

**MANAGING TENSIONS IN A GLOBALIZING ENVIRONMENT**

A Dissertation

by

MARTHA McARDELL SHOEMAKER

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of  
Texas A&M University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2009

Major Subject: Communication

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Approved by:

Chair of Committee,	Antonio La Pastina
Committee Members,	Charles Conrad
	Katherine Miller
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Head of Department,	Richard Street

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## ABSTRACT

Managing Tensions in a Globalizing Environment. (August 2009)

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Globalizing processes often place the social cohesion of organizations at risk when multinational people experience and exhibit tensions from their diverse cultural and language norms. This study uses discourse analysis and dialectical theory to understand the intersection of organizational tensions and multinationalism as they appear at a bilingual Swiss higher education institution. I define *multinationalism* as the intersection of communities who self identify with a national heritage and perpetuate that identity through daily communication and interaction.

This case study is approached from a social constructionist perspective. I use grounded theory and dialectical analysis to analyze the fifty-nine interviews in order to identify the tensions that intersect with multinationalism and how they are managed. The tensions identified include: choosing a language where two are privileged, providing an intercultural environment as described by the mission statement, and managing pedagogy/co-teaching practices. Choosing a language is often described in a dual dimension between *choosing French/choosing English* where language groups are sometimes seen as oppositional and vying for privileged status even though the

organization privileges both languages. Providing an intercultural environment is described as a global endeavor and yet sometimes becomes dialectical when balancing how the organizational environment is actually *managed/not managed* based on national and organizational cultural perspectives. Practicing pedagogy/co-teaching activities are often framed as oppositional and dialectical when trying to reconcile *French pedagogy/Anglo-Saxon pedagogy* and co-teaching practices, especially in regard to American influence. Multinationalism emerges when participants use group identity descriptors and intersects in a variety of ways depending on the intensity of the tensions.

Managing tensions result in ambiguity because of undefined language fluency and competency. While ambiguity allows for social cohesion and time for interpreting messages, it sometimes is used strategically to deny messages and retain privileged positions. Disorienting interactions for some employees result in paradoxical situations, and in some extreme cases, participants reported schizophrenic behavior when paranoid statements are made which reflect their paralysis, uncertainty and loss of power.

This study advances dialectical theory by redefining *totality* as including regional, national, and global contexts that also influence organizational agency and discourse. In addition this study adds to the understanding of *knots of contradictions* by illustrating how tensions evolve in their own right and also spin off simultaneous and interconnected tensions. Finally, results from this study suggest that using ambiguity could be seen as another management option as well as a result when dealing with dialectical and paradoxical tensions.

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to four women who most influenced my early path in life: Peg McArdell, Virginia Peta, Elfrieda Oberst, and Florence McArdell. I also dedicate this to Stowe Shoemaker, my husband and best friend, who supported and encouraged me in this endeavor.

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## NOMENCLATURE

ABC	Case Organization
BOD	Board of Governors/Directors
SUI	National Educational Network



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION: RATIONALE AND THEORY

#### OVERVIEW

This dissertation represents the findings of a case study I undertook at a bilingual, Swiss educational institution where organizational tensions<sup>1</sup> resulted because of globalizing processes. Originally an elite, private, French speaking higher education institution that specialized in training hotel general managers, ABC<sup>2</sup> has gone through several changes in recent years. First, the leadership opted to update its curriculum to offer a more globally focused hospitality education and directed all courses to be taught in both French and in English in an effort to remain globally competitive. Shortly after this change, the organization also joined with SUI,<sup>3</sup> a national educational network that subsidizes tuition for Swiss students. Finally, the institution also recently finished a US reaccreditation process because they added a master's program (English only) along with their already established two year and four year programs.

Over the years in order to accommodate the language and curriculum changes, the institution hired faculty and staff from multiple nations based on academic skill sets. At the time of my study, faculty and staff represented thirty nations and the student population of one thousand five hundred represented eighty nations. My study took place

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This thesis/dissertation follows the style of *Management Communication Quarterly*.

<sup>1</sup> The term *tensions* is defined as a clash of ideas or values which cause uncomfortable feelings (Fairhurst, Cooren, & Cahill, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> ABC is a pseudonym used to identify the institution throughout the dissertation.

<sup>3</sup> SUI is a pseudonym for a Swiss educational network founded in the 1990s and represents the interests of students in various associated disciplines.

ten years after the language changes occurred and six months after leaders chose to downsize staff where several employees either were either terminated or had their hours reduced.

My research at this site focused on the intersection of multinationalism and the tensions formed through occurring contradictions and dialectics inherent in organizations (Putnam, 1986; Putnam, 2003). I define *multinationalism* as the intersection of communities who self identify with a national heritage and perpetuate that identity through daily communication and interaction. While past studies have focused both on organizational contradictions and dialectics (Tracey, 2004; Jameson, 2004; Stohl & Cheney, 2001; Fairhurst, Cooren, & Cahill, 2002; McGuire, Dougherty, & Atkinson, 2006; Mumby & Stohl, 2001; Mumby, 2005) and multinational communication (Mendenhall, Osland, Bird, Oddou, & Maznevski, 2008; Pearce & Osmond, 1999; Wiseman & Shuter, 1994; Erling, 2007), little has been researched in regard to how they intersect or influence each other.

Table 1 (next page) is provided to give the reader an initial understanding of the cultural perceptions in such a diverse environment. These examples from the fifty-nine interviews I collected reveals a complexity of issues brought on by tensions – an environment described in numerous ways as it relates to linguistic diversity, cultural and national identity, competencies, and how the institution imagines itself within the global community. In particular, these responses reflect the tensions and challenges faced on a daily basis that includes struggling with respect and balance in a multinational environment.

**Table 1**  
**Culture<sup>4</sup> at ABC**

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You've got the makeup of nationalities here, and the English and the French speaking, and then within the English and the French speaking, you've got all the different nationalities. You then have operational people and academic people, and there's a different culture there as well. **So that complicates the whole situation.**  
(Interview with #23)

...and I think to a certain extent, **there are conflictual perceptions**... the ideal is this whole notion of a melting pot where you can bring people from all over the world together, and **you can take the best of what all these different cultures have to offer**, and channel those for the future good of the hospitality industry, which is a worldwide industry, and wherever it's happening needs to take into account the whole multicultural, cross-cultural element... I think ... that even those who would like to believe that most firmly when they get into the day to day, **you get into a situation where there it's difficult to totally respect everybody else**, and not to feel that yes, but after all it is the Swiss tradition that should be dominating, as it should be. It is the Swiss way of doing things which should be dominating, or it is the American, because **that's what the world is all about today**, or ... and it's not being able to find the right balance, **or some people find it much more difficult to find the right balance than others.**  
(Interview with #58)

So [ABC] has its own culture. It's not Swiss anymore. **It was founded on the Swiss basis, by the Swiss.** It will always be owned by the Swiss. It will always be a Swiss institution, but it **wouldn't be only Swiss culture**... [ABC] doesn't represent the European Union, it represents the world... It's not European. It's a coincidence it's based in Europe, but if Switzerland was based elsewhere, [ABC] **would still be Swiss and global.** (Interview with #22)

...I think it's a mix, and that is what causes the difficulties we have here. There is **no unity**, I think. I see more precisely those differences of culture and languages, **unfortunately making people not understand very well each other**... I think that [ABC] actually reproduces a little bit the trouble we have in Switzerland because we have **three different cultures in Switzerland – the Italian, the German and the French** – and it makes it really difficult to have one country which is very ... how can I say unified?" "... the director, the general director is not Swiss, and that is something really important, because **he's actually the one leading the school...So he's really, I think, setting the pace**, and many of the members of the management team are not Swiss, which is also a great influence. So ... I think that I wouldn't say that this institution is really Swiss. I wouldn't, **because a Swiss institution would be much more peaceful**...(Interview with # 33)

For me, it's the culture of the global planet, you know, **like there is no borders**... I think that it is still **colored by the French more heavily** than by anybody else...the pressure to be beautiful, the pressure to be stylish, fashionable, is French, in my opinion. It's **not Swiss, it's very French**... **It's still the soul of the institution.**  
(Interview with #54)

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<sup>4</sup> When respondents discussed culture, I left it to them to define/describe it as they understood the term. In addition, as will be explained in Chapter III, I highlight key phrases to reflect possible tensions and underline multinational descriptors used to identify self or others by participants.



The analysis in this dissertation reflects a social constructionist perspective revealing how organizational tensions in the form of contradictions and dialectics occur within a globalized environment and how they are managed through discursive practices. Some organizational members are able to manage the contradictions and dialectics and they do so in various ways – through integrating with others, separating organizational duties in order to manage any differences within that setting, selecting only one language or group with which to communicate and associate, transcending tensions by reframing them or embracing them in a connected way, and/or becoming disoriented by the environment and paralyzed in the process (Baxter & Montgomery, 1998; Poole & Putnam, 2008).

Outcomes from the analysis suggest that in some cases, ambiguity is strategically used to complete daily organizational activities; but that at the same time, this strategic ambiguity results in paradoxical messages and in some cases leads to double binds and schizophrenic behavior. Finally, in some cases unintended consequences result that contradict the school mission to provide a rich and challenging environment.

My analysis and results also suggest that tensions and multinationalism intersect when organizational members use identity descriptors to label themselves, other members, or even in descriptions of the institution itself, and are often used to illustrate oppositional relationships. As Table 1 reveals, national,<sup>5</sup> international, and global perceptions are contextualized in organizations affected by globalizing processes. As Table 1 also illustrates, housing multiple national cultures and utilizing these national

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<sup>5</sup> And sometimes regional contexts are included, but not in this particular example.

affiliations in a positive way and threatens power balances and respect if some groups are perceived to have more privileged than another.

Now that I have supplied an overview, I will next explain the rationale for the study. I then present a theoretical foundation I use to understand the case and list specific research questions.

## **RATIONALE**

Organizations participating in a globalizing world are never isolated or operate in a vacuum; they are ongoing fluid entities which have multiple relational levels of intersection: within the world, within the national community in which it resides, and within the organization itself. (Philips & Hardy, 2002). This intersection results because of the simultaneous communication between/among its organizational members and often intersects with these outer rings of influence especially when an organizational mission is to educate the next generation of global hospitality leaders. Since communication plays such a fundamental role in globalizing process it is critical to identify and investigate discursive tensions that may intersect with multiple contextual layers: global, national, organizational (Stohl, 2001, 2005; Wiley, 2004). This study allows us to understand the complex social processes which are inherent in globalizing because little research has been done in regard to how communication reflects tensions within a multinational environment, the relationship to which they identify within the national and global contexts, and how the tensions are managed.

In addition, it is important to remember that the process of globalizing creates interdependence among nations and societies that in the past have been separated by social antipathy, history, national boundaries and geographical barriers (Baraldi, 2006). This sometimes new and often fragile interdependence can bring about tensions because globalization means the possibility of cultural<sup>6</sup> change and innovation through the opportunity of dialogue, yet at the same time it can be perceived as a threat to the surviving cultural traditions (Baraldi, 2006, p. 54). Stohl (2005) states: “Globalization is not a state of affairs; it embodies dynamic communicative, economic, cultural, and political practices and produces new discourses of identity” (p. 247).

At the same time, globalizing brings with it a new understanding about what national and multinational represents (Wiley, 2004; Mallavarapu, 2007). National boundaries now appear more ambiguous through economic and political unions like the European Union and the Arab League. Yet, there is no real understanding of nation until its contextual dependences and connections in relation to globalizing are understood. While the concept of nation is no longer the only way in which people should experience and understand globalization, it is important to remember that the concept of nation has not disappeared (Wiley, 2004; Mallavarapu, 2007). In fact, despite making organizational changes in order to globally compete, the organization in this study still defines its population in regard to the national membership of its members.<sup>7</sup> I choose to define multinationalism as it relates to national heritage because I argue that it is still the

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<sup>6</sup> I define *culture* as shared values and norms depending on the context. This definition leaves the ability to have simultaneous and fluid social group memberships, especially in organizational situations where allies and affiliations are critical in issues of self-esteem and influence.

<sup>7</sup> One of the many examples exhibited at this site is the use of student name cards adorned with a picture of the student’s national flag.

dominant way people engaging in a world society identify themselves and because it is the nation state that determines most policy affecting its citizens. Indeed, Mallavarapu (2007) argues that nations as opposed to globalization really regulate the flow of “people, ideas, commodities, and capital” (p. 95) and are the communities that identify and distinguish its citizens from aliens (p. 95-96). Thus, this organization provides an opportunity to further understand the evolving nature and role of nation as it relates to globalizing institutions.

It is also important to remember that our understanding of national cultural attributes especially in regard to competency<sup>8</sup> is due in large part to Hofstede (1980, 1991). His work offered a set of national cultural typologies including whether a group generally shows individualistic or collectivistic attitudes, whether a group avoids uncertainty or not, whether a group acts in a traditional masculine or feminine manner, and/or whether a group acts in a hierarchical manner or grants all members equal status. While Hofstede’s work and the multiple works spawned by his typologies (see Søndergaard, 1994) offers a foundation from which to work, his typologies have been embraced by educational and business environments that often represent his work as the *only* way to understand competency and that his descriptions of national characteristics are fixed/unchanging cultural attributes (see also Orr & Hauser, 2008, Blodgett, Bakir, & Rose, 2008; Ailon, 2008; Gerkhart, 2008; Merkin, 2006).

One competency any society depends on is language competency. Because of England’s geographic colonization and because of the United States’ (US) past and

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<sup>8</sup> I define competency as the ability to successfully engage and complete all interactions with members of social out-groups for the purposes of maintaining workplace relationships and advancing workplace goals.

present economic and political global interactions, English has assumed the role as the lingua franca of business (Laponce, 2001; Van Parijs, 2000). This perceived domination has produced a debate as to whether English will eliminate linguistic diversity (Philipson, 1992; Canagarajah, 1999; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; Master, 1998; Joseph, 2006). In addition, MacLean (2006) argues that language has been overlooked in international business research because of the incorrect assumption that the choice of language for a multinational corporate structure seems only to depend on selection, and that the nuances of how it affects the organization is either seen as too simplistic or as too complicated for researchers to tackle.<sup>9</sup> Finally, understanding what language tensions occur from globalizing processes and how they are managed may also help societies provide some insight in how and why majority and minority groups see it as necessary to secede or split (Canada and Belgium) from their national community because of perceived differences that include language privileging.

Finally, choosing an educational institution as a case study breaks away from norm of investigating corporate institutions, which traditionally are used as the models in which to understand multinationalism (See Stohl, 2001). Choosing an educational institution also allows for an understanding of the growing connection between education and globalization (Spring, 2008). Globalizing forces are influencing a *knowledge economy* where wealth is tied to knowledge, workers, and ultimately, to educational systems requiring a brain circulation and multiculturalism through migration (Spring, 2008, p. 37). One question that Spring (2008) asks is whether societies, as they

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<sup>9</sup> Maclean (2006) also argues that Hofstede has never addressed the influence of language on national attributes.

become more diversified, remain socially cohesive. This study aids in understanding what social cohesiveness looks like under these circumstances and how it is maintained and managed (or not). In addition, investigating an organization who prepares future leaders for working in an international environment helps to understand what tensions these future leaders are exposed to and what they witness in their school environment between and among the university faculty and administrators. Now that I have provided a rationale, I will discuss the theoretical foundation of the study.

## **THEORETICAL FOUNDATION**

### **Discourse**

I approach this case organization from a social constructionist perspective. This epistemology as discussed by Philips and Hardy (2002) suggests that reality is created from the “conflictual discourses” (p. 2) people experience. The term *discourse* includes all texts (written or conveyed orally/visually) used in the production, dissemination, reception, comprehension and the maintenance of the social construction of reality (Philips & Hardy, 2002; Alvesson & Karreman, 2000). We cannot understand social interactions without understanding how discursive practices create the reality of its agents as well as understanding the contexts in which these agents operate (Philips & Hardy, 2002).

Alvesson and Karreman (2000) argue that using discourse analysis (described as *discourse* with a small d) in order to understand social practices at the local level can take away from understanding the larger contextual levels (described as *Discourse* with

a big D). These scholars also suggest that using both types of analyses will take away from understanding the complexity. However, I argue that it is necessary to utilize both ways in order to understand how local social practices constitute reality for the organization and its members. In other words, it seems reasonable that members of a multinational community must exhibit some discursive practices that identify them with the wider contexts if they are contributing to the social construction of these larger globalizing processes.

Phillips and Hardy (2002) also describe methods of discourse analyses where analysis of text and context are separate and distinct approaches. With a case study approach I find that attempting some level of a “three dimensional” (p. 19) approach is warranted (Phillips & Hardy, 2002). In other words I attempt to include both context and text to illustrate the multidimensional components of organizational and member discourse. For contextual purposes, I supply longer passages in order to capture the richness of the construction of reality reflected in participants’ interview descriptions, and at the same time, I identify the textual identity descriptors that reflect differentiation and comparison among and between organizational groups (Tafjel, 1981).

Finally, along with the use of contextual and textual analyses, I also include background and social histories throughout this dissertation. This is important in order to offer a more complete understanding of the organization and avoid diluting the importance of agency as sometimes happens when utilizing discourse analysis (Conrad, 2004).

## **Contradictions**

*Contradictions* refer to the co-existence of opposites that take the form of messages and actions within a communication process (Baxter & Montgomery, 1998, Fairhurst et al., 2002; Stohl & Cheney, 2001; Seo, Putnam, & Bartunek, 2004; Putnam & Boys, 2006). Seo et al. (2004) argue that contradictions exist in bipolar relationships that sometimes become incompatible. Giddens (1984) argues that contradictions can be defined as structural principals (reproduced and deeply felt interconnections such as rules) and operate within an organization, but may also infringe upon or violate each other. These descriptions suggest both a dynamic and sometimes irrational nature where occurring contradictions might influence organizational interaction when trying to manage tensions in a diverse environment. As global competition and workforce diversity escalates, contradictions intensify and organizations must understand and utilize the contradictions in a positive manner and at the same time avoid the polarizing, static and defensive tensions which can also paralyze an organization (Lewis, 2000).

Any complex organizational system has contradictions, such as hiring employees based on their individual attributes and then socializing them to become indistinguishable or trying to control employees while attempting to allow employee participation (Poole, Seibold, & McPhee, 1985). In a multinational institution as described in my case, the goal of socializing people to become indistinguishable would not be an option because it does not benefit an organization whose mission is to provide an intercultural environment where employees can share their diversity. But at the same time, tensions from contradictions can occur when an institution wants to create social



cohesion and respect diversity. Scott, Corman, and Cheney (1998) argue that members are often asked to produce and reproduce specific behaviors in organizational situations based on member identities that reflect their organizational “set of rules and resources” (p. 303). These rules in this case represent how tensions are managed to maintain social cohesion and resources represent knowledge such as language and cultural values. These constructed identities can often represent oppositional positions when employees try to embrace these rules and at the same time remain a diversity resource for the organization.

### **Dialectics**

While tensions result in contradictions, tensions as opposites can also appear as *dialectics*, or as unified opposites that are interdependent and create a push/pull situation (Baxter & Montgomery, 1998; Putnam, 2003). Dialectics reflect the actors’ struggle to embrace the opposing contradictions through forcing situations that are both/and or either/or (Putnam, 2003). The use of dialectics in organizational communication has been and continues to be important to the discipline because it offers scholars a way to look at such important aspects of organizational life-- conflict, change, power relationships, intercultural relationships and language use (Putnam, 2003; Putnam & Boys, 2006, Stohl & Cheney; 2001; Duta, 2008).

Managing the dialectics is critical in dealing with conflict and several management options have been identified (Baxter & Montgomery; 1998: Seo, Putnam, & Bartunek, 2004; Poole & Putnam, 2008). First, people who are managing dialectics *select* one end of the pole in lieu of the other in an attempt to deny the existence of both.

Second, people *separate* issues and events and choose a way to manage them based on the particular situation. Third, people attempt to *integrate* both poles, sometimes by forcing the two poles together in some kind of amalgamation or sometimes by balancing them so there is a perspective of equal power and/or status. A fourth way people manage dialectics is *transcending* them by redefining them or reframing them to reflect a different perspective. People also are able to *connect* with both equally and embrace the opposites because they perceive both poles valuable and/or necessary. Finally, people sometimes become disoriented and become paralyzed and inactive because of organizational dialectics.<sup>10</sup>

Pertinent studies add to our understanding of how dialectics work. While this study focuses on organizational dialectics, two interpersonal studies are important to note because they offer ways to understand value norms and local dialectical contexts. First, Dindia's (1998) work on social stigmas that force people into managing the dialectic of reveal/conceal. Value structures establish social stigmas as an identity marker and require a person to manage them based on the shared environment and perceived value of the stigmas. This study reflects how social identity factors can be constructed through dialectical interaction and how certain characteristics become privileged through understanding oppositional value structures. Second, Conville's (1998) study highlights dialectics involved in relationships and argues that contradictions in the relational development appear knotted or interconnected where

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<sup>10</sup> Some scholars suggest that disorientation is a way that people manage paradoxes (Poole & Putnam, 2008). I address paradoxes as a *result* of managing contradictions and dialectics. A discussion of paradoxes is found in Chapter VI.

tensions become tied and/or evolve together. Here relationships as processes shift and continually evolve through the social construction of shared dialogue. His study also introduces the use of *indigenous* dialectics, those dialectics that are created from unique local terms to reflect the study population.

Organizational scholars have borrowed from interpersonal communication to explain dialectical tensions within organizations such as leadership succession dialectics in non-profit organizations (Duta, 2008); how the implementation of language during negotiations signals yielding/controlling (Putnam, 2003); and maintaining status between anesthesiologist groups by managing autonomy/connection with politeness (Jameson, 2004).

Dialectics are important because they help to identify tensions associated with power relationships. For example, Vaughn and Stamp (2003) used grounded theory to understand power relationships in regard to emancipation/control in staff/client interactions at a battered women's shelter when results revealed asymmetrical roles and contrasting experiences in regard to the power structure. The contrasting experiences point out the multiplicity of perceptions that often construct reality within an organization. Mumby and Stohl (1991) investigated power positions and how it is maintained and reproduced in team concepts and gender identity in regard to absence/presence dialectics. One particular example in their study is when an employee is absent and her supervisor comes in and rearranges her office. The employee remarks that it wouldn't happen to *a real person*, meaning a faculty member. Here the authors suggest that her identity is reproduced as subservient due to both her physical absence

and her acknowledgement as powerless within the organizational structure. Like Dindia's study on stigmas as identity markers, this study also allows us to understand a different kind of identity –identity as gender. Her role within the structure reflects her understanding of her place of power (or lack thereof) when trying to manage this dialectic.

Educational organizations are also sites where dialectics have been investigated. Kellett (1999) offers us an example of the different ways they are managed when collective thinking is needed when deciding changes in curriculum, an institutional shared mission, and staff and faculty empowerment. In contrast, another study in an educational context illustrates how the emotionality of hidden conflict produces dialectical tensions. Specifically, Bartunek and Reid (1992) look at hidden conflict at a private educational institution and discover public/private, formal/informal, and rational/irrational dialectics at work. Their findings on changing roles give insight into how emotion can create tensions, how the contextual situations of public and private play into understanding how organizations operate and how participants within an organization hide conflict in various ways including passive resistance in order to oppose changing role identities.

Bartunek's and Reid's (1992) study in particular reveals the relationship of dialectics and irrationality as it relates to tensions as a component of organizations. Trethewey and Ashcraft (2004) argue that irrationality associated with tensions should be considered a normal function of organization, especially as it relates to gender issues, but it could also be argued that other relationships appear irrational if driven by social

identity where status is at stake and/or there is a real or perceived power imbalance. In addition, even if irrational behavior is normal, and I agree that it is, it can be disruptive and should be identified in order to be understood and addressed especially if it disrupts organizational missions and devalues organizational members.

These studies focus on how contradictions and dialectics appear to operate in somewhat similar ways for much of the organization members because scholars are attempting to study either a specific instance or a specific tension to find existing patterns. One notable exception to this is Tracey's (2004) study of prison guards and how they experience multiple interpretations of tensions when dealing with prisoners. Specifically, some guards see their positions as contradictions, some as dialectics, and some as paradoxical resulting in double binds. This study reveals that organizational members do not always share similar perspectives and it demonstrates that because people are approaching these situations from their unique perspective. It makes sense that organizational members don't manage tensions or perceive situations in the same manner. What could be considered missing in this study is what other contexts intersected with these tensions so as to better understand the outcomes. In other words, what contexts outside the prison institution intersected to influence the guards' different managing techniques and perspectives?

One study that addresses dialectics with a more global focus is the Papa, Auwal, and Singal (1995) study of the Grameen Bank and its lending rules. This study argues that the dialectic of control/emancipation is at work because borrowers are emancipated when they own their own businesses but are controlled at the same time by the rules set

in place by the bank which requires each borrower to operate in conjunction with a peer group of borrowers who control borrower's payback behavior. This study gives an understanding of regional influences by describing the women borrowers' identity and cultural circumstances which is helpful in understanding the role of agency but it also presents the agents as only having one dialectic to manage when it could be argued that these women would have other contradictions and dialectics of which they have to manage that emerge from their association with the Grameen Bank.

In fact, none of these organizational studies take into the consideration how influences outside of the organization reflect a larger picture in which the organization operates because these studies understand the element of *totality* as the organization itself. In addition, little research has been offered in regard to dialectics and the intersection with intercultural communication. Martin and Nakayama (1999) posit that a dialectical approach will free researchers to use a different lens through which they can view intercultural communication and give new insight and flexibility. In particular, by investigating dialectical intersections in everyday interactions, Martin and Nakayama (1999) argue that the discipline can offer a better understanding of the connections between privilege and disadvantage, and how social and contextual elements influence these intercultural components. This study addresses these components when it identifies what tensions exist and how they are managed. It also addresses how multinationalism intersects these organizational tensions to understand what they look like and how they operate in the construction and reproduction of globalizing processes.

Now that I have discussed how dialectics have been represented in the literature as it relates to my study, I will discuss the evolution of dialectical theory which undergirds this study.

## **DIALECTICAL THEORY**

The foundation for understanding dialectics evolves from a progression of philosophers and scholars and is divided between a Hegelian perspective where there is a possible resolution of sorts at the end of the tension as opposed to the Bakhtinian perspective where tensions are ever evolving (Poole & Van de Ven, 2004). Hegel posited that dialectical thought is comprised from three components of logic– that is, the abstract component (thesis), the negation of the thesis (antithesis) and the speculative or rational aspect (synthesis) (Kojève, 1969). It is from these contradictory moments that the resolution or synthesis of the truths occurs and a form of resolution results. Thus, each person brings their own truth to the discussion and that the comparisons of these truths offer contradictory moments. It is from these contradictory moments that the resolution or synthesis of the truths occurs.

In contrast, Marx argued that Hegel's ideas were too orderly and that contradictions were neither rational nor always reconcilable. Marx based his perspective on dialectics as they appeared in the material world of economic capitalism where the worker and the capitalist represented the oppositional dialectic, each interactive agents where output was dictated by the capitalist while at the same time, dependent on the worker to create it (Mandel, 1990; Wilde, 1991). This relationship created a push/pull

situation where opposite poles became interdependent and sometimes becomes a power struggle because of their interdependent community and economic social positions.

Bakhtin's (1981) influences on dialectical theory reflect the complexity of dialectics as it relates to dialogue and discourse. First, Bakhtin argued that no discourse is ever alike because each situational experience has unique characteristics and voices. In addition, Bakhtin argued that within a social group there is an ongoing creation of discourse which is contradictory and packed with tension because of the centripetal (unifying) and centrifugal (coming apart) components of language creation. At the same time, dialogue that comes about in these situations results in multivocality or multiple voices even though the construction process seeks coherence and unity (pp. 270-272). These three assertions suggest that through dialogue, a social group creates a unique reality but does so through a push/pull experience where a multitude of perspectives attempt to become a cohesive message. The continual coming together/coming apart through dialogue allows for the understanding that resolution can never occur because of the continuation of agent interplay and that discourse is socially constructed because of the uniqueness of the created message (Honeycutt, 1994; Duta, 2008; Baxter & West, 2003).

Finally, Baxter and Montgomery (1998; Baxter,<sup>11</sup> 2004a, 2004b) extend the understanding of dialectical theory from an interpersonal perspective. These scholars describe their understanding of dialectical theory based on two specific frames of

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<sup>11</sup> Baxter (2004a) states that Bakhtin's work in dialogism continues to have an effect on her evolving thinking on dialectical theory where her understanding now has passed by the more mechanistic notions she felt was reflected in her 1998 work.



features. First, they argue that four elements - *contradiction*, *change*, *praxis*, and *totality* are necessary for dialectical interactions to occur. As mentioned earlier, *contradiction* refers to the interplay between the opposites. *Change* refers to some difference in phenomenon over time and cannot be separated from contradiction, because the tension between the contradictions is how change occurs (Baxter & Montgomery, 1998). A third element, *praxis*, focuses on “the simultaneous subject-and-object nature of the human experience” (Baxter & Montgomery, 1998, p. 9). This means that individuals both act and are acted upon so that their actions in the present are both constrained and enabled by past actions to allow for the creation of future situations in which the individuals will respond. Thus, the core element of *praxis* suggests that historical, present and future contexts need to be considered in order to understand the full meaning of dialectical processes because these contexts provide a comparative nature to people’s understanding of reality.

Finally, the element *totality* means that occurring phenomena cannot be considered separate; that is, dialectics should not be separated from its “sociocultural situations” (Baxter & Montgomery, 1998, p. 11). Baxter and Montgomery do not fully describe or delve into this element and scholars in previous studies as mentioned above have usually limited their idea of totality to either the relationship or the organization itself. Little is shared with how the outside factors that influence an organization may influence the emerging and ongoing dialectics inside the organization. Benson (1977) states:

Because social construction is an emergent, partially autonomous process, the realities accepted by participants at any particular time may be

continually undermined by on-going acts of social construction. Even powerful actors may be unable to maintain an orderly, rationalized system of social relations in the face of this ongoing process. The totality, conceived dialectically then, includes newly emerging social arrangements as well as those already in place (p. 5).

Despite this ongoing construction, or because of it, Benson (1977) contends researchers should continue to look outside the organization and its arbitrary boundaries to understand the environment in which it operates (p. 9).

I define *totality* as including the contexts in which an organization resides, which includes regional, national, and global as well as the social, historical, economic, and political factors within those contexts. I argue these contexts intersect and influence organizational discourses because their members have access and integrate with the public sphere and they bring these ideas into the organization. As mentioned earlier, organizations are not isolated and thus it seems reasonable to argue that outside contexts and their agents influence the social construction of discourse created by the agents operating on the inside.

These elements as Baxter and Montgomery (1998) name and describe are all present in my study. First, changing organizational policy at ABC created many recurring contradictions. One example in regard to constructing discourse is how organizational members are forced to choose one of the two privileged languages to communicate in every organizational situation. To continue with the same example of language policy change, praxis is also at work because members act to carry out the changes yet at the same time they are acted upon because past traditions of the organization, such as only speaking French, enabling them to communicate but also

constraining them because they now have to contend with the present conditions which also privileges speaking English.

Finally, totality is critical in how the organization operates because as a place whose mission is to prepare students for a globalized society, totality doesn't just include the organization, but includes all of the multiple contexts in which an organization resides. In other words, these outside contexts are represented in the discourse as seen in Table 1 as the organization attempts to identify its place in a globalizing society.

The second major feature of dialectical theory discussed by Baxter and Montgomery (1998) is the idea of the *knot of contradictions*. Specifically, the scholars explain that contradictions are interconnected or operate as a “knot” (p. 11). Based on studies by Conville (1998) and Rawlins (1998), knots of contradictions seem linear with strands connecting the cycles of dialectical tensions. In my study, the strands of each identified tension are knotted, but that the multiple tensions I identify are spinning off simultaneously, and are also knotted and interconnected in meaningful ways. This is important because the knotted component allows for a more dimensional and dynamic understanding of how tensions enable and constrain the co-construction of discourse.

Thus, in order to understand how tensions operate in this organization, it is important to understand:

**Research Question 1: What tensions occur in the form of contradictions and dialectics?**

Second, in order to know how agency operates within the organization, we need to understand what people do when tensions occur, thus:

**Research Question 2: How are types of tensions managed?**

In the next chapter, I expand upon the literature as it relates to my definition of multinationalism. In particular I include pertinent literature as it relates to competency, linguistic diversity, and national identity.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### INTRODUCTION

This chapter addresses competency, linguistic diversity, and identity, as it relates to multinationalism. I define *multinationalism* as the intersection of communities who self identify with a national heritage<sup>12</sup> and perpetuate identities through daily communication and interaction. *Competency* is the ability to successfully engage and complete all interactions with members of social out-groups for the purposes of maintaining workplace relationships and advancing workplace goals. Competency includes cognitive knowledge of cultures,<sup>13</sup> feelings and attitudes about norms and values, awareness of the appropriate ways to interact, through the ability to socially compare (Skuttnab-Kangas, 2000).

It would seem reasonable that the elements of competency, national identity, and linguistic diversity are interrelated but literature suggests their relationship is somewhat elusive. I would argue that people can be made aware and learn what it takes to be competent, but there is no clear and easy path to either reach this goal because so many of the components of acting competently are situational (Mendenhall, 2008). Further, having multilingual skills in a globalizing environment is a major competency, but as

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<sup>12</sup> I have chosen *national heritage* as a descriptor because the case organization describes its population as comprised of people from multiple nations and because it is shown through the literature that nation states in most cases are the bodies that most often determine official language policy.

<sup>13</sup> As mentioned in Chapter I, I define *culture* as shared values and norms depending on the context. This definition leaves the ability to have simultaneous and dynamic social group memberships, especially in regard to privilege.

English gains status as the lingua franca of business, technology, and hospitality, linguistic diversity is threatened (Scanlon & Singh, 2006; Phillipson, 1992, 2007; Macedo, Dendrinos, & Gounari, 2003; Skutnbb-Kangas, 2000). At the same time, while globalizing processes are influencing what it means to be competent and what languages to use, nations still are the predominant community that creates and implements language policy. Specifically, national policy usually designates which languages are considered acceptable and privileged. Thus language and national identity become linked because political and educational organizations administer policies that socialize its citizens to identify with and be identified by the language(s) in which they communicate.

## **COMPETENCY**

Recent organizational competency literature includes key topics such as human resource training, teamwork, and assessing international and global leadership traits. First, human resource training focuses on redesigning human resource goals and systems in order to offer intercultural training support. For example, Adler and Bartholomew (1992) contend that training on an individual basis needs to focus on understanding national cultures, to train towards the ability to simultaneously work with people from multiple cultures, and to find ways to show respect and treat foreign colleagues as equals.

On a systems basis, Adler and Bartholomew (1992) advise that organizations move from a singular national culture perspective to create a multiple worldview

perspective because an organization should never assume its heritage national culture will always dominate. Interestingly, they also warn against the illusions of thinking that if the foreign employees are fitting in, then an organization must be “managing their cultural diversity well” (p. 63). People assimilate or put on the appearance of assimilation for different reasons. Take the example of organizational citizenship behavior. As described by Organ (1988), employees exhibit citizenship behavior by pitching in and doing tasks not articulated in job descriptions. Randel (2003) argues that shared values among team members are more valued than diverse ones, but that members may exhibit citizenship behavior, that is, do extra tasks, in order to compensate for their discomfort of dealing with unlike cultural backgrounds.

So on one hand, this study suggests that there are certain behaviors deemed positive that can veil discomfort. On the other hand, if employees fit in and become too assimilated, it is counterproductive because the reason for diversity is to have multiple perspectives. Snell, Snow, Davison, & Hambrick (1998), suggest the delicate balance among local responsiveness, global efficiency, and learning sometimes eliminates prized team cultural differences so companies need to find a balance that retains the diversity of the staff yet also makes them identify with their respective work social group.

Another component of the Snell et al. (1998) study suggests that discerning reward systems and appraisal assessments are the most difficult components in intercultural team work within organizations. This aspect is another reason why human resource departments need to have multiple worldviews because they are the ones who normally manage and maintain these systems and without the diversity required to

appreciate and respect how people feel valued, they will be unable to educate both staff and offer advice to those who make policy.

Other training studies suggest that how different national cultures learn using models developed by Kolb (1984) should be taken into consideration when human resource trainers look to design intercultural programs (Barmeyer, 2004). Additionally, Graf (2004) suggests that there should be ongoing assessment of methods implemented by human resources and that there is no guarantee that just because managers go through training it suddenly means that they will be judged as competent in every situation. Finally, as cultural novelty increases in organizations competing on a global level, there should be more time and effort placed on training (Engle, Mendenhall, Powers, & Stedham, 2001). This makes sense given that the more diverse organization populations become, they will be housing interacting social groups that may not share values and norms. In addition, since identity is dynamic, intercultural training needs to be accessed and updated based on evolving behaviors and changing value structures.

The problem with training is how to discover what to train for, that is, what makes a person competent? Multiple studies offer different methods in the form of assessment tools to understand competency. For example, the *Intercultural Development Inventory* created by Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman (2003) identifies the six stages or progressions toward intercultural competency which starts at denial (lack of interest), and goes through the processes of defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation, to the highest level, integration (being able to assimilate and accept multiple worldviews). Hammer (2005) also developed an intercultural conflict style inventory from five



hundred ten participants<sup>14</sup> based on 122 items undergirded by individualist/collectivist patterns, high context/low context communication systems (and judged as relevant by a panel of sixteen experts). This study in particular reflects the complexity of tensions in intercultural contexts and how difficult they might be to manage.

Next, the *Multicultural Personality Questionnaire* developed by Van der Zee and Van Oudenhoven (2000) measures personality in regard to expatriate adjustment and performance.<sup>15</sup> They specifically assess cultural empathy, open-mindedness, social initiative, emotional stability, and flexibility. Kets de Vries, Vriegbaud, and Florent-Treacy (2004) developed the *Global Executive Leadership Inventory* in order to understand the gap between a leader's self-assessment and the assessment of others. In particular, it focuses on the capabilities to direct and motivate and the ability to create successful organizational systems.<sup>16</sup>

The topic of competency is so critical that the 2008 Academy of Management Conference included a symposium where Mendenhall (2008) led a discussion on what it takes to become a competent leader in a global society. While Mendenhall mentioned that there are over fifty-six traits (and counting) needed to be competent, Mendenhall and Osland highlighted six interactive dimensions to understand the complexity of the subject. They are: global business expertise, global organizing expertise, cross-cultural

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<sup>14</sup> Hammer reports that 56% of its participants listed North America as their dominant culture and included the US/Canada/Mexico. It is interesting that it is suggested that North America is a culture given the diversity among the respected nation states listed.

<sup>15</sup> See also Van Oudenhoven, Timmerman, & Van Der Zee (2007) and Herfst, Van Oudenhoven, & Timmerman (2008).

<sup>16</sup> For an extensive discussion of assessment tools, see Bird (2008). In addition, see also Graen (2006) for a debate about their preferred Third Culture Bonding Approach (TCB) versus the Global Organizing Designs Leadership (GLOBE) approach.

relationships, cognitive orientation, and understanding of traits. The discussion also included Jokinen's (2005) layers of competencies that include behavioral skills such as knowledge and networking abilities, mental characteristics such as social judgment and empathy, and fundamental core traits such as inquisitiveness and self-awareness, and findings from a US Army field study conducted by Abbe, Gulick, and Herman (2007) which resulted in the necessity of organizations to promote and train for language proficiencies and the understanding of regional cultures.

Mendenhall<sup>17</sup> also suggested that it takes a variety of experiences to attain any level of leadership competency: in class intercultural training, role play, practical day to day experiences, and exposure to multiple cultural situations through opportunities such as travel and international work. In particular, he stated that while language competency is important, it is only one of the many characteristics necessary to be competent.

Based on the literature and all of the different approaches to competency it seems that there are multiple types of training necessary to become competent; that competency is relative based on the context and situation in which one finds themselves; that is, there is an ability necessary to manage the growing interdependence of partners; and that one has to accept that there is a great deal of ambiguity in these situations (Lane, Maznevski, & Mendenhall, 2004).

One of the most ambiguous situations multinational organizations have to deal with is communicating in multilingual situations. In the literature the battle is over

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<sup>17</sup> For a complete look at global leadership, see Mendenhall, M.E., Osland, J. S., Bird, A., Oddou, G. R., and Maznevski, M. L. (2008). *Global leadership: Research, practice, and development*. London: Routledge.

acknowledgement and respect of linguistic diversity. Specifically, linguistic diversity is hotly debated because globalization seems to be displacing both dominant languages and lesser status regional languages in favor of English, the current lingua franca of business. At the same time, nations still control much of the language policy that dictates status to a particular language. This global controversy is discussed next.

## **LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY**

Linguistic diversity literature focuses on how national language policies and the increased use of English as the lingua franca of business has exacerbated language fragility because of their power to dictate status of one language over another.

Hornberger (2002) suggests that until the 1980s, linguistic diversity was looked at as a societal problem and that now it has turned into a paradox where we “squander our ethnic resources while lamenting our lack of foreign language resources” (p. 35). This paradox reflects a contradiction of accepting all cultures as equals but at the same time rejecting their heritage language as less valued.

The rise of the nation state, colonialism, and rapidly moving globalization are cited as the reasons for the loss of language diversity and some argue that these phenomena have forced people in many areas of the world to choose between forgoing their heritage language in order to compete for a better quality of life (Scanlon & Singh, 2006; Phillipson, 1992, 2007; Macedo, Dendrinos, & Gounari, 2003; Skutnbb-Kangas, 2000; Van Parijs, 2000). Currently, Scanlon and Singh (2006) report that there are thousands of languages in “danger of extinction” (p. 16) due to their lack of international

value. Van Parijs (2000) argues for the enforcement a territoriality principle so that all immigrants to have to learn the host language in order to maintain its value.

The lingua franca most currently to blame is English. Presently, sixty countries deem it their official or main state language where about four hundred million speak it with another three hundred million who speak it as a second language (Brisk, 2005). English has been at the forefront as a form of imperialism or as Phillipson labels it, *linguicism* (p. 55). Linguicism is a form of linguistic racism where English is privileged in fields such as business and education, and other languages are devalued or altogether excluded.

Also under attack are the English as a Second Language (ESL) programs which have been charged with attempting to have a cultural agenda -- spreading the associated culture of English for England and the United States (Master, 1998). English for Specific Purposes (ESP) programs have been argued to be less inclined to spread unwanted cultural norms, but falls short by allowing the people in these programs to negotiate communication outside of their workplace (Master, 1998).

Taking a more pragmatic view, some scholars suggest that forcing people to retain their heritage language at the expense of economic survival is not realistic. Specifically, while imperialism is at play, taking this stance can “ghettoize minority communities” (Okara, 1990, p. 177; Joseph, 2006; Canagarajh, 1999; House, 2003). In addition, some argue that English is a neutral and malleable language and that through the intersection of minority languages, English can become a language people can make their own. (Okara, 1990; Canagarajh, 1999; Grimond, 2009)

Vaish (2005) takes a different viewpoint altogether and suggests that people are in fact, capable of learning English and maintaining their heritage language. Further, he asserts that attitudes (like Phillipson's) that suggest that people can't learn one language and still know another reflects a lack of respect and really reflects another form of colonialism because it treats people as children (Vaish, 2005, p. 200-201). In addition, excluding people from learning English, a form of linguistic capital, also excludes people from access to the global economy and perpetuates inequality. In fact, Kumar, Trofimovich, and Gatbonton (2008) argue that when studying Hindi immigrants living in Canada, second generations show cultural changes in regard to some traits such as filial duty, but their findings suggested that there was no clear connection between language and retention of cultural traits. In other words, it could as easily be argued that exposure to new cultural situations or experiences in the new environment could be the reason for changes in behavior.

Alternatives to learning English have been suggested to restrict its use. One attempt is the development of Esperanto. Esperanto is a substitute language in an effort to replace competition among dominant languages and to neutralize the cultural connection of languages (Phillipson, 1992; Li, 2003; Fettes, 2001). This artificial language, derived from European languages, is reported to have about a range of about one million speakers worldwide (Li, 2003). Despite multiple attempts, Esperanto has not been successful in its role as a substitute language because it still does not allow for large enough technical vocabulary for specific fields, is not taught world-wide, is not perceived as useful, and it does not provide universal contextual meanings (Li, 2003). I

would also argue that building a language from a set of European languages does not really remove the cultural component because it seems to still privilege a group of languages that are attached to other cultural heritages.

Another way groups have attempted to restrict English use has been to introduce bilingual educational programs. Bilingual programs are where two languages are used in some format for the purposes of instruction and have been introduced in many countries as a way to retain the local or minority languages and still compete in a globalized society and/or to offer the opportunity to become fluent in another language (Hu, 2008; Brisk, 2005). There are multiple types of bilingual education where effective programs start early in life, involve immersion and offer simultaneous training, however, the same programs can also result in assimilating minorities where outcomes often result in monolingual outcomes and substitute a “false need for modernization” (Hu, 2008, pp. 201-203). Yet, bilingual contexts allow for complex situations which can enrich cultural situations if an equitable participation of both languages can somehow be achieved. If not, people with higher fluency levels dominate conversations and less fluent people tend to only participate when directly engaged (Du-Babcock, 1999).

Nations often make the decision over language status, because they officially recognize specific languages based on approval of its residing social groups, while regional and educational institutions enforce the decision through documentation and through educational policies. For example, in 1988, England passed education legislation that named English as one of three major core subjects (besides Math and Science) and while it allowed for additional languages to be studied, study was limited to the ages of

eleven to sixteen (Bourne, 1997). In the US, there is no state that requires courses in any language other than English despite the influx of major immigrant populations (McGroaty, 1997).<sup>18</sup>

Economic factors also play a large role in official recognition and thus, the European Union (EU) is also concerned with the encroachment of English. As a primarily economic community that privileges over twenty official languages, the EU has been caught in a balancing act between their policy of encouraging language diversity and the ease of the use of English as introduced by the UK and Ireland in 1973 (Truchot, 2001; Mar-Molinero & Stevenson, 2006). Despite the balancing act, the EU continues to rely on English especially in regard to its creation of written documents (Mar-Molinero & Stevenson, 2006).

It is important to note that while they encourage linguistic diversity, the EU does not dictate policy for its member nations. Thus, nations are on their own to protect language status. An example of a country known for taking a protectionist position is France. In fact, France and its French citizens support a monolingual policy because they feel their language is threatened, especially by English, due to the lasting influence of English in rising powers like India, a former British colony, and the growth and dominance of the US after World War II (Ager, 1999).

Ager (1999) suggests the antagonism that the French feel about this situation should be understood in the context of history. Specifically, the current French dialect was chosen to replace several other regional dialects by French Revolution leaders in

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<sup>18</sup> Boyd (1998) attempts to dispel the idea that people from the US are always monolingual by looking at a population of expatriates living in the Nordic regions of Europe that have become bilingual.

order to communicate the revolution and its mission to the middle class. Because of the association to the French Revolution, the cultural ideology of speaking French and being French became one in the same and it became a component for export as a part of the culture (Ager, 1999). So ironically, minority dialectics were sacrificed for the supposed good of the nation.

France is so concerned about its language status that it has considered legislation that would require mothers to speak French to their children at home in order to better assimilate immigrants (Joseph, 2006). Joseph also argues that: “it remains truer in France than in any other European country that someone who speaks the national language is accepted as part of the nation, regardless of their origins” (p. 24). This assessment suggests that language and national identity is synonymous and privileging one language seems contradictory in that France is attempting to maintain language dominance, the same thing that it complains that English speakers are trying to achieve.

Ager (1999) also reports that despite the perceived loss of status of French in the globalized society, the French continue to press for its maintenance. Specifically, France continues to promote the retention of the French language through governmental agencies, through *Alliance Française*, and remains involved in the promotion of its language use and language policy issues in other French speaking countries (Ager, 1999).

Two nations where French has been and remains on a collision course with English are Canada and Switzerland. First, there is no place that the promotion of French as a status language has been more controversial than in the Canadian province of



Quebec because it not only attempted to achieve equity in status with English but because it also became entrenched with national identity when Quebec moved toward independence from Canada (Cumming, 1997; Ager, 2005; Jedwab, 2007; Bourhis, Montaruli, & Amiot, 2007). Jedwab (2007) suggests that language became the principal identity marker as early as the 1970s for English speakers in part because of the language policies generated at the time that made them identify with minority status in Quebec despite its majority status within Canada. French speakers<sup>19</sup> in Quebec especially felt oppressed due to their minority position and lesser language status within the country as a whole, even though Canada's two official languages are both French and English (Bourhis et al., 2007). Ager (2005) argues tensions framed Quebec more as a nation state than as a province when it fought to instill a form of national pride by changing language policy.

A recent study by Bourhis et al. (2007) reviews twenty years of field studies concerning this issue as it relates to identity and language behaviors (psychological, sociological, and cultural contexts) and communication accommodation theory.<sup>20</sup> Summarizing their findings, a series of language policy bills were passed culminating with the Charter of the French Language (Bill 101) which required the French language to be accommodated in work, retail, and governmental environments (Bourhis et al., 2007; see also Jedwab, 2007). Specifically, any businesses that employed more than fifty people were required to apply for a "Francization certificate" (p. 190), which

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<sup>19</sup> See Gibson, McKelvie, & De Man (2008) for a study on the psychological differences between Anglophones and Francophones.

<sup>20</sup> See also Bourhis (1984, 2001).

certified the business as a place where French was allowed as the language of work. In addition, it also required future immigrants and children to attend French speaking schools, although it allowed for the continued operation and attendance of private English speaking schools. Finally, it also called for all visible signage to be changed to French and supported three public English speaking universities and seven public French speaking universities.

While outcomes suggested that this policy change increased French speaking and created a closer economic parity with Anglophones, it also caused a drop in population in its young adult population, English speakers still resisted accommodating French speakers, and some Anglo businesses were negatively affected. In addition, Bourhis et al. (2007) argue that tensions became so high that allophone minorities<sup>21</sup> were put into the position in taking sides with one or the other. Despite all the upheaval, there is a beginning of an integrated community whose younger Anglo adult population has added French to its language repertoire and that a bilingual community can now be seen in part as a commodification process in order to compete in a global economy especially in terms of tourism and educational fields (Poplack, Walker, & Malcolmson, 2006; Heller, 2003).

In contrast to the Canadian situation where English has arguably lost status in an attempt to increase the status of French, Switzerland, a multilingual nation of four official languages (German, French, Italian, Romansch),<sup>22</sup> has been dealing with an

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<sup>21</sup> For other discussions of minorities' assimilation in Canada, see Grant (2007).

<sup>22</sup> For a complete view of Switzerland and its language history, see K.D. McRae's (1983). *Conflict and compromise in multilingual societies: Switzerland*. Ontario, Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

intrusion of English into its educational systems and threatening the stability of its national languages. In Switzerland, the twenty-six cantons control educational policy and in 1998, the canton of Zurich introduced English as a primary language (without consulting other cantons), relegating French (and Italian) to a less prestigious role, which disrupted language policy (Stotz, 2006, Demont-Heinrich, 2005). Stotz (2006) argues that tensions resulted where Swiss isolation from the global economic community became pitted against the economic advantage that would come from Swiss citizens learning English (p. 261).

It is not that Switzerland doesn't recognize flexibility in borders in regard to language as Vance (2004) reports on a project about piloting bilingual texts where students are taught about social similarities and differences in order to provide a broader linguistic and social background in the Upper Rhine Valley, a region shared by Switzerland with France and Germany. But in this study, the focus is on countries with whom Switzerland shares a border and grants status to the featured languages. In addition, cities like Geneva, Lausanne, Berne, and Zurich host many international expatriates who conduct business in English. But the addition of English into the mix challenges the national position and is perceived as extending/ breaking down their linguistic borders (Demont-Heinrich, 2005). In particular, it threatens, on some levels, the national identity and culture of which Switzerland most preciously tries to protect (Mar-Molinero & Stevenson, 2001; see also Stadler, 2001; Alleman-Ghionda, 2002). At the same time, there is an existing subculture identity one cannot escape that creates tensions within Switzerland's own borders as it tries to maintain its version of linguistic

diversity. Article 70 written in 2000 states: “Language culture emerges as the determinant factor and identification in Switzerland. The language communities increasingly adopt the characteristics of linguistic blocks and are thus destroying the network which forms the basis of multi-cultural Swiss statehood” (As interpreted by Stotz, 2006, p. 252). This language tension is also captured in *ID Swiss* (2004), a DVD about Swiss identity produced by Presence Swiss, who describes itself as an official body of the Swiss Confederation. In one vignette, two Swiss soldiers are featured, one from the German speaking area and one from the French speaking area. They discuss whether they would ever fight in a war, and they agreed that the most relevant conflict they might have to participate in is the conflict within the nation because of the tensions over language status. So at the same time the Swiss attempt to protect the official languages from English, there are tensions within the nation about language factions within its borders.

These two examples of language tensions over English give insight into how national identity and language become interconnected. Joseph (2006) states:

Since language and nation are so closely bound together, it is not surprising that the politics of language choice rarely depend on purely ‘functional’ criteria, such as what language will be most widely understood. The symbolic and emotional dimensions of national identity are crucial, and language policies that ignore them prove dysfunctional in the long run (p. 24).

These remarks not only identify the interconnectedness of national identity and language, it also reveals the emotional and sometimes perceived irrational perspectives that come into play when identity, as reflected in one’s association with language can

become fraught with tensions and conflict in order to protect status and retain self-esteem.

## **NATIONAL IDENTITY**

National identity is an ambiguous term because like all identities it continually evolves through the social construction between and among social groups who see their collective region as an “imagined political community” (Anderson, 1988, p. 15, as cited by DeCillia, Reisigl, & Wodak, 1999) that often but not always share all common traits such as language choice and other norms and values (DeCillia, Reisigl, & Wodak, 1999; Tajfel, 1981). It is useful to understand the role of Social Identity Theory (SIT) as it relates to national identity because SIT operates from the understanding that a social group is comprised of more than two people who identify and define themselves in the same way in order to enhance their self-esteem (Tajfel, 1981; Hogg, Abrams, Otten, & Hinkle, 2004; Niens & Cairns, 2002) It seems reasonable to expect an organization whose population reflects multiple nations would use terms identifying and comparing themselves in this manner when the organization uses these terms to describe its population. In other words, when national identity descriptors are continually communicated by its members both in written and oral organizational discourse for comparative purposes, organizational group identities would become socially constructed in regard to status and self esteem.

In fact, communication through language allows us to define and create various types of comparisons in social group relationships – individual, collective, competitive,

oppositional, historical, social, and/or hierarchical (Niens & Cairns, 2002; Skuttnab-Kangas, 2000; Hogg et al., 2004). Language labels and descriptors define and categorize social groups. Hogg et al. (2004) argue that social categorization is the “cognitive heart” (p. 253) of social identity processes because the categories often assume shared behavior and related attributes. Sometimes categories depersonalize or stereotype an out-group in order to maintain self esteem in power situations (Hogg et al., 2004.; Tajfel, 1981).

Alvesson, Ashcraft, and Thomas (2008) argue that SIT as it applies to organizations is in the midst of “a major stretching exercise” (p. 14) as it relates to organizational scholarship and that SIT is “amenable to situational and processual interpretations as...it emphasizes how in-group identities become salient only when out-groups are experienced” (p.14). In particular, they suggest SIT could address conflicting and concurrent self-images and how these can impact the organization and its identity. This also suggests that in order to understand the in-groups of an organization, it is important to understand both the perceived out-groups in the organization and the out-groups that reside outside of the organization. Hogg et al. (2004) argue that not all groups who perceive sameness are homogenous and that research should be directed to investigate these nested categories. Billig (2002) suggests that SIT limits the idea of national identity as it does not allow for ideological components of nationalism and patriotism.<sup>23</sup> He argues: “What is means to identify with the nation is a site of contest, and if we wish to understand the relationship between national identification and discriminatory action, we should investigate the construction, dissemination, and

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<sup>23</sup> For a discussion on patriotism as it relates to national identity, see Hopkins, N. (2001). National identity: Pride or prejudice? *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 40, 183-186.

reception of different versions of the nation's boundaries (i.e., who belongs), the contents of identity (i.e., what it means to belong) and the nation's relations with others" (p. 185).

We also have to recognize the role of nation and national identity as it evolves in the wake of accelerating globalization (Wiley, 2004). Tajfel (1981) also recognized that people classify nations as "clearly X or Y and rarely something indefinable in between," (p. 132). Sackmann, Phillips, Kleinberg, and Boyacigiller (1997) suggest that bounded nations are seen as having a common set of shared norms and values (p. 25). Further, Sackmann et al. (1997) suggest that people from different nations also have different expectations about organizational structures and how work is accomplished. Thus, these preconceived notions affect how people respond to unfamiliar and unexpected behaviors. This assessment suggests that people who enter multinational workplaces may operate from perceived and static national characteristics.

Given the rapid growth related to globalization, it is no surprise that defining national identity and understanding national categorization and its attributes can be elusive and perplexing. In addition, no study has done more to influence how we look at what defines national cultural attributes than Hofstede (1980) and the reported findings from his landmark IBM study. Hundreds of studies have been based on Hofstede's assessments in regard to how bounded nations' apparently homogenous citizens react in cultural situations, even though the study was based on one set of the workforce (managers) over thirty years ago (see Søndergaard, 1994).

Researchers have begun questioning Hofstede's work due to the static nature of the boundaries created (Soderberg & Holden, 2002) and the argument that Hofstede's supposition of a uniform national culture is unproven (McSweeney, 2002). Friedman and Antal (2005) acknowledge the extent of Hofstede's influence; however, they do suggest that classifying groups as national cultures "assigns a causal link between cultural values that is too simple and deterministic" (p. 73: Also, see Shimoni & Bergmann, 2006). In addition, Hofstede's typologies have been difficult to link differences in values with concrete applications in management performance (Barmeyer, 2004) In other words, Hofstede's cultural typologies do not clearly address ambiguous national boundary issues where cultures overlap and do not reflect the fluidity and multi-layered context in which cultures reside and evolve (See also Blodgett, Bakir, & Rose, 2008; Ailon, 2008; Gerkhart, 2008).

One recent study that helps to understand how people develop identities and put the idea of national identity in respect to international and global contexts is Erling's (2007) study of university students in Germany. Erling (2007) argues that international and German students' understanding of English plays a role in their re-creation of local, national, European, and global identities.<sup>24</sup> The population studied included those students studying to become experts in the English language. Learning English at their level of competency not only included classroom study, but also included reading texts, newspapers, the internet, watching television and especially films, listening to the radio and CDs, and having access to English through tourism and friendships with people

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<sup>24</sup> See also Ailon-Souday and Kunda (2003) where they discuss that their study population reported using their national identity stereotypes as a kind of a template to use in comparison with other groups.



from England and the US. Results from interviews revealed that knowledge of English was becoming an “unremarkable skill” (p.121). In addition, for the German students, knowing English is just another part of being German and allows them to redefine their national identity by showing they are also European and global; in fact it allowed some of them to forget their past history by identifying with being European instead of German, but at the same time, privileging their identity with their local regions. Tajfel (1981) argued that one of the consequences of group membership is that individual members stay with a group and seek membership of another group if he/she can benefit from some perceived and satisfying positive characteristic (p. 256). Further, he argued that members look to improve their group position and sometimes that is done at the cost of the putting another group’s position at a disadvantage. Here it seems students embraced English, a characteristic that would help to identify themselves as European and global, and others relinquished their German identity in order to maintain their self-esteem in comparison to other groups.

Erling (2007) also reports that non-German students also felt more connected to Europe and less connected to Germany despite residing in Germany. Their use of English was also considered a marker for being European. This study suggests that some people living in multinational situations now are either moving past national identity whether it was their place of birth or whether they are guest residents of a nation, or incorporating it into a way that benefits their self esteem in comparison with other national cultures. Tajfel (1981) argued that undesirable attributes of a group can be

justified through reinterpretation. Here students were able to reinterpret their German status as it reflected their regional heritage and along with that, their heritage language.

## **SUMMARY**

Summarizing, studies that address competency are useful in that they target managers and their need to understand a globalizing society in which they operate, but the literature doesn't really privilege employee interaction on a daily basis and how competency issues and skills operate either up/down or side to side. We need to understand how intercultural competency plays a role when tensions occur between and among organizational members, not just one employee segment.

Tajfel (1981) argues that there must be a continued search for coherence in the midst of social change and still preserve identities and integrity (p. 137). Tajfel (1981) also suggests that social stereotypes usually occur when people are trying to understand complex and distressful social events, to justify events "committed or planned against out-groups" (p. 156) or to clarify positive differences of the in-group as compared to an out-group when differentiation is ambiguous or eroding. This suggests that tensions that inherently occur in organizations play a powerful role in how identities are constructed and how competencies are perceived. Tensions over which languages are privileged and when they are privileged are important but it is equally important to identify tensions and what they look like so we can better understand the consequences to social groups and their self esteem as it relates to language, nationality and other related identities.

Skuttnab-Kangas (2000) suggests that the discourse of culture, identity, and nation decides identity in terms of economic and political systems and can be seen as dialectic. She suggests the thesis can be viewed as dominant groups defining identities and the anti-thesis reflects minority groups defining themselves. The synthesis reflects the identities by which groups are characterized in regard to constituencies and stakeholders (Skuttnab-Kangas, 2000, pp. 194-195). Jiang(2006) suggests that intercultural communication should not be seen as a competency to attain but also as a component of the social, political, and economic, educational activities within a culture and that which is affected by organizational and national policies. In order to understand these concepts we should look at how they play out in social groups within an organization and how the multinationalism they represent intersects with the tensions that occur in the organization. The findings could also reveal a better understanding of the relationship among the elements of competency, linguistic diversity, and national identity. Thus:

**Research Question 3: How does multinationalism intersect with these types of organizational tensions?**

**Research Question 4: What are the outcomes and implications of these intersections?**

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODS**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses methods used in the study and the contexts in which the case study resides. First, I discuss the relevance of using the case study method. Next I provide the organizational, regional, and national contexts in which the study took place. In addition, I also report the shared population characteristics in which to understand the socialization of the participants and my role as participant observer in data collection. Finally I supply the research methods and analysis methods used along with a description of my pilot study.

#### **RESEARCH DESIGN – THE CASE STUDY**

I used a single case study method in order to approach the organization in a comprehensive view because this method offers an opportunity to study organizations in depth and to focus on detail and context to gain greater understanding (Stake 2005; Yin, 2009). By posing questions about a particular topic of concern, I was able to study both the common denominators and the particulars about the organization including the contextual components of history, politics, location, the population and what they bring to each organization (Stake, 2005).

In addition, Yin (2009) argues that the case study allows a researcher to challenge or extend previous theories, which method allowed me to challenge existing

notions about intercultural communication and how it intersects with organizational daily tensions and conflict. Further, this method helps in determining whether an organization might either be unique where revelatory situations can be observed, or it can be representational where an organization mirrors recognized global organizations populated by multinationals (Yin, 2009). Upon entering the site, I was uncertain as to which was the reality, so using this method accommodated both types of organizations.

Finally, using the case study method allowed me to utilize multiple types of evidence such as interviews, participant observation, organizational documents and media, artifacts and direct observation in order to achieve triangulation (Lindof & Taylor, 2002; Yin, 2009; Arneson & Query, 2001). Through the collection of multiple types a “web of evidence” (p. 156) can be established and the researcher can make links between the data, the posed questions and the conclusions (Arenson & Query, 2001).

### **ABC AS AN ORGANIZATIONAL CASE**

ABC is formally categorized as a private/public not for profit educational institution. At the time of the study, this one hundred and eleven year old hospitality institution in Switzerland considered itself to be the top Swiss and global hospitality institution.

Hospitality education varies by institution, but generally it encompasses an assortment of theoretical and applied courses dedicated to the operation of hotel and/or food outlets/organizations. Courses reflect the multiplicity of the discipline and include topics such as finance, development, housekeeping, management, food preparation and

purchasing, marketing, human resources, meeting planning, and entertainment. This interdisciplinary segment of education also focuses on the teaching of services, such as customer satisfaction, instead of only selling tangible products. Thus, the product offered to consumers is often emotionally based since people involved in hospitality are attempting to recreate a suitable home-like environment, and attend to affective concerns such as comfort, safety, and relaxation.

Until ten years ago, ABC trained students to become general managers who usually oversaw either independent or family owned hotels. Courses were taught only in French and the atmosphere of the school retained much of the original elite status it advertises today. However, due to globalization hospitality's move away from individually owned and operated hotels and its move towards a more corporate structure, the institution was forced to refocus the curriculum. Owners and management decided to teach courses in both French and in the lingua franca of business, English (see Laponce, 2001; Van Parijs, 2000; Demont-Heinrich, 2005). Student population was increased to one thousand five hundred and became even more nationally diverse. These moves required management to increase the staff and faculty national diversity. At the time of the study, ABC faculty and staff represented thirty nationalities and student population represented eighty nationalities.

Now that I have discussed the rationale for using the case study method and provided an understanding of the organizational overall purposes, I will supply the contexts in which ABC operates.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT**

While many curricular and employee changes have occurred, today ABC's organizational structure retains many of its historical patriarchal<sup>25</sup> characteristics. At the time of the study (and currently) ABC is owned by a private hospitality organization. An appointed Board of Governors/Directors (BOD) oversees strategic changes and some operational issues. Some of the Board members are also owners of ABC. All members of the BOD at the time of the study were white males, although there was a woman on the board for a brief period of time. She was one of the members who initially advocated for some of the changes in regard to becoming part of the SUI, a national educational network which gives tuition funding to the resident Swiss students and requires certain academic criteria to be met in order to qualify as an SUI member (Respondent #30, personal email communication, October, 2004; Interview with #30, July 2006). The association with this network opened the institution to middle class Swiss students for the first time.

The BOD appoints a director. This person's responsibilities include implementing the vision of the institution, reporting to the owners and the BOD as well as maintaining the daily operation of the institution. In addition, he oversees the following departmental structure: Technology, Human Resources, Finance, Operations, Academics, Student Services, and Consulting and Marketing/Communication. Each department has a Department Head, works autonomously and reports only to the

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<sup>25</sup> Also see K. Burrus' article on how women are treated in the Swiss banking systems in S. Sackman's (1997) *Cultural Complexity in Organizations*, Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Director<sup>26</sup> (See Appendix A for an organizational chart). At the time of the study, the Director had also taken on the responsibilities as the academic dean because the last dean was fired in 2005 and had not been replaced. Because of this gap in leadership, the Director was also now directly involved in policy for students and the faculty in the three academic programs.<sup>27</sup>

The current director at the time of the study was male and was assisted by the three program directors, all whom are women. At this time, the Dean and the Program Directors assigned all teaching and committee assignments, structured hours on site, and made most curricular decisions. According to my participants, no significant course/curricular decisions are normally made by faculty despite the several committees/commissions in place. In addition, there was a person in charge of pedagogical/faculty reviews, but that position had been eliminated and the responsibility had been given to the four Department Supervisors (DSs). While similar to US educational department chairs, DSs have much less authority in regard to decision making in personnel issues like hiring. Their responsibilities at the time of the study included visiting classrooms, approving syllabi and examinations, and conducting faculty evaluations. DSs also have teaching responsibilities and at the time of the study were only allowed 20% of their work week to occupy these supervisory duties. In terms of workload, for example, one DS oversees 30 faculty members along with teaching responsibilities.

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<sup>26</sup> The fact that each department operates independently of each other is a huge challenge to organizational outcomes and adds significantly to the lack of communication among departments and economic turf wars occur as funding increasingly becomes an issue.

<sup>27</sup> There are three programs at the time of the study – OPS (Operations, which is a two year program, BOS, Bachelor of Science Program, and MHA (Masters of Hotel Administration).



The above description explains the organization's structural context in which the study takes place. It is important to also understand that ABC operates in the Canton of Vaud within the nation of Switzerland. Next is a discussion of these political, historical, and social contexts.

### **REGIONAL CONTEXT – THE CANTON OF VAUD**

Originally founded as a confederation as early as 1291, Switzerland has evolved into a Swiss federal state yet at the same time still privileges powerful cantonal regional structures. While the federal government controls foreign policy and cantons are not allowed to secede, cantons are still composed of powerful governments in their own right that control among other components, their own judicial system and fiscal policy (www.switzerland.com, n.d., Government section, para. 1 & 3).

ABC resides and operates within the French speaking Canton of Vaud. Located on Lake Geneva, this region had a colorful and important role in the politics and formation of what is modern day Switzerland (Fahrni, 1997). The official Vaud website home page (www.vaud.ch) describes Vaud as:

...located right at the heart of the continent of Europe, Switzerland is not a member of the European Union, which means it is not directly subject to the EU's rules and regulations either. Switzerland has, on the other, negotiated more than 150 bilateral agreements with its big European neighbour, ensuring close cooperation and mutual advantages in numerous areas, including the free movement of people, the removal of technical obstacles to trade, research, and so on (www.vaud.ch, "A stable, efficient political system", n.d., para. 4).

Further, the canton of Vaud houses 8.7 % of the Swiss population and houses multiple international corporations including Nestlé, Philip Morris and Hyatt (www.vaud.ch, “They chose the Canton of Vaud,” n.d.).

While Vaud’s official language is French, its website reports that 17% of the businesses operate in English and that German is required in its public schools. The Vaud website further explains these international characteristics bring “an openness towards others and this tolerance is extended to the whole world” (www.vaud.ch, “A multicultural, multilingual region,” n.d., para. 4) In addition, it reports:

...one person in five living in Switzerland is not Swiss, a proportion that reaches 28% in the canton of Vaud. These totals for non-indigenous populations are the highest in Europe. This does not include the large number of mostly French cross-border commuters who work every day in the Vaud economy. Thus the population is used to dealing with people from throughout the world, and newcomers integrate easily. The Vaudois themselves like to travel, and more than 50,000 of them live outside the country. Thus human diversity represents a crucial element in the region’s economic success and its cultural wealth (www.vaud.ch, “A multicultural, multilingual region,” n.d., para. 4).

These website statements suggest that the Canton of Vaud wants to project the image that the Vaudois are progressive, tolerant and accepting of cultural differences and illustrates how it resides within several contexts of the globalizing world.

## **NATIONAL CONTEXT - SWITZERLAND**

Switzerland, a population of about 7.5 million and historically referred to as the Helvetic Confederation, is made up of 26 cantons and is considered a semi-direct democracy because its federal state, officially recognized in 1848, has both a representational government and democracy by referendum (www.switzerland.com, n.d.,

Government section, para. 1, 3 & 5) Referendums are held nationally to decide a fundamental issue such as membership to the United Nations, whether businesses remain open on Sundays, and in the future, whether mosques will be allowed to build minarets (Stinson, 2008; Fahrni, 1997; [www.switzerland.com](http://www.switzerland.com), n.d., Government section, para. 5).

Switzerland has an image as a neutral country and leaders began this political tradition as early as the 18<sup>th</sup> century despite or because of its strategic central location among the countries of Germany, Lichtenstein, Austria, France and Italy and its desire to isolate from warring factions even though during its early history it exported mercenaries for income purposes (Fahrni, 1997). At the same time, Switzerland houses the second largest United Nations operation in Geneva whose specific mission is focused on human rights. Because of its stance on neutrality, Switzerland only reluctantly joined the United Nations in 2002.

Another neutral position is reflected in Switzerland's current relationship with the European Union (EU). Switzerland, due in major part to its celebrated and successful banking system, has remained independent of the EU. Instead, it has chosen to rely on its own currency and, as mentioned earlier, create separate bilateral economic and political alliances that allows Switzerland and its citizens many of the relational benefits without any direct interdependence with the EU.

In regard to population, major Swiss ethnic groups include German, French, Italian, and Romansch and each of its ethnic groups' languages are considered official national languages. A 2000 national census reflects the dominance of these languages as it reports the following percentages of language use: German 63.7%, French 20.4%,

Italian 6.5%, Serbo-Croatian 1.5%, Albanian 1.3%, Portuguese 1.2%, Spanish 1.1%, English 1%, Romansch (official) 0.5%, and other 2.8% (CIA World Factbook, 2008).

Despite having a multilingual identity, in the last few years there has been a great deal of tension over some of the canton's educational decisions. For example, the Canton of Zurich allowed English to be taught in lieu of one of the official languages in an effort to prepare its citizens to better communicate in a globalized and English speaking business community. This suggests a huge leap from previous language policies and appeared to signal a change from the privileging of official languages.

Globalization and immigration issues have also sparked controversy in Switzerland. Political parties such as the Swiss People's parties have actively campaigned to limit rights of immigrants ("Proposed Swiss immigration laws show rise of new racism and xenophobia", September 7, 2007). Fervor about immigrants creates oppositional tensions with the image of a democratic Switzerland. In addition, the increased immigrant population has also affected the education community. The challenge to adapt to increased diversity is further revealed by Stadler (2001) as he reports that Switzerland's public schools are "caught in a tight spot" (p. 40) because even as its population becomes more heterogeneous, its teaching population is becoming more homogenous. Specifically, students of foreign cultural descent are less likely to go on to higher education so it leaves only the native population as future teachers. Thus, Stadler (2001) argues these foreign culture students face monocultural and regionally oriented teaching staffs who are "basically multicultural-ignorant" (p. 41). In addition, Stadler (2001) reports that students are referred to as "foreign-language-speaking" (p.

44) and that the Swiss educational institution operates on an ethnocentric view of minimization. He states:

Cultural diversity is minimized to avoid relinquishing the assumption that one's own 'view of the world' is superior to all other views, and therefore the 'truth.' This pretention, excluding the recognition that other cultures, like their own, have an equal right to existence, also denies that individuals of other cultures live in a reality paradigmatically different from their own. It excuses itself from the necessity to learn-to-develop and lets others bear that burden (p. 44).

Finally, Stadler (2001) argues that in order to move from a paradigm of equality to a paradigm of diversity, Switzerland needs to remove certain obstacles such as the monocultural orientation from schools, the privileging of one type of writing or pedagogical learning processes over others, the exclusion of other languages based on the high priority of local languages and teachers who are regionally trained, and cantonal restrictions on teacher admissions processes where assessment is based on culturally interpreted results.

These regional and national contexts provide an intercultural framework in which ABC resides. It is within these contexts that I began to collect data at the site as a participant observer.

## **RESEARCHER'S ROLE**

My role within the study is one of the participant observer. The participant observer has contact with participants over time and has some form of status among the employees (Lindof & Taylor, 2002). I was employed by ABC in the fall of 2003 as a visiting professor. Through this position I became familiar with general institutional

policies and daily operations because as a faculty member, not only did I have interaction with students in the classroom, I also participated in organizational activities such as staff information sessions, commission meetings, and graduation. Besides these kinds of formal interactions, I also had multiple opportunities to participate in informal situations like coffee breaks, lunches,<sup>28</sup> outings with other faculty and staff, and attending the offsite Christmas party. Finally, like many faculty and staff, I took language lessons outside the institution along with my other responsibilities in order to participate in a bilingual environment. Lindof and Taylor (2002) argue that being employed and having worked in similar positions gives researchers a better opportunity to interact in formal and informal talk situations. While it could be argued that my familiarity with this institution and some of its members could distort the analysis, I contend that my relationship with the institution helped me to gain access to more of its members. In addition, because of my reputation with the organization, I was more easily able to gain the trust of my participants and my understanding of daily work challenges as an employee increased my empathetic perspective which scholars suggest helps reduce interviewee tensions (Alasuutari, 1995; Lindof & Taylor, 2002). Finally, my relationship with employees allowed me increased opportunity to control for lying and potential inaccurate statements because of prior familiarity with both the institutional norms and rules and with many of its members' responsibilities. (Alasuutari, 1995; Lindof & Taylor, 2002).

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<sup>28</sup> At the time of the study, no classes were scheduled at lunchtime so all organizational members could have the opportunity to eat with colleagues and friends. Options include several eat in-dining venues, a take away outlet, and vending machines. Many members opted to use the time to relax and enjoy the company of their colleagues.

## **DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

I gained access to ABC in the spring of 2006 because as I mentioned above, I had a prior relationship with the institution as a visiting professor in 2003. I contacted the Director and he granted me permission to enter the site and to interview any faculty and staff who would volunteer. I was granted permission to post letters in both French and in English on the institutional Intranet announcing the study and an invitation to participate. The letters were not sent directly to potential participants because according to the Communication Department, only messages from the Director were important enough to be directly sent on the Internet. Others could only post the letters on the Intranet where faculty and staff have the option of opening the link. Since posting it only on the Intranet secured one interview in five days, I contacted the Communication Director and asked him if there was an additional way to distribute the request. He assisted me by asking each DS to share the letter with their respective faculty/staff. Only nine volunteers were secured before leaving for the site, so I recruited participants once on site by directly contacting random employees and requesting their participation. I also contacted employees with whom I had established previous relationships who either agreed to participate and/or suggested additional people who might be willing to participate.

### **Confidential Issues**

This study was approved by the Texas A&M Institutional Review Board and meets the standards for protection of research participants. I have assigned the pseudonym ABC to refer to the institutional site. In addition, all participants' names have been randomly assigned a number in order to protect anonymity when referring to them in my analysis and results.

### **Participant Demographics**

I interviewed fifty-nine employees out of a population of two hundred seventy. Participants self identified as faculty, support staff, and/or management. I interviewed thirteen (13) participants whose duties included working for a specific institutional department in a support capacity such as Academics or Student Services. Fifteen (15) managerial participants were interviewed. *Managerial* refers to those employees who hold leadership roles such as department heads and/or whose responsibilities in reviewing/evaluating other members of the institution other than students. Some managerial participants also taught courses along with their leadership responsibilities. A total of thirty-nine (39) participants identified themselves either solely as teachers or in combined managerial and teaching roles. Thirty six participants were female and twenty three were male and ages ranged from early twenties to early sixties. Participants included a range of employees who had worked at ABC for as short a period as one month to as long as twenty plus years. Three of the participants interviewed were no longer employed at ABC because they had either been let go due to the recent downsizing or had been previously terminated.



Participants identified themselves with the following national group affiliations: French, Swiss French, Swiss German, German, Welsh, Greek, Dutch, English/Swiss, Irish/Swiss, Irish, Romanian, Vietnamese, Indian, Taiwanese, Moroccan, American, Canadian, Italian, Lebanese, Turkish, Australian, Tunisian, and British/English, British, Belgian, and English. While the above labels are diverse in nature, participants self reported qualities/experiences that provided some unifying characteristics. First, participants were well traveled. In that I mean that all had traveled outside their birth country and had traveled outside their birth continent. In addition, many had lived in other countries and Switzerland was not necessarily the first country in which they had resided outside their birth nation. In these cases, living outside their birth country was due to attending school, completing school related internships, accepting a job, or continuing personal and/or marital relationships. Most of the participants looked at moving to another country as either necessary and/or rewarding. This makes sense given that they are involved daily in an institution that teaches hospitality of which one component is travel. This shared characteristic also added to their cross-cultural experiences as it gave them multiple cross-cultural experiences from which to learn or build referential comparisons.

Second, most participants had work experience in the hospitality industry. Many described cultural experiences they experienced in these work environments which enhanced their cultural awareness and skills. For example, one person spoke about dealing with different groups when they worked in travel services and another mentioned working with groups coming into the hotel for which they worked. For the

most part descriptions were in terms of national groups and these hospitality related work experiences allowed participants to gain insight into how tensions could arise when there is not an understanding of shared values including communication values.

Next, because of this international exposure, most but not all participants spoke two or more languages and their level of fluency was varied. For example, people would say that they were fluent in one language and understood enough of another language to converse but not be able to write in it. Others said they could *get by* in some languages in a social setting or be able to read emails that weren't written in their dominant organizational language. More of an in-depth discussion of language will be provided below in Chapter IV, but it is important to understand that it is one of the characteristics that respondents shared and used in describing themselves in regard to cross-cultural awareness. In addition, those that described themselves as bilingual felt it reflected an important intercultural competency and aided in their ability to communicate in the workplace and their global environments.

Finally, beyond language competency, all of the participants had a similar set of descriptors to describe what it means to be interculturally competent. Specifically, respondents used terms and phrases like *patient, respectful, curious, empathetic, understanding nonverbal cues, well traveled, able to listen, and an ability to accept differences*. So while many felt that language ability is a big factor in regard to competent communication, it was also understood by all but a few that there were other skills needed to communicate with other cultures.

## Interview Protocol

I conducted all interviews in English both on and off site. In my letter and again in person I offered the option to either interview with the help of a translator (off-campus or campus friend) but all participants asked to be interviewed in English and some expressed the desire to use the interview as an English practice exercise. Interviews were audio taped and lasted from one half hour to one and one half hours. Participants were asked to choose the location in which to conduct the interview. Interviews generally took place either in an office or in the lounge areas. All but seven interviews were conducted offsite. Four interviews were conducted within the canton of Vaud— two at participants' homes and two at selected public restaurants. One interview was conducted in person in the United States, one interview was conducted by telephone from the United States, and one interview was conducted over email through a question and answer process. Questions asked included the participants' cultural background, their evolution of cross-cultural skills, the challenges and triumphs of cross-cultural communication and the importance and rewards of cross-cultural communication in regard to their institution. A list of all questions is located in Appendix B.

Additional data collected on site included an ABC electronic collection of newspaper articles and employee policies and procedures located on the organizational intranet. Also, I acquired copies of the institution's annual report, the current accreditation report, a copy of the *Feuille de Charge*<sup>29</sup> (description of individual faculty

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<sup>29</sup> Le Feuille de Charge is normally referred to as *Le Monster/The Monster* because faculty perceive it as a control mechanism that is used in an unfair and inconsistent manner. While clearly a tension in the workplace, it is never mentioned in regard to multinationalism.

work tasks) and a glossary (*Lexique*) created by the institution providing correct French/English business communication language phrases and grammar. In addition I received a copy of the DVD used at one staff meeting visualizing semester student events. I also took photographs around the campus of bulletin board collages, class entries in table setting contests which featured US and European film themes, and general photographs of the institutional structure.

All interviews were audio taped and downloaded onto computer files. Files were copied and sent out of state to a paid independent contractor who transcribed the interviews word for word and emailed the results. As mentioned earlier, a total of fifty-nine interviews were taped but one interview was lost due to technical difficulties. Oral interviews are both stored in a separate computer and on one set of CDs. Transcribed copies are stored both in a computer file and as a paper copy. No one except this author and the transcriber has access to any originals or copies.

## **DATA ANALYSIS METHODS**

I used a combination of grounded theory and dialectical analysis in order to analyze the data. Grounded theory allowed me to both search for categories and identify any assigned comparative identity descriptors. I used dialectical analysis to identify oppositions that are operating simultaneously. Combining both methods allows the opportunity to discover what tensions exist in the organizational environment, if and how there is an intersection with multinationalism (as described earlier), and how employees opt to manage the tensions. In addition, using the perspective of dialectical

tensions allows for an appropriate and methodical sound starting point (Charmaz, 2006; Yin, 2009). Next I will describe the analyses methods and explain the processes in depth.

### **Grounded Theory**

Grounded theory is a strategically based process whereby predictions and explanations of behavior are discovered through the discovery of the theory directly from the data collected in social research (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Charmaz, 2006). I use grounded theory in order to better understand the fluidity of the organizational interactions that simultaneously occurs within multiple political, economic, social and cultural contexts (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 2; Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p.16). In other words, the contextual and process component of interaction needs to be protected as it can be lost in research when categories appear and make events and behavior seem static (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Tischer, Meyer, Wodak, & Vetter, 2000). Thus, not only can patterns and repetitions be identified, but it can aid in identifying incidents and conceptual events. Coding went through several phases in order to identify categories, incidents, tensions, and if emerging themes intersected with multinational communication.

### **First Coding Phase**

I initially started by identifying both actions and words expressing actions in order to maintain the fluidity of the organization and its actors (Charmaz, 2006). This initial open coding process allowed me to interpret the data into differentiated events and incidents and I established the following categories: providing an intercultural environment as mentioned in the mission statement, interactions with the BOD, choosing

a language, Implementing differing pedagogies, co-teaching activities, interactions among faculty/staff, interactions of participants outside the organization, faculty/management interactions, interactions with students, interacting in personal relationships within the organization, activities surrounding Le Monstre/The Monster, working in an international environment, implementing academic missions, and firings/downsizings (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Charmaz, 2006).

Once I identified these categories I cut and pasted interview segments according to the above categories. Then I read and reread the segments according to categories and combined related categories (practicing pedagogy/co-teaching) or eliminated some categories where there was either not sufficient data (interpersonal relationships) or where categories represented redundant data (working in an international environment).

I also employed *in vivo* coding to identify terms used by the organizational members as it applied to multinationalism. Charmaz (2006) cites Calvin Morrill's (1995) identification of general terms and labels by executives in order to further understand and explain conflict (see Morrill, 1995, p. 263-268). The *in vivo* coding process specifically identified participants' descriptors of their colleagues and/or management as a member of a cultural subgroup in which some comparative and/or oppositional relationship existed. All terms were underlined to more readily prepare for secondary processes.

### **Second Coding Phase**

Once the initial coding was completed, I moved to a more focused coding level which Charmaz (2006) defines as "using the most significant and/or frequent earlier

codes to sift through large amounts of data” (p. 57). Focused coding here meant first, that I read and reread each major category to determine what and where action patterns of tensions existed and second, where patterns of multinational identity labeling intersected or influenced the tensions. While most interactions at this site are undergirded by intercultural issues due to the organizational structures (French section/English section) and reported population makeup of the institution, there were three interactions where recurring tensions occurred where participant described them in relationship to identity groups discovered during the *in vivo* coding. These three categories were:

- Choosing a language
- Providing an intercultural environment (as described in the mission statement)
- Practicing pedagogy/co-teaching

In addition to the above reasons, I chose these categories because they also appeared to have a relationship to each other. Specifically, I wanted to understand whether these categories could influence or intersect in some manner.

### **Third Coding Phase –Dialectical Analysis**

Now that categories had been identified I utilized dialectical analysis to chart each of the above categories. I read and reread the data and charted each participant description of any tensions either they or another employee experienced within the organizational setting and how they attempted to manage them. I used the following categories based on Baxter and Montgomery (1998) list which included: *Selection*: selecting one pole and ignoring/denying the other; *Separation*: separating the poles in

order to manage one and then the other in some way such as time or situation; *Integration*: neutralizing the polarities by way of forced integration or balance or compromise; *Transcendence*: transcending the polarities by reframing them; and *Connection*: embracing the oppositions and celebrating the richness of the experience and *Disorientation*.<sup>30</sup> perceiving that the tension is inevitable and harmful resulting in inaction and paralysis. Below in Table 2 is an example of the chart structure.

**Table 2**  
**Example of Chart Structure Used to Perform Dialectical Analysis**  
**Choosing a Language**

Participant Number	Selection	Disorientation	Integration	Separation	Transcendence	Connectedness

The charts created for *Choosing a Language* chart included approximately 200 pages. The charts for the other two categories included approximately 100 pages each.

After the charts were created, I next looked for recurring word patterns within each charted category to determine what tensions seem to be operating in an oppositional manner. While contradictions are opposites and negate each other, dialectical tensions are opposites operating simultaneously because members of the institution are trying to embrace both/and of the bipolar pairs (Baxter & Montgomery, 1998; Putnam, 1986). Charting allowed me to visualize and account for the ways the tensions were expressed,

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<sup>30</sup> This management tool actually is list in Poole & Putnam (2008) in their list of strategies in regard to paradoxes. I included it to identify tensions where paralysis and inaction resulted.



patterns of how they were managed and where multinationalism appeared to be intersecting.

#### **Fourth Coding Phase**

The final coding phase required me to utilize both axial coding and more in depth dialectical analysis. Axial coding should be used to understand the relationships among the data and to reassemble the data, making it cohere. (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 1990) Here I identified recurring patterns to further discover the conditions that created the phenomena, the contextual situations, and the consequences. Specifically, I read and reread my initial categories in order to determine (with the use of the charted data) what oppositional tensions appeared, how they operated (as contradictions and dialectics) and if and how they might intersect with multinationalism. This process was incredibly complicated and required multiple readings to identify relational patterns. I then bolded the unearthed word patterns which reflected the described tensions. In some cases there was a more cohesive pattern as shown below in both *Choosing a language* and *Providing an Intercultural Environment* where subcategories seemed more directly integrated. The patterns were less so for *Practicing pedagogy/co-teaching*. The analysis of these tensions and their patterns is provided in the subsequent chapters. On the next page, Table 3 provides a summary of identified oppositional tensions.

**Table 3**  
**Summary of Oppositional Tensions**

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- Choosing a Language
    - Speaking French/Speaking English
      - Monolingual/Bilingual
        - Fluent/Not Fluent
        - Comprehension/Incomprehension
        - Competent/Incompetent
    - Respect/Disrespect
  - Providing an Intercultural Environment
    - Managed/Not Managed
      - Directly/Indirectly
      - Choice/No Choice
  - Practicing Pedagogy/Co-Teaching
    - French Pedagogy/English Pedagogy
      - Same/Different
      - Teaching in the French Section/Teaching in the English Section
    - French Way/American Way
-

## **Validation**

In order to check the validity in my analysis, I performed procedures as described by Lindof and Taylor (2002). First, I returned to the site to speak to the participants so I could present initial findings. Before I arrived the presentation had been advertised and was open to anyone within the institution. Approximately ten of the original participants attended. While one participant was surprised at the level of respondent disclosure, no one challenged the findings; in fact two of the participants spontaneously identified the excerpts I used from the data as their own and confirmed my interpretations. In addition I had two different participants read the analysis chapters to check for historical accuracy. Finally, I also presented the project in its entirety to one of the participants to get feedback on accuracy in the organization as a case.

## **Pilot Study**

A pilot study was conducted on data taken from email correspondence among employees and the formal description of the disability policy from the ABC student handbook. The conversations revealed differing perspectives on how to handle students with disabilities and dialectical analysis revealed patterns that reflected institutional diversity. Examples of dialectical tensions included *Old Europe/New Europe*, *ambiguity/clarity*, *direct/indirect*, *reveal/conceal*, and *French/English*. It also revealed a multitude of ways that members attempted to manage the dialectics and the consequences of the management choices. In addition I looked to identify the multinational contexts; that is, what descriptors suggested in the interviews that were made in regard to a regional, national, international, and/or global context.

The pilot study helped me in two ways. First, I was able to see that there were dialectics operating in multiple contexts. This allowed me a jumping off point which is appropriate in regard to grounded theory as detailed by Charmaz (2006). Second, the charting process I created for the pilot allowed me to look at how the tensions were managed. An example of the pilot study chart is located in Appendix C.

In the case of the actual study, I adapted the charting process because the data was so immense. Specifically, the charting format was changed in order to expand the responses in regard to managing the tensions so I could more easily identify patterns. Also, instead of creating separate table boxes to highlight the multinational contexts, I identified group labeling and instead underlined the words/terms that expressed these contexts. Finally, I bolded the word patterns that reflected repeating tensions. These charting changes helped to locate patterns and unique comments within the case study in order to more accurately report the findings.

## CHAPTER IV

### LANGUAGE CHOICE

#### INTRODUCTION

So when they say they make an effort to internationalize the program, you know, there's **not an awful lot of evidence** to me that takes place. I mean, I think they are making some effort to be sure that there's **English stuff**, but it's really a low priority... Well, I mean, at the very end, **the reason why there's even an issue about cross-cultural is because they made the program bilingual**. And even that's ... well, it goes even a little bit beyond that. You talk to some of the French faculty who teach some of the higher level management courses, and they'll tell you **that most literature that's available to support those courses is only available in English**. So even then, even before they had the English program, they were finding that it was **required to have students read things in English**. So there's that, **although they don't talk about it very much**. But what is cross-cultural is this basically the fact that they recognize that some faculty meetings, **they will occasionally stop and ask the English faculty if they need any translation**.  
(Interview with #29)

This chapter addresses the analysis of language choice tensions. As the above excerpt exemplifies, using English was already in use even before management at ABC decided they needed to officially add it as a curricular section. So tensions might have existed even before changes were made because English had already begun to dominate the academic world. Canagarajah (1999) argues that debates about English in the academic community range from scholars arguing that English is a form of “mental colonialism” and should be abandoned because it eventually dominates the culture, to the oppositional position, which argues that to abandon English can “ghettoize minority communities” (p. 177). In addition, he argues that English as a social capital allows

people to interact with multiple societies, and, refusing to interact with English may “let its power go unchallenged” (p. 177; see also Phillipson, 1992). Further, a universalistic perspective by Okara (1990) argues that the malleability of English makes it both expansive and neutral enough to represent multiple discourses and can engineer ideological changes even if one escapes the inscribed linguistic ideologies (p. 177; see also Grimond, 2009). Clearly, the adoption of an entire English section along with maintaining the French section suggests a fourth idea, that bilingualism offers an attempt to bridge the oppositions and still maintain cultural identity and ideology. Achieving this transcendence and attaining connectedness is not easy and thus tensions occurred when the program went into effect. Further, in an attempt to gain coherence, multinationalism intersects when employees assign social identity labels based on perceived organizational, regional, national, international, and global group attributes.

In order to introduce how participants intersect multinationalism with the tensions, I first report the types of identity labels or descriptors participants use to describe themselves or to compare themselves with other social groups. Next, I relate the social and historical contexts in which the institutional language changes occurred. Both Tajfel (1981) and Baxter and Montgomery (1998) assert that contextual issues must be considered in order to understand how interpersonal and group conflict and tensions occur. Once providing this context, I analyze the multiple ways the tensions emerge and are managed, illustrating both the contradictions and dialectics as reported and the presence of descriptor use.

## **LABELING IDENTITY THEMES**

As mentioned before, I define *multinationalism* as the intersection of communities who self identify with a national heritage and perpetuate that identity through daily communication. Respondents identify people within the institution as belonging to an identity group for the purposes of social comparison and/or to illustrate the tensions in a contradictory manner. Tajfel (1981) suggests that in order to maintain coherence in an environment of social change people must be able to deal with situations in a way that seem consistent and in a way that preserves self-image (p. 137). Categorization is one way to maintain consistency because it brings simplicity and clarity to ambiguous and often random variation. Tajfel (1981) argues that even if some stereotyping occurs, preserving general content still can remain because negative feedback in complex group situations is often less clear and easier to ignore (p. 32-33).

Participants described this identity most often in a national context where they used terms to describe themselves or others as: Swiss, British, French, English, American, Canadian, German, Romanian, Greek, Vietnamese, Chinese, Belgian, Lebanese, Taiwanese, Italian, Swedish, Turkish, Irish, Moroccan, Welsh, Tunisian, Australian, Indian, and Dutch. While this list might seem to reflect separate identities, it is important to understand that many of the participants reported carrying more than one passport and/or had lived in multiple countries for long periods of time. The reason given for embracing multiple identities had to do with where they were born, the country in which they held citizenship, and/or the country in which they had spent the most time. In addition, some participants also mentioned that their parents and/or spouses were from

different nationalities which gave them an even broader cultural insight based on familial experiences (Baraldi, 2006).

Because the study took place in Switzerland, respondents used the label *Swiss* frequently and most defined being Swiss with general characteristics and then describing cultural areas. One example that reflects this perception is:

I will say I've found Swiss very **hard workers, very organized. Sometimes too organized.** Very little place, I will say, for creativity...They are ... when they start a subject, they want to go completely in and up to the bottom. They never do something in surface. They are very deep. In fact, they don't ... **they're not as friendly as other cultures, but once you know them, they are friend for life,** I will say. But they are very hard workers. **They like punctuality.** It's not five minutes before or five minutes after. It's right on time, **and they hate when you don't follow that rule...**the Swiss German part is a bit different, the French is a bit different, and the Italian part is a bit different. So, I will say, in the Italian part, that we tend to be a little bit more, I will say ... like Italian can be. A little bit more creative and a little bit ... how can I say it in English? A bit relaxed, I will say. Much more than Swiss German can be. And the French, is really the middle, in the French part of Switzerland. It's in between. (Interview with #32)

Along with the national labels above, other labels were used to describe divisions within the population such as *English/French*, *Anglo-Saxon/French*, and *Anglophone/Francophone*. The first usually referred to the divisions between student sections or between the teaching groups. Many participants acknowledged that the English section was more diverse because it not only included institutional members who identified with countries whose mother tongue was English, but also anyone who had the level of fluency where they could either teach in English or be accepted as a student in that section. In contrast, participants reported that the label *French* usually referred to a more homogenous group where students and often faculty had originated either from



Switzerland, France, Belgium and countries such as Vietnam or Morocco where the French had prior relationships from colonial times.

*English/French* and *Anglo-Saxon/French* were both used to illustrate contrasts in value structures such as pedagogy or reactions in social situations. For example, one participant explained:

The academic world in France is very different from the Anglo-Saxon academic world... so... there is a difference of a global perception, both conceptual perception – **a big issue in the French world, the big ideas, the philosophical approach, and I think a more pragmatic approach probably when you get down to bottom line in the Anglo-Saxon world.** That's certainly in an academic institution, I think you're going to find that, broad attention if you like potentially different ways of looking at things, so you get the big picture. (Interview with #27)

Finally, *Anglophone/Francophone* referred to the identity of groups more specifically as it related to language. It is important to note that the labels *American* and/or *British* often replaced *English* when discussing differences in any of these categories and often all of terms were used interchangeably when attempting to show contrasting and conflicting values.

Participants also referred to themselves or others in a regional manner, such as *Swiss French*, *Swiss German* or *Swiss Romande*, (another term for the French speaking section of Switzerland). The label *French French* was used to sometimes differentiate between the Swiss people living in the French speaking region of Switzerland (Swiss French) and the French speaking people from France (French French). Since Switzerland also has Italian and Romansch speakers, it is interesting to note that these two identities are almost never brought into play in the interviews except when someone discusses Switzerland in the abstract as a nation where four languages are deemed official. This

happens in part because these two language areas within Switzerland are quite small and reflect a very small percentage of the population who are also limited by their economic and political power. In addition, most of the respondents on staff who are Swiss come from either the French or German speaking section of Switzerland.

Respondents also used terms to denote continental/geographical identity, such as *European*, *Asian*, *North African*, *Arab*, *Middle Eastern*, and *North American*. The label used most frequently and most well defined by participants was *European* and this term shared meanings regarding geographical, political, economic, religious, and social concepts.<sup>31</sup> For example, some people felt *European* meant that certain countries shared a physical space or a geographic location. Others felt that *European* meant that people from this same space also shared similar values based on shared racial, historical, religious and/or social experiences such as war. One participant described it as: “Oh, I think it’s everything. I think it’s a generalization of a culture, of a history, of a person. Do I feel European? Yes, absolutely” (Interview with #6). This perspective supports Erling’s (2007) position that people move past nationality and affiliate with much larger groups. But another example compares *European* to being *American* and that people still wanted to be identified within the context of Europe, yet still as a unique nationality more like Hofstede (1980) describes. The participant explained:

... I don’t think that Italian people would like to absorb the German identity, for example. Even if we are not talking about the past and World War I, World War II, which still now has an impact, of course. But, I think, okay ... Europe is a good thing. **I would be very happy to be part of Europe as a Swiss citizen, but still each country is very, very conservative on a certain point of view.** They want to keep their own

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<sup>31</sup> See Skuttnab-Kangas (2000) for a discussion of the term *European* and its linguistic evolution.

cultural identity. **It's more about business than identity.** It will never be a salad bowl like in the States...No, really. People are too different, and you have the German side, you have the Latin side, and I cannot imagine a Turkish person absorbing the Spanish habits. **That's also what makes Europe so rich and interesting, for example, for American people.** Because in relatively a small world, you have all these different cultures and nationalities and history. But it's completely different. (Interview with #40)

While it is not the focus of this work to examine the specificity of what it means to be European, these two examples suggest the complicated nature of identity and illustrates how categorization allows for a consistency and the maintenance of self-image (Tajfel, 1981). It also suggests how oppositional tensions emerge when people want to be the same but different. Finally, the participants intermix regional, national, international, and global contexts but the focus reflects historical and militaristic relationships. They also suggest that Switzerland is not a part of Europe, which of course it is, but here they are reflecting the fact that Switzerland is not part of the European Union.

In contrast to *European*, *Asian* was usually mentioned in regard to students in a manner that seemed to identify the group geographically. Asians constitute a very small minority on campus and are rarely referred to in a national sense.<sup>32</sup> Respondents often described this group as one with similar challenges, which are different from all other students. For example, one participant described language issues in this manner:

... that's reminding me of the whole Asian aspect. **I haven't even talked about the Asian aspect** as well, but linguistically definitely... but the **Asian initially have quite a lot of trouble with their linguistics. They have to discard all their Chinese and do it all in English,** and they work terribly hard to produce something which is often not wonderful quality, and that's definitely a problem. (Interview with #41)

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<sup>32</sup> According to informal conversations, there are schools that hire paid independent recruiters in which to attract Asian students, but ABC did not participate in this type of recruitment at the time of my study.

It is interesting to see that in this example that the group's language affiliation is used to identify the students in a more discrete manner – as Chinese. It also suggests that Asians have a more difficult role in assimilating into the perceived in-group primarily because of language challenges.

Next, labels such as *African*, *North African*, *Arab*, and *Middle Eastern* are much less frequently used. This can reflect their minority status within the population, the fact that students who attend ABC are often educated from an early age in US or French affiliated schools inside and outside their country of origin, or that their national identity label is subsumed into a language section. Faculty cultural identities, in contrast to students, were labeled by participants according to their national heritage than any these regional or continental identities, although when they described their identity in relationship to their home (birth nation), they often identified themselves with a particular region within a nation.

Finally, participants used *North American* in order to identify themselves or others in a way to separate themselves from being identified as *American* or being from the United States. This term was used mainly by participants with Canadian heritage.

Finally, respondents would use terms such as *international*, *multinational*, *intercultural*, *cross-cultural*, *global*, and *world/worldly* to identify themselves or others. The first two terms are used by many participants to place the institution as a player in an environment outside of Switzerland but not necessarily global. Terms such as *global* or *world* were applied in ways that represented connection or inclusion in regard to how a participant saw ABC as part of the globalization process. All multinational labels and

references within transcript excerpts used within this chapter and the subsequent chapters will be underlined to emphasize how the labels intersect with the expressed tensions.

Table 4 below provides a summary of the identity descriptors used at each contextual level.

**Table 4**  
**Summary of Identity Descriptors**

Contexts	Reasons	Examples	Examples	Examples	Examples
Organizational	Used to compare and/or to illustrate status tensions within the organization	French Speakers	French Section	Francophone	
		English Speakers	English Section	Anglophone	
Regional	Used to describe regional differences inside the nation and/or in comparison with dominant groups within official language groups	Swiss, Vaudois	Swiss German	French French	High German
			Swiss French	Swiss French	Low German
National	Used to describe national identity of individuals and comparisons between cultural groups	German, Italian, French, Greek, Swedish, Spanish, Portuguese, Czech, Russian, Belgian, Dutch	US, Canada, English, Irish, Scottish, Welsh	Moroccan, Tunisian, Syrian	Chinese, Vietnamese, Indian, Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese
International	Used to compare larger political groups or specific dominant cultures	European Union Eastern Europe Western Europe	North American American British	Middle Eastern North African	Asian Eastern Far East
Global	Used as inclusive terms and more abstract contexts	Globalized Globalization Globalizing	World Planet World Citizen	Multinational Multicultural	International Intercultural

Now that I have provided a framework in which to understand how multinationalism is communicated within the interviews, I will provide the social and historical context in which language choice evolved.

## **SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

In the early 1990s, both the BOD and the director of the institution realized the growing importance of speaking English in evolving globalizing processes, especially in the expansion of the hospitality industry. In order to address the new business environment, ABC management created a section of courses in English that mirrored the existing French section in both the two year and four year programs.<sup>33</sup>

This change/addition required accessing all employees' language proficiencies. So, initially, all employees' language skills were tested. I was told that faculty who couldn't speak English was either tutored both inside and outside the institution while staying in the community or even some traveled overseas to England for immersion purposes. Because some faculty were unable to adapt or resisted a bilingual environment, additional faculty were hired. In addition to this challenge the specialized proficiencies needed to teach the courses in hospitality, hiring criteria needed to be based on a faculty's expertise in the field and not on their language skills. While it was helpful if the person hired was bilingual, Human Resources considered bilingual hires a bonus, not a requirement. Thus, at the time of this study, policy remained one that privileged faculty and staff in regard to their professional or academic skill set over their language skill set unless departments like Student Affairs required it.

It is important to understand that the addition of the English section expanded the intercultural environment, it did not create it. In other words, adding the English section was primary to keep up with globalization, because the school was forced on some level

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<sup>33</sup> In 2002, ABC added an English-only master's degree.

to address the dominance of English in the business and academic world as the introductory quotation suggests (Phillipson, 1992). This statement doesn't mean that there was no thought placed on the importance of a multinational environment, but it seems from most interviews that the increasingly globalized use of English was what drove the institution to decide to change the linguistic format of the organization. In fact, the director who most influenced this initial change, (who happened to be Swiss) already felt that an intercultural environment was a strength because of its central location within Europe and that students and staff already present represented the diversity of Europe. Yet, while he understood the potential for placing the organization on this particular path, he did not foresee how his own cultural perceptions would add to the tensions as the changes took place. As one participant describes:

...I think he was emphasizing the internationalism as one of our great strengths, and something that **we wanted to see more of. He had no hesitation whatsoever, hiring or promoting people who were not Swiss, and I think he even sort of saw Swiss as a little bit backwards looking, a little bit too conservative, and that is not usual for a Swiss, because the slight xenophobic side of the Swiss culture, he had none of it. And to a certain extent, **some of our difficulties came out of the fact that he was going around preaching to every living human being, how superior Anglo-Saxons were, which really wasn't something you needed.** (Interview with #54)**

Thus, some idea of internationalism was already in place at the institution because employees, while all French speakers, came from different French speaking countries or from business or educational backgrounds where they had become fluent at the level necessary to teach. At the same time, this statement also suggests that early on, leadership compared cultural groups in an oppositional manner.

## TEN YEARS LATER

Participants reported that over the years bilingual training policies have been inconsistent due to lack of planning and/or funding. For example, money or time runs out before a person becomes fluent enough to teach in both sections and participants in some cases have reported the necessity of paying for their own language classes if they have a desire to become bilingual. In addition, the creation of two separate sections allows some employees to avoid accepting bilingualism and continue to operate in a monolingual manner. Finally, it also did not help the Swiss French community to maintain the importance of French when German cantons changed their educational policy to include English as a choice during primary years instead of one of the “official” Swiss languages (see Demont-Heinrich, 2005). This was a “huge shock” to the French Swiss region and one that participants reported was not well received in the regional community (Interview with #30).

The current official institutional languages remain French and English, but the current director in an attempt to ease tensions, relaxed the requirement about speaking English in meetings and elsewhere in formal situations. Specifically, it was reported that the policy is: **“You speak in your language and I speak in my language, and then we find each other”** (Interview with #16). This policy, mentioned by several participants, was an attempt to privilege both languages and allow faculty and staff (and students outside the classroom) to speak in whichever of the two languages they opted for when they were in the work environment.



In addition, participants described other informal policies. For example, speakers are expected to use PowerPoint slides in one language when presenting in the other so that both sections can understand the shared information. Also, now that employees are encouraged to speak in their preferred institutional language, other participants who do not understand the conversation are expected to ask for translations.

While onsite I witnessed graduation ceremonies, which are held in both languages with the masters of ceremony speaking first in French and then repeating the same message in English. There is one exception to the bilingual format. Each year a faculty member is chosen by each section of students to give a speech at the ceremony. Here, each chosen faculty speaks to the entire audience in their language of choice so there are moments that outsiders and insiders who are monolingual are left unable to comprehend the speeches because neither is translated. Obviously, it is also expected that anyone who attends the ceremony is fluent in one of the two privileged languages.

This environment yields multiple tensions. First, employees face the choice of *speaking French/speaking English*. This opposition sets the employee in an either/or situation where he/she is always privileging one language over the other. In addition, the institution is attempting to provide a bilingual environment although it is not required, therefore, tensions emerge around *monolingual/bilingual* oppositions where tensions erupt when employees and/or groups operate in only one language when they are supposed to uphold the ideal of bilingualism. Another tension which appeared is *fluent/not fluent* because employees have differing skill levels in speaking, writing, reading, and understanding the two privileged languages. So, if people aren't fluent in the

language of choice, *comprehension/incomprehension* becomes a tension for some when they cope to understand messages in organizational settings. At the same time, if people aren't fluent, tensions arise in regard to maintaining self-image, thus *competent/incompetent* is another tension in this organizational setting. Finally, *respect/disrespect* tensions appear when employees want to respect each language choice but reveal feeling disrespected when others show signs of valuing one language but not the other.

### **Speaking French/Speaking English**

Participants revealed that choosing a language and how that choice was perceived among colleagues was the most discussed tension during the conducted interviews. The reality is that employees are continually in a position where they have to choose to *speak French* or to *speak English* in order to participate within the organization. While not all respondents have specific challenges with this situation, especially if they perceive they are bilingual, many did discuss this as a challenge either for themselves or for other employees.

Participants reported multiple ways in which this tension was managed. First, in some cases, participants select out choosing only one language in which to communicate in all organizational situations. Reasons given for choosing this management style included: no ability in learning languages, it is too time consuming to learn a second language; teaching schedule is too heavy to learn another language; and, it is unnecessary to learn a second language since they are already fluent in one of the two privileged languages. In addition, two participants cited legal reasons for not learning the second

language; one also admitted that because there are two languages to choose from, no immersion situation existed in the work environment. They stated:

**It's not in the contract.** There's nothing in there that says it's required to do it, so **when we go to school, we spend all day talking in English, where most of our students speak in English, most of the staff, the faculty speak English, so it's not like it was an immersion thing where you go in and you don't have any choice.** (Interview with #29)

Participants also acknowledged that choosing to speak English is the norm for the international environment, yet at the same time there is a need to choose to speak French because of the local community:

Yes, because for ... to make it easier, we have a tendency to **speak in English** with everybody, because **we expect everybody to speak English**. Now the French are very chauvinist, you know? They like their language. They don't want to give it away. **They always say, "Well, do it in French**. They should speak French. We're in a **French speaking country**, so you have this... (Interview with #56)

Finally, participants opted to select out because for them spending the time they would normally spend learning another language could be better spent achieving personal goals. As one person reflected:

**That's why I decided, okay, I have to make a choice. Basically, I want to spend my time to work on my PhD, or I learn French.** But then, to be very honest, **how many people in the world speak French?** If I want to learn another language, Spanish would be better, where there are more people speaking Spanish. Also, since I have limited time in terms of five years from now, my ability to speak French **won't get me anywhere** as much as my PhD degree, yes... (Interview with #37)

Another way participants managed tensions is to separate language choice depending on the organizational setting. For example, many participants talked about managing language choice in meetings where forced integration required a balancing act:

**...if I'm in a meeting now that's in French, I have no problem understanding. But when it's my turn to speak, I say it in English. But immediately, the conversation switches to English, and I have to be the one to tell them to continue with the French. Or, if there's one person who maybe speaks less English than I speak French, and he'll sometimes sort of get upset that it switches to English. I'm always saying it's not me. You guys can keep talking in French, but there's a challenge...** (Interview with #30)

As the above example suggests, despite the language section divisions created for the students, there are multiple situations where the faculty and staff are integrated throughout the day. While some people found this a rewarding environment in which to work, others found it challenging and uncomfortable, even if they were bilingual. Thus, many sought the comfort of like groups, not necessarily by nation, but by shared language:

**So it's the first time I work in a bilingual environment, and that I found really difficult** because actually in spite of the fact that everybody should speak the language of the other one, you really see that there is a frontier between those who speak French and those who speak English. They are separated. And I feel that it's really difficult if you're a French mother tongue to be very close to the English speaking people, and vice versa...Because actually, I think you don't feel at ease. **Even if you have the impression that you've mastered the language correctly, it's always an effort**, and I think that naturally people **feel very comfortable** with people who speak the same language... (Interview with #33)

Some participants transcended the forced integration in creative ways such as the idea of blending the two languages. One participant commented on how this worked:

**Sometimes the problem is how do I translate that concept in French**, because if there's a brand-new approach, a brand-new model, it's [a] very proprietary concept (?), then I have to translate it by myself. It's that kind of approach. **I know among my colleagues, there are some using, on a regular basis, a kind of Français, a combination of English and French, eh?** It exists, sure. **It's a form of helping and supporting ...**

**Franglais, and even in the newspapers, we talk about Franglais because there's a very strong influence also for the everyday life French language from this English influence and perspective, so that's why we call it, we speak about Franglais. (Interview with #26)**

The above illustrates that despite the sectional divisions, linguistic transformations begin. This example also acknowledges Okara's (1990) assertion that English is malleable and can absorb other languages, creating what others might refer to as *world Englishes*. (see also Kachru, 2005)

At the same time, even after having bilingual language policies in place for ten years, some participants talked about disorienting perceptions when trying to balance the choice of language. Specifically, fears expressed included the loss of French language, the loss of Swiss hospitality values, and the exclusion from organizational and social settings. For example, one participant remarked: "And I think there has been **a sort of fear from the French and Swiss part of the staff, particularly faculty, **that the French language will be lost**. And that, for me, sort of showed that if we don't speak French in [ABC] any more, **we're going to lose the old Swiss hotel values**" (Interview with #20).**

Another recurring theme was not only the loss of Swiss values but the fear of American culture overtaking the institution:

**... But there's a danger where, and there I agree sometimes, where even we have 50% of the students who are in the English section, and 50% who are in the French section, I think that one thing that's **crucial not to forget is that you are still in Switzerland**, and the school should not be **Americanized**. **And there's a danger of the school sometimes as being too much Americanized** ... I'm not saying that American is bad or not ... our roots, we are a Swiss school with Swiss ... we are in a French canton, so we still have to follow some principles and **not forget where we come from**. (Interview with #19)**

Here it can be argued that these terms reflect a fear of sorts because of the intersection of multinationalism when it comes to American influence. In fact, the United States, England, and France, less so, are the national cultures most named in regard to feelings of fear and apprehension.

In summary, when people are forced to choose one language from two choices, they opt to manage the tensions as a contradiction, where one is chosen over the other for all occasions, or they opt to manage it as a dialectic where dependent on the context, they separate out the tasks in order to manage the choice more effectively. However, some employees expressed fear in the loss of identity in regard to national (i.e., Swiss) hotel and canton values due to the introduction of English, especially in regard to the dominance of US culture.

### **Monolingual/Bilingual**

Another tension involved the understanding around ABC's organizational identity as a bilingual environment. Providing a bilingual environment is also mentioned in the mission goals of the institution (see Chapter V). One participant summarized the history and the feeling of many respondents when they stated:

...'96, so ten years ago, so in '96, certainly there was a big clash because before that, you had only French speaking staff, and then we had to integrate English speaking staff, and that certainly at that time, **there was a kind of resistance saying, "Okay, we're a Swiss school – why now do we have to speak English?"** So certainly at that time, you could **have that kind of resistance, but I think that's it's now really part of [ABC's] culture to have, to be bilingual** and to have that multicultural aspect that is really, really strong. ... **when you have too much English, it's something that is, from our side, felt as being intrusive and being ... we all do the effort to speak in English, so you should do the same, and that is something that exists... But I think it's really part of our culture**

**that [ABC] is bilingual, but it's not meaning that it's only English.**  
**That's important. Bilingual is French and English.** (Interview with #2)

This statement also suggests that not only is there a tension to balance the use of the two privileged languages, it also reflects that other languages are excluded such as Swiss German and Italian, two of the official Swiss languages.

Employees revealed that tensions arose when bilingualism was not acknowledged by some employees and interviews revealed that it was the English speakers who most insisted on speaking English in meetings and in other formal settings within ABC. In addition, most participants agreed that if an employee wasn't bilingual, they could lose important organizational communication. As one person put it, to obtain “**maximum information from the maximum sources, you have to be bilingual**” (Interview with #26).

Another aspect of this tension is that many respondents suggested that if you work in an institution where the community is bilingual or multilingual as is Switzerland, you are expected as an ex-pat to become fluent in both languages of the institution **and** the official language of the host nation community.

Specifically, participants sometimes complained that meetings were difficult “...because for example, there is in a meeting, 20 people and one person who is not able to speak French, and everybody has to speak English. **And we are in Switzerland, so everybody should be bilingual**, so also the **English speakers are supposed to bilingual**” (Interview with #19). In other words, the insistence on bilingualism extends outside the organization and into the community.

Only one participant suggested that the school should accept English more openly because of the global perspective of English as the language of business. They stated:

**I think this school is a bilingual school, but I think you need to respect what bilingual means and again, the language of business is English, and these kids are leaving this school predominately working in an English speaking environment, or they're working in an environment where English is the language that they're operating, even though it might be in Seoul or somewhere, because that's the **common communicator**. And I just find it ... **I get a little frustrated at times when people make that big an issue about it**. Because it does, **I think it pushes the divide even wider between the groups**. (Interview with #43)**

Despite the difficulties, most respondents felt it was a good thing to provide a bilingual environment for the students and employees were generally proud of the fact that the institution represented this ideal. Only one participant directly disclosed that the institution should be monolingual and they felt that the language of choice should be English.

*Monolingual/bilingual* tensions are also managed through separation. One example is when employees have to address written communication and it arrives in only one of the two languages. While the organization has two translators on staff for documents, some participants talked about having difficulty reading documents, especially receiving organizational emails in only one language when it should be sent to employees in both languages:

...Some people **send an email only in one language, when it's important enough to be in both**. Others will send it in both when really, it was probably not necessary, in my opinion. There are certain people who you can identify, **who always will do it in one language**. My case, **I can't write in French** very well, so I always have to get somebody to translate to the French. You know, it's a big art when you have a translation... So that's always kind of a ... because you know, if it's



important that you want them to read it, and also **to appreciate the fact that it is in both languages.** (Interview with #30)

In addition, people mentioned that there are times when official documents often come out first in French, but that sometimes there is a delay in the English translation. This tension also reflects issues surrounding to fluency levels, that is, what does it mean to be fluent?

### *Fluent/Not Fluent*

While many participants mentioned fluency as a tension, no one really clarified what it meant to be fluent despite the fact that it was an institution responsible for educating students to participate in an international environment in all forms of communication.<sup>34</sup> Some participants did talk about the number of years it took to be fluent while others talked in percentages of who was fluent; usually this reference to fluency reflected the ability to speak and understand what is being orally communicated. Fluency tensions included dealing with monolingual people who refused to speak one of the official institutional languages, expectations in meetings and other formal organizational settings and time/efficiency costs.

Some employees attempted to manage this tension by transcending or reframing the issue by stating that it is the employee's responsibility and not the organization's to understand what is being communicated. For example one person stated:

I think if they miss information, it's because of their own will, because you have all type of information, and I think even if they don't speak, **they can always read it, and every effort is made for people to be able to understand, and there is always somebody that can understand and**

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<sup>34</sup> Although, Brisk (2005) argues that within bilingual groups, people usually exhibit differing levels of fluency depending on use factors and which language was initially learned.

**help you and if you really want information, I think you can get it. It's your own place to do that.** (Interview with #32)

Other employees depended on translation to get through difficult situations and others rejected the level written fluency as long as they could be able to speak and understand. As one participant remarked when discussing taking language lessons: "... that's what I wanted, it's just to have conversations. **I'm never going to write, or pen articles in French** or proofread or anything like that. **I just want to be able to speak**" (Interview with #43). This sentiment was repeated by others and suggests that people were most concerned about the oral fluency overall in order to participate successfully in the institutional tasks and activities. In addition, the same person later said, "and now when the phone rings, I don't look to see if it's an 021 number. 'Oh, shit ... maybe I can't answer this because it might ...' **If it's somebody who can only speak French, now I can do it**" (Interview with #43).

This statement introduces related issues of *comprehension/incomprehension* and whether employees are appearing *competent/incompetent*. These are important tensions to address because first, messages within the organization can be misinterpreted if employees' can't comprehend the shared information. In addition, a positive self-image is affected if an employee does not want to reveal his/her competency level in front of other employees because of a perceived self-image.

### *Comprehension/Incomprehension*

The most frustration regarding comprehension occurred in meetings where people were forced to integrate and reveal language fluency levels when contributing to the discussions. Reported tensions included participating less when the language was not one's heritage language, lack of vocabulary to express and share ideas, and the lack of translation available in certain settings. One way this forced integration was managed is through separation where languages are alternated in creative ways. As one person explained:

**What generates a lot of fury is always if you go to a meeting, and then one person speaks for about half an hour with nothing to show what he or she is speaking about, so that's ... so now it's just become pretty automatic here that each time in any meeting, anyone who speaks in one language, that there are slides summarizing it in the other language. And there's usually an alternation of French and English speakers, and those who can speak both languages often do some in one and some in the other.** (Interview with #55)

While this process can be effective, at the time of my data collection I went to a staff information meeting where three people presented information in a manner inconsistent with this above description. In my experience the director spoke first and he used the above process, i.e., he spoke English (his dominant of the two official languages) and used PowerPoint slides written in French. The second person, however, spoke French and used diagrams that either had no language or limited French phrasing to explain how the kitchens in the institution were to be remodeled. The third presenter used French to inform about faculty representation issues and used French with no accompanying language visual aids. For French speakers, the French slides in the first presentation were helpful but illustrated how PowerPoint informs in a simplistic manner eliminating the

richness of the discussed concepts and potentially leaving gaps in understanding. In addition, questions directed to the director were answered in English. At the same time, an English-only speaker who was not assertive enough to ask someone in the audience to translate would not have had any depth of information regarding the last two presentations. Experiences like these can be potentially disorienting and excludes people from participation.

Another tension expressed by some respondents was the lack of access to bilingual training sessions. For example, employees mentioned how Easter vacation had been cancelled in order to attend sessions given by an English only speaker who had included preparation tasks that included reading a book written in English. Frustrated by losing their week off (that was usually needed to attend to the task of grading midterm examinations) French speakers were also faced with trying to prepare for an English only session with an English textbook. While all faculty were frustrated by the loss of their vacation time, some employees were additionally frustrated by having to comprehend sessions held in their non-dominant language.

Finding speakers who are bilingual to speak to students also offers a challenge. Because of the dominance of English as the language of business, trying to find French speakers seems especially difficult for some faculty members, especially if French is not their mother tongue. One participant lamented:

...And so to find a **high level person who speaks French fluently, and who's a good public speaker, is not so easy**, especially for me since I don't go to places **where those people are speaking as much as I would for the English ones who speak**. So then, I bring in many more **English speakers**, and I always apologize for that...but here we bring in CEO's that want to meet and talk and stuff, and very few people go. And if they

do go, it's **always the English speakers**, and I'm not sure why. (Interview with #30)

Both of these narratives reveal frustrations that are integrated with language issues and suggest that information is shared in an unequal manner due to differing comprehension levels.

Another somewhat disorienting task taken on by ABC included their US Accreditation process. This process began a few years before my data collection and while I was a visiting professor in 2003, the accreditation committee was onsite observing and presenting their initial findings. Reported tensions to me at the time of my collection in 2006 focused on different cultural approaches in requirements. For example, terms like “faculty governance” and “general education” seem easy to understand unless you are from a national culture where these concepts either don't exist or have different meanings. For example, one staff member discussed the term “general education” and what difficulties this concept created. She explained:

... **our director just cannot understand.** He cannot. I've tried to explain it to him several times. And then in the accreditation report which came back, they said there was a sentence saying that they hoped in the future that education would be more broad-based. And he said, sort of irritated, **“What do they mean by broad-based? What do they mean? Do they mean more professional?”** It's ... **but you see, if you come from this perspective, it is meaningless to a European.** Everybody here who hasn't been exposed to that are saying, “What do they mean by that? **I don't understand.**” It's not part of it. I mean, general education, you've got in any case here. You're continually being educated and you're being pushed to higher level that's not general education. **It's a non-concept. So that's not a little one, and there are lots of others.** (Interview with #55)

This example illustrates that even if the language is understood, there can be a lack of comprehension when national and international concepts are not shared structures.

In addition, a lack of comprehension can stifle and stall communication when people cannot express themselves because while they may comprehend what is being said, they do not have the vocabulary to be comprehended in a complex manner. As explained by one manager: **“If you’ve missed those small things that are said in French and probably are even more interesting than all the conversation that went in English, then it just makes people ... It was long and it was difficult and it was four hours every week. It’s not easy - fourteen people, so just try to imagine”** (Interview with #15).

Operating in a bilingual environment where comprehension is an uncertainty can also work to one’s advantage in escaping interactions or in an effort to conceal unintentional messages. One person suggested that while one sometimes is excluded because of language comprehension, at the same time they can also opt out if they are not interested in interacting. It was also reported that management once suggested that there would be no more firings after the previous fall when up to sixteen employees had been let go or had their hours reduced. When someone tried to verify this statement, it was denied it was ever said. Specifically, the respondent reported: **“...he said, ‘No, you must have misunderstood me because I said it in French.’ And so he used the French as an excuse for having ... but we all know he said it in English... And so sometimes the language is used as an excuse, and there it was used in kind of a shameful way.”** (Interview with #30)

Finally, when forced to integrate in organizational settings some respondents reported that neither French speakers nor English speakers could speak effectively

because of the lack of the depth of vocabulary in which to express themselves. One respondent's comment reveals the frustration of the situation:

What happens is actually **English is becoming the only way to communicate**, and **what we really lost is then a good interaction in a meeting**... when we had those people in the meeting, and we tried to communicate and so on, I knew that some people, **because we had to communicate in English, couldn't really express themselves and give the right ideas**, and you see when those people were absent, the dynamic completely changed because it's in French, it's fluent and you can question, you can do this ... It's a shame, I think. It's just I think we really lose a lot of ... from the French part, but also from the **English** part. (Interview with #15)

But is this a lack of comprehension or an unwillingness to expose one's level of incompetency where group interactions seem unsafe for self-image? Here one person states: "But French, I think half the time, **what's even more dangerous when I think I do understand something and I'm completely off-base with what was intended**"

(Interview with #10). Describing a situation as *dangerous* suggests that people felt at risk under certain circumstances so that participation becomes threatening when employees reveal their incompetency in understanding the discourse.

### ***Competent/Incompetent***

*Competency/incompetency* tensions exist when employees feel they don't have the ability to speak in situations and at the same time they know they should in order to practice. At the same time, bilingual employees become frustrated because they know people learning should practice especially when being tutored yet they don't. One way these tensions are managed is through the use of only basic vocabulary and/or phrases or the use of PowerPoint slides written with simple phrasing. In some cases, employees opt out of conversations or attending the setting altogether, or hold back in organizational

settings from interacting because they found the interaction exhausting and time consuming. Reasons given for these management strategies of selection and separation included; embarrassment for making mistakes, not speaking with perfect grammar/pronunciation, time constraints, and lack of memory except for key phrases such as asking if the person could speak the person's first language (Parlez-vous Francais/Anglais?) and basic greetings (Bonjour). As one person explained how embarrassment occurs and then the resulting paralysis from fear of trying again:

It happens a lot with very small words that change completely the meaning of the sentence, so I think something's positive and it's actually negative, and **I catch myself all the time nodding, when in fact, it was totally inappropriate. And just getting your hands slapped a couple times, even just from your own self,** realizing that you thought you understood something, and it was incorrect, **it drives you even further away from wanting to tackle both languages.** That's a pity. That's a real pity.  
(Interview with #10)

Even if the person had some competency level, there was a fear of trying in any organizational setting: "... If I have to speak **French** ... usually when I speak **French**, I get such stares – not because it's bad, necessarily, but because people are surprised. **But then I get shy, or people will speak back to me English, so I get really frustrated. It's not that comfortable to speak if you don't speak fluently.** I don't think we have a culture where everyone's really open to people speaking the other language" (Interview with #30). So some people can comprehend and have competency, but manage to opt out of situations that appear threatening to self identity.

At the same time, participants who identified themselves as bilingual were frustrated in these situations where they wanted to help people speak in the language and didn't understand why people didn't practice. In these cases, participants insisted that



these fearful people only need to try and other employees would act as teachers in a positive way. In addition, some admitted that for multilingual people, making mistakes in certain cultures was expected and necessary in the process: “... **why should you make the effort since everybody talks to you in English**? I think that’s the main reason, because we have to speak a **foreign language** that we Swiss people, we have four national languages, so we are used **to switch from one language to the other**, and **who cares if we make several mistakes?** The most **important is to be understood**” (Interview with #19). This response suggests that some participants are merely looking for comprehension, not accuracy.

Some participants took the act of practicing outside the organization citing some success at practicing in a more neutral environment. For example:

Something very interesting – when you are in the French speaking part – I don’t know for the German – **but in the French speaking part, if you speak French and you do mistakes, they never correct you**. In the best case, they try to give you the right words if you have problems finding that word, but even if you do mistakes – grammar or whatsoever, **they never correct you**. For me, that’s amazing, because the kind of relationship I have with my language, when I have someone doing mistakes when **speaking Romanian, my first reaction is to give the right word or the right grammar**. **Sometimes it can break the communication**. I think the Swiss approach is a good one, because what’s important is you have a message for me, I let you send me the message, and if I have to think I have to send a message, **I shall never correct you**. **It’s just, I get a message, we communicate**. It’s very interesting. (Interview with #26)

But others who were bilingual or multilingual suggested that there are bilingual employees who focus on the mistakes in a negative way and suggest that you don’t even try: “... and when you have a presentation, if you are an English speaking person, speak English. If you are French, speak French. **Because if you are bilingual – and I’ve**

**experienced this sometimes – if you understand both of them, you spend most of your time listening for the mistakes, and you pick out the wrong words...**” (Interview with #48).

Participants also discussed other specific organizational settings where it was evident to them that the organizational culture did not allow for incompetency. Areas such as teaching become hostile where faculty participants reported that students were not tolerant when a faculty did not display perfect language competency. Even activities which are optional can be seen as a place to argue about competency where reactions are extreme:

... particularly the **French** again, **and I have to be careful, but I see it all the time.** You look at the elections of the student council. It’s a classic example. And every year when they’re announced – even some of the **French** faculty **say it’s disgusting there’s no French in there.** Well, no one’s stopping anyone from doing it, and **when the student council president doesn’t speak perfect French, or doesn’t speak any French and you get, again, faculty going, “Oh, it’s disgusting.”**  
(Interview with #43)

Terms like *disgusting* suggest rejection and relates to conflict in regard to not respecting the values of a group.

### **Respect/Disrespect**

The final dialectic I identified is *respect/disrespect*. Participants revealed that both sides attempted to be respectful but at the same time often did not actively show this respect or revealed disrespect as seen by the above excerpt. Contexts where respect became a component included: not learning the regional language; the global dominance of English in hospitality, business, and academics; disrespect in the form of anti-Americanism; and the disinterest to learn French by the English speakers. For example,

one person summarized how people from the region felt when ex-patriates selected out from using French:

...It's difficult sometimes to get your point across, and it's not as simple as "I don't understand the language." **A lot of times, it is, "I resent the fact that you're using this language."** Because Francophones resent the fact that **English has become the international language**, and so they will sit there and say, "Well, we're in the Canton of Vaud, and French is the language of here, and you should be saying these things in French," **and if you did, and you made mistakes, that might be held against you.** (Interview with #54)

This statement reflects that people are disrespected when the regional/national language isn't used or even if it is used, and that employees encountered criticism instead of encouragement to practice. This example suggests people find themselves caught in a double bind because of the contradictory message which paralyzes actions. Whichever choice they make there will be repercussions.

Anti-American and anti-French comments were also made both by employees and the managers who had to deal with the fallout from the resentment. For example, one person said: "... If you add on top of this the fact that **some people were anti-American**, and the others were just ... '**I don't care about French**.' Nice. **You have a great interaction ... and you have to manage** those people even in that case. It's just a shame, I think" (Interview with #10). In fact, some comments include an almost paranoid attitude where people suggest that choosing English over French is threatening to their national and cultural heritage. An example is: "French was the language and English only started in the late '90s, and I think also because so much of the **management comes in and only speaks English**, so it's a natural territorial resentment, I think, for **Francophones to feel they're being invaded, especially by Americans**" (Interview

with #35). The terms like “territorial” and “invaded” suggests an extremely aggressive, almost militarist perspective that exhibits feelings of fear and loss.

*Respect/disrespect* also occurs because of the make-up of both the region and the institution when one looks at who comprises the English speakers and the French speakers. Here, employees commented on the fact that the French speaking population seems much more homogeneous because the members come from only a few countries, while the English speakers are more global and in many cases have had a bigger adaptation because their native languages are often neither English nor French. As one person suggested: “... there has to be **more tolerance among the English speakers** because it’s **already a compromise whereas for the French, it’s not**. It’s more an insistence [for the French] and it’s you know, perhaps a way for them to hold onto what they’ve always had in the past” (Interview with #10).

There are some divisions among the French speakers where they are not always seen as homogeneous: “... I think maybe that **the French Swiss do not mind so much about the English being spoken here, but the French French, they think it’s a cheek in a way. French, being a very proud race ...As you know, the French are very proud of their language...**They don’t want to globalized here by the English language. You have to respect that to a certain extent**” (Interview with #56). Here, even though the respondent recognizes that the French deserve respect but at the same time they also remark that it only goes to a “certain extent” suggesting that their concerns may not be valid.**

Finally, respondents also complained about the lack of integration into language practices when new staff and faculty moved to a new country. Some respondents who were most aggressive about their position were neither French nor Swiss. An example of this is from one respondent who stated a sentiment shared by some participants:

I'll be brutal about this one. We're in a French speaking country. **Survive...** If we were in North America, the French speakers – or if we were in England, or Australia- the French speakers would have to adapt to the English language system. We wouldn't give them a chance to not adapt, would we? **Why doesn't it work the other way around, to a certain extent?** (Interview with #1)

## SUMMARY

In summary, language choice is the most divisive tension where multinationalism intersects. *Speaking French/Speaking English* creates an opposition operating simultaneously. This dialectic is managed primarily by selecting out of one language entirely, separating when they can choose a language based on task or context, integrating when either forced or ideally, when there is some comfort level of fluency, and connectedness if the person is bilingual. Further, since the ideal of the institution is bilingualism, tensions of *monolingual/bilingual* emerge when employees don't participate in the institution in a bilingual manner and it is managed through reframing or transcending the issue by putting the responsibility onto the employee instead of the institution to achieve bilingualism.

One of the largest tensions is *fluent/not fluent*. Here, participants never define fluency but data revealed that differing levels of fluencies as well as differing types of fluency create disorientation where communication is difficult and time consuming

because of the necessity of translations or misunderstandings of the information. A subset of this dialectic is *comprehension/incomprehension* when participants have to manage the tensions through forced integration created in order to participate in the institution during formal and informal functions or selecting out if the situational option exists. If an employee is not fluent, another subset which appears is *competent/incompetent* where in particular, an employee fears being seen as incompetent so they don't practice speaking while at the same time those who are competent wish these participants would try to speak the language in order to become competent. This situation creates a double bind for some participants who feel trapped because they either lose positive self identity through embarrassment when participating or feel excluded when they opt out. Finally, *respect/disrespect* undergirds all of these tensions because even if all but one participant thinks the bilingual environment is important and should be continued, there is a continuing perception that one language over the other is more important and this imbalance creates a power struggle.

Multinationalism intersects primarily in opposing named languages where French and English become identity terms which reflect the divisive nature of the tensions. National identities are mentioned when participants find that employees from those nations assume that they do not have to learn the host language because of the status of English. While some respondents use terms like *global* and *international*, these terms are used primarily to identify English as the privileged global language of business and hospitality. Finally, terms like *American, British, and English* and *French* to a lesser extent are used sometimes to illustrate a group or groups that altered the organizational

environment so much that there is a real fear that the host language (French) and/or host culture (Swiss) will be replaced.

Finally, the addition of English speaking section leads to an expanded intercultural environment where tensions erupt because of how and if this type of environment should be managed as articulated in the mission statement. Further, because of the differing fluency levels between the French and the Anglo Saxons on staff, co-teaching pairs are created for many of the courses taught to fulfill the requirement of the BOD (Board of Governors) to offer equitable degrees for both language sections. Tensions erupt here because differing pedagogies and worldviews come into play. These two categories of tensions are covered in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER V

### SECONDARY TENSIONS

#### INTRODUCTION

If someone is a practicing Muslim, what can they do? Go off to pray? How? Where? We don't cater to that, and if religion is part of culture, which it is, that's a pity. It sounds negative, **but it does sound wonderful that we are so multi-cultural**, but when it comes down to it, **we take all these cultures and we squeeze them into two sections**. I don't know any other way to do it. I'm not saying it's bad, but that's what we do. So is that really multi-cultural? **We're using a Western or European educational method – norms, values, structure – which may not be prized in other cultures, where they may be going back to work. Of course we can't provide for everyone. It's not possible, but that's not multi-cultural**. (Interview with #38)

Well, it depends on which courses you're teaching and who's in there. That is, for an American person coming ... not only American, but any person who's come in with any history teaching in higher education where they haven't had this constraint is something ... **and they don't prepare for that**. And you learn over time that when they say that the courses **have to be exactly the same**, it's impossible. **I mean, two people never teach the same content in the same way, but when you first get here, there's so much pressure on you, that you really ... it's like you're in a panic, you know?** How do I do this? Especially if the person, the French person is coming from a different culture and background, it really is a challenge... (Interview with #10)

In this chapter, I analyze secondary tensions resulting over time when other aspects of organizational life are affected by the addition of language choice tensions analyzed in Chapter IV. Specifically, as illustrated by the first excerpt above, all students experience forced integration into one of the two language sections in order to maintain a level of communication coherence. But how does an organization attempt to create an intercultural environment that respects all national cultures as the mission statement



states when they merge students into sections and promote a Western philosophy in the classrooms? At the same time faculty are also merged into these same sections. The second excerpt above provides an example of what happens sometimes when faculty members are paired because they lack the fluency levels to teach in both language sections. In both cases, tensions are revealed to accommodate the two dominant value structures (French and Anglo-Saxon) and others are often marginalized for the sake of operating in some kind of shared coherence.

In order to explain these tensions, I first provide a brief analysis of the institutional mission statement discourse highlighting the descriptors and terminology used in the production of the statement. As mentioned in the previous chapter, providing an international environment was already seen as an institutional strength before the addition of the English section, and that through the addition of this section, multiculturalism was organizationally redefined to include a larger and more diverse population and expanded to include a new understanding of globalization as it pertained to the hospitality industry.

Next I provide an analysis of the tensions that occur when employees try to provide this intercultural environment for its organizational members. This analysis reveals that the tensions are dialectical in nature and are managed primarily through selection, integration and separation strategies. The three dialects that appear include *managed/not managed*, *direct/indirect*, and *choice/no choice*. *Managed/not managed* reflects how respondents recognize if and how the mission is carried out; that is, what level and what kind of institutional management occurs. As a subset of the first dialectic,

respondents reported that measures implemented were both managed *directly/indirectly* when trying to provide an intercultural environment. Finally, institutional members struggled with *choice/no choice* in whether to participate in this intercultural environment.

Third, I analyze tensions that result when co-teaching is required to compensate for the lack of bilingual fluency and/or subject expertise. Specifically, tensions arise when teaching pairs are constructed in order for the institution to offer both language sections an equitable educational experience as mandated by the BOD. Pedagogical and worldview tensions appear when pairing French speakers with English speakers. Canagarajah (1999) argues that pedagogy, methods used in the classroom to advance the learning process, is created by various organizations and agents such as universities, national and regional government agencies and faculty. These political and social institutions and groups have a large hand in controlling society, thus no pedagogy is ever value-free (Canagarajah, 1999). In particular, teachers pass these values through pedagogical practices such as the use of textbooks, group work, assessment tools, and class techniques such as lecturing. The students, in turn, become accustomed to these value-ridden methods and the interwoven ideology as a byproduct of the learning process. Thus, ABC's tensions arise when it attempts to advance and recreate an organizational pedagogical worldview while also trying to accommodate specific pedagogical and educational worldviews preferred by a multinational faculty and expected by its multinational student population (Canagarajah, 1999).

Tensions that result reflected a diversity of perspectives but are also interconnected with the two major language sections. First, respondents mostly frame their pedagogical perspectives as *French pedagogy/Anglo-Saxon pedagogy*. A subset of this tension includes *same/different* where faculty merge their diverse experiences in an attempt to manage the dialectic through integration. Another subset is *teaching in the French section/teaching in the English section* when teachers report tensions based on personal experiences and institutional rumored sectional differences. Finally, *French way/American way* tensions emerge when comparisons are made that appear to privilege one system over the other. Overall, employees experience forced integration in order for the institution to accommodate pedagogical issue. Data reflects a multitude of interpersonal strategies and an ambiguous organizational policy in order to enforce the rules created by the BOD so that students receive an equitable learning experience in both language sections.

Now that I have introduced this chapter, I will begin by discussing the mission statement.

## IMPLEMENTING THE MISSION STATEMENT

**Figure 1**  
**ABC Mission Statement**

<p><b>Mission Statement</b></p> <p><b>Our Vision</b></p> <p>The [ABC] <b>is the world leader</b> in hospitality management education, offering an unmatched learning environment for students, faculty and the hospitality industry.</p> <p>Through our uncompromising commitment to quality and <b>our unique culture</b> of the <u>arts and sciences</u> of hospitality we develop the talented men and women who will <b>lead our industry into the future</b>. We combine solid business competence with the characteristic aesthetic and <u>human dimensions of our profession</u>.</p> <p><b>Our Mission</b></p> <p>As a member-institution of the University of Applied Sciences of Western Switzerland, the [institution studied] serves the hospitality industry by educating and <b>continuously developing leadership talent</b> to an acknowledged high level of professional competence and <b>social responsibility</b>. In so doing, we create knowledge for current and future hospitality management practice and promote innovation.</p> <p><b>Our Core Values</b></p> <p><b>Learning:</b> We are committed to the growth of all members and partners of the <u>[ABC] community</u>. We are inspired by the pursuit of learning: we value new knowledge, skills and competencies in the <u>arts and sciences</u> of hospitality.</p> <p><b>Professionalism:</b> We strive for excellence. We promote the ethical dimension of our work. We acknowledge and <u>reward exceptional performance</u> and actively support all who learn in their <u>desire to achieve</u>.</p> <p><b>Academic Integrity:</b> As an institution of higher learning, we uphold the principle of academic integrity. In the execution of our mission, we demand <u>academic rigour</u> and defend <u>academic freedom</u>.</p> <p><b>Savoir-vivre/Savoir-être:</b> We <b>recognize and respect the value of individuals, teamwork and cultural diversity,</b> and endeavour to <b>enhance mutual understanding, tolerance and cooperation</b>.</p> <p><b>Hospitality:</b> We are guided by the principles of the hospitality profession and demand service excellence. We <b>create a safe and secure environment</b> for the [the institution studied] community.</p> <p><b>Our Commitment to Our Stakeholders</b></p> <p><b>To our students we offer, in both English and French, an unrivalled entrepreneurial and multicultural learning environment which balances the arts and sciences of the hospitality profession.</b></p> <p><b>To our industry,</b> we provide talented, <u>multicultural</u>, <b>responsible graduates</b> possessing an acknowledged high level of <b>professional competence</b>, a <b>passion for quality</b> and the <u>culture</u> of <b>savoir-être that characterizes the entire [the institution studied] community</b>. Through our <b>research, consulting and executive education</b> we provide <b>knowledge and expertise</b>.</p> <p><b>To our faculty and staff,</b> we provide an <u>international</u>, <b>entrepreneurial professional environment which actively encourages excellence and individual initiatives in support of [the institution studied] mission and quality imperative</b>.</p> <p><b>To our alumni,</b> we offer an <b>inspiring global network</b>, supported by [the institution studied], which provides opportunities for professional and career development and <b>knowledge exchange</b>.</p> <p><b>To the Swiss and local communities,</b> we offer our <b>expertise and services</b> in hospitality. <b>We bring economic and socio-cultural value to our home base</b>.</p> <p><b>To our governance bodies,</b> we provide <b>sound and sustainable operational and financial performance</b>, thereby allowing [the institution studied] and our partners to be confident in our <b>future</b>.</p>
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According to the organizational website<sup>35</sup> and interviews, the decision to change the mission of the institution (the addition of the English section) initially came from the Board of Governors (BOD). The mission statement posted at the time of the data collection (shown in Figure 1) reflects a globalized view yet still respects local and national origins. Descriptive language underlined above in the institution's mission statement provide the acknowledgement that this institution offered students a bilingual opportunity ("both English and French") in a "multicultural" and "international" environment residing in "Swiss and local communities." As mentioned in Chapter IV, there was already a perceived multinational environment by the director and this mission statement clearly reflects that perception with its use of this kind of terminology. These descriptors clearly demonstrates an awareness of the multi-contextual nature of which they organization resides.

Equally interesting are terms and phrases that reflect a mission which Spring (2008) refers to as a "world systems approach" (p. 334). Spring (2008) defines the system as the standardization of idealized western educational ideals integrated into one global cultural view where power is legitimized through the teaching of capitalist theories with the use of English, the lingua franca of business (p. 334-337). Thus, a "knowledge economy" results where wealth is tied to knowledge, to workers, and ultimately to a system of education as human capital and generates a brain circulation and multiculturalism through migration (Spring, 2008, p. 342).

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<sup>35</sup> I have not listed the website address in order to protect the anonymity of the organization.

It would appear that many terms and phrases used in this mission statement reflect the world systems approach. For example, the institutional goal described is to “lead our industry into the future,” and provide an “entrepreneurial professional environment” within the “global network.” These terms are often used to describe business environments where the future is privileged and entrepreneurs expand (capitalistic) opportunities. In addition, ABC hopes to provide “knowledge and expertise” as a “knowledge exchange.” This text suggests that knowledge becomes a marketable item tied to wealth and profit which results in what all businesses desire -- a “sound and sustainable operational and financial performance.” At the same time, the mission discusses the desire to bring “value” to the “home base”—value described in terms of “economic and sociocultural” gains. Here economy and culture are united where a world system is created by hiring people from multiple nations, in effect, circulating knowledge through migration as described by Spring (2008).

I would argue that much of this text could also be described as ambiguous and at the same time, offers interpretive flexibility that can result in a “set of empty platitudes” (Fairhurst, Jordan, & Neuwirth, 1997, p. 244; Eisenberg, 1984). In fact, organizational mission statements generally suffer from a lack of communication because they are artificially formalized and this challenges members’ concern about its message (Fairhurst et al., 1997). This supposition is supported by most respondents at the time of the study because they generally knew that there was a mission statement, yet at the same time, didn’t know or couldn’t remember what it said. An example of this sentiment reflects this lack of concern/interest: “Yes, mission statements, for me, they are always beautiful.

They are written somewhere. People look at it, and it's nice to have a mission statement for any type of companies. I mean, I'm sure you can ask 20 or 50 people and they have no clue what the mission statement says, and I am one of them, okay? I know we have one. I know it looks good on paper" (Interview with #48). In addition, respondents who actually knew what the mission said, did understand that implementing the mission was "a bit more complex just than a person in the English and the French section" (Interview with #55).

Now that I have provided an analysis of the mission statement, I will discuss the analysis of respondent's assessment of how the mission was implemented at ABC.

### **Managed/Not Managed**

Respondents expressed differing ideas as to whether providing an intercultural environment was actually managed, however, at the same time there were some clearly defined managed tasks that were in place in the institution when it came to students. First of all, each student admission is decided through review of their previous scholastic records, language proficiency scores, and an interview conducted by two randomly chosen faculty members.<sup>36</sup> In addition, admission numbers are generally based on selection of equal numbers of French speakers/English speakers, with about half of the students coming from abroad. Respondents generally reported that the English section included many non-native English speakers from Germany, Eastern European, Asia, and South America. In contrast, the French section reflects less national diversity because the

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<sup>36</sup> I participated in two of these interviews when I worked at ABC. Questions include a range of topics and are used to determine whether the student has a level of maturity in understanding what is required to succeed in this environment.

students come from nations where French is either the official language like Belgium or used extensively in business like in Morocco and Tunisia.<sup>37</sup> But at the same time, according to my interviews, no management decisions were reported to specifically manipulate levels of nationality and no one ever mentioned that they were aware of any specific programs in place to implement the intercultural component of the mission. It was more often that people made comments like the following where uncertainty was expressed about how the mission is accomplished: “Um...**I don’t exactly know how they manage that**, through the mission and what the goal is. I’m sure they just don’t make their decision about having someone from Asia because we are a bit low with Asian people on campus. It’s not working this way at all, so I don’t know exactly what mission is behind this. To me, **it’s not really clear**” (Interview with #53).<sup>38</sup>

Once students are accepted and come to campus, orientation initially forces integration where it was reported that even language sections are mixed, however, orientation only lasts one week. Any diversity that may be established during orientation abates when students are then placed into their respective language sections. After orientation students are divided into groups and are mixed based on nationality and gender. In fact, one coordinator reported their own philosophy when creating each group:

I’m in charge of a semester... **so I can mix the groups in the beginning**, and I always make sure that okay, I’ve got some academic requirement to follow, but then genders and culture, and **I would never have all the Swiss German and all the French together, because it’s a catastrophe.**

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<sup>37</sup> As mentioned in Chapter II, French is now used less than English in business and technology.

<sup>38</sup> It is also important to note that even with the addition of English to the curriculum, the high tuition with no available scholarship money kept the class structure from changing. It was only through ABC’s relationship with the SUI that subsidized middle class Swiss students now had access to the institution.



**A German speaking guy from Switzerland, they're like the salt in the soup. You need a little bit, but not too much of it.** (Interview with #48)

So clearly there is some specific managing of nationality placement in an attempt to maintain order and harmony. This particular coordinator had been at ABC for several years and had a great relationship with students both in the classroom and in extracurricular activities so this person had a great deal of experience from which to draw when managing groups. At the same time, their cultural perspective signal both regional and national differences and reflecting personal perceptions of identity characteristics when labeling students based on temperaments.

In addition to this initial group assignment, students are also assigned group work in most courses which requires them to interact with additional nationalities, but still within their own language sections. In fact, group work is often the case in many courses in order to teach students about achieving cooperation and consensus and at the same time, decreasing faculty's grading load.

Students also have optional opportunities to interact in various activities such as peer counseling, community service, student council, wine tastings, sports day and field trips. In particular, there are two annual events in which many students participate. First, at Fête Universale, students set up booths which emphasize their national identity where they share cultural information including specialty foods. Fête Finale is a themed, black tie celebration for the graduating class complete with a lavish dinner and entertainment provided by the students in the form of dance, song, and/or theatrical vignettes. All of these activities allow students and staff to opt out of integration because they are not orchestrated or forced and here they can choose whether and how they wish to participate

with other people from different cultures. As one respondent stated: “... **only a few activities** that really put the necessary emphasis on these issues. So again, it’s like the corporate culture. It happens because it is there, **but it’s not being managed**” (Interview with #26).

One respondent compared the ABC structure of activities to US universities, which have a much smaller population of international students and actively focus on the international aspect when these students arrive. This person suggested that while there are support structures in place at ABC, “...**the difficulties are not sufficiently perceived**, and that the...both classes, assessment, **support of all kinds is not constructed along the international perspective**” (Interview with #55).

International students at ABC are considered those not from Switzerland, which, as mentioned earlier, is close to half of the students. Since so many of the students are not from Switzerland, some respondents complained about the lack of focus on the host country culture. For example: **It’s a multi-national environment, but they really don’t provide it**. They accept multinational people, coming from every country. As a matter of fact, to they...their mission, I think they take care of this, of course, yes. But I’ve seen **so many students after two or four years, they still don’t know what is Switzerland, yeah? They seem to know what is France. It would be nice to let them a little bit know [what is Switzerland]**” (Interview with #17). This statement suggests that despite the fact that the host country is Switzerland, some of the participants feel that France is treated as the privileged culture. This feeling could be due to Ager’s (1999) assertion that

France is adept at simultaneously exporting and maintain its culture and language in countries that designate French as an official language.

While the above examples suggest that activities outside of classes were infrequently managed, sometimes management did step in when unplanned events happened. In particular, events happening outside the institution provided a learning opportunity and it was reported that management manipulated the circumstances in order to integrate students and manage discussion about controversial events. One respondent explained:

You see that as fantastic that we have so many different nationalities here around, and that you don't say, okay, that creates a problem. The only thing what I remember ... when was it? We had something, was it in London? Yeah, okay ... the London one. No, no ... was is it the London one, or the other one, the bomb there. I can't remember, but at least that **we had to be very careful**, the broadcast ... was it CNN, was it Euro News, was it another. And that was not ... then we really had to see and to discuss that. What are we going to do? **We had the different television screens, and will CNN be always there, and Euro News be always there, I mean. We decided to shift it, to make changes there, so that there were one hour CNN there, but then it moved to another, so that no people would create groups of anti-whatever. So, we tried to mix it a little bit.** (Interview with #16)

This statement suggests that while they might not manage the daily interaction, there is a fear that if they don't manage some issues that there will be a lack of order. But many felt that managing or manipulating integration becomes paradoxical, removing spontaneity of interaction. For example:

... this is once more, my definition of things, but a multi-cultural environment is sharing. It's about sharing experience and sharing beliefs and sharing points of view with people. **And, if you force that too much, it becomes unnatural, and it becomes, "Yeah, let's be multi-cultural!" and that's not spontaneous, and you lose, to me, the integrity of what that is supposed to mean.** (Interview with #1)

Finally, while as it can be seen that situations are *managed/not managed* as it applied to student interaction, most respondents stated that nothing was really done to manage an international environment in regard to staff. As one respondent suggested:

...Well, culturally, I'm absolutely convinced at some level **that there was not a lot of understanding, and it comes from a lack, I'm sure, of experience of the challenges they were going to have in administering a bilingual program, and not only just dealing with the logistics, but dealing with the factoids.** Here, you have pretty much vocational, mostly French or Swiss French oriented faculty,...many of them [ABC] graduates ...and then, bingo, you start hiring...other people, mostly from the U.K. or America, and all of a sudden, you've had some major cultural issues going on, **and for the most part, it was never verbalized.** ... Sometimes things would happen, and the French faculty would say, well, that's those Anglo-Saxons and that kind of thing, and it was amazing to me that they could, **or they should have realized fairly early on when some of the issues came up, that hey, maybe they really should stop and think about this.** ...and there was never any discussion. I guess **they think of themselves as being so international, that the idea of them to have to think through strategies to deal with, particularly on the faculty and staff side of cultural issues, never really had even occurred to them.** Or if it did, I certainly wasn't aware of it. **I never heard any discussions about it whatsoever.** (Interview with #29)

So, while employees understood that students should have a multicultural experience, not much if anything at the time of the study had been done for employees to have a similar experience. In other words, it appears that because employees have had international experiences and are working in an intercultural environment it was assumed that they are culturally competent and there was no need to provide any kind of education for them in which to learn about other cultures.

### *Directly/Indirectly*

Another way respondents framed tensions was through trying to find a balance of *direct/indirect* integration. This strategy suggests a separation by task/event and/or situation. For example, one respondent pointed out:

It's done **directly and indirectly**. It's done by sourcing faculty and students and staff, of course, from across the world... It's done **indirectly by encouraging social events and social interaction where a cultural understanding gets promoted**. I mean, **there's a lot of dinners that I've had with people of other cultures** in [ABC], leave alone in business and outside of [ABC], but with [ABC] community. (Interview with #22)

The problem with managing in an indirect way means that there is an ambiguity as to how understanding/learning really happens. For example:

...so I come back to this garden picture **You don't stand in front of your rose and you just shout at the plant, "GROW NOW!" You can only work very indirectly**, and therefore, the influence into these **things are sometimes not as direct as possible**...well, a lot of students seem to get out with this kind of special spirit. Nobody knows how this is actually done, but it takes place. Well, **very positive on one side that it takes place somehow, but very dangerous that it is not researched internally in a way that we understand first the fragility, second the potential to influence it in a positive way**. (Interview with #28)

Here the participant captures the fragility of trying to manage successful interactions and the consequences if you manage too closely. The term *dangerous* is interesting in that it is a descriptor used fairly frequently in interviews when unpredictable consequences may occur and may appear threatening to the balance within the institution.

### *Choice/No Choice*

The final way respondents framed tensions was on a personal level as to whether one could make a choice to select out of the process. In particular, when it came to

faculty, it was perceived that some select out if given the choice to interact with other cultures, at the same time others felt that no choice existed and everyone is forced to integrate because of being in the same institution space and because of being a part of the hospitality and tourism industry. As one respondent remarked: “... Provide a multicultural environment? That’s, by definition, what it is, you know? **It’s kind of like you can’t get away from it, like it or not**” (Interview with #5). Another respondent commented: “...but I don’t think that there’s something really in place to develop this multicultural environment. I think that it’s something, if I have to work with another department that has a different culture, **so I have no choice**. I have to deal with this person, **so the organizational relationships oblige the people to deal with other cultures**” (Interview with #36).

Many respondents mentioned that both faculty and students, when given the choice, also select out to be with either first, their own nationality, and if that was not possible, their own heritage language group. Reasons given include British colonial patterns of segregation, being assigned into like language groups, and having someone to talk to in the same language. For example: “**I notice students from the same country tend to stay together**, okay? Taiwanese will be with Taiwanese, Swiss-German with Swiss-German, **so then where does the multi-cultural part come in?** Is that because teachers are from different countries...” (Interview with #55). Here, the respondent expressed not only the rarity in the data of a particular Asian country being cited but also that the German portion of Switzerland is referred to a separate country instead of region,

which suggests that language<sup>39</sup> trumps country as far as Switzerland is considered. At the same time, many said that the integration students faced was important and that it provided them countless learning opportunities despite the tensions surrounding the interactions. One respondent summarized it in this way:

Now, I think that on the other side for the students, **I think it's a terrible ... plus. That's a sort of oxymoron, but ... (laughs), but I think it is.** It is because it is great because suddenly you have people from China **that have never spoken to anybody in the world except Chinese, and they find themselves speaking to Germans, Americans, Arabs,** whatever have you, and that **is an eye-opener which is fantastic because [of] all the difficulties** that go with them. **And the difficulties [are] the terrible part, okay. The eye-opener is the plus part. That's why I said the terrible plus.** (Interview with #20)

It appears as an oxymoron, but I would argue that it is a dialectic where students experience these oppositional forces simultaneously because the environment in which they live provide both experiences simultaneously creating a learning environment in which to grow and understand how social cohesiveness can work.

## SUMMARY

In summarizing, respondents understand providing an intercultural environment as a *managing/not managing* dialectic where ambiguity exists because both oppositional views occur in how to provide an optimum organizational environment for students. As a subset respondents see the tensions as a balance between *directly/indirectly* in order to avoid too much force so as to not squash spontaneity in interactions. Another subset,

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<sup>39</sup> As discussed in Chapter II, language and national culture are often linked but in the case of Switzerland allegiance is often first to the canton. As explained by my participants, Swiss German dialect is also referred to as Low German because it is a separate dialect and often not understood by those who speak the German dialect spoken in Germany, also referred to by some as High German.

*choice/no choice* becomes a factor when respondents felt that just being a part of the institution forces integration because so many nationalities exist simultaneously that a person cannot avoid interaction, yet when given the option, many choose to associate with like nationalities and/or language skills to be more comfortable.

It is interesting to note that tensions surrounding mission goals really surround trying to manage students. While intercultural tensions existed among employees, no one mentioned any way in which ABC as an organization attempted to manage these situations with any kind of intercultural employee training programs. Thus, it is unclear as to whether that management felt that such training for employees wasn't necessary or that it wasn't important enough to warrant financing. Most importantly, tensions surrounding implementing intercultural environment are usually embraced because most respondents felt this was an important and mostly positive feature at ABC. It is within these dialectics that employees most often described contexts with all levels of intercultural situations -- regional, national, international, and global identifications, while most socially identify groups on a national level in order to compare identities.

Finally, in an organizational context, many tensions reflect the different perspectives between how French/European and Anglo-Saxon/US groups see multicultural learning should occur. French/European perspectives privilege indirect and spontaneous relationships by providing the space and allow for voluntary integration, while Anglo-Saxon/US perspectives look to force relationships by creating opportunities to self-reflect on what it means to be intercultural. This difference in ideology becomes more apparent in the second half of this chapter where co-teaching partners have to



combine their pedagogical perspectives to create similar courses and identical student assessments in order to give students an equitable experience regardless of language section and/or national/cultural affiliation.

## **PRACTICING PEDAGOGY/CO-TEACHING**

Co-teaching at ABC operates on two levels. First, teachers with different strengths and experiences about a specific subject come together in the classroom in order to provide students with a holistic understanding of the topic such as research methods. Few participants reported on this form of co-teaching. One person did mention that people in their area of expertise were protective about sharing subject knowledge. This suggests that some members looked at knowledge as some sort of social capital in which to garner in relationship to status within the organization (see Spring, 2008).

Second, teaching partners are created in order to offer the same subjects in both French and in English when faculty don't have the fluency level to teach the subject in both languages. Partnering is based on specialization. As mentioned in Chapter IV, this decision arose when faculty who have expertise in a specialized area could either not attain the adequate fluency levels (read, write, and speak) in both languages or were unwilling to attain that level of fluency even when the institution offered in some instances to pay for courses. An example of this inability as it relates to co-teaching is: "I teach only in English, because first, I have the handicap of not being able to write, really...And there are a lot of correspondences, PowerPoint and everything that should

also be in French, if I teach in the French section. I wouldn't feel as comfortable yet"

(Interview with #9).

Participants often cited the BOD policy requiring that students in both language sections receive an equivalent degree. As one person explained:

**When they made the decision to open the English section, the [BOD] insisted that the two sections, all the courses, every single one would always be given in both languages, and the exams would be the same. That's a law in stone in the school, that both sections are getting just as good an education. The exams are just as good, they're just as whatever, and everybody is getting fair treatment.** Because I think what I have heard at the time was that there was concern that in certain areas, specialized areas, that it would be much more easier and very tempting, for example, to have a highly specialized person like your husband<sup>40</sup> come and teach here, **but only give the course in English, which means that the French section wouldn't get as good a quality of course,** and the [BOD] is against that. **When they walk out, they have equivalent diplomas. They don't have better or worse, so they're supposed to be the same objectives, the same exam, and in between we hope it's the same quality, really. That's a big hope...** (Interview with #5)

The phrase "law in stone" reflects a nation which privileges a rule focused society and that expects people to obey the rules and act accordingly. One person explained that while rules exist in France and in England, no one expects people to obey them, but in Switzerland it is expected that people obey the rules and then, if an exception has to be made, that exception will be made if the person has a history of obeying the rules. The idea of the Swiss characteristic of equitable treatment reflects the image of Swiss

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<sup>40</sup> When visiting faculty or speakers came to ABC, courses and seminars were usually taught in the dominant language, and this often resulted in forcing French speakers to learn in English. No translators to my knowledge are hired. When I was a visiting professor, no one was familiar with the course I taught so I had all students, both French and English sections, taking the course from me. This caused the French speakers who did not have good English skills and the English speakers who were not as fluent as they were in their heritage language to ask students next to them to translate during class.

democracy which suggests fair treatment.<sup>41</sup> Further, one person shared an old saying from his village in Switzerland – he said that “if you are walking with your head above the crowd, it will be cut off.” In other words, people should remain equal within the community. Both of the perspectives reflect the national and regional cultural undergirding that positions this policy at ABC. Thus, teachers in the four year program are required to create identical goals and identical examinations. The two year program has even more stringent rules because according to the respondents, not only do the goals and the examination materials have to be identical, but the same information must be shared. These requirements often place great pressures on co-teaching teams to execute them. It also puts management in the position to see that they are enforced. For example, one participant reported:

Anyway, it was a struggle...and it was even more content open plus structure because ... but you learn over time **how to play this game**, and you eventually realize that, **and even the administration wore down after awhile**, and they realized that **you have to beat some of these people over the head** that it was **impossible to make it exact**. But you had to have similar objectives, obviously, and similar structures for exams, and similar assessment. So once you learn **how to play the game**, and it took me probably almost three years to figure out the **rules of the game**, so ... but that's an interesting ... I'd forgotten about that, actually. **That's one of those cages that you have to deal with when you come here.**  
(Interview with #29)

While there are no national social identity labels directly used in this quotation, the situation reflects how some out groups initially feel that the rules enforced by

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<sup>41</sup> Of course, fair treatment as it applies to men as Switzerland is the last western European country to give women the vote, which occurred in 1970. In addition, when I worked in Switzerland, married women paid a higher wage tax than men. The reason, I was told, was to try to keep women out of the workforce although I never saw formal documentation to confirm this perception. As mentioned earlier, see (Burrus, 1997) where the author describes her banking industry experiences where these Swiss organizational structures reflect the traditional male hierarchy.

management are so challenging to their pedagogical and educational worldview that they felt they were in a cage and needed to transcend the situation through game playing. This example also reflects the existence of competing international tensions within the institution over differing pedagogies and educational worldviews.

### **French Pedagogy/English Pedagogy**

Tensions that sometimes emerged were between competing pedagogies within the institution. While employees interviewed represented multiple nationalities, all who mentioned pedagogy framed it that a person taught from either a French pedagogical approach or from an English or Anglo-Saxon approach.<sup>42</sup> Further, French and Anglo-Saxon pedagogies are similar in that it is the goal of the teacher to challenge the student, but if the student fails, the French do not feel a responsibility to help the student overcome the failures because their educational worldview argues that one can only be an intellectual elite by being born with a certain level of intellect. As one respondent explained:

**We don't care about the social elite, but the intellectual elite, you have to be part of this.** It's either you are born with a certain intellectual level, and the university is there to provide you that challenge, and not to help you have the right level. See what I mean? ... So, we're not trying to help the students. **The professors are not there to help or listen.** They are there to just challenge you... This is why a lot of failure rate in the university the first year and so on, and it's **perfectly accepted as part of the culture**. And if you have your degree, that means that you have to assert your degree, and you really, you have survived, basically, the university. So you're intelligent enough to be part of that group of people. Whereas in your country, I think ... is, okay, let's help the students and let's do our best to get them to a certain level. **And for a while, it was**

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<sup>42</sup> The terms *English/Anglo-Saxon* are used interchangeably by respondents when contrasting with an established value or characteristic of the French culture

**very, very much a shock because I didn't see why we have to help so much those students.** Who cares if they fail? (Interview with #15)

This attitude is in contradiction to the Anglo-Saxon philosophy, or in this specific reference, to the US philosophy where teachers are there to retain students and to help them succeed as long as the student shows an ability and desire to work hard and meet the challenges.

Other comparisons reported by participants included that French pedagogy involved less interaction in the classroom and that teachers in the French section were stricter and graded more harshly than the teachers in the English section. At the same time some respondents reported the best of the French speaking students intentionally enrolled in the English section in order to have a more diverse experience and to prepare themselves for the globalized work world where English was privileged. Another rumor or perception suggested that teachers in the English section treated students like friends and did not challenge the students nearly as much as the teachers in the French section. Finally, as mentioned in an earlier chapter, French pedagogy was described as having a large worldview and is more abstract and less pragmatic than Anglo-Saxon pedagogy. As one participant described the tension: “I **don't think it's cultural, except that ...** and I'm going to qualify it, **so I'm going to say it is cultural** in a way. People who come from an American or an English background, and people who come from a French background, educational background, **are different beings**” (Interview with #24).

One of the most explicit narratives reported reflects these opposing approaches dealt with the use of pedagogical tools such as textbooks. The argument described below

illustrates how whatever national society in which we receive education has a profound effect on preferred and value-ridden pedagogies that educators continue to advance:

**It's really a question of culture...** For four years, I'd been **fighting against him** because he wanted the students to have a textbook, which I thought was really ... **I still think is a really stupid thing. But now I can understand his point of view**, because in the States, if I understand correctly, the students have to first read and then come to school prepared and then the professor goes through the things that are very difficult. In the school I have been, it was never the case. You come completely unprepared. You listen to what was said, and then you go to the library and you try to learn the difficult things by yourself. So you don't rely on the text. **It's just a nonsense to have a textbook** in that context. **And it was five years, and we never really went through why it was so important for him and for me. We just were so much into fight and one against the other, and okay, why are you so stubborn, and I didn't see the point**, and him pushing the professors. **It was even worse for me.** It was, "How dare you ask the professor to have a textbook?" That's really not understanding what the professor is and the student is supposed to do. It's amazing. **For me, we never questioned why it's like this**, and it took almost four years to realize that we have completely different way of looking at teaching, at pedagogy also. **Very, very important in the States, and not at all important in France or in my country.** (Interview with #15)

Here the tensions do not become managed or understood for several years! How do these tensions become so disoriented? This lack of sharing other perspectives could be explained by the idea that people often argue positions instead of interests if they think they need to maintain status (Fisher & Ury, 1991). In this case, the people mentioned were part of the management team and both expressed an extreme allegiance to differing philosophies that often found them in oppositional situations This also suggests that ethnocentrism has been brought into to the work environment because personal cultural patterns are perceived as normal and superior; in fact, if these customs have worked in the past, why should they change? Finally, the following interpretation of operating

cultural viewpoints regarding conflict resolution gives insight into why frustration occurs and spirals out of control:

You see it in our meetings. I think **Anglophones try to come up with solutions and compromises**. That's typically the approach. And I notice for **Francophones that the issue is to debate. They actually look for contrarians**. That's the only way I can describe it. **They like to provoke by being controversial, and it's not disrespectful in their point of view. I don't think it's very constructive**, personally, because it means our meetings **last a long, long time, when certain matters should be resolved very quickly**, but because of the two different objectives – I guess they really are objectives, it usually ends up being quite a lengthy process ... I don't think it's representative of other, let's say universities' campuses in this region. I think it's something unique to us because **we're faced with such a dual dimension**. (Interview with #10)

So, if in the example above regarding textbook use is seen from this perspective, it could be argued that French speakers like to argue because it is a way to *think out loud* and their provocations reveal alternative solutions. To them, this is a valuable process and time shouldn't interfere. Anglo-Saxons, on the other hand, seem to favor eliciting solutions/outcomes more than an abstract discussion process. Thus, they are often frustrated in situations where they perceive time is being wasted. These dual interaction methods operate simultaneously but instead of being managed in an effective manner, employees sometimes become disorientated and grudgingly live with the duality instead of trying to find common ground and appreciate the cultural richness this kind of to the environment offers. At the same time, this excerpt and the previous one frame tensions in terms of French/Anglo-Saxon cultural dimensions, excluding the other national cultures represented in the population.

### *Same/Different*

Not all respondents reported frustration, and in fact some managed any tensions by transcending the cultural identity labels by framing tensions as *same/different*. Here respondents talked about finding a way to privilege dualities by sharing different backgrounds and finding common interests in their field of hospitality as an educational resource for their respective classrooms. One respondent explains how this was accomplished:

Respondent #32: So, but we share and it's quite good because she is Swedish, okay, and so she has a type of education also, and I have another type, and we exchange and I think it's great. I think it's really, really good. **And we are completely different characters**, so it's just great... We get along very well because we are, I would say, **working on the same track and we have the same ideal of the hotel business.**

*Interviewer: Do you have similar backgrounds from the hotel business?*

Respondent #32: **Not at all.** Not at all because my background in the hotel business, it's really big hotels, you know. It was 750 rooms, 800 rooms, 400 rooms, and **she has more of a Swiss experience**, which is quite good, because like **that we have both sides....** We work out the exam in **both languages together, and one time it's easier to find the question in French, so we do it in French. Sometimes it's easier in English, so it comes out in English**, and after, finally, we sit down and put it together. This is really perfect, that we are really **working just great together.**"

Here the respondent shares how their partner's diversity is transcended to combine differing work experiences, cultural backgrounds and language fluencies to create common ground. Reasons for this ability could be that they are both bilingual, they are long-time employees, they are assertive, and that there is clearly a mutual respect for



each other and their prior experiences. Thus their unified diversity allows them to teach the students in a rich and equitable manner.

### *Teaching French Students/Teaching English Students*

Another subset of the pedagogy tension is actually dealing with the different sections of students if a teacher is fluent enough to teach or interact in both sections. While some respondents felt they could and did sometimes teach in both sections, some also felt that not teaching in their mother tongue was a challenge. For example, one respondent reported:

Yes, I did both languages. I started off in the very beginning when the English section opened. ... I thought I'd been here long enough, and then I realized the English section was opening and they were looking for people to teach communications, and I had done transaction analysis, that kind of thing, and I said, okay, I'll do a course in that. They said, right, you take the lot, baby! ... **I started off teaching in the English section, and they suddenly said, "You have to do French, too,"** and then I worked parallel with another teacher... Well, they put me in the French section, and moved me into the French section, **and then somebody else, an English speaker, took over, which I must say was a blow. A big blow...** Because I just feel, **I felt linguistically more at ease, and culturally more at ease with the English section, and having to deal with the French section, I found really tough.** (Interview with #41)

Another person talked about one of the teachers with whom they co-taught. Here they express that while their partner has the ability to teach in both language sections, certain cultural fears hold them back:

... She can speak English well enough to talk about our subject area...at length with me. We don't speak in French. We speak in English, but **she would never dream of teaching in English**, because I think she believes that our English students would be like her French students in terms of their expectations, **demands of her proficiency and it's a loss of face.** It's fascinating. Because in my opinion, she has the ability to teach... in English, **but there is no way she would consider it, because it makes her vulnerable**, and she has a very, very different teaching style. **It's**

**hugely appreciated by the French students.** She gets, like, ovations, at the end of her classes, and **I know that it's nothing like what I'm used to, having grown up in Anglophone educational systems,** but I can't describe what it is. It's hugely, hugely structured, funny enough, with students that I previously described as being rather inattentive. It's much more structured and so I don't think she has as much conversation that goes on during the class as for example, as I would. (Interview with #10)

Once again, growing up in pedagogically specific institutions structures people's self-image regarding abilities and comfort level and creates paralysis in risk taking because of the fear of loss of face.

Another way respondents discuss *teaching French students/teaching English students* is in regard to the opposite ways the sections seem to learn. As one participant explained it:

Yes, there's the culture, but there's another thing which [is] **how Anglophone students learn, and how French students learn** also. I think the learning process is **totally different**, and that's why also **some problems could raise between the two professors**, because the way the French and the Anglophone learn, it's really different because I'm more closer to the ... Francophone of assimilating knowledge...I think for a French guy, give me the information and I will handle it. I will try to do things by myself. **They will never, for example, ask you a question.** So you have to make, to find a way to be sure that the student understood what you said. **So the professor has to make the effort to know if the students have learned something.** But I think, I don't have a lot of experience with the English, **but I have them mainly for their dissertation for their SBPs, things like that – it's the contrary. They are more active in their learning process, so they will ask you questions.** They will say, they will argue, etc. in order to understand... Because I think English, Anglophones, they are surprised if they attend a French section, they don't normally generally ... it doesn't mean that it's a silent class. It's not a silent class, of course, but the English, they are more active in their learning process. But the French, no. The professor has to make the effort. **The professor is more active, and he has to do a lot of things to interest them, to try to involve them in what they are doing, so ...** Yes, there's another problem. If someone thinks that this question is very personal, they would wait. Perhaps they would say the other people understand, and they understood everything, but I don't

understand, **so I will wait until the end of the session or I would phone to the professor to ask him a question.** It's a way of not really a respect, not only of respecting the other, but also **they don't want to expose themselves** also – “Oh, he didn't understand.”  
(Interview with #35)

This interview reveals that differences exist in how students from the different sections interact with the professor in the classroom and the perception that a teacher has to incorporate different methods to interest the students and access learning. Interestingly, there is some common ground in presenting ways for the students to learn, but in this respondent's eyes, the differences outweigh the common ground.

Another way respondents separate teaching experiences in regard to sections is work ethic. For example, one respondent suggested that:

Students are more demanding in the English speaking sections, more disciplined. If they're interested, if they're motivated, they want discipline or are willing, **they are more hard workers**, I think, in general...I'm not sure if we would identify some criteria to evaluate the students within the different sections, **we would find that you have more middle, average students in the French speaking group** – some about average and some very low, let's say **not weak students, but undisciplined and naughty.** In the English part, you will have weak student. **You would have a higher percentage than in the French section of very good students and hard workers, and maybe less average. The feeling of being average is not very well recognized in the English section. It is acceptable in the French section.** You do it, you get average and you get through, it's okay. But in the English section, you have more people taking up the challenges more, I think. **That changes your investment in the classroom, I think, when you see that people are, you know, demanding.** Yes, it does change your delivery.  
(Interview with #12)

So some faculty separate and adjust strategies due to work ethic differences they see between the groups.

Besides all the tensions between the two groups, respondents also reported some tensions within the language sections. Participants talked about differing language proficiency among the English language speakers because of the diversity of nations represented. Also, group work exposed how time issues for the nationals from Spain and Italy often created tensions because of their tendency to not privilege precise timeframes with students who were from a German or Swiss time perspective where to be late is considered almost akin to a character flaw. Time issues arose within the data from group work perspectives where timetables were set to complete projects and students became frustrated dealing with these cultural differences. In these cases, conflicts were often addressed by the faculty member whose responsibility it was to help manage group work. This person would meet with groups and offer conflict resolution solutions and other advice in order for group to be able to produce whatever work was required.

Finally, one participant who has spent many years within the institution framed the cultural differences in the French section and at the same time insisted that their multiple experiences in these interactions has eliminated their need to consciously categorize the tensions:

... I found the French, there is a cultural difference between the French and the Swiss French speakers. They're very, very different, and so I'd be getting a certain reaction from a student, "What's going on?" There'd be far more conflict. **They're ready to challenge authority and challenge a grade in a way that a Swiss person won't, so that's way beyond linguistic.** But since I've been in the English section, I have very few native English speakers, so I'm quite used to all these different cultures. **I probably do a lot of this subconsciously now.**

(Interview with #38)

This perspective suggests that despite a shared language, that people are influenced by the culture of its region and nation state. In this example this long-time faculty member makes comparisons based on years in the classroom that a French speaker from France is more willing to challenge in certain matters than a French speaker from Switzerland. Given the history and culture of the two nations, it would appear that these approaches transcend language as the faculty member suggests or that stereotypes are working within the organization in an effort to predict behavior. It also supports some of Hofstede's assertion regarding risk taking in regard power distance and uncertainty avoidance.

Finally, faculty face tensions because of the preponderance of English-only academic literature. French section students argue the fairness about assessing their work when reading materials aren't available in their section language. As one person explained:

... **So, quality issues.** You can't bring in certain aspects. You may want to use a case study, and the other person wants to use something different, you're not allowed. Or, there's a big issue with the French section, having to read a lot of things in English **because it doesn't exist in French.** So, there's a lot of resentment from their part, saying, **I chose to go through the French program, so why are you giving me English material that's required?** (Interview with #30)

Because of the global reality of English as the lingua franca, French speaking students face a contradictory message: Apply to a language section at ABC but don't expect required reading materials to always be in that language. At the same time, faculty face another but related contradictory message: Create identical course objectives but don't plan using identical materials because they don't always exist.

### **American Way/French Way**

The final theme respondents reported is the tensions that sometimes existed between the *French Way/American Way*. Because the dean<sup>43</sup> previously from the director combining that position with his current responsibilities was from the US, there were continual comparisons in regard to US ways and the ways things had been done in the past.<sup>44</sup> In addition, there were comparisons because ABC had been and was still in the process of securing a US accreditation because of the addition of a master's program (only taught in English). These factors, both past and present at the time of the study created a feeling where approaches were in competition instead of ways of which to connect and embrace both. In the following case, it is unclear whether the person seemed to select out of *American* in order to manage the tension or try to transcend it by calling it *international*:

**Well, the French part was feeling that the American approach was dominating more and more the school, and you could feel it. You could hear it. And the American ones – well, not American, but let's say Anglophone – it was not just American ... was like, okay, these are French culture, old culture, old thing that never worked, so this is the right approach, and it was exactly the opposite of what should have been done. Because if you are too arrogant in your way of approaching things, that that's the only way, there's always ... **When they give an example or solution, referring to what happened in the States or in the university they have been to, most of the time it was the States, even if they weren't American. But you know, when you have someone who is just like, "Oh, I don't want to hear about America," and again and again, it's American, and then you have to go back and say, "Well, in Europe, it's probably basically the same."** You try to sell the idea**

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<sup>43</sup> This dean had been there for several years. He was fired by the BOD for unstated reasons and his leaving was framed publicly as a resignation. In fact, it was reported that he was escorted off the premises in front of organizational members including students. Students informally reported to me that they were saddened that he left because he always attempted to interact with the students despite his high management position.

<sup>44</sup> This is one of the themes that came up in my pilot study during the discussion surrounding the way to manage student disabilities.

because you find it interesting, by saying, well, that happens also in other universities here, so it's not just American. It's also something that is becoming international. I think it was the approach that was more and **more difficult actually, and important to manage**. (Interview with #15)

This response also reflects the resentment of the infusion of American methods, because even though the respondent corrected the comparison as *Anglophone*, not *American*, they proceeded to provide a narrative about the tension and continued to reference it as *American*.

## SUMMARY

In summary, when bringing different national cultures together in an educational institution, value structures are advanced and socially created to reflect the perceived identity of the institution. Co-teaching pairs are formed where teachers teach alone in their respective language section but have created identical objectives and identical examinations because students from each language section were required to have an equitable learning experience. Mainly, participants expressed tensions because of their allegiance to either a *French pedagogy* or an *English/Anglo-Saxon pedagogy* where teaching perspectives in regard to goals and outcomes were oppositional in some cases. This formation often brought together teachers from different nationalities who when working together faced and sometimes overcame a *same/different* dialectic because they drew from their diverse cultures and experiences to provide a united and complex educational experience. A subset of this was also teaching *French students/teaching English students* where participants spoke of the tensions faced when working in each of the language sections because of perceived differences in student work ethics and

perceived learning differences. Finally, some respondents discussed tensions between the *French way/American way* where perceptions existed that the French and/or European way of education should be replaced with a newer and better American way of education. It is not hard to understand these tensions emerged as Canagarajah (1999) suggests that “textbooks, knowledge, discourse conventions, and identities of teachers and students are heterogeneously constituted, steeped in conflict, and implicated in the exercise of power” (p. 35).

While multinationalism still intersected in a dominant way, regional tensions sometimes emerged when local concerns of past identities of the institution become threatened due to global concerns. Most other values were expressed in terms of French and Anglo-Saxon or English which really moves to a level outside of national because these pedagogies while starting in England and France, have now been exported and perceived as a western tradition even though there are clear differences in pedagogical strategies. Next, in the final chapter I will address conclusions and outcomes from these tensions.



## **CHAPTER VI**

### **RESULTS AND SUMMARY**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The analyses in the previous two chapters capture the multidimensional component of this study because they reflect how complicated discursive practices become when organizations strive to embrace globalizing processes that include respecting national identities. ABC embraces these processes and the organization also attempts to retain and respect equally important local norms including language in order to provide a rich and complex intercultural environment for their students. So the contexts operating outside the organization - local, national, and global, continually co-construct and reify discursive practices inside the organization.

In this chapter, I first summarize research questions one, two, and three that address what tensions occur in the form of contradictions and dialectics, how they are managed, and how they intersect with multinationalism. Next, I address research question four that asks what results and implications of the intersections of tensions and multinationalism occur. Here I discuss how ambiguity operates strategically because it mitigates some of the tensions in that it gives members time to interpret and manage them in multiple ways. In addition, the ambiguity helps to aid in achieving social cohesion among sometimes competing national cultures because they are allowed to maintain their local allegiances while attempting to achieve a global outcome – that is, training students to become global leaders. At the same time, ambiguity exacerbates tensions especially

when interaction is forced because it can result in paradoxical messages where some participants feel trapped and exhibit schizophrenic behavioral patterns. These occurrences can sometimes lead to paralysis and ironic outcomes.

After I address the four research questions, I discuss how this study adds to the literature in regard to dialectical theory. I also include some practical implications and suggestions to show how this study might help organizations facilitate and clarify communication. In particular, trying to decrease ambiguity when employees fall into a disoriented state could help organizations to have a more socially cohesive and productive workforce.

Finally, I discuss the limitations of the study and also include suggestions for future research. Suggestions range from ways in which to further understand multinational organizational communication, to interpret globalizing processes over time, as well as to identify how power/resistance operates as it relates to hidden conflict in multinational organizations.

### **SUMMARY OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS ONE, TWO, AND THREE**

Adding an English section to a traditionally elite French speaking institution causes multiple tensions; some are managed and others remain open. Employees manage the tensions in a variety of ways: some favor the forced integration through the director's policy of using one's heritage or dominant language despite the lack of organizational fluency; others select out and decide to only use one language which excludes them from participation; others transcend to learn both languages; and some become disoriented,

accepting an unacceptable situation, sometimes becoming paranoid about the other's perceived growing power. Multinationalism intersects in multiple ways but when fluency, competency, and respect are at the heart of the tensions, members opt to describe it more as an organizational tension between two language groups or as nationalities that reflect the language it represents.

Once the English section was added with its own tensions to manage, ancillary tensions also became apparent: how to provide an intercultural environment with an increasingly nationally diverse, and how to provide an equitable degree to both sections when co-teaching pairs represent differing national cultures and sometimes opposing pedagogies. First, tensions related to providing an intercultural environment operate in mostly a dialectical manner. A push/pull force becomes engaged when employees reveal their perspectives about whether the environment is managed or not, how it is managed both in a direct and indirect way, and that people sometimes have a choice (select) to participate or whether they are forced (integrate) because of having to share space among such a diverse population. Overall, because the organization offers both forced and optional activities based on cultural norms from European and Anglo-Saxon societies, employees perceive that the intercultural environment is a positive organizational characteristic and members are usually able to rise above the organizational tensions and reference the global implications. At the same time, participants also noted that some employees and students do opt to remain in the same nation and/or language groups when possible in order to provide a cultural haven where messages seem less ambiguous. Finally, in some of the optional activities such as student council, some members are

reported as being critical of the students who may not be bilingual even though the students enter a prescribed language section that supposedly requires fluency in one language. This criticism may reflect the feeling made by locals that if an expatriate is living in the area they should be able to speak the regional language.

Other tensions result from the emerging pedagogical and worldview differences especially when co-teaching pairs are necessary to overcome employees' fluency weaknesses. Faculty manage co-teaching responsibilities in a variety of ways when they have to address tensions between their partner and competing pedagogical and worldviews, when teaching different language sections, and when addressing international pressures to adapt to methods perceived by some members as superior to theirs. Here some pairs are able to transcend tensions by integrating their paired diversities to create a rich experience for their students; others become disoriented when international (French/Anglo-Saxon) differences result in ethnocentric perspectives and threatened identities because educational traditions are challenged. In one reported case, one set of co-teachers ended up selecting out of the process altogether, refusing to work together because not only could they not resolve their differing educational worldview in selecting educational goals; they could not get past their dislike for each other's national culture.

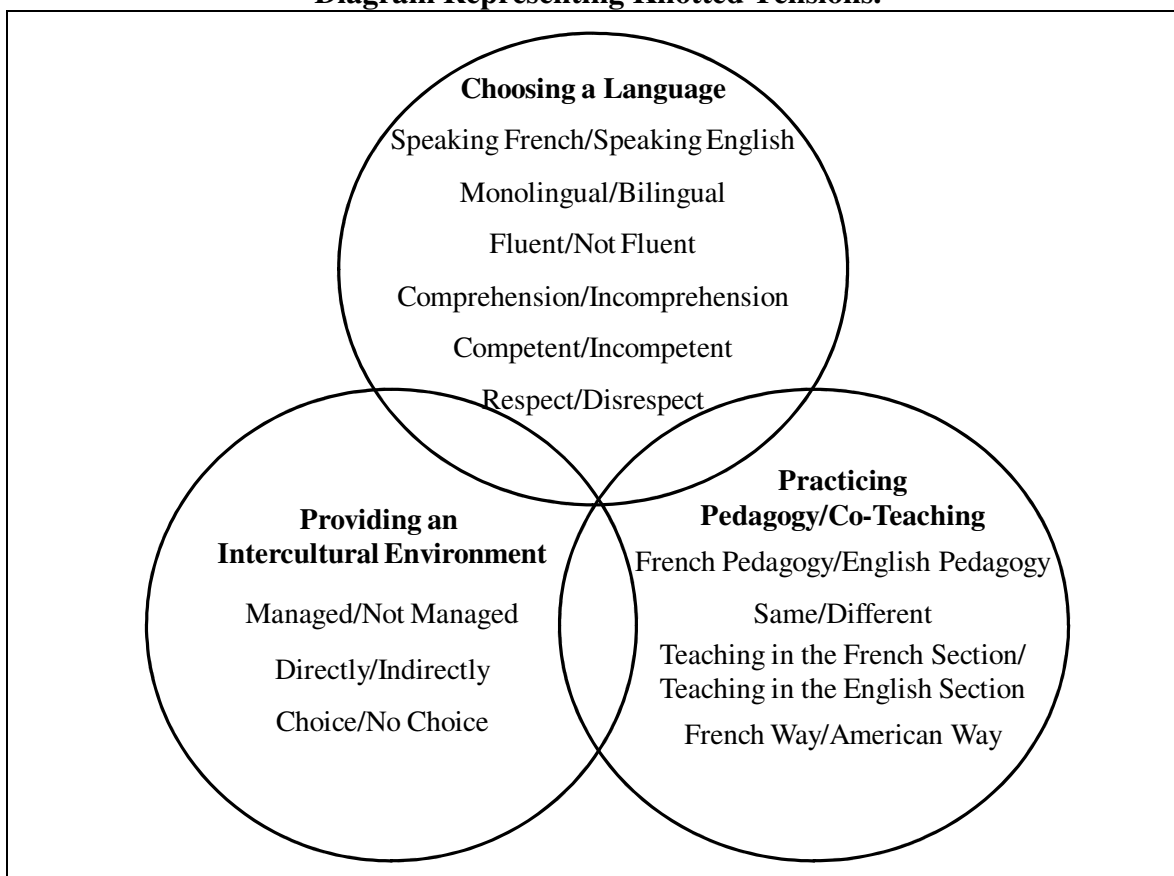
Thus, oppositional tensions operate in multiple contexts, are managed in a variety of ways, and intersect with multinationalism depending on the context. Having to choose a language and attempting to support an ambiguous intercultural mission and competing learning strategies becomes a huge challenge, even though organizational members

understand the rationale for adding English for the global benefit of their students. The reality is that identity positions often become primary and are expressed primarily as it relates to nation and national language.

Having to choose a language and what language is privileged in organizational situations quickly becomes an organizational challenge because employees' identities are threatened if one language is perceived as achieving more status over another. At the same time, this organization represents many of the challenges and opportunities international organizations face every day. We need as a society to learn to socially cohere and clearly from this case study it is often messy, uncertain, but at the same time, eye-opening and brilliant when people find a way to put interests, in this case, those of the students, ahead of positions. The trick is to find a way to communicate it. It is no easy matter.

Below in Figure 2 is a representation of the knotted components that emerge because the tensions and multinationalism are interconnected.

**Figure 2**  
**Diagram Representing Knotted Tensions.**



Tensions not only have multiple tensions within the same theme but interact with other tensions that operate simultaneously in the organization (Baxter and Montgomery, 1998).

## **DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY OF RESEARCH QUESTION FOUR**

### **Ambiguity**

Tensions at ABC often result in ambiguous communication. *Ambiguity* is a complex concept that can mean indirectness, vagueness, uncertainty, disqualification, denial, confusion, and/or contradiction. (Eisenberg, 1984; Eisenberg, Murphy, & Andrews, 1998; Martin & Meyerson, 1988; Martin, 2002; Katambwe & Taylor, 2006).

Some ambiguity is unplanned, and while clarity is a goal of some cultures, it is not necessarily a part of communication competence when diverse values are in play (Eisenberg, 1984). In addition, contradictions that result in ambiguity are not effectively dealt with sometimes in organizations because saving face in situations is often privileged over clarity (Katambwe & Taylor, 2006). In this organization, ambiguity mitigates tensions by letting people form their own interpretation about what is said and then if necessary, later check with their peer groups about their interpretations in order to clarify any required response. Some respondents remarked that they either had colleagues' help with translation while others acted as a translator in certain meetings. In addition, ambiguity allowed members to work out what is being communicated over email or in written documents and think about an appropriate response to the situation. For example, some respondents mentioned using computer translation programs and/or dictionaries to understand received information. Organizational members who had to write any outgoing communication such as business letters used the institutional Glossary (Lexique) created by staff translators.

While some ambiguity is unplanned and operates within this organization, *strategic ambiguity* is a way to complete goals by intentionally communicating in an unclear manner (Eisenberg, 1984). There are several ways in which strategic ambiguity is a result of the tensions. First, strategic ambiguity promotes unified diversity, which is defined as “the individual’s need to feel both a part of the social world and to develop a unique sense of self apart from the social world.” (Eisenberg, 1984, p. 230) As an organization with a mission of globalization, strategic ambiguity allows employees to

transcend the multiple interpretations of globalization yet still allows them to preserve the choice of using codes, jargons, values, and other languages in informal situations (Eisenberg, 1984, p. 232; Contractor & Erlich, 1993; Paul & Strbiak, 1997).

Strategic ambiguity also preserves privileged positions (Eisenberg, 1984). This is especially true when ambiguity amplifies unstated expectations (Markham, 1996).

Referring back to Chapter IV, the policy of *you speak your language and I speak my language, and then we find each other* is ambiguous enough to allow for multiple interpretations but it is also ambiguous in that it doesn't state expectations other than *finding each other*. Are employees supposed to become fluent? Are students supposed to be bilingual? How does it force relationships?

Finally, strategic ambiguity offers the opportunity to deny messages to preserve future options (Eisenberg, 1984). Referring back to Chapter V, the reported example of the director saying he told employees that they misunderstood his message about future firings in one language in order to deny the message he gave in another language allowed him to save face and to avoid being trapped if he may need to downsize again (Eisenberg, 1984). While deniability can come along with ambiguity, so can losing trust in leadership if participants perceive that leadership is creating ambiguous messages intentionally in order to exclude them, create hidden transcripts and/or retain power (Scott, 1990).

At the same time, ambiguity can also exacerbate disoriented members. Even in a less diverse environment, employees become confused about the message, in doubt about what it means, think it's meaningless, or misunderstand the message even when they



think they do. (Stohl & Redding, 1987) So, it would seem that in bilingual organizations, ambiguity can force people into uncertain and unwanted situations, because message misinterpretation is increased and diverse value structures such as pedagogical worldviews take on a site for contradiction and conflict.

### **Paradoxes**

Tensions also result in paradoxical situations for some organizational members. *Pragmatic paradoxes*, inherent in cultures and in organizations, are socially constructed contradictory statements or messages composed of opposite characteristics that evolve over time (Putnam, 1986, p. 153; Smith & Berg, 1987; Kets de Vries, 1980; Hall, 1976; Poole & Putnam, 2008; Lewis, 2000; Lewis & Keleman, 2002; Putnam & Boys, 2006; Osland & Bird, 2000). Paradoxical situations are managed through separation, selection, connectedness, integration, and transcendence, and disorientation, similar strategies used to manage dialectics as defined in Chapter I (Poole & Putnam, 2008).<sup>45</sup> McGuire, Dougherty, and Atkinson (2006) argue that dialectics allow choice but that paradox eliminates it and while agency exists in dialectical interaction, paradox suggests issues of power and control. Their study reports more fluidity between the two concepts and suggests when moving between the dialectic of closeness/distance that sexual harassment sometimes experienced by nurses results in entrapment, which the authors refer to as “paradoxing the dialectic” (p. 440).

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<sup>45</sup> See also Martin, 2004; Hoffman and Medlock-Klyukovski, 2004.

While multiple typologies have been covered in the literature,<sup>46</sup> I argue that the resulting paradoxes here fall into two typologies: *paradoxes of belonging* and *paradoxes of learning* (Lewis, 2000; Smith & Berg, 1987). First, *paradoxes of belonging* result when issues of identity surrounding power discrepancies were minimized in order to focus on overriding goals (Lewis, 2000). Employees found themselves in paradoxical situations when trying to resolve organizational and national concerns with global realities such as the organization's educational mission, the curriculum, and competing pedagogies. For example, one participant talked about the paradox of Swiss hospitality:

... this remains a paradox, because there is no Swiss hospitality. They're not hospitable, as a culture. As the industry, the local hoteliers are not hospitable. **It's a style of hospitality that's arrogant.** I mean, it's not friendly... but they have this idea that it is, and **they carry that forward.** (Interview with #35)

This statement suggests that paradoxical messages like this one that reflects nationality might not be addressed because they are controversial<sup>47</sup> and so identity driven. Why carry it forward if it is confusing or contradictory?

Second, *paradoxes of learning* result when leaders tried to confront a paradox rather than the suppress it (Lewis, 2000). Counterintuitive thinking into paradoxical situations gives leaders a chance to understand power and changing relationships instead of trying to resolve recurring dilemmas (Wendt, 1998).<sup>48</sup> As mentioned in Chapter IV, the current director directed employees to choose whichever language they wished and still

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<sup>46</sup> See also Stohl and Cheney, 2001; Putnam, 1986; Putnam and Boys, 2006.

<sup>47</sup> See Farson (1996) and his discussion of embracing paradox and absurdity in managerial situations.

<sup>48</sup> In addition, Beech, Burns, de Caestecker, MacIntosh, and MacLean (2004), argues for use of games as a way to keep the paradox open to subvert and avoid conflicts with hierarchy.

communicate. This paradoxical message was managed in many ways as seen in Chapter IV, and it also keeps the paradox open by forcing organizational members to communicatively *find each other* despite their differing language choice. Using forced integration isn't always an effective way to manage a paradox (Poole & Putnam, 2008). In this case, participants expressed a perceived loss of power and status connected to this paradox related to the firing of the US dean and the loss of English speakers in the organizational downsizing. In other words, keeping the paradox open in this way was perceived in some respondents' view as a political setback because English was no longer the privileged language in meetings. It also trapped the monolingual speakers on both sides who had always resisted bilingualism.

### ***Double Binds***

Because paradoxes often remove any kind of choice, paradoxical directives like *you speak your language and I speak my language and we find each other* resulted in trapping some organizational members in *double binds* (Putnam, 1986; Tracey, 2004). *Double binds* are repeated paradoxical experiences which result in irresolvable consequences because the message a person receives conflicts with the first (Putnam, 1986). When abdicating their language in perceived important situations, some employees feel trapped in that either choice (speak the other language/be excluded because you don't understand the message) is unacceptable and contradictory to their self-esteem. Thus members face difficulty in assigning the correct communication approach (Putnam, 1986; Bateson, Jackson, Haley, & Weakland, 1956; Kets de Vries, 1980). Most importantly, breaking the relationship is not an option because there are

perceived punishments attached for misunderstanding which include withdrawal of approval and/or incurring anger and/or hate (Bateson et al., 1956; Kets de Vries, 1980).

So again turning to the language directive, even though it seems paradoxical and trapping, the only choice for some employees is to strive to understand it on some level. In an earlier example a participant described trying to use body gestures such as nodding at appropriate times to signal the understanding of the nuances in French and then finding they had misinterpreted the nuances, thus appearing incompetent. This response reflects a struggle to understand continued messages, appear competent, and to retain relationships even if there is no clear understanding of how to respond. Thus, members sometimes obsess about what clues they are missing or work in isolation. (Putnam & Boys, 2006; Kets de Vries, 1980; Sluzki & Ransom, 1976; Watzlawick, 1976) Examples of these outcomes include not practicing language skills in the workplace in fear of appearing incompetent, even though if they don't practice they will never be competent; coming in to only teach and avoiding interaction with other organizational members; and, not attending optional institutional student functions and/or informational sessions where discursive messages may be confusing or ambiguous.

Another response to paradoxical messages included metacommunicating outside the situation (Kets de Vries, 1980; Putnam, 1986; Tracey, 2004). Examples include the director's confusion over what the accreditation board meant by *broadly based or general education* and participants sharing their anxiousness over specific instances such as attending training by English only guest speakers.

Finally, responses to paradoxical messages created included merging contradictory messages into creative solutions (Kets de Vries, 1980; Putnam, 1986; Tracey, 2004). Some employees called in sick when they were given notice of their eventual layoff (because of the recent organizational downsizing) even though they were still employed for three more months. While seemingly emotional or irrational responses are commonplace in organizations, paradoxical situations can also lead to schizophrenic reactions (Tretheway & Ashcraft, 2004; Wood & Conrad, 1983; Bateson et al., 1956).

### ***Schizophrenic Reactions***

A less studied aspect of paradox is the idea of schizophrenic reactions. Bateson et al. (1956) argue that paradoxical situations also can lead to schizophrenic reactions when a person perceives irregular or eccentric communication habits that seem appropriate on some level. For example, ambiguous and/or contradictory statements result in avoidance and confusion over work standards (Kets de Vries, 1980). It was reported that courses framed as *international* were not acceptable because it was felt that the environment was so international it wasn't necessary. This is perceived as confusing because how can an organization with an international and global mission not offer courses described or labeled as international to emphasize focus? Not understanding this statement can result in a perceived lack of information so employees can follow through with their work responsibilities. (Kets de Vries, 1980, p. 53). Thus behavior manifests itself in employees giving up and feeling helpless because lack of structure creates too much ambiguity (Kets de Vries, 1980).

Paranoid statements are also a part of schizophrenic reactions (Bateson et al., 1956). Statements were reported about various cultural fears which could be interpreted as bordering on paranoia. The most repeated fear was the overpowering influence and *invasion* of US culture even though the addition of English was framed and implemented as British English. In addition, participants reported fears about the loss of the French language; the dominance of French culture over Swiss culture; the organization was becoming too globalized; the fear of Germans because of their role in World War II; and that the British arrival had somehow caused the organization to decline. These references by organizational members reflect a lack of power over perceived dominant value structures and/or economic forces, and it also demonstrates the discursive practice of multiple globalizing and national constructs.

In a schizophrenic context, messages become circular and disguised (Bateson et al., 1956; Kets de Vries, 1980). The most unusual and potentially harmful communication was when one employee reportedly went on national television and stated that the school was being run by a Tunisian. The Tunisian reference sought to tap into the fear held by a minority of people that immigrants/minorities were negatively influencing Swiss (and European) society. This employee used this identity descriptor in an effort to produce more interaction by the BOD in the conflicts at the time of the study. The statement on national television caused some participants to apologize to the member with Tunisian heritage for the inappropriate remark because it contradicted what the organization was supposed to represent, while others interviewed felt it was an appropriate tactic because they felt so powerless within the institution.

Thus, with schizophrenic behavior, power becomes a scarce commodity because no one wants to relinquish it and because power is related to the need for approval (Kets de Vries, 1980, p. 50). Communication becomes a form of power especially when members receive insufficient feedback, perceive a lack of transparency and struggle with unclear definitions of roles and tasks (Kets de Vries, 1980, p. 54). In particular, some participants reminisced where there used to be a culture of shared activities with faculty but that feeling no longer existed because of the changes over time from the language divisions and the *stratification* of faculty status because of the fairly recent privileging of PhDs.<sup>49</sup>

### **Irony**

Finally, language tensions in some cases have also resulted in ironic outcomes. *Irony* can be defined as the opposite of what is being said and what is actually being done and/or what is intended and what is really apparent (Real & Putnam, 2006; Oswick, Keenoy, & Grant, 2002; Trethewey, 1999). In ABC, there seems to be an unintended consequence of linguistic simplicity used to overcome lack of bilingual fluency when the mission is to provide a rich and complex bilingual environment. Specifically, some participants reported using simplistic vocabularies/messages to overcome accents and the lack of fluency in classrooms and in meetings. In addition, in order to meet the mandates set by the BOD for equitable degrees, faculty are sometimes forced to create less challenging coursework because all assessment tools must be identical and that means

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<sup>49</sup> The tension over the privileging of organizational members with higher degrees was represented in the interviews but transcended nationality and language. In addition, it never was described in a globalizing context.

that if an article is in only one language or a guest speaker is monolingual, it was reported that it is material that cannot be included in the assessment process.

In summary, employees end up sometimes using simplistic vocabularies in order to be understood and to avoid ambiguity but it contradicts the image of offering a rich and complex bilingual environment. It could also be argued that students are not challenged in the way they should be because students miss exposure to written or spoken texts because it is only available in a language that does not reflect the section in which they are enrolled.

## **THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS**

This study has several theoretical implications. First this study expands our understanding of how tensions in the form of contradictions and dialectics intersect with multinationalism and it demonstrates that members identify and manage tensions in multiple ways dependent on the type of perceived tensions based often on their national culture and language group affiliation. The more fearful members perceive the tension, the more they identify the context in terms of their language group and their nationality.

Investigating the intersection of multinationalism through the use of identity descriptors and how members use them also further defines the element of *totality* as mentioned by Baxter and Montgomery (1998) and Benson (1977) because it offers us social constructs in relation to globalizing processes including the push/pull between nationalities. This study offers an opportunity to understanding an organization as a dynamic, evolving entity that influences and is influenced by the surrounding



environment – regionally, nationally, and globally. This suggests that whenever possible, scholars should situate their organizational studies to include influencing outside factors because otherwise much can be lost about the organization and how its members are enabled and constrained.

This study also identifies how much ambiguity plays a role in managing a multinational situation in order to preserve social cohesion. While I presented it as a *result of* managing tensions, it also could be argued that ambiguity is a *management choice* (along with selection, integration, separation, connectedness, and transcendence) because members choose ambiguity to manage both the dialectics and paradoxical messages. Ambiguity as a way to manage dialectics and resulting paradoxes should be further investigated in order to better understand how it can be used positively in organizational conflict.

This study also offers insight into what schizophrenic behavior looks like in organizations populated by members representing multiple nations. In extreme cases schizophrenic behavior is expressed through fear and paranoid statements intersected with national descriptors. These intersections express power struggles and are an attempt to rationalize power imbalances. Sometimes the messages might reflect cultural humor but behaviors can be extremely disruptive when members become paralyzed and inactive and when this discursive practice disrupts desired social cohesion.

At the same time, I would argue that organizations like this one provides an example of an organization that sets an example of the risks and challenges in managing social cohesion in a global society. Interestingly, normally one does not look to perceived

risk-averse nations like Switzerland to set examples because it appears that Switzerland simultaneously separates itself from the EU and at the same time encourages integration through bilateral agreements and by hosting UN activities. But Switzerland is one of the few countries where official policy attempts to privilege multiple languages, which is both a challenge and an opportunity in of itself. As mentioned earlier, the Swiss government itself gave insight into this phenomenon when it supported the production of *Swiss ID* (2004). In particular, this documentary features Swiss army soldiers revealing the conflict they most predict to result is between the two dominant (German and French) language groups! Thus, national, regional, and organizational policy makers could learn from the challenges and opportunities playing out in this organization as it relates to their own populations.

This study offers a unique view of the actual day to day, dynamic linguistic interactions when an organization and its members try to accommodate globalizing processes especially as it relates to introducing English as a second privileged language. I came into this study after ten years of introducing a second language and still there are multiple tensions as the organization attempts to privilege both. It also offers support to research like Erling's (2007) that suggested that while language and national identity are interconnected, internationalization and globalization allows in some cases for the privileging of other identities over national identity such as European. Even though many organizational members clearly also saw themselves as European, because of the influence of national policy especially as it relates to education, I would argue this study supports that national identity is still usually privileged above all identities. This is

especially the case when it relates to power struggles and when members wish to associate or be compared to groups in order to maintain their self esteem.

Finally, this study adds insight to Hofstede's described national attributes and their relationship to competency. In some cases, cultures are reported as reflecting Hofstede's characteristics. Participants described Swiss uncertainty avoidance as it relates to their adherence to rules and described French faculty reflecting power distance in traditional student relationships. At the same time, respondents remarked that they had adopted cultural practices they admired from other national cultures and many respondents illustrated their connectedness to other cultures by exhibiting these attributes. Interestingly, some respondents remarked that after living in so many places they often no longer consider their heritage culture as *home*. This admission suggests that their national and regional identity is in flux and that they have probably adopted new attributes that don't mesh with Hofstede's conclusions. More research needs to be done in how *home* is becoming reconstructed so that Hofstede's work can be better understood as a part of the competency puzzle.

## **PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are several practical implications based on the analyses and results of this study. First, language choice cannot be perceived as a neutral entity especially if there is an attempt to privilege more than one language. It is a dynamic and political force that continually reconstructs the workplace. An organization supporting a bilingual position must develop a more consistent policy about making language training available to its

employees off-site in order for them to feel they are in a safe environment where they can practice freely and not in front of colleagues whom they perceive will judge them for their lack of competency. In addition, employees need release time in order to complete language courses. Expecting employees to take courses on top of a full workload is unrealistic given the numerous reported occasions that time issues were mentioned by respondents. Finally, international educational institutions should attempt at offering translations and not encourage and not expect its students to learn another language unless they offer it as part of the required curriculum on a consistent basis. In other words, if it is part of an organizational mission to be bilingual, the organization needs to offer consistent support and financing if that those goals are to be achieved.

Second, organizations in these situations might also look into better ways to implement translation as a means for improved communication. Devices that offer simultaneous translation might be implemented in meetings and formal functions while employees are in the learning process, so they can still feel included. This is important because investing in this kind of technology might improve attendance at meetings and help to make employees feel that their contributions are important to the organization. In addition, using paid translators already on staff will retain the complexity of having multiple languages as an asset and cut down on the use of simplistic terminology, which defeats the purpose of providing a bilingual organization in the first place. Since the organization studied uses translation during the graduation ceremony, it seems inconsistent that they offer this help to friends and family members of the students, and then not offer it to their own employees.

Third, as some respondents pointed out in the interviews and from the tensions that are revealed in the analyses, there is clearly a lack of understanding about and sometimes respect of the national cultures within the organization. It is a reality that just because people might be well traveled and be bilingual, it does not mean that they are interculturally competent (see Mendenhall, 2008). There is a preconceived notion within this organizational that everyone is an expert on what international means and that everyone defines it in the same way, which from this analysis is clearly not true. People still bring in their preconceived notions and complex stereotypes about cultures unlike their own. The media exacerbates the development of stereotypes and historical interaction clouds current realities. As mentioned earlier, it was reported to me informally how Germans are either perceived as Nazis even if certain employees and/or students are generations removed from World War II or that *everyone understands* that the German language isn't useful because it is too hard to learn and because no one but Germans use it. In addition, it was mentioned several times that Asians have a harder time learning French than English even though the organization includes a faculty member with Vietnamese heritage who only teaches in the French section.

While there is no quick fix for these kinds of imbedded stereotypes and judgments, there are two things that might be considered to stimulate understanding. First, on a student level, faculty might offer more discussion about intercultural issues, especially about controversial national relationships. It was reported that in the past that more emphasis was placed on national cultures such as India and China because the presumption was that they were less known and because of their growing dominance in

the global economic future. While these national cultures are equally important, it seems that so too are the national cultures that people have more contact with on the daily basis. Just because organizational members share space doesn't mean they understand or know about all cultural components.

In addition, this organization has an enormously diverse staff and student body yet it was never reported that this resource was ever tapped in an organizational context. One particular example is that for years they have had a person who had worked for the United Nations involved in post war negotiations and based on my interviews and informal conversations, no one thought to ask this person to be a guest speaker about their experiences and knowledge about negotiation. It is always hard to be a prophet in your own town, but sharing experiences with students could add to the knowledge base and increase respect within the community.

Finally, intercultural communication often takes place in small groups and in interpersonal situations. Intercultural communication about these topics might be addressed on an organizational level through formal information sessions. While conversations like these should be led by someone who can provide a safe environment, this kind of interaction might help to decrease reported events such as the perceived notion that the firing and/or decreasing of hours was done to limit power of the English speakers, decrease releasing highly controversial discourse in the form of newspaper articles because members feel estranged and underappreciated, and limit national television appearances that devalue organizational members' heritage cultures.

## LIMITATIONS

There are limitations in regard to this study. First, not everyone within the organization was interviewed. While I was able to interview fifty-nine participants who represented twenty four nationalities, statistics reported by the institution suggested that there were thirty nationalities represented by faculty and staff. Second, while I sent introductory letters in French and offered to conduct interviews in French, all interviews were conducted in English. In some cases, people, as mentioned earlier, wanted to speak English with me as a form of practice. Because fluency level is so elusive and unknown in some cases, there could have been some contexts lost due to limited vocabulary since I am not fluent in French. Although I am not totally ignorant of the language because I was tutored in French while living in Switzerland and I continued training upon returning to the US, I could not have conducted the interview in French. I would have had to rely on hiring a translator or having the respondent's friend come and act as interpreter if someone had made the request.

In addition, while I tried to bring in as many contexts as possible, there are some that I am sure are not represented because of the lack of data or because of the focus of my study. For example, there are additional groups experiencing tensions that have transcended some of the major cultural identities. One context that I mentioned but didn't expand upon is the tensions between the faculty that are categorized as *professional* and those that are categorized as *academic*. These groups have been formed in response to new systems introduced that regulate their classroom and preparation time. Because one is seen as privileged over another by time (and in some cases, salary) there have been

added tensions. As explained in Chapter III, this study solely focused on the intersection of multinationalism.

Finally, I come to this study as someone with a US heritage with French, Irish, and German ancestry and my affiliations with these cultures could have affected my interpretations. In addition, my US heritage probably stopped some respondents from addressing their interpretation about the US influence (although some were incredibly pointed especially about President Bush and the war in Iraq) and some were indirect about their distaste for the US government and the perceived arrogance surrounding its economic and military power. But since other people mentioned that some members were anti-American (their term, not mine), I would argue that people did not offer to participate because of my nationality.

## **FUTURE RESEARCH**

There are three areas in which future research could give us additional insight into multinationalism and its intersection with tensions. First, it would be valuable to interview this organizations' student population or a similar educational system if it exists where students are forced into two language sections. Student's management strategies may be quite different because of age, place in the organization or levels of diversity (in this case, eighty nations). While on site, with the help of some of my former students, I held a meeting asking the same questions as I asked my group of official participants. In addition, I separately interviewed two students to get a sense of their perspectives. Even though the population of students interviewed totaled only ten out of a possible one



thousand five hundred, I did see differences in perspective of language choices, how nationalities are perceived, especially regarding race, and how they perceived differences and interaction between the two student sections in regard to shared activities and class distinctions. Studying this population could give additional insight into international education, social cohesion, and especially the management of tensions in a different generation.

Next, while I reported on the multiple power contexts that participants shared with me, this is an interpretive study and not a critical one. Yet, I would argue that looking at organizations in a critical study could reveal new insights in how power, nationality and language intersect. For example, I noted issues of class distinction, a lack of faculty empowerment through governance (despite the call for it by the accreditation board), support of educational elitism, and the continuance of patriarchal organizational structures that all intersect and influence power and resistance. These features are in contradiction to a nation state that projects an image of equality and democracy. In particular, there is a private context of hidden transcripts (Scott, 1990) that become public when resistance to the domination of a patriarchal hierarchy becomes difficult to manage.

Third, since this study captures the organization at a specific time, it would be beneficial to return and repeat the process. In this way it would give us a comparative opportunity especially investigating if the tensions are similar and if respondents report similar management strategies.

Finally, while there seems to be extensive literature on language as a component of competency, it would be interesting to understand the use of language as social capital.

One answer that was repeated on a few occasions was the idea that in order to be successful in this organization, one should be bilingual. How does one define *success* and how does language operate as social capital and reward organizational members when they embrace the connectedness of bilingualism? Future research studies could examine this perspective and how it influences workplace interaction and cooperation, especially as it relates to globalizing processes.

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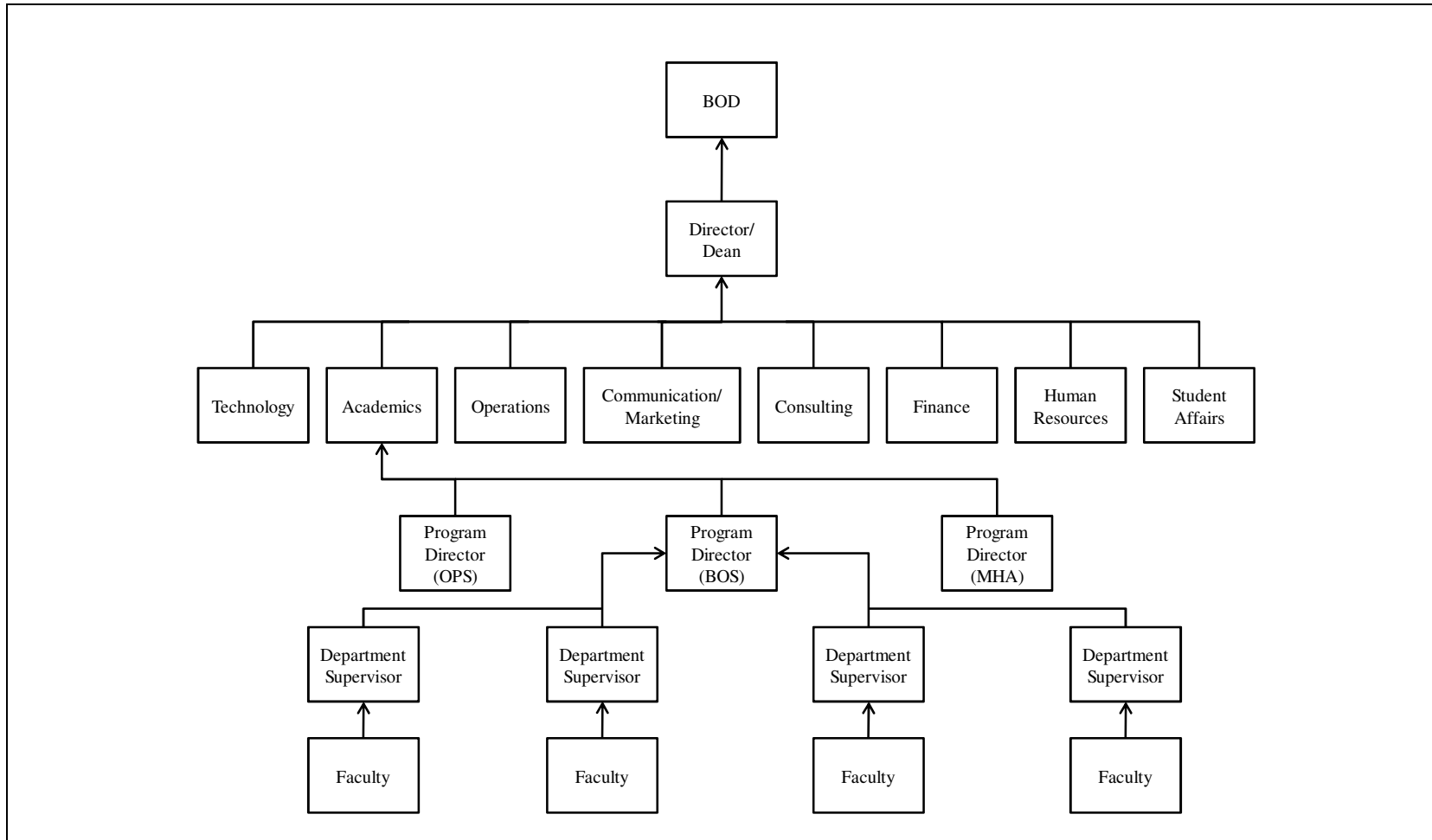


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**APPENDIX A**

**ABC ORGANIZATIONAL CHART**



## APPENDIX B

### INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

#### Part I.

##### 1. Cultural background

- Where were you born?
- Were your parents also born there?
- Where do you consider home?
- What languages do you speak at home?

##### 2. The evolution of your cross-cultural skills

- How do you define ‘cross-cultural communication?’
- What skills are necessary to be competent? Can they be taught or is it “on the job” training?
- What skills have you obtained throughout the years working in multinational environment?
- What specific life or work experiences gave you lessons on how to effectively communicate in a multinational environment?

#### Part II.

##### 1. The challenges and triumphs of cross-cultural communication

- Can you tell me any specific stories about communicating with someone from another culture in a work environment that was particularly challenging?
- Can meeting and interacting with people from other cultures be hard work or fun for you?
- Do you think stereotypes play a role when interacting in a cross-cultural situation for the first time?
- Is there any value to stereotypes in these kinds of interactions?
- How do you try to communicate with a person once you realize you don’t share a common language?
- Can you tell me any specific stories where a cross-cultural communication encounter was particularly successful?

#### Part III.

##### 1. The importance and rewards of cross-cultural communication

- What rewards do you think result because of a person developing cross-cultural skills?
- How important do you think it is for someone to have these skills in the workplace?
- When you work in a multicultural community, does it affect your own cultural identity?
- How does ABC represent a multicultural community?
- How do you contribute to ABC’s multicultural environment?
- Do you feel you have to have cross-cultural communication competencies to succeed at ABC professionally?
- How does working at ABC help you to increase/develop your skills?

## APPENDIX C

### PILOT STUDY CHART

Critical Incident	Theme	Tension	Choices	Consequence
<p>Increasing numbers of dyslexic students</p> <p>Micro context</p>	<p>Special consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Students “who <i>claim</i> to be suffering from dyslexia”, “Tests corresponding to the <i>suspected disorder</i> must be carried out by a “qualified physician/therapist” (P)</li> <li>○ I was not only dyslexic but also deaf of one ear and left handed (A)</li> <li>○ Je suis tres surprise de constater <i>que par magie</i> des certificats medicaux apparaissent en milieu d’etudes?... (R)</li> <li>○ There are an inordinate amount of students who come to hotel schools who are dyslexic, as many of these students develop strong social skills (D)</li> <li>○ “Des certificats n’apparaissent pas par magie” “Souhaite-t-on dire non a ces etudiants, pour les voir ensuite se retourner contre l’ecole suite a une mauvaise note et invoquer la commission des recours” (T)</li> </ul>	<p>Dialectic- lenient vs. strict</p>	<p>Separation (P) Selection, (A), (R) Transcendence (D), (T)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Students at this time felt unable to admit to disability due to negative reaction and stigma listed on record could affect job opportunities.</li> <li>○ Paralysis - Faculty felt unable to act if they disagreed.</li> <li>○ Silenced once D (Dean) spoke.</li> </ul>
<p>Meso context</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Measures “<i>cannot show preferential treatment</i> towards one student over another student”</li> <li>○ I can assure you that my childhood in post-war Italy was no pic-nick (A)</li> <li>○ Choice of French</li> </ul>		<p>Separation (P), (A) Selection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Fear of showing preferential treatment reflects the Swiss attitude of not appropriate to stand out, not be unique</li> <li>○ For French speakers, choice is nationally approved.</li> </ul>
<p>Macro context</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ I simply wonder, whether <i>we as a society are becoming a little too indulgent</i> (A)</li> <li>○ Choice of English</li> </ul>		<p>Transcendence (A) Selection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Reframe as indulgent allows for rejection as appropriate for everyone</li> <li>○ Selection of English is appropriate as it is the lingua franca of the world of business.</li> </ul>

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