

ADVANCES IN GLOBAL
LEADERSHIP

ADVANCES IN GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

Series Editors: Joyce S. Osland, Mark E. Mendenhall
and Ming Li

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For the past decade *Advances in Global Leadership* has landscaped the contours and the anatomy of this evolving field. Volume 11 builds on previous exemplary contributions by bringing together a judicious collection of theoretical and empirical manuscripts with several carefully chosen contributions tackling the perennial question of whether global leadership can be taught. I wholeheartedly recommend it to scholars and practitioners alike for both its accessibility and its insights.

Michael J. Morley PhD, Professor of Management, Kemmy Business School, University of Limerick, Ireland

Advances in Global Leadership (AGL) is a unique and exemplary contribution to the field of global leadership. It has for the last decade been pushing the boundaries on rigorous foundational research on global leadership while also seeking to make contributions to practice. It is home to work by world-renowned scholars and newcomers to the field of leadership. Volume 11 highlights work on the all-important issue of the efficacy of university programs focused on developing global leaders. Given the significant resources expended on these programs such an in-depth review is long overdue. I commend the editorial team for their continuing and significant role in the development of the field of global leadership.

Nakiye A. Boyaciogiller, Sabanci University School of Management, Istanbul, Turkey

Global leaders are able to reach across cultures, building bridges of understanding, and the need for these capabilities has never been greater. *Advances in Global Leadership* consistently delivers the very latest in innovative academic research and practical experiences that define these capabilities. Volume 11 brings a special focus on Global Leadership development programs in academia, which is an important first step in defining what we must keep in mind when working to develop ourselves and the next generation of leaders.

Lisa H. Ruiz, Latin America Area Head, Regulatory International, AbbVie Inc.

Developing global leaders has become a key priority in for-profit and non-profit organizations. Today's executives face unprecedented levels of complexity and challenges of huge proportions and consequence. Navigating these challenges requires "new" leadership competencies, such as agility, imagination, and the ability to engage a diverse set of stakeholders spread across the globe. The papers included in the present volume offer numerous insights into the nature of global leadership and how global leaders can be developed.

Günter Stahl, Professor, International Management, WU (Vienna University of Economics and Business), Vienna

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ADVANCES IN GLOBAL LEADERSHIP VOLUME 11

ADVANCES IN GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

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Communication Association, and International Leadership Association. Some of the presentations have focused on the relationship between international students and faculty in complex classroom environments, pedagogy in higher education, and teaching needs of international students. Her passion for international education, and especially for international students, is apparent in her work at Indiana Tech where she is engaged in many activities with international students and serves as the Chair of International Committee.

NEW RESEARCH ON GLOBAL LEADERSHIP: INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME 11

Joyce S. Osland, Mark E. Mendenhall and Ming Li

As one would expect from the name of this book and e-journal, *Advances in Global Leadership* publishes research and well-crafted essays that grow and advance the field. We seek articles that close the identified gaps in foundational research: construct definition clarification, theory development, identification of antecedents, outcomes and effective performance measures, assessment instruments for selection and development purposes, and developmental methods and processes, as well as richer descriptions and observations of phenomena and comprehensive literature reviews. We also echo calls for synergies between the field of traditional leadership and global leadership, given the limited theoretical and empirical cross-fertilization between these two fields.

There has been an upswing in global leadership research since 2010 (Mendenhall, Li, & Osland, 2016), and we are pleased to report that, according to a comprehensive systematic review (Vijayakumar, Morley, Heraty, Mendenhall, & Osland, 2018), *Advances in Global Leadership* is the most popular home for that research. The call for Volume 11 was unique in that it requested both traditional research topics and global leadership development in the university setting. Given the growth in university programs, we hoped the following suggested topics might foster effective university programs for future leaders:

- Creative pedagogies for global leadership skill development
- Institutional assessment of learning outcomes associated with global leadership skill and competency development
- “Best Practices” in curriculum program design that develops global leadership skills and competencies in students
- Faculty development programs that enhance global leadership knowledge, skills, and competencies in faculty and doctoral students
- Developing global leadership skills in students through formal relationships with foreign universities
- “Best Practices” in study abroad experiences specifically designed to develop the intercultural skills and competencies associated with global leadership

The majority of Volume 11 does in fact address these topics and serves as a wonderful primer for anyone tasked with creating or improving global leadership programs in a university setting.

PART I – EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

Part I of Volume 11, however, contains empirical and theoretical articles on traditional global leadership topics. The first selection, Chapter 1, targets one of the most under-researched topics in the field – global change (Lane, Spector, Osland & Taylor, 2014). In “Here be Paradox: How Global Business Leaders Navigate Change,” Jan Ann Nelson describes a qualitative dissertation study of global business executives who described global changes in their globally integrated enterprises. The results indicated that they navigated complex, continuous change via paradox and sensemaking, aided by learning agility. This article furthers our understanding of the paradoxes faced by global leaders and the process they use to deal with them.

Chapter 2 presents “Leadership in the Global Context: Bibliometric and Thematic Patterns of an Evolving Field” by Pooja B. Vijayakumar, Michael J. Morley, Noreen Heraty, Mark E. Mendenhall, and Joyce S. Osland. This chapter systematically reviews the literature on leaders/managers/supervisors who hold global, expatriate, or international positions. This bibliometric analysis of 327 articles in key management and organizational behavior journals identifies the most cited articles, the most published first authors, the countries of first authors, and the most frequent publishing venues in this field. Next, content analysis identified two dominant themes, global leader development and global leader effectiveness, and the lenses used to study them, providing a point of departure for future research.

The fields of global leadership and global talent management have developed independently in research and practice, with the notable exception of Jürgen Deter’s book, *Global Leadership Talent Management: Successful Selection of Global Leadership Talents as an Integrated Process* (2017). We invited him to submit an excerpt from this book, entitled “Global Leadership Talent Selection as an Integrated Acquisition Process: What makes a Global Leader?,” which is found in Chapter 3. Deters takes a holistic HRM approach to selecting and developing global leaders in organizations that is useful for scholars and practitioners alike.

In Chapter 4, “Unpacking the Complexities of Global Mindset: A Multi-lens Analysis,” Jörg Hruby, Rodrigo Jorge A. de Melo, Eyden Samunderu and Jonathan Hartel carried out an extensive systematic review of the individual-level global mindset literature with the goal of assessing and evaluating its operationalization and measurement. Using an inductive thematic approach, they employed a multi-lens framework to enhance our understanding of this construct and its implications for the development of global mindset for HR professionals, coaches, and trainers.

Chapter 5 looks at behavioral manifestations of global mindset by exploring the intersection between organizational global mindset capability and

managerial practices. In “Managerial Practices of Strategic Global Mindset: Forging the Connection Between Individual Competence and Organizational Capability,” author Rikke Kristine Nielsen reports the results of a three-year case study of middle managers at Solar, a Danish multinational. In this innovative example of an embedded and engaged research design, Nielsen and her co-inquirers identified four emergent managerial practices that supported the company’s global strategic needs with respect to global mindset.

PART II – FEATURED PAPERS: UNIVERSITY GLOBAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Chapter 6 is an example of a creative pedagogy used to teach global leadership skill development. In “The Use of Assessment Center Methodology to Develop Students’ Global Leadership Competencies: A Conceptual Framework and Applied Example,” Ann Herd, Denise Cumberland, William Lovely, III, and Allan Bird describe how they developed an assessment center at Northeastern University. This program, which targets international business majors, complements other international education opportunities, such as study abroad and a global cooperative work program.

Most descriptions of global leadership development programs in university settings make reference to David Kolb’s (1984) experiential learning theory and Mezirow’s (1978) transformative learning. The subfield of responsible global leadership shows that companies also rely on global experiences and reflection for developmental purposes (Stahl, Pless, Maak, & Miska, 2018). At the same time, both universities and companies are promoting online learning, prompting the question and title of Chapter 7: “Can Global Leadership Be Taught Online?” Mark Mendenhall answers this question and reflects on his experience moving to online teaching after decades of teaching global leadership in traditional, face-to-face classroom settings.

The next four chapters address study abroad in university settings. For many years, expatriation was heralded as the best way to develop global leadership (Black, Morrison, & Gregersen, 1999). More recently, short-term immersion programs including international service learning (Stahl et al., 2018) and even leveraged business travel (Johnson, 2014) have proven to be effective in global leadership development. Thus, it is not surprising that universities turn first to study abroad and international service learning as methods for developing global leadership or (its counterpart on some campuses) global citizenship.

Chapter 8 takes us on a deep dive into a small, carefully designed and researched study abroad program in Costa Rica. In “Developing the Next Generation of Global Leaders: Proposing an Iterative Framework for Student Global Leadership Development,” Stephanie Quirk and James “Gus” Gustafson took a grounded theory embedded mixed method approach to understand what type of study abroad experiences seem to lead to the development of global leadership competencies in a community college population. They also discussed personal characteristics that seemed to impact learning and personal growth. Based

on these findings, they are the first to propose a process model for Student Global Leadership Development.

Chapter 9 describes and compares three different study abroad programs in “Do All Roads Lead to Global Leadership? Three Approaches to Teaching Global Leadership in Modern Business Schools.” Authors Komal Kalra, Mike Szymanski, and Anna Olszewska describe their school’s programs. Next, they analyze them based upon [Brake’s \(1997\)](#) competency framework and [Oddou and Mendenhall’s \(2018\)](#) depiction of methods that are most likely to result in personal transformation. This chapter lists positive and negative aspects of these programs, underscoring the point that not all programs are equally effective.

Chapter 10 describes a very different and creative approach to study abroad in a master’s program in global leadership. “Canadian Global Leadership Students Engaged in Strategic Partnerships in Ecuador” was written by ten authors, an indication of a dynamic partnership: Wendy Rowe, Wanda Krause, Gary Hayes, Lisa Corak, Sean Wilcox, Gesow Azam, Shina Bopari, Major Fabricio Cordova, Lt Colonel Robert Vargas, and Lt Colonel Fabricio Varela. The authors describe how the program, with its purpose of developing global-minded citizens who are interculturally competent and capable of working in international partnerships, unfolded and developed. Based on student interviews, they identified key aspects of the network building process.

Chapter 11 provides an interesting look at global leadership as an emerging discipline. In “The Global Leadership Field and Doctoral Education: Advancing the Discipline Through a Targeted Curriculum,” Yulia Tolstikov-Mast, Franziska Bieri, Jennie L. Walker, Alicia Wireman, and Vlad Vaiman explain how disciplines develop and the impact this has on curriculum development and revision. They compare and contrast doctoral-level degree programs in global leadership. Finally, they describe the curriculum revision process at Indiana Tech’s doctoral program in Global Leadership as an example of the complex and multidisciplinary approach required to prepare global leadership scholars-practitioners.

CONCLUSION

In our final chapter, “Global Leadership Development in the University Setting and Future Directions for Advancing Global Leadership Research,” the editors, with the help and wisdom of Martha Petrone, present the conclusions of an Internet search for global leadership programs and courses. They list helpful research and criteria for designing and assessing effective university global leadership programs and study abroad programs with similar goals. Benchmarks are suggested to maximize the potential impact of various development programs. Finally, we summarize the book’s research findings and address future research needed to advance the field of global leadership.

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- Joyce: To Asbjorn and our burgeoning family – Jessica, Joe, Zoe, Lucy, Michael, Anna, Jacob, Gavin, Katrina, Scott, Isabelle, and June.
- Mark: To Janet and my wonderful grandchildren: William, Thomas, Amy, James, Timothy, and Eleanor.
- Ming: To my son Riqian Li, with pride for what you have achieved during your first year at university.

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PART I
EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

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HERE BE PARADOX: HOW GLOBAL BUSINESS LEADERS NAVIGATE CHANGE

Janet Ann Nelson

ABSTRACT

Although managing global change is one of the key competencies demanded of global leaders, it is one of the most under-researched topics in the field (Lane, Spector, Osland, & Taylor, 2014). This chapter shares findings from a recent qualitative study that examined how global business leaders navigate complex global changes. Data were collected from 23 global business executives working for 20 unique global enterprises, in 12 different functions, through a pre-interview participant qualifying profile, an in-depth semi-structured interview, and follow-up verification. Findings reveal that global business executives are contextual leaders who juggle both global task and global relationship complexities. The paradox is the process they employ to navigate continuous change, enabled by sensemaking. Finally, as agile learners, they prove that the global leadership capabilities required to navigate paradox can be learned.

Keywords: Global leadership; globalization; navigating change; paradox; sensemaking; learning agility

INTRODUCTION

Ancient mapmakers reputedly used the Latin words *hc svnt dracones* (here be dragons) and a picture of a dragon on their maps to indicate unexplored and potentially dangerous waters for early explorers (Dempsey, 2012). Today's global leaders operate in an increasingly fast-changing, complex world, and they must navigate the unknown without labeled maps or sophisticated GPS systems.

Globalization has resulted in increased international trade, enhanced information flows, diasporas, and a greater dependence on the global economy, as well as dramatically changing the context in which leaders operate today. Lane, Maznevski, and Mendenhall (2004) have observed “Globalization is a manifestation of complexity,” and it flows from the conditions of multiplicity, interdependence, ambiguity, and constant change (p. 4). Studies show that there is a shortage of global leaders and that most organizations are concerned that this lack of global leadership skills may threaten corporate performance and continued business growth (Black, Morrison, & Gregersen, 1999; DDI, 2015; Deloitte, 2015; Ernst & Young, 2012; Ghemawat, 2012; IBM, 2010; Mercer, 2017; PWC, 2012; World Economic Forum, 2013, 2015).

Global leadership as a field is still fairly new – emerging in the mid-1980s, taking hold in the 1990s, and growing rapidly today (Mendenhall, Li, & Osland, 2016). Increasing interest in global leadership from both the research and practice communities has given birth to a new subfield in both international management and international human resource management (Mendenhall et al., 2018, p. viii). As a young research field, it has also experienced “growing pains” – lack of a construct definition, underconceptualization of global leadership, and fragmented research agendas and sampling criteria (Reiche, Bird, Mendenhall, & Osland, 2017). Ironically, Lane, Spector, Osland, and Taylor (2014) have asserted that managing global change is one of the key competencies demanded of global leaders; however, leading change in the global context is one of the most under-researched topics in global leadership. As Osland, Ehret, and Ruiz (2017) noted, “the omnipresent need for agility in transnational firms and the high demands of both task and relationship complexity in global change initiatives make this particular domain of global leadership ripe for study” (p. 43).

Similarly, paradox research is also rapidly expanding. Ford and Brackoff (1988) define paradox as “some ‘thing’ that is constructed by individuals when oppositional tendencies are brought into recognizable proximity through reflection or interaction” (p. 89); Lewis (2000) characterizes paradox as both a framework and an inquiry. In the most recent special issue on paradox, Smith, Erez, Jarvenpaa, Lewis, and Tracey (2017) posit that the time is right to further enrich theories of paradox, change, and innovation. Most of the research on paradox has focused on the organizational level, but microfoundation/individual-level research on leaders is now starting to emerge (Waldman & Bowen, 2016). Within that subset of research, to date, very little research has focused specifically on global leaders and paradox. Empirical studies to date include Osland’s (2000) study of expatriate paradoxes and Fredberg’s (2014) study of Global CEO’s approach to managing paradoxes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study focused on the intersection between two constructs, *global leadership* and *change*, situated in two contexts, *globalization* and *globally integrated enterprises* (GIEs). These four elements framed the following brief literature review.

Globalization

Globalization is defined as “a multidimensional process whereby markets, firms, production, and national financial systems are integrated on a global scale” (Brawley, 2011). In contrast, Lane et al. (2004) defined globalization as “a manifestation of complexity” that “flows from the conditions of multiplicity, interdependence, ambiguity and constant change” (p. 4). Keohane and Nye (2000) posited that globalization is the growth of “globalism” and that it is important to examine the shift from “thin” globalization to increasingly “thick” globalization. They attributed the expanding thickness of globalization to (1) the increased density of interdependent networks, (2) the increased velocity of communications at the institutional level, and (3) the increased transnational participation across distances and cultures (Keohane & Nye, 2000). Numerous scholars have asserted that globalization is not new, and it is intensifying in terms of pervasiveness, complexity, interconnectedness, and frequency (Black & Morrison, 2014; Evans, Pucik, & Bjorkman, 2002; Friedman, 2005; Gundling, Caldwell, & Cvitkovich, 2015; Keohane & Nye, 2000; Osland, 2003).

Lane et al. (2004) opined that globalization is defined by structures and best managed by processes and people. Organization structures have also changed as corporations became more global. Marquardt, Berger, and Loan (2004) identified four progressively more complex stages of organization structures: (1) domestic, (2) international, (3) multinational/multiregional, and (4) global. Characteristics of Stage 4 global structures include global business strategy; significant competitors; large, worldwide markets; mass, customized product and process engineering; globalized least cost production; mixed centralized/decentralized organization structures; and critical importance of cultural sensitivity (Marquardt et al., pp. 136–137). Palmisano (2006) describes these organizations as GIEs or “a company that fashions its strategy, its management and its operations in pursuit of a new goal: the integration of production and value delivery worldwide. State borders define less and less the boundaries of corporate thinking or practice” (p. 129).

Global Leadership

Global leadership is grounded in the recent phenomenon of globalization, and many global leadership scholars have their roots in international management rather than in traditional leadership (Osland, 2015a). Global scholars indicate that the field of global leadership is just 25 years old (Black & Morrison, 2014; Javidan & Bowen, 2013; Maznevski, Stahl, & Mendenhall, 2013; Mendenhall et al., 2013). Yukl (2013) points out that social scientists have defined leadership in terms of the portion of it that interests them rather than taking a holistic view. Similarly, global leadership is challenged by numerous and often confusing definitions. Mendenhall, Reiche, Bird, and Osland (2012) argue that “the lack of a precise, rigorous, and commonly accepted definition of global leadership limits the field’s conceptual and empirical progress” (p. 493). Reiche et al. (2017) define global leadership as “the processes and actions through which an individual 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” (p. 556).

In keeping with this perspective on global leadership, [Mendenhall and Bird \(2013\)](#) identified two key elements: *complexity* and *boundary spanning*. They described globalization as “intense, extreme complexity” that involves the dynamic interplay of four drivers: multiplicity, interdependence, ambiguity, and flux. *Flux* is also described as “rapid, unpredictable change in many directions” ([Lane & Maznevski, 2013](#), p. 14; [Osland, 2015b](#), p. 5). The second dimension, boundary spanning, consists of the creation and navigation of linkages and networks across economic, functional, geographic, cultural, linguistic, religious, educational, political, and legal systems. [Mendenhall et al.’s \(2016\)](#) recent review of the literature found more than 600 scholarly works published since 1990, most in the last 10 years. They identified that there is (1) a continuing need to rigorously operationalize global leadership definitions and typologies; (2) a predominance of articles on culture, competencies, job analysis, expert cognition, and development; and (3) a need to broaden global leadership research into new emerging areas.

The global leadership typology ([Reiche et al., 2017](#)) is the first attempt to start building a global leadership theory, and it examines task and relationship complexities to more precisely conceptualize global leadership roles: “Working from the assumption that leadership depends on the context in which it occurs, context constitutes a critical contingency factor that determines specific global leadership roles and their requirements” ([Mendenhall & Reiche, 2018](#), p. 395). The task complexity dimension focuses on both the variety and flux within work tasks. The relationship complexity dimension focuses on the number and variation of boundaries and interdependences ([Reiche et al., 2017](#), p. 556). The global leadership typology also illustrates the competing priorities and dynamic tensions of different global leadership roles. The authors strongly recommend that the typology should be used in sample selection to enhance clearer understanding of research results and limits on generalizability.

Global Change

Change is one of [Marquardt and Berger’s \(2000\)](#) twenty-first-century global leadership transformations; they posited that the world is shifting rapidly from a Newtonian mindset to a quantum world of chaos (pp. 15–16). [Brown and Eisenhardt \(1997\)](#) found that many computer firms compete by changing continuously, and they reported that change is “frequent, rapid, and even endemic to the firm” (p. 3). [Chia \(1999\)](#) observed that organizations are more comfortable maintaining stability and orderliness, rather than the paradox of flux, movement, change, and transformation; he advocated rethinking change as a dynamic, transformative process, noting that “Change, surprise, and unexpected novel outcomes are the *sine qua non* of living systems” (p. 224). [Tsoukas and Chia \(2002\)](#) went even further, asserting that change is pervasive in organizations and reframing change as “organizational becoming.”

Worley and Mohrman (2014) argued that traditional change management may be obsolete, and disruptive change is the new normal. Pasmore (2015) asserted that most change efforts fail because most change methods are built to deal with single, linear changes, not the fast-moving, complex, simultaneous, technology-intertwined, global changes that bombard leaders today. Unfortunately, leaders' ability to respond has not kept up. "We need to get better at leading complex, continuous change, and we need to do so as quickly as we can" (Pasmore, 2015, p. 14). What makes complex, continuous change different is balancing multiple priorities, integrating efforts, not exceeding capacity, and broader and deeper engagement.

Lane et al. (2014) defined *global strategic change* as "strategically aligned alterations in patterns of employee behavior across national boundaries" (p. 232). It differs from domestic or intracultural change due to four key variables: context, distance, time, and focus (business context); culture is further defined as a boundary condition. Williams (2015) described the actual work of global change agents as leading by crossing internal and external boundaries, busting boundaries, transcending boundaries, and building bridges. Osland et al. (2017) commented, "Boundary spanning skills like these are dictated by the global context and the nature of global work and intercultural collaborations" (p. 45).

In the Center for Creative Leadership's recent study of global leadership gaps, Leslie (2015) found that change management is one of the top five leadership skills in terms of both importance and leadership deficit. In her review of global leadership change, Osland (2013) posited that culture, both the predisposition to change and how change itself are viewed and managed, is an important element. She concluded that "The research on global change leadership is more anecdotal than empirical and therefore warrants further study" (p. 213). Lane et al. (2014) asserted that managing global change is one of the key competencies demanded of global leaders; however, leading change in the global context is one of the most under-researched topics in global leadership (p. 229). Osland et al. (2017) also commented:

Perhaps not all global leaders have to be, by definition, change agents; nevertheless, the omnipresent need for agility in transnational firms and the high demands of both task and relationship complexity in global change initiatives make this particular domain of global leadership ripe for study. (p. 43)

In the introduction to their special issue on paradox and change, editors Louart, Durant, Downs, and Besson (2006) asserted, "In the context of organization change management, paradoxes – with their underlying ambiguities and unstated assumptions – are vehicles for advancing our understanding of change processes" (pp. 421–423). Paradox also abandons the notion that change is smooth, linear, and planned (Brown & Eisenhardt, 1997; Lewis, 2000, p. 760).

Paradox

Global leadership is characterized by complexity and competing priorities, hence the importance of paradox. Smith and Lewis (2011) defined paradoxes as

“contradictory yet interrelated elements that exist simultaneously and persist over time” (p. 382), and they found that paradox is also integrative and dynamic. [Schad, Lewis, Raisch, and Smith \(2016\)](#) stressed the two core characteristics of paradox: *contradiction* and *interdependence*, asserting that “paradoxes intensify, as contemporary organizations and their environments become increasingly global, fast-paced and complex” (pp. 6–7). [Smith, Lewis, and Tushman \(2016\)](#) describe today’s leadership as a form of dynamic equilibrium that balances three interdependent and contradictory tensions: today versus tomorrow, within versus across boundaries, and shareholders versus broader stakeholders.

[Waldman and Bowen \(2016\)](#) described a paradox-savvy leader as one who effectively handles “(1) paradoxes that are inherent in the practice of leadership in terms of agency and communication and (2) paradoxes that are inherent in terms of the ‘now’ and ‘next’ demands of sustained organizational effectiveness” (p. 318). While paradox scholars have addressed the disruptiveness of globalization, to date, most of the research on paradox has been at the organizational versus the individual level of analysis ([Schad et al., 2016](#); [Waldman & Bowen, 2016](#)). Recent individual-level studies have focused on Danish middle managers ([Lüscher, 2012](#); [Lüscher & Lewis, 2008](#)), leaders in a US hybrid public–private organization ([Jay, 2013](#)), global CEOs ([Fredberg, 2014](#)), top leaders in five hypercompetitive organizations ([Lewis, Andriopoulos, & Smith, 2014](#)), business unit leaders ([Smith, 2014](#)), Chinese supervisors ([Zhang, Waldman, Han, & Li, 2015](#)), individual microfoundations in US, UK, Israel, and China firms ([Miron-Spektor, Ingram, Keller, Smith, & Lewis, 2017](#)), and Singaporean public sector leaders ([Soon, Yan, & Bolden, 2017](#)). Of note, (1) there is no one common theme; (2) while paradox scholars talk about the disruptiveness of globalization, little research has been done with global leadership populations; and (3) most of the research is qualitative, as new measures and assessments ([Miron-Spektor et al., 2017](#); [Zhang et al., 2015](#)) are just beginning to be published.

In one of the first quantitative studies, [Zhang et al. \(2015\)](#) defined paradoxical leadership behaviors (PLB) as “Leader behaviors that are seemingly competing yet interrelated, to meet competing workplace demands simultaneously and over time, [...] dynamic and synergistic approaches to contradictions in organizational management” (p. 539), and they developed five empirically validated five PLB measures: (1) self-centeredness and other-centeredness; (2) maintaining both distance and closeness; (3) treating subordinates uniformly and allowing for individualization; (4) enforcing work requirements and allowing for flexibility; and (5) maintaining decision control and allowing for autonomy.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine how senior executives in global business enterprises navigate change. Change in this study had three elements: experiencing change, understanding change, and leading future changes. Therefore, the primary research question was: *How do global leaders navigate change?* The secondary research questions were: (1) how do global leaders

experience organizational change, including paradox? (2) how do global leaders report that they understand the changes that they have experienced? and (3) how do global leaders translate this understanding into the future organizational changes that they lead? Given the extreme complexity, interdependencies, multiple boundaries, and frequency of change (flux) cited by the global leadership literature, this study examined change through the lens of paradox theory. Heeding the “growing pains” of earlier global leadership research, Reiche et al.’s (2017) definition and global leadership typology were used to qualify, select, and understand global leaders with different roles.

This exploratory study employed a basic qualitative design and interpretative analysis. Participants were selected in two steps. First, organizations were selected that met [Palmisano’s \(2006\)](#) definition of a GIE. Second, within these targeted organizations a snowballing technique was used to identify potential participants who met the following criteria: (1) have at least 10 years of full-time work experience, with at least five years of experience in a global leadership role; (2) hold a senior leadership role in their company, as denoted by the title of “director,” “executive,” “general manager,” “vice president,” or “president;” (3) currently hold a job requiring leadership of cross-border business activities and management of multicultural teams; (4) have experienced a major change; and (5) have current or past experience leading a global change.

Data were collected in three ways: (1) a pre-interview participant qualifying profile; (2) an in-depth semi-structured interview; and (3) follow-up verification, which are detailed in [Table 1](#). In addition to open-ended questions, two measures were employed. First, in the participant qualifying profile, each global leader was asked to self-report on his/her global leadership role, using a checklist constructed from the Global Leadership Typology ([Reiche et al., 2017](#)). Second, in the interview, participants were asked to discuss their experiences with each of five specific of PLB, using the [Zhang et al. \(2015\)](#) measures, as well as identifying any additional paradoxes that occur in their global roles.

As illustrated in [Table 2](#), the study participants included 23 global executives, working for 20 unique global enterprises, in 12 different functions, across 18 different industries. While most participants worked in the United States, the headquarters of their organizations were located in seven different countries, and all study participants managed employees in multiple countries. The companies varied in size, with 2015 total revenues ranging from US\$ 150 million to US\$ 150 billion. Study participants also reported that their firms’ percentage of sales outside of the headquarters home country ranged from 28% to 90% of 2015 total revenues. Participants reported an average of 24.3 years of full-time work experience, with a range of 10–50 years. Participants also reported an average of 11.0 years of global leadership experience, with a range of 5–30 years.

The interviews were recorded and manually transcribed. All forms of data collected were initially analyzed manually, but the analytic process was expanded to include MaxQDA11 software to organize the large volume of data. The analysis was organized in several steps. First, the researcher holistically reviewed the individual transcripts and created memos. Next, themes and codes were assigned to describe, categorize, and interpret specific elements across the