

Administering an international hospitality education program

by Karen Lieberman

Understanding the political structure of education and applying principles of political action may help avoid the destruction of educational alliances formed between partners of divergent backgrounds. The author discusses how this form of analysis may also be of benefit in understanding the problem technically-oriented hospitality programs from abroad often have articulating with the academic administrations in most American universities.

A story has been told about President Woodrow Wilson who, while attending a White House dinner, was asked if he missed his job as president of Princeton University. He responded by saying that he was glad to be president of the United States so he could get away from university politics. Perhaps he overstated the case, but anyone who has taught at a university can understand Wilson's reference.

Universities, like other bureaucracies, consist of constantly shifting political factions. Researchers have deemed this phenomenon as it

occurs in educational institutions as the "micropolitics of education." Utilization of this theory enables one to understand the inherent tension that occurs between an academic-minded university hierarchy and the more practical-minded technical training of some hospitality management programs. Adding to this tension is the cross-cultural abyss that appears when a hospitality program in the United States affiliates itself with a foreign technical school. Such activities are sometimes referred to as 2+2. A typical example occurs when a hotel school abroad offers a two-year program to students who then become eligible to obtain a bachelor's degree in hotel management after an additional two years of study at an American university. The American school confers the bachelor's degree.

Micropolitics examined

Micropolitics of education theory concerns itself with the

interaction and political ideologies of social systems of faculty, administrators, and students within the school organization.¹ Iannaccone originally tried to understand how teachers at the building level (the school) influenced the behavior of principals. The question revealed a more complex set of mutual dependencies that introduced the phrase “micropolitics of education.” This theory was rephrased as the “politics that take place in and around schools.”² The politics can occur at any level of education, primary through tertiary.

In politics, discussions of such matters as power, conflict, and policy are prevalent. Within the field of micropolitics of schooling several themes³ have surfaced:

- ideologies and values of subsystems of teachers and administrators in schools
- boundaries and turf
- maintenance and bureaucratic myths
- policy remaking in site-level implementation
- mobilization of bias in organizational life
- reality creation in organizations as a study of power
- privatization of conflict
- salient structures and tasks around which people, then leaders, then coalitions and loyalties develop

Based on these major themes, research on school micropolitics focuses on the strains and tensions that stem from diverse sources of

power, rival interests, and intractable conflicts within and around schools. Such research can attempt to understand how these political phenomena affect the way in which schools cope with fundamental educational and social issues.

Morgan sees it as creating a unified direction for diverse educational personnel: “By recognizing that an organization is intrinsically political, in the sense that ways must be found to create order and direction among people with potentially diverse and conflicting interests, much can be learned about the problems and legitimacy of management as a process of government, and about the relationship of the organization to society.”⁴

Bacharach and Mundell developed the concept of “logics of action” as the focus of political struggle in school organizations, arguing that the interest group is an appropriate unit of analysis for political studies of school organization.⁵ If one uses a Weberian (as opposed to a Marxian or Neo-Machiavellian) perspective, politics do not emerge simply from structures; politics emerge from the interplay of different systems of meaning. The construct of logics of action expands on the Weberian notion of social action. Logics of action are constructs to designate “forms of coherence among objectives,”⁶ or goals, which then become criteria that can be used to evaluate individual decisions and procedures and organizational

Figure 1
School politics by perspective

Marxian	Neo-Machiavellian	Weberian
Politics are predicted by structure.	Politics are predicted by interaction between leadership and structure.	Politics emerge from the interplay of different systems of meaning.
Ex: Schools are political because teachers are workers and administrators are managers.	Ex: Schools are political because the structure of schools necessitates their domination by a strong principal.	Ex: Schools are political because structures cannot predict all situations leaving uncertainty; meaning and action are to be negotiated by participants.

practices, or means.⁷

Understanding logics of action is fundamental to negotiating in times of uncertainty. Uncertainty appears as a fundamental problem for complex organizations⁸ and coping with it is at the core of the administrative process. In a joint program of study, cross-cultural misunderstandings only add to this problem. The unknown nature of the organization and operation at a foreign location exacerbate the concerns encountered when opening a program overseas. Combining uncertainty with bounded rationality makes it difficult to specify goals and the means to them. Bounded rationality states that cognitive processing limits make it impossible to achieve purely rational decisions on the basis of complete information.⁹

Various logics of action exist in different types of schools. These logics of action can become belief systems that govern behavior

within organizations. In organizations, logics of action can be manifested both as sweeping ideologies and as specific policies.¹⁰ Ideology refers to broad beliefs while policy refers to a behaviorally anchored belief that directs actions. Whether or not logics of action are manifested as broad ideologies or specific policies, these belief systems implicitly govern decisions about both goals and means, thus indirectly linking them together. Therefore, a clash will exist when an organization is composed of differing types of logics of action.

Educators differ

Pertinent to hospitality education, the logics of action of technical trainers are different from the logics of action of academic educators. The logics of action of a technical trainer will focus on an employable student, concentrating the education on skills learning. The logics of action of an academic

Figure 2
Manifestations of logics of action of technical trainers

	Ideology	Policy
Goals	employability	training students in skills sought after by employers
Means	standardized technical skills and training	closely supervised classes

educator focus on producing a critically-thinking individual; the educational process is concentrated on engaging in analytical thinking.

Barnard sees the struggle over logics of action as occurring through leadership.¹¹ In higher education it would be manifested as a strong university president or chancellor, or the absence of such a central figure. Deal and Kennedy see the struggle of forming a unified logic of action through the emergence of an organizational culture.¹² Others see the struggle occurring through the restructuring of the processes by which logics of action are defined.¹³ However, whether the contention for logics of action in a school is manifested through ideologies, policies, goals, or

means, it is the focus of both the symbolic and real political contest within the organization.

While this framework has not been applied systematically to the study of educational innovations, it is an appropriate framework for a study of two schools working together on a mutual undertaking. This article focuses on the development of joint educational projects that involve schools of differing cultures working in concert. Micropolitical theory can assist in the creation of a smoothly run partnership.

Education internationalizes

Many American universities today are searching for educational partners in foreign locales to broaden student horizons. Several

Figure 3
Manifestations of logics of action of academic educators

	Ideology	Policy
Goals	critical/analytical intelligence	exposure to world-wide arts and humanities; training in critical thinking
Means	engage in critical thinking and problem solving	broad readings and work in problem solving

European hospitality schools have forged partnerships with American universities. In a previous case study¹⁴ a private Swiss hospitality college joined with a state-funded American university to offer a bachelor's degree in hospitality administration. There was disagreement over faculty standards, student standards, monetary issues, and more. These differences caused factions to form and dissension to arise at the joint program location. There were several issues of contention. The roots of the disputes frequently stemmed from cultural differences. A micropolitical perspective can be utilized to scrutinize this type of situation.

Politically contentious issues in a school partnership can be analyzed through the lens of "logics of action." This case study demonstrates how competing logics of action of a private Swiss technical college and an American state-funded university were unable to contend and compromise because of an unsuitable administrative struc-

ture. Instead, partial and ill-conceived "logics of action" based solely on the views and personalities of individual administrators guided policy decisions. The result was instability and wildly vacillating policies. The institution was never able to attain a "normal" stable internal political life based on the interplay between coherent interest groups negotiating their differences. Table 1 illustrates results under different administrators.

Marshall and Scribner¹⁵ propose eight micropolitical themes that can be used as the basis for studying a partnership between an American university and a foreign technical college. The themes and potential problems are as follows:

- **Differing ideologies and values:** The educational ideology of a private technical hospitality college is to develop a professional, well-trained, highly skilled hospitality graduate while maintaining a profit. A liberal arts ideology

Table 1
Potential personality driven logics of action of administrators

	Ideology			Policy		
	Admin. #1	Admin. #2	Admin. #3	Admin. #1	Admin. #2	Admin. #3
Goals	Students are like soldiers	The world is your school	Quality through exclusion	School is like work	Laissez faire	Take charge
Means	Autocratic, rigid organization	Students take charge of their own organization	Limit admissions for quality	Professional conduct rules, e.g., dress code	Whatever works	Threaten if do not get own way

would lean toward developing a critically thinking, problem-solving individual capable of directing others in the hospitality field.

- **Turf struggles:** The location of the school may cause a turf struggle. Local administrators in a foreign country may feel that their customs and standards should predominate since this is where the school is located. However, American administrators and faculty may inadvertently attempt to suppress the foreign component in order to establish and maintain an American school on foreign soil with American values and ideals.
- **Bureaucratic myths:** A partnership forges a new entity, which must respect the histories of both institutions. Customs and rituals will grow; these should be encouraged and stimulated to fortify the partnership. These become part of the joint history or the “myths.” If equal importance is not given to each institution, there will be difficulties in forming joint bureaucratic myths.
- **Policy remaking on site:** Educational policies would be newly formulated in a joint venture. The policies of the partner schools may differ on very fundamental items such as entrance requirements. Lack of agreement would damage the partnership.
- **Mobilization of bias:** Both faculty and staff will come to a partnership with their own biases whether they are cultural, institutional, or organizational. Respect and understanding for each other’s cultures and establishments are essential to the partnership. Insensitive, disrespectful management leads to alienated faculty and staff.
- **“Reality creation” to study power:** Organizational leadership has the power to determine which issues are relevant and critical. This not only defines the “reality creation,” but it also defines the power of the organization by identifying the acceptable reality. When two disparate cultures are working together in an organizational setting, there will be differences of opinion on what is important (“the acceptable reality”). For example, a technical college may consider uniforms to be of utmost importance; academic university faculty may find it difficult to support this concern.
- **Privatization of conflict:** Micropolitical conflict occurs within the walls of the institution. Conflict will occur between different subgroups (faculty, students, administrators) or between members within a subgroup (e.g., disagreement among administrators on organizational issues).

• **Salient structures and tasks:**

These are those around which people, then leaders, then coalitions and loyalties develop. When subsystems or groups link through common ideologies or tasks there is potential for power. In the case of two culturally diverse organizations working together, common language and mores will cause subsystems and groups to form even more so than common ideologies.

Problem can be solved

Key issues need to be negotiated in advance of any partnership formation; a well-defined contract is crucial. Problems that need to be addressed can arise in three areas: a relative lack of consensus in the area of goal attainment; the ideological basis for much of what happens in schools; and the presence of conflict over means and ends in most schools.¹⁶

First, there must be a consensus in goal attainment. A good contract should detail the goals. In order to achieve these objectives, the contract could include job descriptions succinctly stating which partner has responsibility for the different segments of the endeavor. The partners must agree to oversee their portions with great care, as it is difficult enough to have a joint venture.

Second, if the ideological basis underlying the programs is different for each partner then a compromise must be worked out. For example, the ideology of the

first partner school may be technically oriented since this school prides itself on producing a highly skilled graduate capable of competing in the marketplace. The second partner school strives to produce a critically-thinking student who is capable of problem solving and who therefore could enter the management marketplace. It is in the best interest of this partnership to develop a common goal for its graduates. A final goal statement in this regard might read: "will meet the need for critically thinking, problem-solving professionals with advanced training in both the liberal arts and in international hospitality management."

If such a compromise is not reached, there will be conflict over means and ends within the school, which is Ball's third point.¹⁷ Administrators will bicker over the "means" (the type of education, e.g., technical vs. academic) and the "ends" (a "highly regarded" graduate with either a strong technical education or a strong academic education). If an amalgamation of the two types of education is not achieved, a stable partnership will not exist.

Conflicts are inevitable

When an organization is composed of differing types of logics of action, conflicts are inevitable. Political interest groups will contend for differing visions and policies. Ordinarily in an educational setting interest groups would form around specific roles and functions occupied within the school.

Occasionally outside interest groups, such as parents, legislators, private funders, etc., also play an important role in internal campus politics. This analysis will be confined to the primary internal interest groups (subsystems), as they are the ones that customarily interact in a political manner within a college campus.

One interest group is comprised of the students. Although students usually remain at the institution for a limited period of time, they have a very large stake in the operations of the college. Their careers in education are affected. Students also have common living quarters on a residential campus and they interact extensively on a social level in and outside the classroom. On the other hand, the likelihood of students coalescing into a unified and effective interest group is limited by the transitory nature of the population, the subordinate role of students in the institutional hierarchy, the youth and inexperience of most students, intense outside interests of a social nature, etc. As college administrators in the 1960s learned, students may become a powerful interest group, but the usual state of affairs has students relatively fragmented and only sporadically influential in internal campus politics.

The faculty comprises another interest group. In U.S. colleges and universities, faculty members are given an organized voice through a faculty senate and sometimes a union. Faculty governance is also practiced in most academic depart-

ments; curriculum, personnel, course scheduling, and other matters are customarily handled through collegial governance mechanisms. In U.S. institutions of higher education faculty tend to be a very important interest group capable of major alliances with, or clashes against, other internal interest groups.

Administrators form another normal interest group on a college campus. In a partnership, there may be a two-headed administration. If this is the case, it is important to determine a mechanism for it to operate; if not, it will be at war with itself. The administrators will then be utterly incapable of coalescing into a distinct interest group.

Interest groups needed

If a school is left without the usual set of functioning interest groups, it will function much like societies headed by dictatorships which have forcibly suppressed the emergence of a "civil society" (intermediary organizations and groups between a government and its people). The school then is subject to the decisions of individuals in leadership roles that are not cushioned by the give-and-take of interest group maneuvering and negotiation. In such circumstances, policy decisions are made without regularized or consistent feedback from organized constituencies. Often they reflect the personality of the policy maker as much as they do broader realities of the institution. Politics tend to take the form of

Table 2
Logics of action of a private, technical school

	Ideology	Policy
Goals	employable student	train students in skills sought by employer
Means	standardized skills training	close supervision, i.e., faculty, staff, curriculum, budget, etc.

internal (often totally personalized) battles within the governing group; policies can change drastically depending on who is in the position of authority. Power struggles become commonplace.

Consistent with Bacharach and Mundell,¹⁸ the following tables define the competing “logics of action” of a privately funded technical school and a state-funded, public university.

If competing logics of action are not allowed to confront each other through normal interest group politics, these groups will not interact, aborting any attempt to fuse them into an amalgam. In short, the micropolitics of a joint venture can become severely truncated by inappropriate administrative structures. It is suggested that issues be handled through interest group negotiation, and not through power plays by individual administrators.

Actions must be managed

Compelling logics of action within a micropolitical context manifest themselves in varying ways. Actions need to be managed in advance and/or during a partnership in order to solve problems

and resolve discrepancies; it is unacceptable for differences to interfere with educational delivery. There are seven themes inherent in the micropolitics of education which are particularly pertinent to international hospitality educational endeavors:

- **Differing ideologies and values:** Teachers and administrators create social systems within schools. This relationship, which involves growth, change, and the implementation of policy, is the function of micropolitics, the political process of the daily allocation of stakes or interests. Diverse ideologies and values should be encouraged. A for-profit, market-oriented ideology will lead to technical training for market success. A humanistic, self-aware/critical thinking ideology leads to a broader liberal arts approach. Respect and continuing awareness of the importance of both are crucial to a joint endeavor that crosses these ideological lines. Technically-oriented educators may stress attendance policies

and on-time performance in order to emulate the workplace. Even though the typical U.S. faculty member might not see this as important, in a partnership, the technical faculty must be corroborated in order to achieve a strong union.

The direct relationship between administration and faculty is also related to differing ideologies and values. A market-oriented school might not appreciate a faculty voice. However, when a faculty has no voice, and is dictated to by the administration, it will be a dissatisfied faculty, which will find a way to air its complaints. If the administration does not allow complaints to be aired, a likely venue will be the classroom. This will create havoc, frustration, and discontent. College faculty members appreciate having input on university policies. An energetic and dynamic faculty council can enhance an educational setting. Checks and balances can be put

in place so that it does not become one sided.

- **Turf struggles:** Originally, this theme referred to the informal negotiation between the administrator zone and the teacher zone.¹⁹ A faculty council may assist in this regard. Also, committee work and other means for culturally divergent micropolitical groups to function together could assist in maintaining a political balance.

In the instance of an American school and a foreign school operating at the foreign site,²⁰ it is of utmost importance to establish and agree on as many rules and policies for institutional governance prior to the partnership incorporation as possible. A strong contract, as well as faculty and student handbooks detailing policies and procedures, will assist in avoiding detrimental situations. It is also essential to include a tool for correcting and resolving discrepancies.

Table 3
Logics of action of a state-funded, public university

	Ideology	Policy
Goals	an analytical thinking individual capable of leadership	broad exposure to arts and humanities; broad worldly experiences
Means	engage in problem solving to improve critical and analytical thinking skills	employ well-rounded faculty; loose supervision, excellent resources, i.e., library, computers, etc.

- **Maintenance and bureaucratic myths:**

A rational assertion to one group may be irrational to another, causing the determination of bureaucratic rationality to be difficult between two culturally divergent groups. With two culturally diverse groups, this would likely fall along cultural lines. Cross-cultural committee work and sensitivity training help overcome such obstacles. Working side-by-side aids participants in understanding each other's thought processes through common work as well as the sharing of daily events. In time, daily events lead to a shared history that will give the two distinct groups something in common. Joint rational assertions are beneficial; what is rational to one group is also rational to the second group. Forming joint policies and compromising and establishing shared customs and rituals all strengthen an organization. A starting point may be the annual celebration of the partnership anniversary.

- **Policy remaking in site-level implementation:**

Educational policies are needed in any new joint venture. For example, the policy of the technical partner may be that training/education should mimic the workplace, and therefore a uniform is essential for superior education. A liberal arts approach may not accept this market-oriented

approach on uniform policy. Educators who differ on policies would then tend toward influence building through coalitions. Policies either in the school handbook or contract regarding academic standards, credit transfer, dress code, faculty selection, and faculty salaries should be included.

- **Mobilization of bias:**

In any enterprise, partners bring their own preconceived notions concerning daily operations as well as goals and objectives for the organization. For example, a profit-oriented school may choose to have an open enrollment policy. If an open admissions policy were not acceptable to both partners, this would create a schism. Entrance requirements need to be stipulated early in a joint educational program. Manuals detailing operational policies should be developed and issued at the start.

- **Reality creation:**

Creating an acceptable reality between culturally divergent groups is difficult. For example, in Switzerland, it is acceptable for married women to be paid less than men (married or not) for performing the same job. Determining a wage scale in a joint educational program between a Swiss school and an American university could be sensitive. It is requisite that administrators determine all

legal as well as ideological differences in advance with methods for addressing those differences.

- **Salient structures and tasks:** These are the items around which people, then leaders, then coalitions and loyalties develop. The salient structure is the joint educational institution. Administrators, faculty, and staff form coalitions and loyalties around this institution. Coalitions will tend to form around cultural boundaries, often due to common ideologies, for example, academic vs. technical, U.S. vs. foreign. Encouraging activities across cultural lines as well as including cross-cultural participation in organizational proceedings, such as committee work, will alleviate tensions and prevent the formation of cultural coalitions for potential political power within the organization.

Issues can be studied

Other issues that may form the groundwork for future study with reference to international educational partnerships may include any of the following:

- **What should be included** in an international educational contract? The contract is the basis of any agreement between partners; it should be carefully designed. Based on the literature and past case study²¹ it should be stipulated

that a strong well-defined, carefully designed contract is fundamental to a joint venture. Additionally, other supportive documents such as faculty, staff, and student handbooks that detail administrative policies and procedures should be considered vis-à-vis assistance in the implementation of a joint educational venture.

- **What type of governing structure** is appropriate for a joint educational entity? What characteristics would the leader of a joint educational project embody? The administrators should be selected with regard to managerial and organizational abilities as well as cultural sensitivity, including the ability to live and work in a foreign location. The study should include governance procedures by a two-headed organization as well as the partners' oversight of their respective administrators.
- **How can an effective** executive board be formed? Who should sit on the executive board of a joint educational project? An executive board should be formed with equal representation for the partners. Agreements regarding the board's authority and mode of operation should be established.
- **Who should be appointed** to the advisory board of an international educational project? An advisory board should be formed to counsel and oversee a

joint endeavor. The backgrounds and characteristics of potential advisory board candidates should be included in the research.

The latter three items may be included in the partnership contract. A carefully constructed contract negotiated in advance and addressing these issues can reconcile competing logics of action originating in the partner institutions. It can set the basis for healthy micropolitics in a newly forming joint educational venture, allowing cohesive interest groups to contend in a functional manner over the implementation of agreed-upon goals and policies. However, a contract will not necessarily bring equilibrium to an organization. The underlying basis for a secure joint venture creating an international joint program is stable partners. Without stable partners, a stable organization cannot exist.

References

- ¹ For a complete discussion see L. Iannaccone, "Micropolitics of education," *Education and Urban Society* 23, no. 4 (1991): 465-471.
- ² C. Marshall and J. Scribner, "It's all political," *Education and Urban Society* 23, no. 4 (1991): 347-355.
- ³ Ibid.
- ⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵ S. B. Bacharach and B. L. Mundell, "Organizational politics in schools: micro, macro and logics of action," *Educational Administration Quarterly* 29 (1993): 423-452.
- ⁶ L. Karpik, "Organizations, institutions and history," *Organization and Environment: Theory, Issues and Reality*, L. Karpik, ed. (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1978).
- ⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸ J. Thompson, *Action in Organizations* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967).

⁹ J. Feldman and H. Cantor, "Organizational decision making," *Handbook of Organizations*, J. March, ed. (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1985).

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ C. Barnard, *Functions of the Executive* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938).

¹² T. Deal and A. Kennedy, *Corporate Cultures: The Rites and Rituals of Corporate Life* (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1984).

¹³ J. Shedd and S. Bacharach, *Tangled Hierarchies: Teachers as Professionals and the Management of Schools* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1991).

¹⁴ K. Lieberman and W. Samenfink, "Cultural risks in joint international hospitality programming," *Praxis* 2, no. 1 (1999): 56-70; K. Lieberman, "Joint degree programming: a case study in hospitality education," Ph.D. dissertation, Purdue University, 1998.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ S. Ball, *The Micropolitics of the School* (New York: Methuen, 1987).

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.; E. M. Hanson, *Educational Administration and Organizational Behavior* (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1979).

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

Karen Lieberman is associate professor and chair of the Hospitality College, Johnson & Wales University (Florida Campus).