 2) role-modelling top-management, 3) role-modelling supervisors, 4) supportability, 5) feasibility, 6) transparency, 7) discussability, and 8) enforcement. To instill such a culture, most scholars suggest two approaches: the conformity approach and the shared values approach (Langlois et al., 2012; Boisvert, 2003; Lacroix, 2009; Roy, 2009). Although the conformity approach is favoured and more frequently described in the English-language literature, the shared values approach offers a framework that allows greater freedom of action (Langlois et al., 2012; Weaver & Treviño, 2015). Organizations may also integrate both approaches at different levels, which Boisvert et al. (2011) call "a form of regulatory synergy" (p. 45).

In the field of educational administration, Furman and Shields (2003), Larson and Ovando (2001), and Shields (2012, 2015a, 2015b) emphasize the importance of the role of leaders, who can redefine the basic principles according to which schools function, thereby ensuring that they run more equitably and produce greater social justice. Bringing about greater social justice and equity, which are vital components of an ethic of critique (Starratt, 1991, Langlois, 1997), implies reviewing existing standards and practices, and questioning what hinders the embedding of these values in schools. This process constitutes the foundation of an ethical environment. Great courage is required to break the mold of prescriptions and standardized procedures while promoting the values of social justice and equity. Such actions depend upon a culture that supports ongoing ethical reflection.
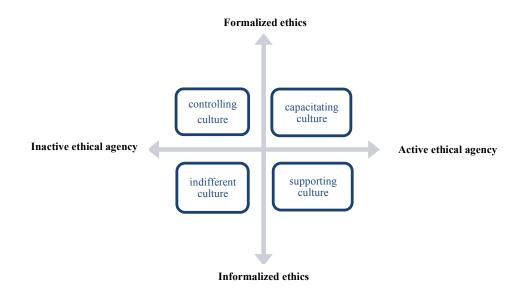
A Typology of Ethical Culture. Results stemming from our 25-year-long empirical research program show how ethics-related characteristics of organizations have an impact on the degree to which leaders can exercise their ethical judgment (Langlois, 2002; Langlois et al., 2010; Langlois et al., 2014), which in turn reinforces or undermines the creation of more ethical organizational cultures. Initially, we identified three types of organizational cultures based on how senior managers react when junior managers are faced with ethical dilemmas: the supporting culture, the controlling culture, and the indifferent culture (Langlois & Lapointe, 2014).

In a supporting culture, ethics is found both in the structures and practices of the organization. Encouraged to consult with their superiors, leaders are given leeway to exercise their professional judgment and make their own decisions. In a controlling culture, leaders must defer to their superiors, who will make the decision. In such cases, ethics is characterized by expected conformity, while individuals are not granted freedom of action. In an indifferent culture, leaders are left to fend for themselves. This culture has no clearly expressed ethical expectations. Individuals act to the best of their knowledge with no possibilities of dialogical reflection with their superiors or colleagues.

Other case studies we conducted more recently led to the addition of a fourth type, a capacitating culture. Building on Sen's work (1999), we define a capacitating culture as characterized by practices that allow all members to participate freely within the general framework of an organization's mission and vision. The free agency of all workers is supported and promoted through rules and resources that allow them to fully engage in conversations, as well as in the decision-making process about values, principles, and actions the organization should prioritize. A capacitating ethical culture exists when senior managers decide to provide the means and leeway required for all members in an organization to develop their ethical capacity and be actively and freely involved in ethical decision-making. Workers are no longer "passive recipients" (Sen, 1999, p. 53) who merely function within the organization; instead, they become participants who put in place initiatives that support ethics.

In light of these four cultures (see Figure 1 below), the individual can be portrayed as an active ethical agent, namely a person who can act when dilemmas and ethical issues arise, speak up to make improvements, and work effectively despite uncertainty, thus learning from committed and fully responsible action. To become such an agent, the individual needs the support of an organization where ethics is formalized, and where members are genuinely empowered. As shown in Figure 1, this is why indifferent and controlling organizational cultures impede the ethical agency of individuals.

Figure 1

Proposed Typology of Ethical Culture and Ethical Agency

In Figure 1, the x-axis represents the potential of action for an ethical agency, whereas the y-axis refers to the degree of formalization of ethics within the organization. If this formalization follows a bottom-up decision-making approach, the ethical agency will be optimal, but if it follows a top-down approach, it will be hindered by expected normative standards.

Methods

To empirically verify the theoretical validity of the proposed typology and clarify the role of active ethical agents, we conducted a research project in a very large Canadian high school, where the leadership team was engaged in the process of institutionalization of ethics. Having learned about our research program, the school leaders invited us to engage in a collaborative research project with them, which we agreed to.

Collaborative research posits researchers and practitioners as team members (or co-researchers) who work as partners to identify research questions and complete data collection and analysis on an issue of common interest to both parties (Passmore et al., 2008). The participation of researchers and practitioners in the research process need not be identical; they work side-by-side throughout the process, to complete elaboration, implementation, and diffusion of research (Given, 2008). This approach allows researchers to get a deeper understanding of the environment they aim to study, while practitioners can make sure that research results will inform the challenges or issues they face and contribute to identifying solutions. Collaborative research requires a genuine dialogue between co-researchers through the establishment of relationships based on trust, openness, and mutuality (Given, 2008; Passmore et al., 2008).

The collaborative research project covered a two-year period during which the co-researchers met five times. Meetings were typically one-day long. In addition, each school leader was asked to note, in a journal, their thoughts and experiences relating to ethics at work. These thoughts and experiences contributed to a collective reflection that led to the draft, by the leadership team, of a plan aiming at creating an ethical culture within the school.

In this paper, we present the results pertaining to the first phase of the research project, which consisted of the diagnosis of the existing organizational culture at the beginning of the project. Data from this first phase were analyzed using the proposed typology, allowing for the verification of its theoretical validity.

Participants, Interview Guide, and Data Analysis

The school leadership team was composed of ten men and six women, all of whom agreed to participate in the research project. Diagnostic interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview guide based on the six main organizational, structural, and personal factors identified in the literature as facilitating or hindering the implementation of an ethical culture (Kaptein, 2008, 2009; Langlois & Lapointe, 2010, 2014). The questions related to 1) individuals' experiences with regard to possibilities for professional development, 2) the work context, 3) superiors' expectations, 4) the decision-making approach, 5) participation in organizational development, and 6) professional experiences that raised ethical questions. Below are examples of questions asked during the interviews as well as the factors to which they are linked:

- Tell me what you have observed in your school concerning employees' opportunities to develop their professional skills. (Opportunities for professional development, work context)
- Do you have concrete examples of how all employees can participate in the development of the school by offering their ideas and participating in decision-making? Are there employees who do not participate as much as others do? If so, why do you think that is? (Work context, decision-making approach, participation in organizational development)
- Do you feel you have sufficient leeway and autonomy in how you do your work, or would you want more? Why? (Possibilities for professional development, work context, superiors' expectations)
- Please describe a time when you felt your power to act was restricted. (Possibilities for professional development, work context, superiors' expectations)

- Have you ever had to make a decision that was good for the organization, but that ran counter to your personal convictions, even slightly? Please explain. (Professional experiences that raised ethical questions)

The interview data were transcribed in full and analyzed according to a thematic approach (Paillé & Muchielli, 2012) using NVivo software. The analysis was based on predetermined categories corresponding to the four types of ethical cultures. Two coders independently processed the data to identify the characteristics of the different cultures in thoughts, actions, and experiences related by the participants. The principal investigator and the co-investigator then verified the coding and processed the results. Four themes emerged from this analysis: a context of organizational transformation, flexibility and autonomy, decision-making, and values as benchmarks. In the results section, pseudonyms are used in place of participants' real names, followed by their position in the school (principal, vice-principal, department head).

Results

A Context of Organizational Transformation

As mentioned above, the school where the collaborative research project took place was undergoing major restructuring, triggered by the appointment of a new principal, who initiated a transformation of the organizational culture. The participants clearly convey their experience of a hierarchical, centralized, and controlling culture that prevailed under the previous principal.

> *It was his way of doing things. A way you see less and less today. More authoritarian, top-down, and "I'm the boss, I call the shots," (Kevin, department head)*

> *The former principal criticized us in front of everyone, so if you spoke up, well, you ran the risk of being scolded, but we're not in this culture anymore. (Lucy, department head)*

In an effort to transform the school culture, the new principal introduced practices that allowed members of the leadership team to use their professional judgment and worked on the creation of a healthy and harmonious school climate. Her actions in this area mainly concerned meetings that nurtured a dialogue on the challenges met by the school. The arrival of new leadership team members also facilitated this transformation. Members of the leadership team described the new work climate and work relations as 'warm,' marked by 'respect' and 'openness,' which, they noticed, appeared to have positive repercussions throughout the school.

> *It was a difficult culture when I took (my position); the climate was very negative. In two years, it has changed a lot. (Peggy, principal)*

> *We all get along really well; we have fun, we are friends and colleagues at the same time. It's a plus at work because we trust each other. [...] I think we have a good, a fine organizational culture now, really. (Anna, department head)*

To further complete the organizational transformation, the new principal restructured the management team, a change that created a lot of uncertainty and tension despite the positive work climate. This review of the organizational structure was prompted by the addition, without any justification, of an intermediate hierarchical level, which widened the gap between department heads and the principal.

> *What I find hardest is that when you are further from the principal, you lose influence over the direction the school takes. You are relegated to an executive role. (Frank, department head)*

The transformation process was not clearly stated, which created an impression of improvisation and lack of planning. The leadership team thus faced the worrisome aspects of the change, without un-

derstanding the expected advantages.

> *When one of the department heads left, it was certainly panic-inducing because it was a very, very demanding position, and suddenly this person was gone, and there were no plans, no follow-up. The information we received afterward calmed people down because they saw that a plan was on the way, but at the time, there was nothing! (Lucy, department head)*

> *It's a major adaptation period, and what I personally find most difficult is the lack of systematic planning. (Frank, department head)*

The principal was aware of the prevailing climate of uncertainty; however, she felt she could not do things any other way. Although she intended to foster a trusting dialogue with all, she acknowledged the fact that gaps in planning and communication had had a negative impact, and that the team members had only had a clear vision of what was expected of them once the restructuring was complete.

> *We changed a lot in the last two years, and we are heading towards other changes. It's a year of transition, next year in particular. I sense that everyone wanted the roles and responsibilities and positions to all be set in stone this year, but it's impossible. (...) We are in transition. (...) So we have a team that's very motivated, very engaged, highly participative, but they are certainly experiencing uncertainty and anxiety. (Peggy, principal)*

In light of the proposed typology, we note that despite the challenges met, the principal's intentions were to instill an ethical culture approaching the supporting type, characterized by openness and the fostering of a healthy and warm working climate that would allow for greater dialogue and discussion.

Flexibility and Autonomy

When asked about their degree of autonomy, participants were almost unanimous that it was sufficient. They described the positive effect of their newly-found autonomy on the quality of their work. Their professional freedom motivated them to develop and surpass themselves. This autonomy reinforced their confidence in their superior when the time came to make decisions.

> *As principal, she has taken on the risks, but in doing so, it's as if she gave me the power to build. (...) Personally, when I feel like a builder, it's like I have reached professional nirvana. (Ben, vice-principal)*

> *As a result of the relationship established with my vice-principal, I do feel quite flexible in my future decisions. I know that she will be there, or vice versa, the same thing for her. (Luke, department head)*

These characteristics are akin to a supporting, or even capacitating ethical culture as they offer leadership team members the leeway and resources needed to make choices and carry out projects. However, it would be simplistic to stop the analysis here. Although autonomy and flexibility are crucial assets, they may also be associated with vague expectations or work overload when subordinates are granted more flexibility but without support. The challenge is to offer the type of support that optimizes the possibility for individuals to use their capacities, and expand their degree of control over the actions they wish to carry out autonomously (Falzon, 2013). Within this school, unclarified roles and responsibilities resulted in vague expectations and work overload, characteristics of a potentially indifferent culture.

> *We work every day without knowing enough and we realize that, when it comes down to it, it's because [the principal] doesn't know either; we're all just in a state of waiting. (Ben, vice-principal)*

Some participants described one or more situations where their decision-making power was restrict-ed because of co-management situations, responsibility overlap, administrative burdens, or a deficient flow of information. We thus observed a lack of coherence coupled with a tension between the principal's intention of being an authentic participative leader and management practices that continued to exhibit controlling traits.

> *Because of my position, I did not receive much information, so I was less proactive than my colleague who had access to information. (Ben, vice-principal)*

Decision-Making Mode

As explained above, practices that support the free agency of all members of an organization are central to a capacitating ethical culture that facilitates the emergence of active ethical agency and aims at en-couraging individuals to use their professional judgment as much as possible, rather than controlling it top-down. In the case studied, the leadership team members generally felt engaged in the decision-mak-ing process. They confirmed that most of the time, it was carried out collegially, by a unanimous or a majority vote. However, superiors would sometimes reinforce their viewpoint and rally others behind their decision.

> *Our discussions are really collegial; we openly discuss issues; sometimes things get a lit-tle tense, sometimes they don't... I think there is more openness in our discussions, a real exchange. Of course, a boss may have the last word on a subject. So, in that case, we rally behind the decision. (Anna, department head)*

Regarding her efforts to put in place a participative organizational culture, the principal confirmed having adopted more democratic decision-making modes.

> *If I see there are two clans, I will really want to get opinions, and if it gets emotional, I'll take over. We will stop right there, and I'll tell them "I'll get back to you, let's take a moment to think about it". I will then individually ask people for their opinion. (Peggy, principal)*

When issues were more complex, the use of subcommittees with specific mandates was the pre-ferred means of advising the leadership team.

> *We have several meetings planned with subcommittees, then with the people concerned, and then all together. So, there are several steps to follow with several teams who reflect on the same things. (Lydia, vice-principal)*

Obstacles to collegial decision making also emerged during the interviews. First of all, a restricted informal three-member strategic committee was created by the new principal, its role being to gather information for the most critical decisions and then present its analysis to the leadership team for dis-cussion and decision-making. However, it appears decisions were, in fact, often already made. This committee had a hidden existence in the structure: it was not listed in the official organizational chart, yet it played a pivotal role in strategic decisions and the functioning of the organization.

> *The major decisions are made in small ad hoc committees, or informal meetings. We have what we call a strategic committee, where decisions are a fait accompli, or a done deal. The big decisions are made there. It's not a form of manipulation except that the big decisions happen at that level then descend to the leadership team. (...) Often, we [members of the strategic committee] will meet at a restaurant where we are sure we won't run into anyone else. And we make decisions there. (Ben, vice-principal, member of the strategic committee)*

The fact that not all department heads were included in the leadership team meetings also raised concerns. Some people were afraid that decisions would be made without their effects on the organi-

zation having been adequately studied. This practice was officially justified by the large workload that prevented department heads from participating in committee meetings.

> We, the department heads, don't participate in any committees. Zero. When we do meet, we have no decision impact. It's more information meetings. (Anna, department head)

Whereas the former principal was described as an authoritative person who would sometimes make hasty emotion-based decisions without consulting the team, since the arrival of the new principal, people observed an effort towards more structured and well thought out decision-making preceded by dialogue, and even debates. This new approach aimed at enabling the team to take the time and carefully analyze changes in order to address current challenges. However, stepping back to make sound decisions often required more time than was available.

Concerning the central role of decision-making in an organization, data indicate a tension between a controlling culture that could, taken to the extreme, be manipulative, and a supportive culture where members become stakeholders in some decisions. A supporting ethical culture thus appeared to emerge in parallel with practices linked more closely to a controlling culture.

Values as benchmarks

Strategic planning initiated by the new principal allowed the leadership team to collectively identify a set of values for the school. While many believed that these values should always be present in their mind, they were also perceived as reference points used variably according to each context and situation.

> [Values] are important because before being leaders, we are also human. So we have a value system that dictates our conduct. Except that sometimes you have to depart slightly from these values, you have to step back. We take the time to reflect and then go back to some positions. When we stop and reflect on people's involvement, what the potential effect will be going forward, often we may be a little less rigid. (Lydia, vice-principal)

The role of the adopted values in the decision-making process was not clear for all members. Many viewed them as ideals that guided the school but were difficult to integrate into their daily work. When asked if they sometimes justified a decision by these values, the participants replied that this was not the case, at least not consciously or deliberately.

> For example, we will talk about support measures for students, essentially it's to be linked to our values, but we don't necessarily verbalize it; our mission may not be verbalized that clearly. (Anna, department head)

> No, but I think it would be a good thing! Because then we'd really focus more on making the right decision. The value statement is not used in a concrete way. (Lucy, department head)

These excerpts illustrate a lack of clarity regarding organizational values and their mobilization in action, a situation that, Kaptein argues (2008), undermines the coherence required to build an ethical culture.

Discussion and Conclusion

The goal of this paper was to present our initial findings with regard to verifying the theoretical validity of the proposed ethical culture typology. Analysis of the data gathered through semi-structured interviews confirms, in an exploratory way, the theoretical as well as practical relevance of this typology. More particularly, results point to key elements of the organizational transformation initiated by the principal, the typology highlighting some of the main characteristics of the process of changing the school culture from a controlling hierarchical one to a more ethically capacitating culture.

Firstly, the typology showed that, although the new principal's objectives were to create what the

typology identifies as a supporting ethical culture, the autonomy and capacity to act of many of the leadership team members were significantly reduced by management inconsistencies, blurred lines of communication, a lack of transparency and clarification with regard to implemented changes, the centralization of power in decision-making within an informal and somewhat secretive three-member committee, as well as insufficient support with regard to newly delegated responsibilities and granted leeway. Furthermore, although the school had officially adopted a set of values, these were not sufficiently operationalized in decisions or actions, despite being a fundamental aspect of ethical action (Kaptein, 2008; Koehn, 2016). Analysis based on the proposed typology, therefore, demonstrates how establishing a capacitating ethical culture remains a challenge for the school.

Specific resources are required to support a capacitating ethical culture, mainly work release in order to participate in systematic staff training, and spaces where employees can reflect together on ethical issues and challenges. Doubts and uncertainty emerging from collective reflection and deliberation have to be tolerated and nurtured through moral courage, opening up to a renewed ethical culture conducive to improved work environments (Huhtala et al., 2016; Mitonga-Monga et al., 2016; Pavić et al., 2019). In addition, to maximize all leadership team members' autonomy and empowerment, roles and responsibilities must be clarified so that all can feel they have the freedom of action required to fully contribute to the mission of their school, as well as the means to act ethically. Indeed, although decision-making latitude supports the exercise of professional judgment, leeway without reference points prevents people from working with greater autonomy (Bénion, 2010; Fernagu-Oudet, 2012). Overall, the participants in this study seemed to have the leeway to implement some initiatives, but their latitude, as well as the resources provided, were too limited to support their ethical agency.

In conclusion, some research limitations must be noted with regard to the common objectives set in this collaborative research project. Firstly, the research project took place during a major restructuring of the school. The challenges inherent in this context restricted the optimal implementation of the envisioned ethical culture. The second limitation concerns the context associated with the arrival of the new principal, who needed to quickly impose her authority and be slightly more controlling than she wished in order to rally a destabilized team. The last limitation is linked to the fact that these results are exploratory; more studies will be required to further validate the proposed typology.

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