

ADVANCES IN GLOBAL  
LEADERSHIP

# ADVANCES IN GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

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ADVANCES IN GLOBAL LEADERSHIP VOLUME 10

# ADVANCES IN GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

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# INTRODUCTION: NEW ADVANCES IN GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

Welcome to Volume 10 of *Advances in Global Leadership (AGL)*. We are delighted to announce the following progress for *AGL* since our last volume was published in 2016:

1. The creation of an Editorial Board stocked with excellent researchers who work in global leadership or related fields.
2. The establishment of a double-blind review peer review process. Thus, all the research articles and some of the practitioner pieces in the current Volume 10 underwent a double-blind peer review process. The only exceptions were the essays by well-known practitioners, which were invited submissions reviewed by the editors.
3. The need for a more frequent publication schedule due to growth in the field.

The goal of the *AGL* series is captured in its title: specifically, to develop the field of global leadership by advancing the definition, conceptualization, and understanding of global leadership processes, as well as the development of global leaders. Our audience is composed of both scholars and practitioners who want to stay current on developments in the field. *AGL* continues to be a unique outlet for global leadership scholars and practitioners. In addition to high quality empirical research, it also welcomes well-crafted essays and innovative conceptual work and research. Given its designation as both a book and an e-journal, authors have the luxury of space to fully present their thinking and results without the page constraints found in most journals.

In the last *AGL* volume, we published a multidisciplinary review of global leadership literature and dissertations (Mendenhall, Li, & Osland, 2016) and promised to contact the over 400 authors cited and invite them to submit their research to *AGL*. Mark E. Mendenhall followed through on that promise and contacted all of the authors for whom he could find email addresses. Some of these authors submitted their work for consideration for publication in this volume, and though not all of them survived our new review process, we feel that the constructive feedback that was given will enable them to find a publication home in the future. We hope that *AGL* continues to be a place where global leadership scholars can find updates on the state of the field and directions for

future research so that the field of global leadership can be advanced in an integrated and collaborative fashion.

If you are a long-time reader, you know that the series previously defined global leadership in a broad fashion and solicited a wide variety of global topics related to various types of international, comparative and global leadership. Beginning with Volume 8, we predicted that the field of global leadership had grown and matured to the point where we could focus the series more narrowly on the emerging global leadership construct and closely related topics. Fortunately, the number and rate of global leadership publications and dissertations have increased (Mendenhall et al., 2016). To avoid confusion with the fields of comparative leadership and global management, we used these global leadership definitions in the call for contributions to Volume 10:

- *The process of influencing the thinking, attitudes and behaviors of a global community to work together synergistically toward a common vision and common goals (Adler, 2001; Festing, 2001)*
- *The process and actions through which an individual inspires and influences a range of internal and external constituents from multiple national cultures and jurisdictions in a context characterized by significant levels of task and relationship complexity (adapted from Mendenhall, Reiche, Bird & Osland, 2017).*

The primary focus in this particular volume is on foundational research and global leadership development. The chapters are introduced briefly below.

## EMPIRICAL FINDINGS AND THEORY BUILDING

The first chapter, “The Nature of Global Leaders’ Work” by Tina Huesing and Jim Ludema, was written in response to a previous call for observational studies of global leaders (Osland, Li, & Wang, 2014). While Joyce S. Osland was explaining the holes in the global leadership literature to Benedictine University doctoral students, one of them accepted the challenge when she recommended, yet again, that someone should really replicate with global leaders Mintzberg’s (1973) seminal managerial observation study as a dissertation topic. This chapter, based on Tina Huesing’s dissertation and observation of five global leaders from five industries for five days, is the first behavioral observation study in the field of global leadership. Huesing and Ludema compared her findings with Mintzberg’s and provide a first-hand description of what global leaders actually do. Content analysis revealed 10 distinguishing characteristics of global leaders’ work. This chapter is a welcome addition to a recent focus on global work (Hinds, Liu, & Lyon, 2011; Nurmi & Hinds, 2016) and will hopefully inspire other scholars to focus more on global leadership behavior.

The second chapter also provides a fuller description of global work, specifically the work of global change and how experts think about it and describe

their behavior. This chapter exemplifies the cognitive approach to global leadership and extends our understanding of expert cognition in global leaders who are change agents (c.f., Osland, Oddou, Bird, & Osland, 2013). “Case Studies of Global Leadership: Expert Cognition in the Domain of Large-Scale Global Change” fills a gap in the limited literature on both global change and global leader cognition. It was written by Joyce S. Osland, an academic and organizational development consultant, and Michael Ehret and Lisa Ruiz, who are both working global leaders and doctoral students. They present two case studies, accompanied by cognitive task analysis interviews with expert global leaders directing large-scale global change initiatives. Cognitive task analysis (CTA) is a methodology designed to distinguish expert and novice thinking in a specific domain (Militello & Hutton, 1998). The authors’ findings include task diagrams of the global leaders’ change process, as well as knowledge audits that specify the cues and strategies they used with respect to various elements of expert cognition. The strategies are, in essence, self-reports of effective global leader behavior. Two of the most interesting findings in this chapter are the difficulties identified for novices and the cognitive demands on global leaders in large-scale change. Both the case studies and the CTA results provide useful guidance for training program design and accelerating the development of global leadership expertise.

The third chapter also sheds more light on global leader cognition and behaviors – in this case the domain in question is the formation of interpersonal connections. Farah Shakir and Yih-teen Lee address and unpack a new research topic in global leadership – the relationship between multicultural identity and global leadership (Fitzsimmons, Lee, & Brannen, 2013). In “Connecting across Cultures: An Empirical Examination of Multicultural Individuals as Global Leaders,” they used content analysis to analyze in-depth interviews with 26 multicultural individuals in global leader positions. These authors created a helpful model featuring competencies resulting from the experience of multicultural identities, the various actions that create connection, and the different types of connection that result – emotive, cognitive, and behavioral. Their chapter adds a greater level of sophistication to both interpersonal connection and multiculturalism.

The last chapter in this section describes a new theory-building effort in the domain of global leadership development. Mark E. Mendenhall, Todd J. Weber, Audur Arna Arnardottir, and Gary R. Oddou collaborated on “Developing Global Leadership Competencies: A Process Model.” Like many young fields, global leadership generally lacks theoretical models that can spur future research (for another exception, see Reiche, Bird, Mendenhall, & Osland, 2016). In response to a well-documented scarcity of global leaders, the authors created a theoretically grounded process model of global leadership competence development after reviewing the competency construct and extant models of global leadership development. Next, taking a multidisciplinary approach, they incorporated concepts from various fields and created

testable hypotheses. The result is a significant contribution to both research and practice.

## THE PRACTITIONER'S CORNER

In the last volume of *AGL* we introduced “The Practitioner’s Corner,” a section of the volume dedicated to the application of theory and research to global leadership development and education and also as a forum for experts to share their wisdom based upon their past experiences in working as – or with – global leaders. Claudy Jules described his work with global leaders in the nonprofit sector. For this volume we invited two experts, J. Stewart Black and Martha Maznevski, to share their reflections on global leadership development in executive education and consulting. Finally, our last two selections come from teams of authors working in global leadership development at the university level.

In “Global Nonprofits: Leadership Ensembles Harness Value in Diversity,” Claudy Jules, Managing Director at Accenture Strategy, addresses global leadership issues that nonprofits face when they expand abroad and find themselves in unfamiliar territory. He provides a framework to guide top management at nonprofits who are “going global,” introducing readers to the concept of “leadership ensembles” and describing four ensemble configurations that can drive success for nonprofit senior management teams. Effective leadership ensembles require certain global skills in their members, and, after describing the nature of these skills through the use of case examples, he discusses various operating model blueprints that leadership ensembles can work off to ensure success. Dr. Jules’ framework provides a significant contribution to the practice of global leadership in a context that generally has been overlooked in the global leadership literature – the nonprofit sector.

In his chapter, entitled “Reflections on Global Leadership across 30 Years and 10,000 Executives,” J. Stewart Black condenses his 30 years of experience in teaching in and running executive development programs for global leaders at The Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth College, Thunderbird, The Ross School of Business at The University of Michigan, IMD, and INSEAD. He begins by discussing how the relevance of global leadership has evolved over the past three decades and then addresses the following question: “Based on my 32 years of experience with 10,000 executives, what would I say if I were asked, ‘What are the capabilities needed to be an effective global leader?’” In response, he delineates five key capabilities shared by excellent global leaders that he has observed over the years and illustrates the dynamics of each capability with short case examples from his personal experiences in working with global leaders. Readers interested in developing global leaders will find his insights particularly useful and relevant for their own consulting and research work in global leadership development.

Martha Maznevski has spent over 25 years working with global leaders in executive education programs at the Darden School of Business at University of Virginia, IMD, and most recently at Ivey Business School. In her chapter, “Self-Acceptance and Community Transcendence: Reflections on Global Leadership from an Irrepressible Scholar-Teacher” she encapsulates her “take-aways” of what she has learned about global leadership and global leaders. Using a case example of a global leader with whom she worked extensively (as well as sharing other experiences in working with global leaders), she illustrates two intangible dimensions of global leadership that have not yet appeared in the literature and are poorly understood by both scholars and practitioners in the field. Maznevski then fleshes out the nature of these intangible dimensions and discusses their implications for the field in terms of both future research and practice.

In their chapter, “Translating Theory into Practice: Developing Global Leaders through Undergraduate Experiential Education,” Henry W. Lane, Allan Bird, and Nicholas Athanassiou report how the Global Leadership Expertise Development (GLED) model (Osland & Bird, 2008) has been applied in a higher education context at Northeastern University. The program is an experientially intensive global leadership development process that employs aspects of Kolb’s experiential learning theory, concepts of instructional scaffolding and guided discovery, with an emphasis on the personal development of students within a cohort experience. They discuss, in detail, the design of the program, which allows interested readers to either gauge the degree to which Northeastern’s program could/should be reproduced at their own institution or assess which components of the program could be applied to their existing undergraduate program design. Additionally, individual instructors might fruitfully apply aspects of the program within their courses, and the article thus also can act as a catalyst for innovation in individual course design. The editors view this program as currently one of the “best practices” in business schools for the development of global leadership in undergraduate students.

In “The Global Leadership Advancement Center: Developing Global Leadership Expertise in a University Setting,” Joyce S. Osland, Linda M. Dunn-Jensen, Kyoung-Ah Nam, and Pamela Wells describe in depth the various programs at San Jose State University’s Global Leadership Advancement Center (GLAC). This center, established in 2007, has numerous programs in three focal areas: Knowledge Creation & Dissemination, Development & Training, and a community outreach Social Innovation Initiative. The chapter describes their unique research-based Global Leadership Laboratory and its assessment center approach, which is used in the university’s extensive global leadership curricula at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. The development of the first university-wide co-curricular Global Leadership Passport Program is also explained. GLAC was called a “best practice” by AACSB auditors.

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- Joyce: To my family: Asbjorn, Jessica, Joe, Zoe, Lucy, Michael, Anna, Jacob, Gavin, Katrina, Scott, Isabelle and the newly arrived June.
- Ming: To my son Riqian Li, with the wish that your dreams for this year come true.
- Mark: To Janet, and my wonderful grandchildren: William, Thomas, Amy, James, and Timothy.

Joyce. S. Osland  
Ming Li  
Mark E. Mendenhall  
*Editors*

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**PART I**  
**EMPIRICAL FINDINGS AND**  
**THEORETICAL PROPOSITIONS**

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# THE NATURE OF GLOBAL LEADERS' WORK

Tina Huesing and James D. Ludema

## ABSTRACT

*Despite the need for effective global leaders on the part of business (McKinsey, 2012) and the growing body of empirical research related to the topic of global leadership (Osland, 2013a), very little is known about what global leaders actually do. How do they spend their time? In what kinds of activities are they involved? How do they communicate, coordinate, make decisions, and lead? How is their work similar to or different from that of domestic leaders? In this chapter, we respond to these questions by exploring the nature of global leaders' work using an approach similar to Mintzberg (1973) in his classic book, The Nature of Managerial Work. We observed five global leaders from five different industries, each for 1 week, and compared our results with Mintzberg's (1973). In addition, we conducted informal interviews and collected archival data. We content-analyzed the data using the conventions of grounded theory and identified 10 distinguishing characteristics of global leaders' work. It is characterized by (1) multiple time zones and geographical distance; (2) long hours; (3) flexible schedules and fluid time; (4) dependence on technology; (5) time alone connected to others; (6) extensive travel; (7) functional expertise with global scope; (8) facilitation of information, advice, and action; (9) management of complexity; and (10) confrontation of risk. We conclude by discussing implications for future global leadership research.*

**Keywords:** Global leadership; work studies; global tasks; semi-structured observation

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter was inspired in part by Mintzberg's (1973) book, *The Nature of Managerial Work*, which is often cited as seminal research in the fields of leadership and work studies (Tengblad, 2006). Mintzberg observed five chief executives of large corporations each for a week. All five lived and worked in the United States and led domestic organizations. Mintzberg's (1973) purpose was to understand (1) the job of the manager rather than the man, (2) the similarities in managers' work rather than the differences, and (3) the essential content of managerial work rather than its peripheral characteristics (p. 230). Over the last 40 plus years, his findings, combined with a vast body of research that built on his work, has helped to establish and develop the field of management science and connect it closely to what managers actually do.

Despite the influence of Mintzberg's (1973) research and the need to develop more global leaders (McKinsey, 2012), to-date no one has conducted a similar study in the field of global leadership. Osland (2013a) writes, "No one has replicated Mintzberg's (1973) landmark observation of managerial behavior with global leaders by following them around as they do their work" (p. 76). Similarly, Bird and Stevens (2013) suggest that for global leadership research to proceed, more work is needed "a little closer to the ground" (p. 140). This chapter answers the call to observe global leaders in action and discover what they actually do. We observed five global leaders, each for 5 days, conducted informal interviews with them and their colleagues, and collected archival data about the leaders and their companies to assess the nature of their work.

Except for one participant who founded his own global company, the executives we observed were heads of different functions (human resources, finance, global sales, and global services) in large global firms. They all were responsible for business results that crossed geographic boundaries and were successful in influencing others to pursue a common goal. As such, they fit Reiche, Bird, Mendenhall, and Osland's (2017) definition of a global leader as an individual who inspires and influences a range of internal and external constituents from multiple national cultures and jurisdictions to willingly pursue a common goal in a context characterized by significant levels of task and relationship complexity.

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In this section, we set the stage for our study first by reviewing the literature on management and work behavior (Tengblad, 2012), most of which has been done in the domestic context. We then touch briefly on relevant research from the fields of intercultural studies, intercultural communication, international human resource management, and global leadership competencies, development, and assessment. We conclude with an exploration of the literature on the

scope of global leadership tasks, which is closest to our focus on the nature of global leaders' work.

*Pre-Mintzberg's Work Studies (1950–1973)*

Chester Barnard's (1968) *The Functions of the Executive*, originally published in 1938, is one of the best-known early reports by an executive looking at the work of executives. He identified the maintenance of a formal organization and the communication system for the organization as the two primary functions of an executive: "Executive work is not that *of* the organization, but the specialized work of *maintaining* the organization in operation" [italics in the original] (Barnard, 1968, p. 215). Executives function as "points of interconnection" within the system, serving as essential hubs of communication and coordination. Barnard (1968) also pointed out that much of the work executives do is not executive work per se; they often engage in production work, drawing on their technical background or functional expertise.

In 1951, Sune Carlson (1991) published a landmark study of nine managing directors (CEOs) of Swedish companies who kept a diary of their daily work for 4 weeks. They detailed where, when, and with whom they worked, and their administrative assistants kept a record of incoming and outgoing mail and telephone calls. Carlson (1991) concluded that the main tasks of an executive are to make decisions or to see to it that decisions are made by others, and to ensure that these decisions are carried out by members of the organization. Like Barnard (1968), he claimed that executives accomplish these tasks primarily through communication and coordination. He wrote that he "always thought of a chief executive as the conductor of an orchestra," but after seeing how much time and energy an executive spends on communicating and coordinating with a wide range of constituencies, he was more inclined to "see him as the puppet in a puppet-show with hundreds of people pulling the strings and forcing him to act in one way or another" (Carlson, 1991, p. 46).

Dalton (1959) agreed with Barnard and Carlson that an executive's job consists mostly of communication and coordination but showed how cliques and collusion between senior managers and older workers influenced action through informal networks. He claimed that these informal networks were useful for facilitating fluid communication, decision-making, and action, but often excluded important constituencies and added complexity and stress by blurring the lines between executives' private lives and their work lives.

*Mintzberg (1973)*

In 1937, Gulick wrote, "What is the work of the chief executive? What does he do? The answer is POSDCORB" (p. 13). He created the acronym to call

attention to the various activities of a chief executive: planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting. [Gulick \(1937\)](#) was building on Fayol's 1916 work, which introduced the five basic managerial functions as: planning, organizing, coordinating, commanding, and controlling.

Rather than focusing on activities like POSDCORB, [Mintzberg \(1973\)](#) grouped the work of executives into 10 roles and then clustered them into three main categories: interpersonal roles (figurehead, leader, liaison); informational roles (monitor, disseminator, spokesperson); and decisional roles (entrepreneur, disturbance handler, resource allocator, negotiator). These roles are similar to the functions of communication and coordination identified by [Barnard \(1968\)](#), [Carlson \(1991\)](#), and [Dalton \(1959\)](#) but add ceremonial roles such as spokesperson and figurehead that, according to [Mintzberg \(1973\)](#), take up to a third of an executive's time.

[Mintzberg \(1973\)](#) also outlined 13 propositions that describe the dynamism and complexity of managerial work: the work is open-ended, there is little free time, activities are fragmented, interruptions are commonplace, there is always something else that needs to be done, there is a danger of superficiality, current information is preferred over routine reports, nonroutine activities get most attention, verbal communication is preferred over written, managers generate much less written communication than they receive, managers are the link between the organization and outside contacts, managers spend little time (less than 10%) with their superiors, and managers are responsible for many initial commitments.

In summary, [Mintzberg \(1973\)](#) agreed with [Barnard \(1968\)](#), [Carlson \(1991\)](#), and [Dalton \(1959\)](#) that the primary roles of an executive are to communicate and coordinate with a wide range of internal and external constituencies to maintain the organization and get work done. He added that executives invest significant time in ceremonial roles such as spokesperson and figurehead. Additionally, he showed that the work of an executive is complex and dynamic, filled with high levels of novelty, uncertainty, ambiguity, and fragmentation.

#### *Post-Mintzberg Studies (1973–2016)*

[Mintzberg's \(1973\)](#) study was replicated by [Kurke and Aldrich \(1983\)](#), who confirmed his results, reinforcing the image of managers as focusing primarily on communicating, coordinating, and networking in a setting characterized by fragmentation, brevity, concentration on live media, and dependence on others. Similarly, [Kotter \(1982\)](#) observed 15 general managers from nine corporations in the United States and showed how they carried out their roles of communication and coordination through networks of stakeholders. They relied on their networks to decide what to focus on, depended on the network to get things done, influenced the network to move in desired directions, and did all of this while keeping in mind what the people in their network wanted (attention to their

needs and shared direction). In addition, Kotter (1982) described how, in a context of increasing turbulence and complexity, leading change was increasingly becoming a central part of the job of managers at all levels.

Luthans, Hodgetts, and Rosenkrantz (1988) studied 248 American managers and identified 12 descriptive categories that they grouped into four main activities: communication, traditional management, networking, and human resource management, all similar to previous research with the important addition of human resource management. They discovered two different groups of managers: managers who were promoted quickly ("successful" managers) and managers whose performance was rated as superior ("effective" managers). Interestingly, successful managers spent more time socializing, whereas effective managers spent the bulk of their time on communication and human resource management activities.

In 2013, Mintzberg revisited the question of the nature of managerial work in his book *Simply Managing* and spent a day each with 29 leaders around the world. He argued that many of his previous findings still hold but that the complexity of the work environment and pace of change have increased dramatically with the growth of the global economy, increase in global travel, and emergence of ubiquitous electronic communication. He concluded that interpersonal, informational, and decisional roles are still essential but that "management is neither a science nor a profession," but a practice, and "managers are only as good as their ability to work things out thoughtfully in their own way" (Mintzberg, 2013, pp. 8, 12).

In summary, Mintzberg (1973) set out to understand (1) the job of the manager rather than the man, (2) the similarities in managers' work rather than the differences, and (3) the essential content of managerial work rather than its peripheral characteristics. He discovered that the job of a manager is to serve as figurehead, leader, and liaison (interpersonal roles); monitor, disseminator, and spokesperson (informational roles); and entrepreneur, disturbance handler, resource allocator, and negotiator (decisional roles). Previously, Barnard (1968), Carlson (1991), and Dalton (1959) proposed that a manager's job consists mainly of communication, coordination, and production work associated with his or her functional expertise. Subsequently, Kurke and Aldrich (1983), Kotter (1982), Luthans et al. (1988), and Mintzberg (2013) showed how managers often accomplish their job through formal and informal networks and are required to spend significant time leading change in environments of turbulence.

Additionally, Mintzberg (1973) found that a manager's job is complex and dynamic, filled with novelty, uncertainty, ambiguity, fragmentation, and constant interruptions. Mintzberg (2009) calls this "management of an adhoc-racy." These findings were confirmed by Kotter (1982), Kurke and Aldrich (1983), Luthans et al. (1988), and Tengblad (2012). Mintzberg (1991) suggests that perhaps the essence of the manager's job is to absorb complexity, ambiguity, and fragmentation and thereby allow others in the organization to accomplish their work effectively.

*Studies on the Work of Global Leaders*

Although few studies have been done specifically on the nature of global leaders' work, research done more broadly in the field of global leadership provides many valuable insights. For example, work done on cross-cultural management (Hofstede, 1980a, 1980b, 1993; House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004; House, Javidan, & Dorfman, 2001; Kirkman, Lowe, & Gibson, 2006; Taras, Kirkman, & Steel, 2010) demonstrates that cultural differences are a significant part of a global leader's work, and the daily practice of understanding and managing those differences, in oneself and with others, is a central part of what global leaders do. It also suggests that when global leaders fit their practices to country values, this can lead to better performance, and that a core competency of experienced global leaders is to adjust their leadership style based on the needs of their multicultural followers.

Similarly, work done in intercultural studies (Hannigan, 1990), intercultural communication (Lane & Maznevski, 2014), and international human resource management (Björkman & Stahl, 2006; Dowling, Festing, & Engle, 2013), shows that global leaders often experience deep personal transformation because working in and with multiple cultures forces them to question basic assumptions about who they are (Conger & O'Neill, 2012; McCall & Hollenbeck, 2002). Bird, Mendenhall, Stevens, and Oddou (2010) suggest that, in this context, a big part of a global leader's work is to develop intercultural competence (Bennett, 2010), specifically in the areas of perception management, relationship management, and self-management (see the Global Competencies Inventory [GCI], Stevens, Bird, Mendenhall, & Oddou, 2014; for an instrument to measure these). The more culturally novel the situations a leader experiences; and the more he or she invests in developing expert perception, relationship, and self-management; the more cultural competence he or she builds, which, in turn, increases the person's available resources for engaging in future global leadership work.

Understanding the nature of global leaders' work is also influenced by research in the areas of global leadership competencies and skills (Bird et al., 2010; Black, Morrison, & Gregersen, 1999; Caligiuri & Tarique, 2009; Gitsham, 2009; Mendenhall et al., 2013; Wills & Barham, 1994), global leadership development (Caligiuri & Tarique, 2014; Li, Mobley, & Kelly, 2012, 2013; Maak, Pless, & Borecká, 2014; McCall & Hollenbeck, 2002; Miska, Stahl, & Mendenhall, 2013; Oddou & Mendenhall, 2013; Terrell, 2010; Tompson & Tompson, 2013), and assessment of the global leadership construct (Agrawal & Rook, 2014; Bird et al., 2010; Kets de Vries, Vrignaud, & Florent-Treacy, 2004; Stevens et al., 2014). This body of research offers many different models, but there is broad consensus that the work of a global leader is complex, dynamic, and multidimensional and requires time and attention dedicated to developing and demonstrating skills and abilities at the individual,

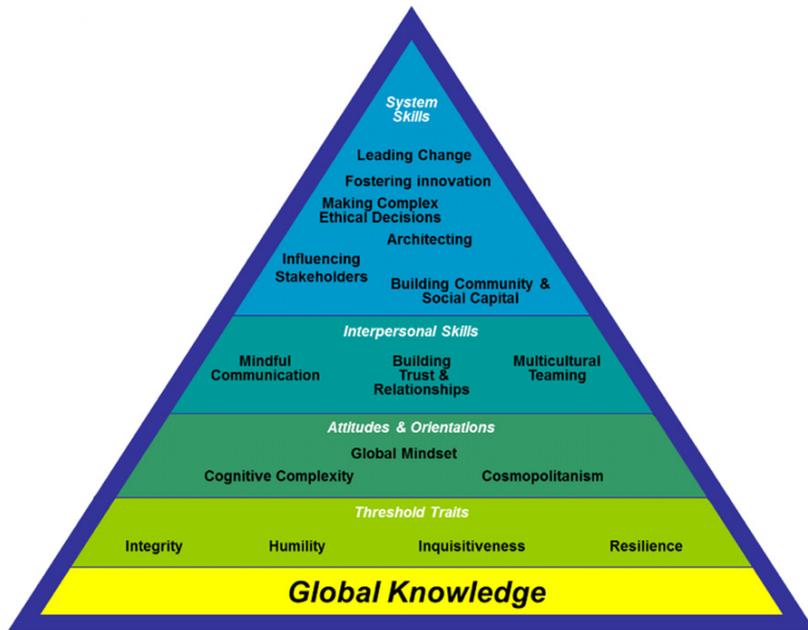


Fig. 1. The Pyramid Model of Global Leadership.

interpersonal, organizational, and cultural levels, as illustrated in Bird and Osland's pyramid model of global leadership (Osland, 2013b; see Fig. 1).

The research most closely related to the nature of global leaders' work focuses on the scope of global leadership tasks (Bird, 2013; Caligiuri, 2006; Kets de Vries & Florent-Treacy, 1999; Osland, Oddou, Bird, & Osland, 2013). Kets de Vries and Florent-Treacy (1999) interviewed three leaders who led global organizations: Richard Branson (Virgin Group), Percy Barnevik (Asea Brown Boveri), and David Simon (Simon Property Group). They conclude that the main tasks of global leaders are to express vision and help others embrace discontinuous change through expert communication.

Kets de Vries and Florent-Treacy (1999) propose that effective global leaders do not hoard power. They seek outside opinion, share information, minimize secrecy, and get people involved. In 2002, Kets de Vries and Florent-Treacy add to their job description of a global leader the need "to establish and maintain a corporate culture that transcends cultural differences" (p. 299). The values and attitudes of a global leader need to be comprehensible and compelling to employees with diverse backgrounds and cultural differences.

Dalton, Ernst, Deal, and Leslie (2002), in a study involving 211 global managers, looked at how essential managerial capabilities, those that are required of all leaders, need to expand for global leaders (see Table 1). They

**Table 1.** Extension of Essential Capabilities Needed When in a Global Role.

Essential Managerial Capabilities	With Global Responsibilities
Ability to manage people	Distance increases differences in how people understand and make sense of the world around them.
Ability to manage action: Decision-making, negotiation, and conflict management	Decision-making is the strongest predictor of performance locally and globally; decision-making, negotiation, and conflict management are strongly affected by culture and distance.
Ability to manage information	Different countries and cultures have different rules about who can have what information, when they can have it, how it needs to be communicated, and whether they may or may not disagree with the message.
Ability to cope with pressure	Stress and pressure tend to increase with when crossing multiple cultures with a wide variety of norms and expectations.
Ability to manage core business knowledge	Effective global managers understand the business both domestically and globally; appreciate what customers, suppliers, and other business partners who are culturally different want, and know what the country systems and structures will allow.

Source: Based on Dalton et al. (2002).

suggest that managers are required to do many of the same things whether their job is domestic or global – the difference is the added complexity a manager experiences when crossing multiple cultures and juggling distance and differences in terms of geography, time, knowledge, and experience.

Dalton et al. (2002) then identified six roles global leaders play – monitor, decision maker, negotiator, innovator, spokesperson, and liaison – and identified four additional capabilities that global leaders need (see Table 2).

Finally, Dalton et al. (2002) compare the roles most important for managers in low-global-complexity jobs (similar to domestic) with those most important to managers in high-global-complexity jobs (see Table 3).

Caligiuri (2006) identified the jobs and activities global leaders need to accomplish. From there, she described the knowledge, skills, abilities, and personal attributes needed, and then assessed the best development methods for each of them. To identify the tasks, Caligiuri (2006) conducted focus groups and surveys with leaders from European and North American firms and identified a list of 10 activities that are common among and unique to global leaders (see Table 4).

Osland et al. (2013) used cognitive task analysis (CTA) to study how expert global leaders perceive and respond to their work context, approach change, and develop expertise. They discovered that the global work context includes multiplicities, challenges, precariousness, and ambiguity, and that expert global

**Table 2.** Pivotal Capabilities of Global Leaders.

International business knowledge	Know how to leverage business across all countries and markets; know the laws, history, and customs in all countries; intellectual knowledge alone is insufficient, to understand something deeply means being able to experience it, feel it, and practice it, i.e., alter one's behavior appropriately
Cultural adaptability	Know how to adapt one's style, roles, and behavior based on knowledge of various cultures
Perspective-taking	Know how to hold someone else's frame of reference in mind; experience the other's perspective; cultural empathy; understand how to act, communicate, or lead from the perspective of deeply held values or beliefs (the symbol system) of someone else in another culture; personal intelligence
Ability to play the role of innovator	Know how to create something new out of two or more parts that is greater than the sum of the parts and accommodates cultural differences, leveraging globalization

Source: Based on Dalton et al. (2002).

**Table 3.** Importance of Roles and Capabilities Comparison.

	Managers in low-global-complexity jobs	Both	Managers in high-global-complexity jobs
Roles	Leader	Monitor, decision maker, negotiator, innovator	Spokesperson, liaison
Capabilities		Self-development, perspective-taking, business knowledge, insight, coping, integrity	Cultural adaptability, international business knowledge, time management

Source: Based on Dalton et al. (2002).

**Table 4.** The Tasks of Global Leaders.

Work with colleagues from other countries	Develop a strategic business plan on a worldwide basis for their unit
Interact with external clients from other countries	Manage a budget on a worldwide basis for their unit
Interact with internal clients from other countries	Negotiate in other countries or with people from other countries
May need to speak in a language other than their mother tongue at work	Manage foreign suppliers or vendors
Supervise employees who are of different nationalities	Manage risk on a worldwide basis for their unit

Source: Caligiuri (2006).

leaders approach their work through problem solving, strategic thinking, boundary spanning, influencing, and “code switching.”

Bird (2013) conducted interviews with 70 highly successful international assignees serving in key leadership roles in 32 countries and identified six tasks of global leaders: articulating a tangible vision and strategy, architecting and designing; scanning the environment, recognizing patterns; inspiring and motivating others, managing uncertainty; building relationships, building teams; managing conflict, managing cross-cultural ethics issues; and creating learning systems. Bird (2013) noted that these tasks must also be addressed by domestic leaders, however, global leaders must be able to shift strategies, business processes, and personal styles to fit different cultural environments along with a broader range of employee backgrounds and motivations.

## METHODOLOGY

Mintzberg (1973) called his methodology “structured observation.” He observed five chief executives of large corporations each for 1 week. During the observation, he kept three kinds of records. The chronology record maintained data on activity patterns, the mail record maintained data on each piece of mail, and the contact record maintained data on each verbal contact. Mintzberg (1968) also recorded notes “without any particular structural framework” (p. 67). We used a similar methodology but called it “semistructured observation” to give equal billing to the unstructured field notes and the structured observations. We kept a chronology record, mail record, and contact record and also took extensive field notes on other aspects of our participants’ activities, conducted informal interviews with our participants and their colleagues, and gathered archival data. We then analyzed the data using the conventions of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014; Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In this section, we describe our methodology in detail.

### *Study Participants*

We recruited our study participants through personal networks of friends and colleagues who worked for global companies and held global responsibilities. We screened them for suitability using Mendenhall, Reiche, Bird, and Osland’s (2012) definition of a global leader as a person who inspires others from multiple countries to pursue a common goal in a context characterized by significant levels of complexity and flow.

Recruitment took many months. Many prospects declined because they, their companies, or their families were not comfortable with them being under observation for a week. We conducted the observations, interviews, and

**Table 5.** Introduction of Study Participants.

Industry	Employees	Title	Location	Name in Study
Telecom	4,000	SVP & GM Global Services	San Jose, CA	Telecom SVP
Aerospace and energy	7,000	Vice Chairman, Chief Financial Officer	Midwest USA	Aerospace CFO
Software development	70	CEO	San Francisco, CA	Software CEO
For profit higher education	80,000 (6,500 in his region)	VP HR for Asia, Middle East, & Africa	Madrid, Spain	Education VP
Tracking technologies	7,000	Global Account Director	Brussels, Belgium	Technology GAD

collection of archival data in the participants' offices over a 6-month period. See Table 5 for a list of participants.

All five participants were male and had advanced degrees, compared to only one of the five participants having an advanced degree in Mintzberg's (1973) study.

#### *Telecom SVP*

Telecom SVP was born in India and was an industry veteran in his early sixties. To pursue an MBA, he went to the United States, and later worked from Hong Kong and Singapore, living in each location for about five years. Telecom SVP was fluent in two Indian languages and English. He was responsible for all services worldwide, with offices in all regions. His organization included 600 employees, with eight people reporting directly to him. When he was not traveling, he worked out of the corporate office 4 days a week and from his home office on Fridays. Both offices were in San Jose, California.

Telecom SVP's corporate office was furnished similar to a standard cubicle – the only difference was that it had walls and a door. Other than his administrative assistant, Telecom SVP's direct reports were located mainly throughout the United States, with a few team members located “in the theaters” around the world. He did most of his communication electronically using video conferencing technology.

#### *Aerospace CFO*

Aerospace CFO had been in his current position for over 11 years, after returning to the United States from Germany, where he worked for a different company. He was an American in his early sixties who worked in various finance functions throughout his career, most often with global responsibilities.

He held dual roles as Vice Chairman for the 7,000-employee company and as CFO, with a staff of 11 direct reports.

Aerospace CFO worked in a traditional work setting. His office was next to the CEO's, and his administrative assistant was outside his office. He held team and other operational meetings in his office, which had a conference table, speakerphone, and video-conferencing capabilities. He decorated his office with company items and family photos.

When Aerospace CFO was not traveling, he worked in his office 5 days a week. There were times when Aerospace CFO was not available for observation because he was working on confidential projects. During these times, we interviewed his staff, all of whom had global responsibilities. These interviews provided additional data and valuable insights into the work of global leaders.

#### *Software CEO*

Software CEO was a French national in his late fifties who had worked in the software industry his entire career, with over 20 years as CEO. He was the owner and served as CEO in the privately held company he had started over nine years ago. The company had offices in the United States, Mexico, Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil, and used employees, consultants, and freelancers in these countries. Software CEO spoke French, English, Spanish, and some Italian. As CEO, he was responsible for all employees, freelancers, and partners; he had seven direct reports.

When Software CEO was not traveling, he worked in his home office and connected with his teams in four countries daily. During observation, he was online at all times and interacted with his teams primarily through instant messaging. He used multiple screens, which were fully visible and provided maximum access.

#### *Education VP*

Education VP was originally from Spain, where he had also met his American wife. He had been working in human resources throughout his career, most of the time in the United States, until he returned to Spain for a three-year expat assignment. In his early fifties, his focus was on human resources in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. Education VP focused on the businesses in Australia, Thailand, Malaysia, China, India, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, and South Africa. His boss, the CEO, was located in Singapore. Education VP had 11 direct reports, some in the United States at corporate headquarters and others spread among the countries mentioned above. The HR organization included approximately 400 people.

When Education VP was asked to develop business teams outside of the United States, he transferred into the region to be closer to the businesses. He chose Madrid because that allowed him to be closer to his Spanish family. With his family nearby and fluent in the local language, his American wife,

a trailing spouse, was well integrated and shared that she enjoyed their assignment, as did their two daughters, the older of whom had decided to remain in Madrid to work when the family was to repatriate. Education VP spoke Spanish and English and spent 3 weeks out of four traveling. When he was not on the road, he operated from his home office. We observed Education VP for 2 days in his home office. He shared and discussed with us by phone detailed reports (diary entries) of his activities during the remaining 3 days.

#### *Technology Global Account Director (GAD)*

Technology GAD was a Belgian national in his late forties who had worked in Belgium, Germany, and the United Kingdom. He had held his current position for seven years and had worked in the United Kingdom for the same company for another seven years. He was responsible for strategic accounts headquartered in Europe. In a staff position, he did not have any direct reports; his virtual team included about 150 colleagues from national account teams, product and marketing teams, the pricing desk and legal offices, and other support functions. His organization included approximately 550 employees, and he was in touch with people in at least 60 countries on a regular basis. Technology GAD's office was in the attic of the family home, where he spent most of his time online and on the phone, talking to colleagues and customers in Dutch, English, German, and French.

#### *Data Collection*

To prepare for our time with the global leaders, we gathered publicly available information for the three publicly traded companies, received internal company-related information from the participants, and had phone conversations with the global leaders, ranging from 30 minutes to over 2 hours. The global leaders also provided company-related information to provide a deeper understanding of their work and their tasks. Upon arrival at each research site, our observation sessions began immediately.

#### *Semistructured observation*

To gather our structured data, we collected a chronology, mail, and contact record for each global leader. The chronology record captured the kinds of activities and the duration of time the leader spent on each activity, alone or with others, throughout the day. The mail record captured the amount of e-mail and snail mail (i.e., traditional mail delivered by the postal service) the leader sent and received (Mintzberg captured only snail mail because e-mail

was not used in 1971). The contact record captured with whom and for how long the leader was meeting and whether it was face-to-face or via technology.

To gather our unstructured data, we kept a field journal and took notes about archival documents, informal interviews, and the activities, behaviors, events, and conversations seen and heard throughout the day. We also took notes about mood, light, smell, physical design, cultural artifacts, and personal impressions, confusions, breakthroughs, and insights. The field notes followed the language identification principle, the verbatim principle, and the concrete principle recommended by Spradley (1980). They identified whose language was being used (i.e., the global leader's, ours, or someone else's), captured the exact words of the people being observed, and were as precise as possible in the descriptions of events and activities. In the evenings, we transferred the field notes to a word processor, conducted initial analysis of the data, and prepared questions of clarification for the next day.

### *Data Analysis*

We collected 216 handwritten pages of notes, which translated into 156 pages on the word processor, and over 200 pages of archival documents relating to the global leaders, their companies, and their work. To analyze the data, we followed the conventions of grounded theory, drawing primarily on Charmaz' (2014) constructivist approach, which recommends a flexible four-step coding process: initial coding, focused coding, axial coding, and theoretical coding. During initial coding, we stuck close to the data to discover codes in each segment of data rather than applying pre-existing categories. During focused coding, we identified the most interesting, frequent, and significant codes from the initial coding process and went back through the data to analyze it at a conceptual level and develop categories and subcategories. During axial coding, we "reassembled" the data into new configurations by linking categories and subcategories and developing them into overarching themes. During theoretical coding, we used a variety of analytic techniques to build theory about what we found in the data. Throughout the coding process, we wrote a series of "memos" to capture insights and further develop our analysis. Next, we share our findings.

## **TEN CHARACTERISTICS OF GLOBAL LEADERS' WORK**

In this section, we describe 10 essential characteristics of global leaders' work. In some cases, we provide a side-by-side comparison of our findings with those of Mintzberg (1973), and in each case, we compare the work of global leaders to that of domestic leaders. We found that global leaders' work is characterized by (1) multiple time zones and geographical distance; (2) long hours; (3) flexible schedules and fluid time; (4) dependence on technology; (5) time alone

connected to others; (6) extensive travel; (7) functional expertise with global scope; (8) facilitation of information, advice, and action; (9) management of complexity; and (10) confrontation of risk.

*Multiple Time Zones and Geographical Distance*

Dealing with time zones is one of the first things global leaders have to learn. One of the leaders in our study said: "It takes a conscious effort. You can't learn it from a book; you have to learn it by experience." Another commented that domestic time zones are much easier to manage than international time zones, especially when crossing the International Date Line. Despite the challenges, the global leaders in our study saw time zones and geographical distance as a way of life. Software CEO knew the time zones for his locations by heart, and Education VP used a "cheat sheet" he had attached to his computer screen (see Fig. 2).

The global leaders in our study also expressed an awareness of other time differences. For example, the United States, Europe, and Australia change back and forth between standard time and daylight savings time on three different Sundays; time in the southern hemisphere changes in the opposite direction of time in the northern hemisphere; and some locations do not change their clocks at all. In addition, the global leaders paid attention to the right time to call, taking into consideration local customs such as times for lunch breaks. The leaders we studied in the United States tended to go to lunch around 12:00 noon, while the leader in Spain only had an espresso around that time and had lunch from about 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. One leader said that getting time zones

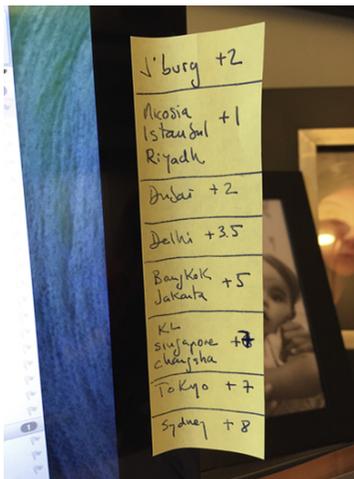


Fig. 2. Cheat Sheet for Time Zones.

wrong or calling at the wrong time is acceptable perhaps once, but if you do it a second time, you may be written off as “not knowing what you’re doing.”

Clearly, working across multiple time zones and geographical distance distinguishes the work of a global leader from that of a domestic leader. It adds complexity, requires constant consideration, and calls for sensitivity to local customs and calendars. It also puts additional demands on global leaders’ work hours and schedules, as will be explored in the next two subsections of this chapter.

### *Long Hours*

In his chronology record, [Mintzberg \(1973\)](#) reported that his executives worked about 49 hours per week, including an average of 4 hours travel time to external meetings and 5 hours worked in the evening. Without the travel time and evening hours, the average was about 40 hours per week. [Mintzberg \(1968\)](#) commented that, in general, the domestic managers kept normal office hours (p. 104). See [Table 6](#).

Our global leaders averaged 59 hours of work per week, 10 hours (20%) more than [Mintzberg’s \(1973\)](#) executives. This is reflected in the column labeled

**Table 6.** Total Hours Worked by Mintzberg’s Participants.

Managers	Hours Worked	Hours in Travel to Outside Meetings	Evening Meetings	Totals
A	28	5.4	—	33.4
B	36	7.1	3	46.1
C	45	4.5	3	52.5
D	53	0.3	7	60.3
E	40	0.3	11	51.3
Averages	40	4	5	49

*Source:* Adapted from [Mintzberg \(1968, Figure 3, p. 101\)](#).

**Table 7.** Global Leaders’ Total Hours Worked.

Global Leader	Start to Finish	Narrow Definition
Telecom SVP	55.5	36.5
Aerospace CFO	53	42.5
Software CEO	56.5	30.5
Education VP	72.5	51
Technology GAD	57	41
Averages	59	40

“start to finish” in Table 7. We also considered a narrower approach where we excluded lunches (unless they were business lunches), travel time to external meetings, time spent on personal work that took more than 2 minutes, and time spent working in the mornings “before work” and in the evenings “after work.” When we took this approach, the average number of hours worked per week were 40.2, which is almost identical to the narrowly defined “hours worked” in Mintzberg’s (1973) study.

The fact that the narrowly defined hours are virtually equal for Mintzberg’s (1973) domestic executives and our global leaders, while the total hours are 20% more (10 hours per week) for the global leaders, reflects an important difference between the work of domestic and global leaders. Because global leaders work interdependently with people around the world in different time zones, they are often required to work well beyond traditional office hours.

### *Flexible Schedules, Fluid Time*

The leaders in our study all maintained flexible schedules to make themselves available at all hours to meet the needs of their global businesses. Their work time was fluid as they took phone calls, did e-mails, and connected with colleagues via text, instant messaging, and file sharing from very early in the morning to very late at night. This was also expected from the leaders’ staff, who were global leaders themselves.

For example, on a Thursday at 1:00 p.m. in the afternoon US Pacific Time, Telecom SVP and two people on his staff were discussing a minor reorganization when someone suggested that the General Manager for the United States should be included in the conversation. They called the US GM on his mobile phone, but he needed to move to a quieter location to join the conversation. He was in a pub in the United Kingdom where it was 9:00 p.m. local time. The GM was in Europe for 2 weeks filling in for the European General Manager, who was on vacation. When Telecom SVP concluded the phone conversation, he encouraged the GM to go back to the bar, but the GM reminded him that he (the GM) had a regularly scheduled staff call that was just about to begin – at 10:00 p.m. UK time.

These kinds of interactions themselves are work, and they have a spillover effect because they push the leader’s thoughts back to issues at work during times where he or she might otherwise be off work. Our participants maintained that this was necessary because “it’s always business hours somewhere,” and there is always a region in which something needs their attention. They acknowledged that they have very little time to go completely off-line during the workweek, holidays, or vacations.

The global leaders were also constantly scanning and gathering information relevant to their businesses outside of normal business hours. One morning, by the time Software CEO came into his office and sat down at his desk, he had

already read the newspaper (online) and shared pieces of information that were relevant to his work with his colleagues around the globe. He was especially concerned about news in Argentina because he had a business there and the rules of doing business kept changing.

On another occasion, Technology GAD mentioned a recall of Maggi Noodles in Argentina (coincidence that it was also Argentina). When asked how he knew about this, he said that it was his job to know about these things and that he regularly scanned the newspapers and online news sites for social, political, and economic material to keep himself and his colleagues informed.

The leaders did not distinguish between general interest in world affairs – be it politics, business, sports, or culture – and professional interest in events in different parts of the world. They felt a constant need to be up-to-date and informed about events in the regions in which they do business.

Finally, the distinction between “work time” and “non-work time” was fluid as it related to the global leaders’ personal lives. They addressed personal issues during the workday and conversely addressed work issues before and after traditional business hours. When they needed to run errands or take a daughter to the doctor, they did it during normal working hours. When they needed to do work in the evenings or during the weekend, this too was accepted. For example, Software CEO and his wife took a female colleague from Brazil shopping on three consecutive nights while she was in town. It was hard to tell whether this was done simply as a friendly personal gesture or because it would help the business, but it reflected the fluid relationship between personal and work life.

The need for flexible schedules and fluid work time to accommodate multiple time zones and still make room for personal life clearly distinguishes the work of global leaders from that of domestic leaders. To be sure, domestic leaders need to maintain some flexibility in their schedules to accommodate work outside of traditional business hours, but as [Mintzberg \(1968\)](#) found in his study, in general, they kept normal office hours (p. 104). This was not true for the global leaders in our study. On the contrary, the way they intermingled personal time and work time seemed to be a normal part of their work and integral to how they saw themselves as global leaders.

### *Enabled by Technology*

In his mail record, [Mintzberg \(1973\)](#) recorded the amount of hard-copy correspondence (letters, memos, periodicals, books, etc.) his executives received and sent. They received a total of 659 pieces and skimmed 31% (204 pieces), read 63% (415 pieces), and studied 6% (40 pieces). They sent 231 pieces, of which 32% was mail they had received and then forwarded to someone else. Of the mail they generated, 2% was reports, 19% memos, and 47% letters. They wrote an average of about 30 pieces of mail a week, or 6 pieces of mail a day.

The global leaders in our study received and sent very little snail mail. Aerospace CFO received newspapers and magazines like *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Economist* through the traditional mail. Software CEO received bank statements and a mailing from the Department of Motor Vehicles in hard copy. Education VP received a registered letter regarding back taxes from the Internal Revenue Service. He opened it, scanned it, and forwarded it to the company that handled his taxes.

The participants in our study made extensive use of information and communications technology (ICT). They used videoconferencing, telephone conference calls, file sharing, and other online collaboration tools for group meetings and group projects and used e-mail, instant messaging, and texts for virtually synchronous communication with individuals and smaller groups. For example, Software CEO conducted almost all of his communication via instant messaging. Education VP and Technology GAD relied more on e-mail than on instant messaging, but had short cycle times between e-mails. They were in immediate, direct two-way communication with others throughout the day.

On one occasion, Education VP wanted to hire a new director for Asia, to be located in the regional office in Singapore. He e-mailed his boss in the United States and the head of HR for Asia in Japan. Within an hour, the three agreed on the timing and terms of an offer, gained approval from the regional CFO in Asia and the corporate controller in the United States, and extended an offer to their preferred candidate. They were located in three different continents, but they worked via e-mail in almost in real time to accomplish their work.

With the exception of Software CEO, the preferred channel of communication for the global leaders in our study was e-mail. Excluding spam, they received an average of 256 pieces of e-mail for the week, or 51 e-mails per day (see Table 8). This is 50% more mail than Mintzberg's executives received, and it does not include correspondence sent via instant messaging or text.

The fact that our global leaders received 50% more mail than Mintzberg's (1973) executives may be explained by how easy it is to send and receive e-mails relative to snail mail. It may also be a result of the "cc" function available in e-mail that allows people to be copied and "kept in the loop" merely at the push of a button. However, it also highlights a significant difference between

**Table 8.** Number of E-mails Received by Global Leaders.

Global Leader	E-mails/Week	E-mails/Day
Telecom SVP	218	44
Aerospace CFO	168	34
Software CEO	86	17
Education VP	544	109
Technology GAD	266	53
Average	256	51

the work of many domestic and global leaders. Because global leaders cannot simply schedule a face-to-face meeting or “walk down the hall” to chat, their means of sharing information or collaborating with colleagues on a project is via information communication technology. The vast majority of global leaders’ work is highly technology-enabled.

*Often Alone, Always Connected*

In his contact record, [Mintzberg \(1973\)](#) found that his executives spent 23% of their time alone, 42% in one-on-one interactions, and 35% in meetings with three or more people (see [Table 9](#)).

Our global leaders spent twice as much time alone (46%) than did Mintzberg’s (23%), but they showed a significant range from 11% to 72% (see [Table 10](#)). They spent slightly less time in one-on-one meetings (34%) than [Mintzberg’s \(1973\)](#) executives (42%) and significantly less time in meetings with three or more people (20% vs. 35%).

The average time spent alone for global leaders who worked in a more traditional workplace (Telecom SVP and Aerospace CFO) was 20% (see [Table 11](#)). These numbers are similar to Mintzberg’s managers (23%), all of whom

**Table 9.** Mintzberg’s Participants Time Spent Alone and with Others.

Manager	Alone (%)	1:1 (%)	3+ People (%)
Manager A	39	36	25
Manager B	23	35	42
Manager C	18	56	26
Manager D	20	38	42
Manager E	16	45	39
Averages	23	42	35

Source: Based on data in [Figures 3 and 12](#) in [Mintzberg \(1968\)](#).

**Table 10.** Global Leaders’ Time Spent Alone and with Others.

Global Leader	Alone (%)	1:1 (%)	3+ people (%)
Telecom SVP	28	41	31
Aerospace CFO	11	49	40
Software CEO	56	37	7
Education VP	61	29	10
Technology GAD	72	15	12
Averages	46	34	20

**Table 11.** Global Leaders' Time Spent alone Based on Place of Work.

Place of Work	Time Spent Alone (Average) (%)
Traditional corporate office	20
Home office	63

**Table 12.** Mintzberg's Participants: Time Spent in Scheduled Meetings.

Manager	Hrs (%)
Manager A	11 (33%)
Manager B	21 (46%)
Manager C	29 (55%)
Manager D	29 (48%)
Manager E	30 (58%)
Average	24 (49%)

Source: Adapted from Mintzberg (1973), Table 10, p. 242.

worked in traditional work places. The average time spent alone for global leaders who worked from a home office was significantly higher at 63% (Software CEO, Education VP, Technology GAD).

While being alone in Mintzberg's (1973) study meant sitting by oneself in the office sorting mail, reading reports, signing letters, and scheduling time, the participants in our study spent the majority of their time alone communicating and coordinating with colleagues around the globe.

Another aspect Mintzberg (1968) captured was the time spent in scheduled versus unscheduled meetings. His managers spent between 11 and 30 hours in scheduled meetings, representing 49% of their time (see Table 12).

In our study, the global leaders spent an average of 20% of their work time in scheduled meetings, 60% less than Mintzberg's executives (see Table 13).

It is notable that Telecom SVP and Aerospace CFO, the two leaders who worked in traditional office spaces with many co-located colleagues, similar to Mintzberg's executives, spent the most time in structured meetings. It was relatively easy for them to gather people physically into the same room when needed. Telecom SVP also had many colleagues scattered around the globe in different regions, and met with them using video-conferencing. He scheduled these meetings well in advance to ensure that everyone who was participating could attend. Software CEO, on the other hand, had very few scheduled meetings. He was in constant contact with many of his colleagues via instant messaging and could connect with them quickly without having to schedule an appointment. Most of his communications were with only one other person.

**Table 13.** Global Leaders' Time Spent in Scheduled Meetings.

Global Leader	Hrs (%)	Type of Meetings
Telecom SVP	15 (27%)	Customer council, weekly revenue forecast, supplier meeting, working with staff on strategy prep, 1:1 with staff, HR issues (reorg, new team member)
Aerospace CFO	18 (34%)	2 Hours with admin assistant, 2½ hours with financial community (investors, analysts, lenders), projects: joint venture, process improvement, strategy deployment, HR issues (performance review), risk management (audit), 1-hour training
Software CEO	4 (7%)	3 Team meetings, 1 external networking meeting
Education VP	13 (18%)	Biweekly call with all leaders, 1:1 with CEO, GMs, staff members, mentoring staffing, training webinar
Technology GAD	8 (14%)	Customer calls, marketing updates, account strategy discussion, training about new products, IT migration
Averages	12 (20%)	

That our participants spent twice as much time alone and less than half as much time in scheduled meetings as [Mintzberg's \(1973\)](#) participants was an unexpected finding, and it is interesting to theorize about why this is the case. First, [Mintzberg's \(1968\)](#) participants were all CEOs, whereas the participants in our study, with the exception of Software CEO, were global leaders, but they also had functional roles within their organizations. It may be that functional work requires fewer scheduled meetings and more time alone and in communication with other individuals and small groups of colleagues.

Second, [Mintzberg \(1973\)](#) conducted his study more than 40 years ago. Work has changed during this time. With information and communications technology, it is easier to share information and reach others anytime and anywhere to pull them into ad hoc conversations, reducing the need for scheduled meetings.

Third, fewer scheduled meetings signal an important difference between domestic and global leadership. [Carlson \(1991\)](#) reported in his study that domestic leaders "become slaves to their appointment diaries" (p. 58). Global work, on the other hand, is full of variety, interdependence, ambiguity, and flux ([Lane, Maznevski, & Mendenhall, 2004](#)). Our findings suggest that effective global leaders must be less shackled to their appointment diaries and more available to connect with colleagues around the world and address issues as they arise. For example, on one occasion, Telecom SVP had a customer issue that escalated and needed immediate attention. He quickly organized a conference call to resolve the issue that took place about 20 minutes later with participants from the United States, the United Kingdom, and

India. This characteristic of having *unscheduled* time to be able to communicate, coordinate, and respond rapidly to colleagues in different time zones and on different schedules was a key characteristic of our global leaders' work.

### *Travel and the Importance of Face-to-Face Meetings*

Like Mintzberg (1968), our global leaders were observed during weeks they did not need to travel, and yet travel was very much part of their work schedule because of the importance of regular face-to-face meetings with their constituencies. They took many international trips with travel times as long as 8, 10, 14, and 24 hours and durations up to 3 weeks. They often spent their time in the office catching up after travel or getting ready for the next trip.

The week after our observation of Technology GAD, he planned to travel all week, leaving on Sunday and returning on Friday afternoon in time to take his daughter to the orthodontist. Although he was comfortable working virtually, he mentioned the positive impact of face-to-face meetings repeatedly. For example, to provide a discount on a product that had not yet been developed, various functions needed to work together (pricing desk, legal, country manager, in-country account manager, etc.). Technology GAD commented that because some of the actors would be at the same meeting in New York (the National Retail Federation's annual meeting), it would be easier to figure out how to proceed. When he called one of the people involved, they were in a cab in New York on their way to the show and promised to work on the issue with the other key players who would be there as well. Technology GAD commented: "This is good; we'll be able to get things done quickly."

In all the companies we studied, face-to-face leadership meetings were scheduled at least annually and were considered to be of high value. As one staff member put it: "It's expensive but well worth it keeping people connected so they can put a face to a name when they get an e-mail. It has paid off tremendously." Face-to-face meetings enabled productive collaboration via technology in between these meetings.

Mintzberg (1968) noted the implication of distance in his domestic study. Subordinates who are within walking distance of the manager's office have easier access to the manager than those who do not work in the immediate vicinity. Those who are close use verbal communication, and since that is the preferred medium, they have access to more and more current information. For global leaders, travel is essential to build relationships, exchange information, and find solutions with colleagues who are located in other regions of the world.

*Functional Expertise with Global Scope*

Each of the five participants in our study was responsible for a certain function in their company and was involved in work specific to the function. Telecom SVP had global responsibilities for strategic planning, Aerospace CFO for financial planning and analysis, Software CEO for business development and organizational design, Education VP for talent and HR management, and Technology GAD for sales.

On the surface, leading with functional expertise does not seem to distinguish global leaders from domestic leaders. Many domestic leaders also have functional responsibilities embedded in their leadership role. The difference lies in the multiplicity of countries and cultures in which global leaders must provide their functional expertise. On one level, this related to things like dates and holidays. For example, on a conference call, members of Education VP's team in the United States were complaining that they had not received responses from their colleagues in India on an important project, even though the deadline for the project was getting close. Education VP had to remind them that most of India had been on vacation the previous week to celebrate Divali, one of India's high holy days. Education VP had to manage similar dynamics for Australia, Thailand, Malaysia, China, India, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Spain, and the United States. He found it virtually impossible to schedule dates and times that did not conflict with holidays in at least one of these countries.

On another level, global leaders must understand and take into consideration the laws, ethical and financial standards, currencies, and customs of the various countries in which they work. For example, Software CEO was working with his Argentine employees to figure out the best way to pay them. Because of the instability of the Argentine peso and high fees associated with banking in Argentina, the employees wanted to be paid in US dollars and have their money deposited in bank accounts across the border in Uruguay. It sounded like a promising solution, but it required additional analysis at multiple levels.

First, they needed to figure out if it was legal to do this in the United States (where corporate headquarters were based), in Uruguay (where the money would be deposited in US dollars), and in Argentina (where the employees lived and worked and would want to exchange the dollars into pesos to pay their bills). Next, they needed to understand the tax implications in all three countries, both for the employees and for the business. Finally, they needed to explore the associated fees in all three countries to understand the full financial impact of the decision. The matter was further complicated because the legal counsel retained in each of the three countries gave conflicting advice, and Software CEO's area of expertise was business development and organizational design, not legal, tax, or finance. Culturally, economically, and socio-politically, he wanted to do what was best for his employees and for his business, but clear answers were not easy to obtain, and they were outside of his primary areas of

expertise. This dynamic of juggling functional expertise with a multiplicity of business challenges inherent in a global scope was a common characteristic of the work of the global leaders in our study.

*Facilitation of Information, Advice, and Action*

Mintzberg (1968) recorded time spent on deskwork, phone calls, scheduled and unscheduled meeting, and tours as activities. Participants in his study engaged in an average of 22 activities per day (see Table 14).

We used a slightly different tabulation method in our study. Each time a global leader turned his attention to something new (e.g., made or received a phone call, attended a meeting, worked on e-mail), we made a note of it. Our participants engaged in an average of 28 activities per day, 8 more (27%) than Mintzberg's (see Table 15).

**Table 14.** Mintzberg's Participants' Distinct Activities.

Exec	Desk Work	Phone Calls	Scheduled Meetings	Unsched. Meetings	Tours	Total Activities	Days	Per Day
A	36	27	16	10	12	101	5	20
B	31	27	14	14	—	86	5	17
C	25	30	27	10	4	96	5	19
D	54	22	18	55	11	160	5	32
E	33	27	30	12	2	104	5	21
Ave.	36	27	21	20	6	109	5	22

Source: Adapted from Table 10, Mintzberg (1973).

**Table 15.** Global Leaders' Distinct Activities.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Total Activities	Days Observed	Total per Day
Telecom SVP	17	10	19	23	—	69	4	17
Aerospace CFO	19	20	25	15	20	99	5	20
Software CEO	—	44	44	31	40	159	4	40
Education VP	32	26	—	—	—	58	2	29
Technology GAD	30	42	36	32	41	181	5	36
Averages	25	28	31	25	34	113	4	28

**Table 16.** Global Leaders' Distinct Global Activities.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Total Activities	Days Observed	Total per Day
Telecom SVP	7	7	5	8	–	27	4	7
Aerospace CFO	3	2	4	7	–	16	5	3
Software CEO	–	20	9	12	11	52	4	13
Education VP	12	8	–	–	–	20	2	10
Technology GAD	8	10	11	10	16	55	5	11
Averages	8	9	7	9	14	34	4	9

We further categorized each activity based on its reach. Was it of local consequence or did it address issues in multiple countries? Either the global leader was talking to a person who was physically in a different country about a topic of significance, the topic that was being discussed was of importance in multiple countries, or the global leader was pursuing a global solution. This yielded an average of nine distinctly global activities per leader per day, 32% of their total daily activities (see Table 16).

Within each global activity, the global leaders addressed many different topics and engaged in many different tasks. To illustrate, below is an example of a scheduled 30-minute check-in Telecom SVP had with a regional business leader:

Telecom SVP wanted to know if the business leader (BL) in the UK had spoken to an employee about a project management role and found out that the BL planned to do so the next day. Telecom SVP shared that he was inclined to outsource this function and asked the BL to investigate further and provide advice on whether or not to outsource. Telecom SVP then provided an update on extra revenues that were expected on an account in the region and asked if this extra revenue would close the existing gap in the plan. The BL responded that he would find out. Telecom SVP addressed a third point about problems with a particular product and shared his view of the product. The BL, well aware of the problem, suggested that this issue needed to be escalated internally to a peer of the Telecom SVP. Telecom SVP added the issue to his list of things to discuss with his colleague later in the week. BL brought up a different issue regarding licensing. Telecom SVP advised to add certain people to the distribution list on a reply e-mail. He added his view of how licensing should work in conjunction with the product roadmap strategy and a software strategy. Telecom SVP advised BL to answer the e-mail at hand and copy certain people, and to let him address licensing for the whole company. Moving on to the next topic, Telecom SVP asked if there were any escalations from customers, and this was discussed briefly. Then the BL moved on to share his experience of branded rooms at a local call center. Telecom SVP shared that he had seen this in India as well. BL provided a few more pieces of information as to what he had done during the previous days. The call ended on time.

In this example, Telecom SVP engaged in a variety of leadership tasks summarized in [Table 17](#).

In total, the global leaders in our study engaged in 170 global activities, which were broken down into 530 distinct global tasks with a distribution as displayed in [Table 18](#).

These tasks and percentages are similar to those found by [Mintzberg \(1973\)](#) in his study of domestic leaders (see [Table 19](#)), but there are significant differences. For example, the participants in Mintzberg's study spent more time in strategy formulation, negotiation, ceremony, and external board work. The global leaders in our study requested and received more information (26% vs. 16%), provided more information (12% vs. 8%), and gave more advice and direction (19% vs. 12%).

The differences in the tasks carried out by Mintzberg's managers and those carried out by the global leaders in our study may be explained by two factors. First, the managers in Mintzberg's study were CEOs and may have been more involved in strategy formulation, negotiation, ceremony, and external board work because of their senior position. The global leaders in our study spent most of their time facilitating the flow of information, advice, and action. They served as an essential hub of communication and coordination.

**Table 17.** Summary of Global Leadership Tasks Undertaken by Telecom SVP.

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*Requested/received information or advice*

- Asked for an update on customer complaints
- Asked for information
- Asked what impact this piece of news had on the overall plan
- Requested information on a product quality issue
- Requested advice on outsourcing

*Provided information*

- Provided an update with information he had received meeting that day
- Shared his view for a licensing strategy

*Exchanged information and ideas (both ways)*

- Exchanged information on branded rooms
- Listened to miscellaneous updates

*Took an action item for self*

- Took an action item to talk to his peer about the product
- Identified "licensing for the whole company" as an issue for him to pursue

*Gave advice and direction*

- Advised how to address a licensing issue and who to copy on the response
-

**Table 18.** Global Leaders' Frequency of Global Tasks.

Task	Frequency (%)
Requesting/receiving information or advice	26
Giving advice and direction	19
Exchanging information and ideas (both ways)	16
Providing information	12
Taking an action item for self	5
Mentoring	5
Recruiting/onboarding/offboarding	3
Interacting with (potential) customers	2
Receiving questions	2
Approving/deciding	2
Other	5

**Table 19.** Tasks of Mintzberg's Participants.

Task	% of Time
Receiving information (one-way flow)	16
Review (two-way information flow; bouncing ideas off one another, functional reviews, catching up on rumors, reviews of new employees, post meeting debriefs, board meeting debriefs)	16
Action requests (authorizations, requests for information, requests to initiate something, requests of "influencing pressures")	12
Giving information (current news, plans and policies, advice)	8
Manager requests (requests for information, advice, delegation, or follow-up)	5
Strategy (discuss whether or not to get involved in joint ventures, crises, operational planning)	13
Negotiation	8
Ceremony	12
External board work, scheduling, status requests and solicitations, observational tours	10

Source: Adapted from Mintzberg (1968), p. 126.

### *Managing Complexity*

The participants in our study invested an enormous amount of time and energy in managing global complexity. This was particularly true in the area of finance where mergers and acquisitions, taxes, regulatory filings, and how to structure deals were often different in each country. The global leaders kept themselves thoroughly informed, sought expert advice, traveled extensively, and relied on

local partners for relevant information and guidance, and still they never knew for sure that they had all the information they needed. As one leader put it, "You can't know everything. It can be stressful because you never know if all the bases are covered." Another said: "There are just too many things. We pick and choose the issues. Complexities of international organizations means we spend a tremendous amount of time understanding the different rules. People constantly underestimate the cost of going global."

Two examples illustrate the challenges of managing global complexity. The first was in the area of taxes. A question arose if there was corporate tax exposure in one country because the company had two expats working there, and the US entity was paying 50% of the cost for the employees. Did that establish a "physical presence," which would mean that the US entity was liable for VAT and income tax in this country? The assignments had commenced almost 2 years earlier, but the question was just being surfaced.

The second example was in the area of compensation. A senior global leader who was French, had been hired in Hong Kong, was living in Hong Kong (because his wife worked there) and worked out of the Bangkok office. He was paid in Thailand, received a housing allowance in Hong Kong, and would receive a year-end bonus in France because France was considered his "home base." The person working out the total compensation package needed to be familiar with the local rules in at least three countries and needed to understand how the different country-specific rules affected each other.

The leaders we studied used two different approaches to manage the complexity of their work. The first was delegation in which the global leader relied on country leaders and functional leaders in the regions. In this case, the role of the global leader was to create alignment among the various regions and to balance the needs of different internal and external stakeholders. All locations are treated in a uniform fashion. This was the approach used by Telecom SVP, Aerospace CFO, and Education VP (see Fig. 3).

The second approach was to connect the network. In this case, the global leader managed complexity by linking team members in various functions and locations. Each location was given significant autonomy and authority to run things in their own way congruent with their local culture and business



Fig. 3. Delegating Complexity.

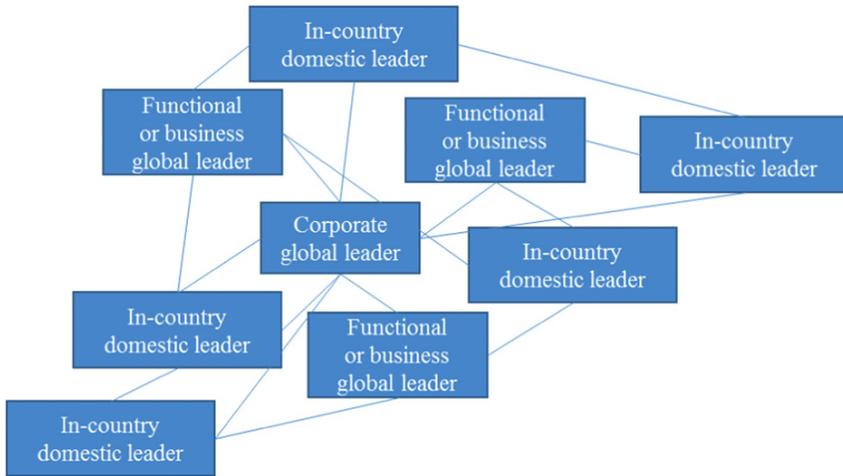


Fig. 4. Connecting the Network.

environment. This is the approach used by Software CEO and Technology GAD (see Fig. 4).

Regardless of the approach, the participants in our study spent the majority of their time exchanging information, giving advice, and facilitating action in a context of global complexity. Because their teams were located around the world, they played an important role in keeping the teams together and helping them deal with uncertainty and ambiguity. Comments like, “I’m their life line,” or “It’s all about getting people to work together across the many divides,” were common.

### *Confronting Risk*

The risks associated with global business have been well researched, but they are becoming increasingly relevant with the rise of global terrorism (Henisz, Mansfield, & Von Glinow, 2010). Three days before our observation of Education VP in Madrid, terrorists launched a series of coordinated attacks on the city of Paris that killed 130 people and injured 368 more. The attacks had a profound effect on Education VP and influenced many of the conversations and interactions he had that week. He knew that many of his colleagues had friends and family in Paris, even if they lived in Asia, and never forgot to ask about their well-being before turning to the business issues at hand. The safety and security of employees and customers came before business considerations.

Eight days after the Bataclan massacre, the city of Brussels was under lockdown for 5 days in an effort to capture one of the perpetrators of the attacks.

Technology GAD talked about the impact of the lockdown on his family and his work. Like millions of families around the world, his family was shaken. It was particularly difficult for them because the terrorist lived in Molenbeek, Belgium, a neighborhood just a few kilometers away. Because of his extensive travel, they were afraid Technology GAD might get caught in similar terrorist violence in the future. They supported his work but also wished that he could stay home with them.

Simultaneously, Technology GAD was preparing to attend a meeting of about 500 participants in Madrid the following week. His company provided a briefing that included security alerts about industrial espionage (“we will not have exclusive use of the hotel; please be careful with conversations in public spaces”), general regulations (“our security limit of 25 people per flight means you might have to stay an extra night”), and terrorist warnings. A few weeks later, terrorist attacks at the Brussels airport and a downtown Brussels subway station shocked the world. Technology GAD had flown out of Brussels airport 24 hours earlier. Had he scheduled his appointment for a day later, he would have been caught in the attack. As it was, he was stuck in Geneva, Switzerland because all transportation had come to a standstill. Authorities closed the airport for 2 weeks. Global business leaders face additional risks because of the global nature of their job, and these risks are risks to their well-being and the well-being of their associates, their ability to be with their families, and ultimately to their life.

## DISCUSSION

The global leaders this study observed worked almost 50% longer hours (close to 300 hours compared to a little over 200 hours) than the domestic managers [Mintzberg \(1968\)](#) observed. Global leaders worked longer hours because the global nature of their work saw them at work early in the morning and late at night. Within this time frame, their mind was never far from work, even if the day was interspersed with personal activities. After having addressed issues in Asia first thing in the morning, Education VP, for example, liked to work out during the late morning before the Americas would come online. Global leaders' work and life are so intermingled that researching and analyzing one without the other is almost impossible.

Global leaders need to be informed about many countries, and keeping up with the news blurred the line between work and private time. When is reading the newspaper considered work? When is it not? Not just the five global leaders themselves, but their colleagues and staff also made themselves available at odd hours. Again, the blending of being on and off work was typical for all global leaders. Working across time zones required global leaders not only to stay on

top of time zones and their changes but also of break times and local holidays. Not knowing local customs makes it harder to be seen as knowledgeable.

Mintzberg's (1973) five participants received their mail through the post their secretaries delivered to their desks; the five participants in our study received almost no snail mail but e-mail instead. Pieces of mail received increased by almost 50%, but none of the leaders complained about too much e-mail. They all acknowledged that they wanted to be kept in the loop, and that e-mail was perhaps the most frequent way for them to communicate – and communicating and connecting people was an essential part of their keeping everyone in the loop, making sure everyone who needs to be informed is informed, can either happen by organizing larger meetings or by copying more people on e-mail. Copying others on e-mail might reduce the need for large meetings. Global leaders in traditional offices spent more time in large meetings than global leaders working from home. Compared to Mintzberg's (1973) managers, the global leaders on average spent only half as much time in scheduled meetings. This could be a result of the greater flexibility new technologies provide (i.e., people can get in touch with others much more easily without having to schedule a meeting). It could also be that global leaders today spend more time in working meetings than in formally scheduled meetings. The five global leaders who participated in our study were all very hands on and performing functional work. This might also be an indication of more distributed leadership, a leadership model that seems particularly suited to global situations where knowledge trumps hierarchy (Toegel & Jonsen, 2016).

Looking at the amount of time the global leaders spent alone or with others, and how much of their time was spent in scheduled versus unscheduled meetings, there was a clear difference between those working in more traditional offices and those working from home. The global leaders working in a traditional office spent about the same amount of time alone as Mintzberg's (1973) managers had (20% of their time for global leaders vs. 22% in Mintzberg's study). In other words, they spent the vast majority of their time with others. The leaders working from home on average spent almost three times as much time alone (63%). But even when they were not on the phone or in an online meeting, their colleagues often were only a button click away. The virtual office extended beyond the walls of their home offices; they were seldom *really* alone.

Leading from a distance created its own challenges, especially when teams faced stressful times. In a global organization, opportunity for global leaders to meet – be it in internal meetings or at trade shows – is always appreciated as an opportunity to get work done more quickly. Cost of travel is part of the cost of being global, a cost that includes much more than just travel, and that is often underestimated.

In addition to their executive roles, the global leaders all performed functional roles. Their staff were looking to them for subject matter expertise and they were hands-on involved in the work of their function both with strategic and tactical work. They were involved in 28 activities on average each day,

which made for a fragmented workday. About a third of these activities directly involved global issues or were of global consequence. Requesting, receiving, and giving information made up the majority of activities for the global leaders, just as they had for Mintzberg's (1973) managers. The complexity all global leaders faced required them to rely on local partners with local knowledge to make the best decisions. The complexities made any decision more challenging and added a layer of uncertainty to all activities.

That global work is characterized by a high degree of complexity and flux is well researched (see literature review above). Organizational responses to globalization are the creation of organizational capacity through the matrixed organization, even though this organization form creates new internal complexities (Pitts & Daniels, 1984). Organizations need leaders who can deal with the cognitive complexity in the global environment and within the organization: global leaders. The global leaders in our study all inhabited and embraced that world.

Global leaders stand firmly in a globalized world characterized by dynamic complexity with its dimensions of multiplicity, interdependence, ambiguity, and flux (Lane et al., 2004). They live in it and embrace a way of life that blurs the traditional boundaries of work and life. Because they keep up with what is going on in the world, because they socialize with team members and business partners, what is and isn't work is sometimes impossible to distinguish. They work at all times of day and night. Black et al. (1999) were right when they called them "global explorers" (p. 48 and also the title of their book). In all aspects of their life do they explore new frontiers and repeatedly put themselves in new situations. They enjoy their lives and don't consider the long hours, the travel, or any of the other added demands a global job brings as a hardship — they simply see it as a way of life. Working from home, the two physical spheres of personal life and work merge.

The blurring of the lines between work and non-work can be understood as border-crosser participation, and raises interesting questions about the relationships between border-crossers and others. New theories on work-life balance help explore this further (Clark, 2000).

Given the complexity of the global workplace, it is not surprising that getting the work done can be accomplished in a variety of different ways. Global leadership is work that needs to be done, and the same leadership job can be accomplished by different people using a range of styles and behaviors. Systems theorists label situations in which different initial conditions can result in similar outcomes or there are equally effective but different ways to achieve the same outcome *equifinality*. There is no one best way to do the job, no one best way to be a global leader (McCall, 2010). Looking at leadership as a social practice calls for a mode of scientific inquiry that rests on close empirical observation (Barley & Kunda, 2001). Observation of global leaders at work is a very good method when we want to better understand the nature of the work global leaders do.

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