

Socially Distributed Leadership in Elementary Schools: Teacher and Staff Leadership Practice in Denmark and the United States

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to examine the nature of socially distributed leadership in Denmark and the United States (US), specifically teacher and staff leadership practices distributed in schools. **Methodology:** We used a confirmatory factor analysis and a second-order factor analysis to examine elementary US and 0-9 Danish school educators' responses to the Comprehensive Assessment of Leadership for Learning (CALL). **Findings:** Findings demonstrate (1) different approaches to teacher and staff leadership in Denmark and the US, (2) the importance of a collaborative approach to developing and maintaining professional learning communities in schools in both contexts, and (3) different patterns of leadership practice that broadly reflect the local structure and approach to school leadership while responding to external policy demands. **Originality:** Drawing on globalization scholarship, which acknowledges the connection between global policy development and local spaces of implementation, our comparative international study allowed us to examine how policy ideas are parlayed into practice through the use of a shared assessment of leadership practice. Our results suggest that while the work of teacher and staff leadership is important and something educators in Denmark and the US are engaging in to advance the overall instructional mission of their schools, the approaches taken in each context are different and reflect a local-level negotiation between contextual cultural norms and policy expectations.

Keywords: Teacher leadership, Distributed leadership

Article Classification: Research Paper (Quantitative)

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3 While scholars examine the manifestations of neoliberal ideas in a specific local,
4 regional, or national setting (Baldrige, 2014; Falabella, 2021), increasingly the impetus for
5 these policies emanates from globalized transnational organizations like the Organisation for
6 Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and others through their recommendations,
7 following extensive analyses (OECD, 2019; UNESCO, 2019). Through the process of
8 globalization in education, policies adopted in one context are adapted and applied in other
9 national contexts (Verger *et al.*, 2018).
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19 Although there is scholarship on education policy from the comparative, international
20 perspective (Ball, 1998; Phillips and Ochs, 2003; Steiner-Khamsi, 2010; Tatto *et al.*, 2020), and
21 there is educational leadership research on primary and secondary schools (Diamond, 2007;
22 Halverson and Kelley, 2017), few studies (Bredeson *et al.*, 2011; Ylimaki *et al.*, 2011) bridge
23 these lines of scholarship. Scholars have not deeply examined educators' everyday practices
24 from a comparative, international perspective—particularly in response to the implementation of
25 similar policies across international contexts (Verger *et al.*, 2018). Furthermore, several studies
26 compare school leadership approaches (Bredeson and Kose, 2007; Moos, 2013; Szeto, 2020) and
27 teacher professional development (Wermke, 2012) across nations. Yet, limited international-
28 comparative scholarship has examined educational leadership through the lens of distributed
29 leadership, which involves formal school leaders together with other informal leadership roles
30 within the middle hierarchical ranks of schools (e.g., teacher-leaders, instructional coaches)
31 (Frost and Harris, 2003; Gronn, 2000; 2002; Spillane *et al.*, 2001; 2004).
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49 This scholarly omission is important because expectations for educators' accountability
50 and student achievement explicated through policy have implications for the initial locus of
51 implementation; teachers and leaders in schools, and educators' professional learning (Castner *et*
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3 *al.*, 2017; Little, 2003). The expanded expectations for principals' work, and the shift in our
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5 conception of leadership practice, that it is distributed in schools — specifically, teachers, formal
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7 leaders, and staff members engage in leadership work as the context or situation requires
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9 (Spillane *et al.*, 2004, p. 11) — has come about through a deepened understanding of
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11 instructional leadership, and in response to external policy (Louis and Robinson, 2012;
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13 Neumerski, 2013). Examining teacher and staff leadership in relation to globalization allows us
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15 to acknowledge that educators' engagement in professional learning and leadership practices are
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17 connected, through policy, across time and location.
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22 The purpose of this study is to examine teacher and staff leadership practices in Denmark
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24 and the United States (US). The two countries represent different paths towards distributed
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26 leadership and neoliberal education policies; whereas the US has a longer tradition of testing and
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28 an emphasis on accountability, these are relatively new focal points in Denmark (Imsen *et al.*,
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30 2017; Kelly *et al.*, 2018). Conversely, the concept of distributed leadership has been a
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32 component of the Danish school system since before it emerged in the English-language
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34 scholarship in the early 2000s. Further, teacher leadership scholarship intersects with distributed
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36 leadership and highlights the importance of formal and informal leadership for teachers and staff
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38 members (Bae *et al.*, 2016; Hunzicker, 2017; Little, 2003; Wenner and Campbell, 2017; York-
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40 Barr and Duke, 2004). We contribute to this scholarship by examining teacher and staff
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42 leadership in support of the overarching work required to sustain communities of professional
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44 learning and practice. Therefore, we ask: (1) What is the nature of socially distributed leadership
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46 in schools in the US and Denmark? (2) How does school-level leadership practice compare
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48 between Denmark and the US in support of socially distributed leadership? (3) Which factors
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3 inform the pattern of leadership practices that teachers, staff members, and formal leaders take-
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5 up to advance professional learning within schools in Denmark and the US?
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10 **Literature Review**

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12 Scholars have studied the extant empirical scholarship on teacher leadership to
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14 understand what we know, how we are conceptualizing teacher leadership, and what remains to
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16 be examined (e.g., Nguyen *et al.*, 2019; Wenner and Campbell, 2017; York-Barr and Duke,
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18 2004). Transnational neoliberal reform policies and practices have informed much of this
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20 scholarship. Indeed, this shared neoliberal policy context, particularly, though not exclusively,
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22 for Western nations, connects Denmark, the US, and many nations. Therefore, in this section, we
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24 first review this shared policy context through the scholarship on globalization, before reviewing
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26 teacher leadership scholarship, followed by the educational contexts of Denmark and the US.
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33 **Globalized Policy Development and Implementation**

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35 The globalization process enables overarching neoliberal policy frameworks to inform
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37 local-level school practice (Adie, 2014; Camphuijsen *et al.*, 2020). For example, Trujillo's (2014)
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39 analysis of an intermediary educational organization illustrates how local practitioners respond to
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41 the applied logics of neoliberalism transferred through the globalization process in education
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43 (Burch, 2006; Klees, 2008). Globalization scholars have called for a focus on the *context* in which
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45 the policy is applied to better understand the *process* a policy goes through towards a particular
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47 change — both the process and change will look different across various contexts (Steiner-Khamsi,
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49 2018).
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53 **Teacher Leadership**

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3 **Teacher Leadership and Instructional Leadership.** In the 1980s, teacher leadership
4 scholarship emerged from the teacher professionalism movement (Brass and Holloway, 2019;
5 Wilson, 2016). Concurrently, the concept of instructional leadership was advanced through the
6 school effectiveness movement (Edmonds, 1979; Hallinger, 2003; Neumerski, 2013; York-Barr
7 and Duke, 2004). Both movements occurred internationally, in response to economic concerns
8 beyond the education policy community. Because nation-states increasingly saw themselves as
9 part of a global community, they focused on education as a central component to compete
10 globally for innovation and future jobs (Muijs and Harris, 2003; Nguyen *et al.*, 2019; York-Barr
11 and Duke, 2004; Wenner and Campbell, 2017).

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13 Scholars have critiqued this reform-oriented literature for being relatively prescriptive in
14 its scholarly contribution — in response to external policy — resulting in somewhat under-
15 theorized concepts (Neumerski, 2013; Wenner and Campbell, 2017). For example, Smylie (1995)
16 argued teacher leadership concepts relied on “policy logic” rather than “formal theory” (p. 4).
17 Bowers (2020) also critiqued instructional leadership concepts for being “vague lists of behaviours
18 that proponents encourage schools to practice, with little evidence that specific components of the
19 lists are related to instructional improvement” (p. 12) rather than serving as a theory.

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21 Nevertheless, both were innovative in advancing new conceptions of leadership practice
22 for teachers, staff, and formal leaders. Traditional notions of leadership were no longer sufficient
23 for understanding how schools work (Lovett and Andrews, 2011). A team of people, not simply
24 one person, were understood to be leading a school (Nguyen *et al.*, 2019). Teacher leadership work
25 resulted in collaborative models where teachers observe their peers, share reflections and together
26 plan for learning, augment teacher practice and thereby benefit students (Muijs and Harris, 2003).
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3 Empowered to lead, teachers can be integral actors in school improvement and student
4 achievement outcomes (Poekert *et al.*, 2016; Shen *et al.*, 2020).
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8 **Collaborative School Culture to Facilitate Teacher Leadership.** School improvement
9 and teacher leadership scholarship reveal that school culture, which is driven by principals'
10 leadership practices, plays an important role in shaping how teachers become teacher-leaders and
11 contribute to school improvement efforts (Poekert *et al.*, 2016). Drawing on international data,
12 Poekert and colleagues (2016) explored how an individual teacher grows personally and
13 professionally to become a leader, and found growth happens when teachers are provided with a
14 supportive environment that regularly offers them opportunities to lead and to improve their
15 professional knowledge, skills, and confidence. Such supportive, engaging school culture also
16 creates “interactive feedback loops” that help teachers develop a more well-rounded skill-set and
17 the capacity to impact their school communities (Poekert *et al.*, 2016, p. 324).
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31 **Teacher Leadership and Professional Learning.** Scholars have found teacher leadership
32 can be built by placing a higher value on professional learning and development (Lovett and
33 Andrews, 2001). Scholarship on professional learning communities (PLCs) (Hord 1997), emerged
34 as a concrete form of the communities of practice concept (Buysse *et al.*, 2003; Lave and Wenger,
35 1991; Wenger, 1998). Scholars and practitioners envisioned PLCs as instrumental for sustainable
36 change in instructional leadership and practice, student learning, and achievement (DuFour and
37 Eaker, 2009; Hord, 1997). As a structure, PLCs were found to facilitate collaboration (Hargreaves,
38 2019; Rigelman and Ruben, 2012) and deepen professional community (Horn and Little, 2010).
39 Additional scholarship explores how PLCs flourish through the work of teacher-leaders and
40 principals (Voelkel and Chrispeels, 2017); and, underscores the relationship between
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3 organizational structures and processes that support professional learning and collective efficacy
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5 (Hallinger and Kulophas, 2019).
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10 **A Scandinavian Perspective**

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12 School leaders often balance competing demands from society, policymakers, and the
13 students they serve. The democratic ideals of social welfarism are reflected in Scandinavian states
14 such as Denmark (Imsen *et al.*, 2017). These values include collective responsibility, collaboration,
15 democracy, and individual enlightenment (Ervasti, 2012; Hernes, 1988; Kvist and Greve, 2011).
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17 Education policy in Scandinavian nations has focused on creating school systems that reflect and
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19 advance these ideals.
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26 In the second-half of the twentieth century, these ideals were reflected in policies that
27 incorporated progressive values of democratic participation and the German concept of *Bildung*,
28 which asserts personal growth and development comprises an individual's learning process (Imsen
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In the Scandinavian context, Denmark has been characterized as a representative of an emerging neoliberal education discourse (Kelly *et al.*, 2018). Through their focus on accountability and testing (Moos *et al.*, 2004), these new reforms push back against collaborative and democratic cultures in Danish schools. Therefore, while some Anglosphere scholarship posits concepts and structures like PLCs as a relatively new development (Williams *et al.*, 2008), other scholars show

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3 that democratic school leadership and co-learning with teacher-leaders has been a historic part of
4 schooling in Scandinavian nations; and, preceded these reforms in other countries (Moos *et al.*,
5 2004). In Denmark, most teachers are practicing in schools with a high degree of focusing on
6 learning coupled with trust, professional development, and engagement from the community, but
7 low levels of feedback from leaders on their teaching, professional collaboration with peers, and
8 low amounts of mentoring and induction compared to the US (Bowers, 2020).
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19 **The US Context of Schooling**

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21 In the US, education policy flows through several structural levels — the states are
22 charged with providing a free and appropriate public education to residing school-aged children
23 (Gamson, 2009); however, in most states, the daily operations involved in public education are
24 meted out through the local school district on behalf of the state (Young *et al.*, 2019). Thus,
25 states establish education policy and local school districts work to implement state policies; and,
26 in the process, often develop local policies that apply to their specific schools in an effort to
27 translate and respond to state and federal education policy (Land, 2002; Rorrer *et al.*, 2008).
28 However, since the development of the U.S. Department of Education in 1979, the federal
29 government has taken an increased role in shaping the education policies states and local districts
30 respond to, specifically through the coupling of federal monies in compliance with federal policy
31 (Briffault, 2005; Gamson, 2009).
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47 Throughout 150 years of American education reforms, the system has sought for a
48 balance between central authority and local autonomy (Labaree, 2010). This decentralized
49 system presents challenges and opportunities. The loose coupling between the federal
50 government (policymakers) and local states/school districts (practitioners) presents a structural
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3 challenge that increases the gap between policy and practice (Cohen and Moffitt, 2009),
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5 constraining the effectiveness of education reforms. Nevertheless, decentralization creates
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7 structural flexibility and diversity in the US education system (Labaree, 2010).
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11 12 **Conceptual Framework**

13 14 **Distributed Leadership**

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17 The distributed leadership scholarship emerged in the early 2000s as a conceptual model
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19 to describe the nature of leadership practice in schools (Gronn, 2002; Spillane *et al.*, 2001;
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21 2004). The scholarly conversation these conceptual frameworks engendered led to numerous
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23 empirical studies to understand distributed leadership as a construct; and, to develop a normative
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25 approach to distributed leadership practice in schools, as a new variant to other types of
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27 leadership practice (Harris, 2008; Mayrowetz, 2008; Tian *et al.*, 2016). In the North American
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29 context, this concept/approach was a relatively new framework for understanding leadership;
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31 however, in other nation-states, aspects of distributed leadership seemed to align with existing,
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33 and in some nations—like Denmark and Norway—longstanding approaches to school leadership
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35 practice (Imsen *et al.*, 2017; Møller *et al.*, 2005). Scholarship on distributed leadership has
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37 developed across international contexts in ways that reflect the local educational context (Liu,
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39 2020; Printy and Liu, 2021; Tian and Risku, 2019), and marks the shift in educational leadership
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41 away from a focus on principals' character traits towards an examination of leadership practice
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43 (Diamond and Spillane, 2016; Ho and Ng, 2017; Tian *et al.*, 2016).
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50 Distributed leadership scholarship has examined how leadership practice is nuanced
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52 within and across the various roles, organizational structures, and hierarchies in primary and
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54 secondary schools (Grenda and Hackman, 2014; Pak and Desimone, 2019). Through its
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3 recognition of the role of formal and informal leaders and their efforts to build structures that
4 support teaching and learning, the distributed leadership framework allows us to study *what*
5 practitioners do in their daily work and *who* is actually engaging in these practices (Spillane *et*
6 *al.*, 2004; see also, Lahtero *et al.*, 2017). Thus, distributed leadership connects to teacher
7 leadership and PLC scholarship (Paletta *et al.*, 2020).
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12 **The Framework.** Spillane and colleagues' framework (2004) describes leadership as the
13 result of tasks, practices, and work that leaders take-up in response to a given situation or context
14 and requires support from a follower. This framework is informed by Engeström's (2000; 2001)
15 activity theory and distributed cognition and asserts two central precepts: (1) leadership in
16 schools is more about practice, tasks, and work, than one formal leader, and (2) leadership
17 practice is taken up by many people, irrespective of formal title, and requires a leader and a
18 follower in response to a context or situation (Spillane *et al.*, 2004, 11). Thus, the distributed
19 leadership framework (Spillane *et al.*, 2001; 2004) asserts leadership is a practice educators
20 engage in to advance the mission and goals related to learning and development.
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35 Spillane and colleagues' conceptual framework (2001; 2004) is embedded throughout the
36 components of this study. Distributed leadership informs the framing of this study by focusing
37 on the practices of formal teacher-leaders along with educators who informally engage in
38 leadership work. Further, the distributed leadership framework allows us to examine local school
39 practice, informed by external globalized education policy, as part of a broader educational
40 context.
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51 **Methodology**

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3 This quantitative international-comparative study used data from the 2015-2016 school-
4 year of CALL to analyze the leadership practices of teachers, school leaders, *pædagogs*
5 (hereafter pedagogues), and other personnel in elementary US and 0-9 Danish schools. The
6 analytical approach consists of confirmatory factor analysis and a second-order factor analysis.
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12 The number of participants in the US version of CALL (CALL-US) totaled 2,122 (1,696
13 teachers, 345 support staff members, and 81 school leaders). The number of participants who
14 responded to the Danish version of CALL (CALL-DK) totaled 468 (335 teachers, 20 support
15 staff members, 27 school leaders, and 86 pedagogues). Participants came from various
16 urban/non-urban locations across the US and Denmark (Modeste *et al.*, 2020). Participants
17 represented 80 US elementary schools and 9 Danish 0-9 schools. The survey response rate was
18 over 50%. Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for the items in this study.
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30 **Survey Instrument – The Comprehensive Assessment of Leadership for Learning**

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32 CALL is an online formative assessment that measures educators' leadership practices.
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34 CALL was initially supported through a grant from the US Department of Education Institute of
35 Education Sciences. CALL applies a distributed perspective in locating and measuring leadership
36 work across five domains of practice: (1) Focus on Learning, (2) Monitoring Teaching and
37 Learning, (3) Building Nested Learning Communities, (4) Acquiring and Allocating Resources,
38 and (5) Maintaining a Safe and Effective Learning Environment (Halverson and Kelley, 2017).
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40 CALL measures leadership practice through practice-based, multi-rater items. Each item is
41 associated with approximately four or more items in a given subdomain of leadership practice;
42 and, each domain has three to five subdomains.
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3 **Building Nested Learning Communities.** The leadership work measured through
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5 Domain 3: Building Nested Learning Communities is the primary focus of this analysis. Items in
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7 this domain measure the work associated with a collaborative focus on problems of teaching
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9 (3.1); professional learning (3.2); teacher and staff leadership practices related to their time,
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11 curricular development, expertise, discretionary budget spending, and instructional leadership
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13 through the subdomain Socially Distributed Leadership (3.3); and the leadership practices
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15 required for meaningful coaching and mentoring (3.4).
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19 **Validation: the CALL Instrument.** In developing the CALL framework, the validation
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21 process included the Rasch model to assess the extent to which the CALL constructs measured
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23 the items, subdomains, and domains in the instrument (Rasch, 1966). The development and
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25 validation of CALL has been explained in detail through several scholarly publications (Blitz *et*
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27 *al.*, 2014; Camburn and Salisbury, 2012; Kelley and Halverson, 2012). For this analysis, we
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29 examined the mean subdomain scores and item-level scores, which served as indicators loading
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31 onto factors. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the CALL-US and CALL-DK item
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33 and subdomain scores are reported in Table 2.
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40 **Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA).** We use CFA to examine the pattern of
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42 leadership practices, through the CALL model, across the Danish and US contexts. Because
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44 factor analysis combines two features of psychometric analysis — statistical measurement and
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46 the development of theory — scholars use various factor analysis techniques to develop theories
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48 about the relationships between factors and their indicators (Boyce and Bowers, 2018; Dedrick
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50 and Greenbaum, 2011; Jacob, *et al.*, 2015; Xu *et al.*, 2016). Since the CALL model has already
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52 been validated and practitioners use the formative assessment to guide their leadership practice,
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3 we are not assessing the fit of the CALL model in either context (Camburn and Salisbury, 2012;
4 Halverson and Kelley, 2017). Here, we extend the analysis of a prior study, and use CFA to
5 examine the pattern of leadership practices within the CALL framework; specifically, the
6 subdomain Socially Distributed Leadership, in the Building Nested Learning Communities
7 domain (Modeste *et al.*, 2020).
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14 15 16 17 **Data Analysis** 18

19 Our analysis included three models: (1) Model 1 for the full CALL framework in the US
20 context, (2) Model 2 with two components: the US Model 2.1 and the Danish Model 2.2, and (3)
21 Model 3 as a modified comparative version of Model 2. Each model provides a varied level of
22 nuance in this study. Model 1 most closely aligns to the CALL framework and provides a
23 comparison for both portions of Model 2 and Model 3. Further, Model 1 is the more complex
24 extension from the preceding analysis; and is thereby an analytical link to that study. Model 2
25 and Model 3 contain our international-comparative analysis.
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35 **Model Specification.** We used Mplus Version 8.2 (Muthén and Muthén 1998-2018) for
36 our analysis: Model 1: a second-order factor analysis of the CALL-US elementary survey with
37 five factors from the CALL domains; US Model 2.1: a second-order factor analysis of the
38 CALL-US elementary school data where the first three domains are included as factors, and
39 items are in the third factor; and Danish Model 2.2: a comparable CFA for the 0-9 CALL-DK
40 survey with subdomain scores for Factor 1 (Domain 1: Focus on Learning) and Factor 2
41 (Domain 2: Monitoring Teaching and Learning) and items for Factor 3. Both portions of Model 3
42 contain fewer indicators for the factors, informed by the results of Model 2.
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3 Throughout the models, the factors are defined by observed variables only; the parameter
4 estimates were all freely estimated. The first unstandardized estimate for each factor is
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6 constrained to 1.00. Each model has more than two factors and each factor has more than two
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8 indicators. These features render all of the models identified (Kline, 2015; Kenny, 1979). We
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10 used the maximum likely estimation with robust standard errors to account for missing data.
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12 Figures containing model diagrams and tables with parameter estimates will be furnished upon
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14 request.
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22 Results

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24 Results from this analysis suggest elementary school educators in the US prioritize
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26 leadership practices that are focused to impact student learning. The pattern of practices from
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28 Model 1, illustrates the importance of teacher and staff professional development, improvement
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30 planning across the school, curriculum mapping, and, in the area of professional learning, the
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32 importance of practice-oriented assessments together with the role of organizational structures to
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34 support professional learning. From the comparative analysis of US and Danish socially
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36 distributed leadership illustrated in Model 3, we see a contrast in prioritization between
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38 classroom-located teacher and staff leadership practices in the US Model 3.1, and school-wide
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40 teacher and staff leadership practices in the Danish Model 3.2.
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44 In the following sections, we first explain the results of our t-tests. Next, we present the
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46 goodness-of-fit statistics for the models, which provides a measure of how well the model “fit”,
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48 or explained, the data. Then, we summarize the results from the models.
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51 T-Test Results: Danish and US Mean Subdomain Scores

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3 Results from our t-test analysis show Danish teachers scored higher than the US teachers
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5 in indicating the degree, on average, to which educators engage in the practices required to
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7 Provide Appropriate Services for all Students (1.4) and the teacher and staff leadership practices
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9 measured through Socially Distributed Leadership (3.3). Conversely, the average scores from
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11 support staff in elementary schools in the US were significantly higher than their counterparts in
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13 Denmark in five of the twelve subdomains tested: Maintaining a School-Wide Focus on
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15 Learning (1.1), Formal Leaders are Recognized as Instructional Leaders (1.2), Formative
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17 Evaluation of Student Learning (2.3), and Collaborative School-Wide Focus on Problems of
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19 Teaching (3.1).
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23 **Parameter Estimates**

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26 We begin by presenting the fit statistics for each model. Given our comparative focus, we
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28 report a comparison of the results from US Model 3.1 and Danish Model 3.2 only. We interpret
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30 the results and present the implications in the discussion.
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33 **Model fit.** We used the chi-square (X^2) test of model fit, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI)
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35 (Bentler 1990), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and the standardized
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37 root mean square residual (SRMR) to assess the goodness-of-fit of the three models in this
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39 analysis. We determined model fit by CFI values greater than 0.90 as acceptable model fit and
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41 greater than or equal to 0.95 as an indication of good model fit; SRMR values less than or equal
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43 to 0.08 and RMSEA values less than or equal 0.05 (Hu and Bentler 1999).
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47 **Model 1.** For Model 1, the fit statistics are presented in Table 3. Generally, they indicated
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49 some degree of model fitness. In Model 1, all pattern coefficients, or factor loadings, were
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51 significantly different from zero.
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3 **Model 2.1 – CALL-US.** For Model 2.1, the fit statistics are presented in Table 4. Overall,
4 they indicated some level of model fitness. Throughout Model 2.1 all pattern coefficients were
5 significantly different from zero.
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9 **Model 2.2 – CALL-DK.** The fit statistics for Danish Model 2.2 are included in Table 4.
10 Altogether, the statistics indicated some degree of model fitness. The SRMR of 0.079 is less than
11 the cutoff value or 0.08. All pattern coefficients for Model 2.2 were significantly different from
12 zero.
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15 **Model 3.** We examined the pattern of parameter estimates for all indicators associated
16 with the factors in comparative Model 2. We used the results of Model 2 to remove indicators,
17 based on their factor loadings and residual variance, to create a modified model represented in
18 both portions of Model 3.
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INSERT TABLE 3

INSERT TABLE 4

Comparative Model 2 and Model 3: Similarities and Differences

We found similarities and differences in this comparative analysis of socially distributed leadership and the broader work of fostering nested communities of professional learning and practice in Danish and US schools.

Different Approaches to Leadership Practice: Focus on Learning. The instructional leadership work measured through Factor 1: Focus on Learning may be operating in a nuanced and more collaborative manner in Danish 0-9 schools, than in US elementary schools. Our results show that in Denmark the strongest indicator of this instructional leadership work is subdomain 1.3: the existence of a collaboratively-designed, including teachers, leaders, and other

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3 educational personnel, integrated learning plan, followed by the work of maintaining a school-
4 wide focus on learning (1.1).
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8 In contrast, in the US, the leadership practice measured through the first subdomain,
9 maintaining a school-wide focus on learning (1.1), is the only meaningful indicator of the
10 instructional leadership work in elementary schools; followed by the second subdomain, which
11 focuses on the work of the formal leader(s) (1.2). Thus, the US pattern is oriented towards the
12 formal school leader; and, conversely, the Danish model prioritizes a collaborative approach for
13 instructional leadership work.
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22 In both components of Model 2, the work of providing appropriate services for students
23 (1.4) is not meaningfully associated with the Focus on Learning factor. This highlights how
24 educators in their respective contexts draw on particular practices to advance their overall
25 instructional goals. We did not include this indicator (1.4) in the modified Danish Model 3.2.
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30 **“Glocalized” Policy and Leadership Practice: Monitoring Teaching and Learning.**

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32 Additional contrast is found in the work of monitoring teaching and learning: Domain 2. Each
33 subdomain-indicator encompasses important practices for this construct in the US context of
34 schooling. In the US context, in Model 3.1, the summative and formative assessment of student
35 learning and teacher practice are each distinctly measured and have pattern coefficients that
36 range from 0.75 (for 2.3, formative assessment of teacher practice) to 0.80 (2.4, formative
37 assessment of teacher practice), which indicates the importance of each of these practices for the
38 overarching work measured through monitoring teaching and learning. However, for Danish
39 schools in this study, only the formative assessment of teacher practice (2.3) — 0.70 — is a
40 meaningful component of this factor. This reflects the relatively new and augmented role of
41 assessments for Danish pupils and the expanded role of Danish school leaders.
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3 **Collaboration across Formal Roles: Building Nested Learning Communities.** Lastly,
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5 when we examined the patterns that inform the work of building nested learning communities,
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7 we found additional similarities and differences between the Danish and US schools in this
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9 study. In both contexts, a collaborative school-wide focus on teaching and learning (3.1) and
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11 professional learning (3.2) were strong and meaningful indicators of work that supports
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13 communities of professional learning and practice. However, we found contrasting approaches
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15 when we specifically examined item-level practices of socially distributed leadership (3.3). In the
16
17 US context, teacher and staff leadership practice may flourish in more classroom-centered forms.
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19 Whereas in Denmark, teacher and staff leadership practice appears to meaningfully occur when
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21 integrated with formal leaders, and change initiatives established across the school.
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25 26 **Limitations**

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28 There are two limitations to consider with the results of our analysis related to (1) the
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30 organizational role of respondents in the dataset and (2) the types of factor analyses we
31
32 conducted. While we included responses from all respondents to both the US version of CALL
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34 and CALL-DK, we did not account for respondents' roles (i.e., teacher, school leader, other
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36 personnel, pedagogue) in the factor analysis. The CALL items are practice-based and designed to
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38 reflect the role of the person responding to the practice (Halverson and Kelley 2017). In this way,
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40 the CALL items reflect the distributed leadership framework (Spillane *et al.*, 2004) by focusing
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42 primarily on school-located practices, and less on the formal role of the person engaging in the
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44 work. However, while the practice-based items capture educators' leadership work, there may be
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46 some loss of role-specific nuance by omitting formal roles from the analysis.
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51 Withal, we do not have identical comparative models across the contexts, due to the size
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53 of the samples. Although throughout Model 2 and Model 3 we are able to compare the items in
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3 subdomain 3.3: Socially Distributed Leadership, in the US portion of the model we examined the
4 items through a second-order factor analysis and in the Danish portion of the model we
5 examined the items through CFA. In the Danish model, we can see how these items interact with
6 the other subdomains, but we do not see the items loaded onto the subdomain, Socially
7 Distributed Leadership (3.3), only Factor and Domain 3: Building Nested Learning
8 Communities. Nevertheless, we were able to examine similarities and differences across the
9 contexts.
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21 **Discussion**

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24 The aim of this study is to examine how policies developed in a globalized context are
25 manifested in the daily practices of school leaders, specifically teacher and staff leaders.
26 Recognizing that a central focus of education policy, particularly globalized education policy, is
27 to effect some change in practice that results in improved student achievement, we focused on
28 the relationship between professional learning and the role of formal and informal leadership
29 from teachers, staff members, and formal leaders to advance leadership work. Our results suggest
30 educational leaders respond to external policy demands by incorporating them into their current
31 systems. Educators find ways to harmonize new practices within the structure of their current
32 environment. We also found educators increasingly have to collaborate in their professional
33 learning work, and teacher and staff leadership practice.
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47 Three central findings emerged from this comparative analysis of socially distributed
48 leadership practices in Danish 0-9 and US elementary schools. First, our results suggest there are
49 different approaches to teacher and staff leadership practices in Denmark and the US, for the
50 schools in our study. Specifically, in the US, teacher and staff leadership practices appear to be
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3 strongest when situated in elementary classrooms where teachers can influence structures related
4 to scheduling/time and the discretionary budget. In the Danish context, school-level
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6 manifestations of teacher and staff leadership appear to be meaningful expressions of socially
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8 distributed leadership. Second, our results underscore the importance of a collaborative approach
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10 to developing and maintaining communities of professional learning and practice in both
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12 contexts. Third, our results reveal different patterns of leadership practices that broadly reflect
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14 the local institutional structure and approach to school leadership while responding to external
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16 policy demands.
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22 The relationship between formal school leaders, and teachers and staff members is
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24 noteworthy. In the US context, our finding of classroom-located socially distributed leadership
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26 suggests formal school leaders provide teachers and staff members with the opportunity to
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28 engage in task-based leadership work related to scheduling and the discretionary budget, rather
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30 than directly managing this work. However, in the Danish context, the prioritization of school-
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32 level manifestations of teacher and staff leadership suggests an on-going relationship between
33
34 formal school leaders, and teachers and staff members to amplify their leadership capacity across
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36 the school. Socially distributed leadership might be a little more compartmentalized within the
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38 hierarchical structure of US schools; where, in the Danish context, teacher and staff leadership
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40 may occur through a form of agentic engagement with formal leaders. These results align to prior
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42 scholarship that highlight the importance of considering the local context when developing,
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44 implementing, and assessing cross-national policies (Meier *et al.*, 2015; Ylimaki and Jacobson,
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46 2013).
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52 Our results intersect with PLC scholarship by underscoring the strategic relationship
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54 between the formal school leader, and teachers and staff members. Formal school leaders occupy
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3 central positions in instructional networks in US schools (Spillane and Kim, 2012). They inform
4 the instructional direction for teachers and staff members and they help establish professional
5 practices for dialog and reflection within PLCs (DuFour and Eaker, 2009). Our findings also
6 reflect the importance of school leaders' work with teachers and staff members to support
7 ongoing professional learning.
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15 One inference we take from these results is while external policy can have a tangible
16 impact on local practice, the form these practices take are negotiated through existing local
17 norms, traditions, institutional culture, and organizational structure. Additionally, while a
18 globalized approach to policy development appears to be a somewhat consistent feature of
19 education policy development, policymakers would do well to examine the measured outcomes
20 or targets of a given policy, and the indirect outcomes, which are related to educators' leadership
21 practices.
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31 Results from our analysis suggest collaboration across formal roles is one way educators
32 in Denmark and the US have responded to the changing and augmented expectations for their
33 work. It is important to recognize and trace the interconnected nature of policy implementation
34 in schools and the shift in educators' practices to meet policy expectations. While external
35 policymakers may be focused on increasing student achievement and shifting the content and
36 competencies that students are exposed to through their primary and secondary education, to
37 meet these expectations, educators have to engage in their professional practice in ways that will
38 support these outcomes. Our results suggest increased collaboration is part of this effort. So,
39 while teacher and staff leadership may be expressed differently through daily practice in
40 Denmark and the US, the need for collaboration to support communities of learning is a
41 consistent response across both locations.
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3 The public education sector in Scandinavian countries may be maintaining aspects of
4 their approach to schooling, while questioning and adapting neoliberal reform features designed
5 to introduce efficiency, accountability, and choice (Ackesjö and Persson, 2019; Imsen *et al.*,
6 2017). Yet, scholarship examining education policy development in nations such as, Chile
7 (Falabella, 2021), Italy (Paletta, 2019), and the US (Trujillo, 2014) point to a more seamless
8 integration of neoliberal reform ideas into education policy (Lipman, 2011; Ylimaki *et al.*, 2017).
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10 Although local school-based educators do engage in practices that have been initiated from
11 external policies that originate in contexts far removed from practice, the germ of the policy is
12 maintained at the level of practice.
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26 **Implications and Conclusion**

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28 Policymakers have an opportunity to consider how local educators may respond to a
29 specific policy reform. It is important to understand how longstanding approaches to
30 instructional leadership practice for teachers, formal leaders and staff members may intersect
31 with the expectations of the new policy. Concurrently, as local and regional educational
32 administration bodies interpret and translate transnational policies for their local schools, they
33 can perhaps more closely attend to the perspective of local practitioners in the development of
34 guidance documents and templates that explain the expectations of the policy and what it might
35 look like within the existing framework of local schools. Policies should better align to research-
36 based practices. Lastly, scholars should continue to study policy implementation and practice
37 from the perspective of school-level practitioners using a range of methodological approaches.
38 While prior scholarship has considered how the local context informs the policy implementation
39 process, the implications of our analysis require us to consider the features of the local context
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3 that may impact how educators receive, interpret, and attend to the external policy expectations
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5 through their daily leadership work.
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8 A central concern of this study was to examine how policies that have originated through
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10 a process of globalized policy development make their way to educators broadly charged with
11
12 implementing them. Our international-comparative analysis suggests educators in different
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14 countries incorporate policies within their existing culture of local practice and in ways that
15
16 reflect the mores of local society. Consequently, while policy mandates may impact *what*
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18 educators do, the local cultural context informs *how* they do it. Examining policy implementation
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20 through school-level practice illuminates how local practices vary in response to broadly shared
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22 external policies.
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Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for the Items in Factor 3 - Building Nested Learning Communities						
	CALL-US			CALL-DK		
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Collaborative School-Wide Focus on Problems of Teaching (3.1)						
PD and Improved Student Learning	1983	3.61	1.090			
School Improvement Planning and Improved Student Learning	1946	3.44	1.175			
Curriculum Mapping and Improved Student Learning	1973	3.61	1.080			
Frequency: Teacher Collaboration – Administrators	370	4.14	0.760			
Focus: Teacher Collaboration – Administrators	374	2.69	1.441			
Frequency: Teacher Collaboration – Teachers	1604	4.18	1.053			
Focus: Teacher Collaboration – Teachers	1609	3.22	1.054			
Leaders Schedule Time for Teachers to Discuss Student Work	1934	3.68	1.536			
Collective Planning for Instructional Improvement	2072	3.44	1.314			
Use of Professional Collaboration Time	1967	3.43	1.772			
Professional Learning (3.2)						
Value of School-Based Professional Learning - Admin	369	3.89	0.917			
Value of School-Based Professional Learning - Teachers	1610	3.90	0.937			
Assessment of Effectiveness of PD	1982	2.02	2.048			
PD Plans for Individual Teachers	1935	3.45	1.395			
School-Wide Professional Learning Opportunities	1965	3.88	1.164			
Design of PD	2075	3.68	1.164			
Opportunities to Team Teach	1956	2.57	1.607			
Opportunities to Observe other Teachers	1936	2.59	1.457			
Use of Staff Expertise in Mentoring	1947	3.36	1.118			
Socially Distributed Leadership (3.3)						
Teacher-Staff Involvement in Decisions about Teacher Scheduling	1959	2.13	1.809	431	3.01	0.963
Teacher-Staff Involvement in Decisions about Student Scheduling	1957	1.93	1.745	430	2.60	1.065
Scheduling of teamwork / meetings - Danish Context	--	--	--	430	2.43	1.148
Teacher-Staff Involvement in Decisions about Discretionary Budget	1952	1.53	1.651	427	1.72	0.930
Leaders Prioritize Developing the Instructional Leadership of Others	2056	3.62	1.055	452	3.59	1.443
Leaders prioritize hiring or training instructional specialists	--	--	--	455	3.94	1.222
Use of Teacher Expertise	1955	3.71	0.875	433	3.62	0.884
Teacher-Staff Support for Change	1948	3.65	1.063	430	3.83	0.877
Teachers and Pedagogues collaborate on Teaching Planning	--	--	--	387	2.46	1.101
Coaching and Mentoring (3.4)						
Existence of Instructional Coaches	1978	3.68	2.145			
Time Allocation of Instructional Coaches	1580	1.66	1.696			
Assignment of Instructional Coaches	1547	3.48	1.720			
Existence of Formal Mentoring Program	1959	3.50	2.218			
Management of Formal Mentors	1448	3.28	1.266			
Mentoring Programs for Struggling Teacher	1499	2.60	1.993			

Table 2
Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficients: Item and Subdomain Scores

Factor	CALL-US		CALL-DK	
	Second-Order Factor Analysis		CFA	
	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient	Number of Items
1 — Focus on Learning	0.696	4	0.723	4
2 — Monitoring Teaching and Learning	0.848	4	0.672	4
3 — Building Nested Learning Communities	0.875	28	0.786	12
(3.1)-Collaborative School-Wide Focus on Problems of Teaching	0.734	8		
(3.2)-Professional Learning	0.748	8		
(3.3)-Socially Distributed Leadership	0.734	6		
(3.4)-Coaching and Mentoring	0.701	6		
4 — Managing Resources	0.750	5		
5 — Maintaining a Safe and Effective Learning Environment	0.763	3		

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Practice in Denmark and the United States

March 2021

Tables and Figures

Table 3 - Fit Indices for Model 1

Table 3
Fit Statistics for Model 1

<u>CALL US – Elementary School Educators</u>	
X ²	10158.76
	(p=0.00)
df	1011
CFI	0.75
RMSEA	0.065
SRMR	0.104

Table 4 — Fit Indices for Model 2 and Model 3

Table 4
Fit Statistics: Model 2 and Model 3

	CALL-US – Model 2.1	CALL-DK – Model 2.2	CALL-US – Model 3.1	CALL-DK – Model 3.2
X^2	7984.01 (p=0.00)	885.85 (p=0.00)	1191.45 (p=0.00)	269.378 (p=0.00)
df	686	167	182	62
CFI	0.74	0.76	0.935	0.893
RMSEA	0.071	0.096	0.051	0.085
SRMR	0.11	0.079	0.058	0.052