Change Agents' Orientations to Change: Experience from Pakistan

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Abstract

In this article, I report on a qualitative study conducted in the rural, mountain district of Chitral, Pakistan. The study examined 5 Teacher Educators (TEs') specific actions and methods (strategies) and their underlying assumptions and core values (orientations) of change in schools. These TEs work as change agents in the schools established by the Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan (AKES,P) in partnership with local communities. The TEs' mandate from AKES,P insists that educational change and community development must go hand-in-hand. They therefore play a unique role as both educational reformers and community developers, stimulating change in schools on the one hand and in local communities on the other. The study's findings captured three realms of the TEs' world: a) the TEs' evolving role as external change agents, b) their preferred strategies for change, and c) their conceptual underpinnings of change in schools. However, in this article, I discuss only one realm of the TEs' world, i.e., their change orientations. I, therefore, first provide a brief portrayal of the TEs, revealing how their role is defined in the organization. I also describe the research methods employed in this study highlighting the research paradigm, inquiry question and theoretical framework, and research participants. I then discuss and analyze the TEs' conceptual orientations to change.

Key Words: Change Agents, Teacher Educators, Orientations, Spiritual, Community Development, Pakistan, Chitral

Introduction

During the last four decades, educational researchers and practitioners have intensively engaged in bringing about positive changes in schools. Therefore the kinds of changes introduced to schools have become complex in nature and overwhelming in number –from improving teacher professional knowledge base and teaching repertoires to developing innovative curricula to changing the organizational structures and cultures in schools. The skills required by schools and teachers to implement these changes have also become more complex. Consequently, a large number of external agents—variously referred to as consultants, linking agents, education officers, or supervisors— have mobilized themselves for building schools' capacity and knowledge utilization at the local level. As a result, there is a growing recognition that change in schools will not last long until the voices and view points of both internal and external agents are not heard and valued (Fullan, 2001; Tajik, 2004; Thiessen, 1989).

As these external change agents engage in a systematic and deliberate effort to conceptualize, plan, implement and examine change in schools, they develop a personal understanding of change—what change is and how it ought to occur. Different researchers have referred to this personal understanding as "change perspectives" (House, 1981; Miller & Seller, 1985), "approaches to change" (Erchul & Martens, 1997), "change knowledge" (Fullan, 1982, 2001; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Frankel, 1997), school improvement models (Anderson, 2002; Farrell, 2002; Thiessen & Anderson, 1999), and "change orientations" (Favaro, 1983; Miller, 1993; 1983; Thiessen, 1989, 1990). I also call this personal understanding of change as "change orientation" in this article.

In this article, I report on a qualitative study conducted in the rural, mountain district of Chitral, Pakistan. The study examined 5 Teacher Educators (TEs') specific actions and methods (strategies) and their underlying assumptions and core values (orientations) of change in schools. These TEs work as change agents in the schools established by the Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan (AKES,P) in partnership with local communities. The TEs' mandate from AKES,P insists that educational change and community development must go hand-in-hand. They therefore play a unique role as both educational reformers and community developers, stimulating change in schools on the one hand and in local communities on the other. The study's findings captured three realms of the TEs' world: a) the TEs' evolving role as external change agents, b) their preferred strategies for change, and c) their conceptual underpinnings of change in schools. However, in this article, I discuss only one realm of the TEs' world, i.e., their change orientations.

I, therefore, first provide a brief portrayal of the TEs, revealing how their role is defined in the organization. I also describe the research methods employed in this study highlighting the research paradigm, inquiry question and theoretical framework, and research participants. I then discuss and analyze the TEs' conceptual orientations to change.

A Portrayal of the Teacher Education

The Teacher Educators in the context of AKES,P are the ones who devote substantial amount of time and energy to provide on-the-job support to teachers and School Management Committee (SMC) members in the AKES,P schools throughout the district of Chitral. These TEs are primarily successful teachers and head teachers who have been promoted to the rank of TEs and assigned with about 15 schools each. Their role is not that of a 'supervisor' or 'inspector' but that of a 'facilitator' and 'critical friend' of teachers and SMC members in the process of school improvement. They are empowered by AKES,P to provide technical support and facilitation to schools and SMC members and are held accountable for bringing about positive changes in schools and the local communities to which the schools serve. They are expected to develop the capacity of teachers, school heads, and SMC members through their active participation in the management, administration, and academic affairs of the schools.

In general, the TEs are responsible to: a) assist and facilitate teachers and head teachers in improving their practices, b) facilitate school-based professional development activities, e.g., through workshops, seminars, and meetings, c) identify and help to address the needs of schools, teachers, and students, d) assist teachers and head teachers in strategic planning for and implementation of change initiatives, e) provide needed knowledge of curriculum, teaching and learning, and critical friendship and, f) facilitate collaborative working relationship amongst AKES,P, local communities, and public education system. While taking on these responsibilities, the TEs are viewed as both educational reformers and community developers because they are rigorously involved in both school improvement and community mobilization processes.

Research Methodology

I chose the qualitative paradigm of research to explore how the TEs understand and explain the strategies they use and the conceptual orientations through which they operate their actions in order to bring about positive changes in schools and local communities. The rationale for choosing the qualitative research paradigm and more specifically the qualitative case study approach was to gain a wider, holistic, and context-specific picture of the TEs' interpretations of their experiences, strategies, and orientations to change. In order to understand the TEs' meanings of their experiences, actions and justifications for those actions, I needed to carry out an inquiry of multiple cases embedded in the qualitative paradigm, which could allow me to look into the TEs' world through their own eyes and perspectives. To explore the TEs' change orientations, I needed to set the inquiry in a way which: a) took account of the multiple realities of their social world, b) was intensive in its pursuit of meaning, and c) was sensitive to the contextual influences on their constructs, meaning and reasoning (Janesick, 2000). In this way I was able not only to probe into their personal understanding of and beliefs about school change and community development, but also to elicit their rationales and observe their preferred change practices adopted within their particular context.

While choosing the qualitative research paradigm, I employed an eclectic set of strategies drawing from different traditions within the qualitative paradigm. The use of multiple strategies and ways of collecting data such as semi-structured interviews (individual and focus-group), non-participant observations, informal conversations, and document analysis helped to capture a broader picture of how the TEs' world looks like, what they say about it, how they feel about what they do, and why they do the way they do (Atkinson et al., 1988; Burgess, 1984; Charles, 1995). I selected two different categories of participants: a) 5 TEs as the principal participants, with whom I had intensive interactions in order to explore in depth their experiences, meanings, practices, and rationales, and b) 4 individuals and 13 focus-groups as secondary participants, whose participation was limited to a 2 hour individual or focus-group interview. I selected the participants in both categories through a negotiated process based on their willingness to voluntarily participate. Since I obtained much of the data from the principal participants (the 5 TEs), and they represent the change orientations I discuss in this paper, I therefore provide in Table 1 a brief profile of these principal participants using pseudonyms to protect their confidentiality and anonymity.

Table 1: Summary of Principal Participants

Particulars	Ahmed	Ali	Faisal	Karim	Khan
Gender	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male
Age	40+	38	40+	46	39
Region / Workplace	Region 1 (suburban and rural areas)	Region 3 (rural, mountainous areas)	Region 3 (rural, mountainous areas)	Region 2 (suburban and rural areas)	Region 1 (suburban and rural areas)
Started Career in Education	1985	1986	1986	1981	1986
Academic Qualifications	M.A in Islamic History	B.A (General)	M.A in Urdu	B.A (General)	B.A (General)
Professional Qualifications	B.Ed., M.Ed.	B.Ed., M.Ed.	B.Ed.	B.Ed.	B.Ed.
Major Subject	Social Studies English	Mathematics English	Social Studies Urdu	Islamiyat Arabic	Urdu Social Studies

The Framework and Focus of the Study

This study was guided by a core research question, "How do the Teacher Educators of the Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan understand their role as educational reformers and community developers?" Specifically, the research question concentrated on exploring the TEs' conceptual orientations to change.

A change orientation, as Thiessen (1989) defines it, is a position the change agent takes to explain why change ought to occur in particular ways. It is a combination of the key assumptions and core values that guide the agent's actions and practices of change. The assumptions frame how the agent views change, and values justify why certain actions and interpretations are more important than others to bring about change. Miller and Seller (1985) define a change orientation as a particular worldview or model of reality that shapes each change agent's personal belief system about the purpose and methods of change. Miller (1983) calls an orientation a "map of reality" and Hjelle and Ziegler (cited in Thiessen, 1989) term it a "template of reality", which is a mixture of our values, attitudes, and perceptions. Our map or template of reality is shaped by our background, experiences, and distinct ways of seeing things.

In the context of this study, a change orientation refers to the TEs' personal understandings, lived experiences, beliefs, key assumptions, core values, and preferred practices of change in schools and communities. It comprises the kinds of knowledge, assumptions, values, perceptions, and practices that the TEs, possess, develop, and use in their classrooms, schools, and communities. In order to explore and develop the TEs' change orientations, I first explored their change strategies— the specific actions, methods, and techniques that they employed to bring about positive changes in schools and local communities. I then looked beyond their specific actions and methods of change in order to explore their conceptual underpinnings of change— the key assumptions and core values behind their actions and methods. Thus, their change strategies are the daily manifestation of their change orientations. By exploring the TEs' change strategies and change orientations, I intend to capture a personal understanding, examining the nature, depth, and variability of how the TEs understand, interpret and facilitate change in schools and communities.

Change Orientations

To conceptualize the TEs' change orientations, I examined the methods and techniques that each TE used during his interventions in schools, and his rationales for his actions. In doing so, I explored the interrelatedness of the TEs' stated and enacted beliefs about change. I also concentrated on the depth of the TEs' articulation of their actions, and the consistency in their key assumptions and core values of change. Table 2 juxtaposes the TEs' underlying assumptions and organizes them into three groups based on common concepts operating behind their change strategies. As shown in Table 2, Ali, Ahmed, and Faisal fall into the same group in respect to educational change, because they hold common concepts and assumptions about educational change. The underlying assumption behind their emphasis on the empowerment of key change agents is that change is best affected by raising the authority and voices of teachers and school heads. In addition, Ali and Faisal value the independence of the key agents of change—local leaders and SMCs—in community development and respect their rights and ideas about the change. Thus these TEs deal in one or both contexts with the concepts of power, authority, influence, voices, and rights, and therefore form a "Political Orientation" to change. The second group of the TEs includes Khan and Ahmed. Khan believes in the technical proficiency of both teachers and SMCs as the key agents of change at the school and community levels respectively.

Table 2: Common Concepts amongst the TEs

| Group | TEs | Underlying Assumptions | | Common Concepts |
		Educational Change	Community Development	
Group 1	Ali	Educational change is best affected by empowering teachers and developing their repertoires	Community development is best affected by increasing SMCs' active participation in education	Power, Authority, Empowerment
	Ahmed*	Educational change is best affected by empowering head teachers	*Falls into Group 2*	
	Faisal	Educational change is best affected by empowering head teachers	Community development is best affected by the power and authority exerted by local leaders	
Group 2	Khan	Educational change is best affected by enhancing teachers' technical knowledge, expertise and skills	Community development is best affected by increasing SMCs' active participation and enhancing their skills	Efficiency, Knowledge, Skills Development
	Ahmed	*Falls into Group 1*	Community development is best affected by enhancing knowledge and technical skills in SMCs	
Group 3	Karim	Educational change is best affected by awakening teachers to their moral obligations	Community development is best affected by developing the moral dispositions of local leaders.	Spiritual being, Moral Development

* Amongst the TEs, Ahmed falls into two different groups, because of his two distinctive assumptions about educational change and community development. He concentrates on the empowerment of headteachers, but on the skills development of school management committees (SMCs) to bring about positive change in schools and communities respectively.

Ahmed emphasizes enhancing the SMCs' skills for community development. The common assumption through which these two TEs operate is that change is best affected by enhancing technical knowledge and skills in key agents of change. They concentrate on technical concepts such as efficiency, skills development, technical know-how, and better techniques for change, and therefore have a "Technical Orientation" to change[1]. Karim alone makes up the third group; he believes in the moral disposition of the key agents of change (teachers and local leaders). He operates through the assumption that change is best affected by awakening teachers and local leaders to their moral obligations of change. He therefore emphasizes moral and spiritual concepts such as commitment, honesty, compassion, fairness, accountability, sacrifice, and dedication towards change. These concepts place him in a "Spiritual Orientation" to change.

Political Orientation (Ali, Ahmed and Faisal)

The Political orientation views change within a political context and deals with such issues as power, authority, influence, policies, interests, and competing groups that have a direct bearing on the development of change in that particular context. The political context (whether school or community) comprises different people or subgroups, of which one influential person or one group support a change and take the lead in implementing it (House, 1981). This may, in turn, provoke a competing group within the context; thus, the legitimacy of authority may become an issue. The success of the change then depends on negotiation, cooperation, and compromise amongst the groups. At the individual level, the change process is fostered by one person influencing another person through exerting authority, persuasion, or inducement.

The underlying assumption in this orientation is that the power and authority delegated to and exerted by the people who are closest to a change and its implementation will stimulate the change process in the context. Guided by this assumption, the appropriate actions include empowering the key agents and respecting their rights, voices, and ideas about change. The core values in this orientation are power and independence. The TEs who share the Political orientation mainly concentrate on who should have the authority and right to decide what changes are desirable in schools and communities and how those changes ought to occur. They therefore invest most of their energies in empowering teachers, headteachers, SMCs, and local leaders who they think are the key agents of change in schools and communities.

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[1] Thus, Ahmed holds a Political orientation to educational change and a Technical orientation to community development.

These TEs argue that these change agents must have the authority and freedom to determine the agenda for change for their schools or their local communities. Their voices and ideas about change should be respected, but at the same time, they must be engaged in a process that enhances their professional capabilities. Thus, this orientation takes the position that political factors, such as the freedom, authority, rights, voices, and interests of teachers, headteachers, and SMCs must be considered in educational change and community development. These actors should have control over change processes and work effectively in schools and communities (Hales, 1997). The conceptual basis for the Political orientation embraced by Ali, Ahmed and Faisal comprises a number of dimensions: how they view change; who are the primary agents of change; how they perceive the context of change; what key concepts they deal with; and what actions they take. In this orientation, change is a political phenomenon dependent on the authority and influence exerted by those who are closest to its implementation. The actions and decisions that these primary implementers make inevitably influence the process of change. These actions and decisions are, in turn, influenced by the amount of power and authority delegated to the implementers. In the school as the context of change, the primary implementers are the headteacher and teachers; in the community, the SMC and local leaders are the primary implementers. The image of the agent is that of an activist who has the authority, ownership, and capacity to bring about positive changes in schools and communities.

The image of the school in the Political orientation is that of a socio-political institution which empowers teachers, headteacher, and SMCs to make independent decisions about what changes are desirable in their school and how those changes ought to occur. Behind this image of an empowering school lie the core concepts, legitimacy of power, authority, influence, right, voice, freedom, choice, interest, advocacy group, competing groups, negotiation, cooperation, and compromise. As a result, politically-oriented TEs' key actions include the decentralization of power structures, the creation of a non-hierarchical and collegial environment, the building of relationships, and the empowerment and capacity enhancement of key agents. More generally, they encourage teachers and SMCs to make independent decisions where appropriate. Key skills required by these change agents include, for example, good intra- and inter-personal skills, competence in groups, conflict mediation skills, decisiveness, collaborative and collegial, and ability to develop trust and good rapport with their clients. The core emphasis in the Political orientation is to change the power structures in schools and communities in a way that would raise the status, voices, and authority of teachers, head teachers, and SMCs to work independently.

The Political orientation focuses on the interest of the key change agents, assuming that the ultimate success of a change resides in how motivated and empowered those agents are to implement the change. Their motivation and empowerment, as Ali, Ahmed, and Faisal believe, can be achieved when their voices are heard and their ideas are valued in the process of change. Thus, these TEs place huge emphasis on negotiations with and empowerment of key implementers, such as teachers, head teachers, and SMCs, in order to effect changes in schools and in local communities. Such negotiations between the TEs and the key implementers allow both parties to share with each other their concerns, views and ideas about the change and its implementation. As a result, the key implementers feel empowered because their voices are heard and because the TEs respect their ideas about change. The Political orientation is remarkably close to House's "political perspective on school reform" (House, 1981; House & McQuillan, 1998), and generally related to Erchul and Martens' (1997) "normative-re-educative", and Thiessen's (1989) "teacher-centered-adaptation" orientation to change. These orientations have in common such concepts as negotiation, power, authority, influence, relationships, and interests. However, Ali's, Ahmed's, and Faisal's Political orientation differs from these authors' categorizations in certain respects. Basically, House's (1981) political perspective and the TEs' Political orientation share an underlying image of negotiation.

Both primarily concern themselves with the issue of delegating authority to the key implementers of change; they ask the basic question, "Who should have more authority than others in order to make independent decisions about change?" House captures a broader picture of political concerns in relation to educational change (such as competing interests of groups, arguments for or against policies, and distribution of power and resources). The Politically-oriented TEs primarily attend to micro-political issues, such as the legitimacy of authority, power, and influence in relation to changes in schools and communities; more specifically, these three TEs are concerned about giving more authority and resources to schools and local communities so that teachers, SMCs, and the TEs themselves can have greater influence on change. Similarly, the three TEs' Political orientation and Erchul and Martens' (1997) normative-re-educative orientations both recognize the importance of empowering key agents of change through creating conditions for both individual and organizational change in schools and in other contexts. The normative-re-educative orientation assumes that change in a school is likely to occur when it is attempted at both personal and organizational levels.

At a personal level, change should occur in teachers' attitudes, values, feelings, and knowledge base; at the organizational level, change must happen in the school's established norms, relationships, power structures, and socio-cultural environment in the school. The TEs who have the Political orientation primarily concentrate on raising the status of teachers, head teachers, and SMCs, respecting their voices and ideas about change. Thiessen's teacher-centered-adaptation and the three TEs' Political orientation share the underlying assumption that change will succeed when its key implementers have freedom and authority to make independent decisions about the change and its implementation. However, change agents in the teacher-centered-adaptation orientation see change as a classroom phenomenon, dependent on the teacher's decisions and actions; they therefore concentrate on teachers' empowerment. The three TEs with the Political orientation view change as a political phenomenon, dependent on the actions and decisions taken by teachers, head teachers, or SMCs.

These TEs are therefore concerned about the legitimacy of the authority system in both schools and local communities. These three TEs holding the Political orientation are concerned not only about empowering the key agents of change in schools and in local communities but also about their own political location within the hierarchical structure of their organization. They feel that they themselves do not have enough authority to work independently in schools and local communities. In order to empower teachers, head teachers, and SMCs, the TEs themselves need more freedom and authority. These three TEs say that most of the key decisions about what should change in schools and in local communities are taken by the district management and passed on to them; they then pass those decisions on to the teachers and local communities for implementation. These TEs therefore argue that change is less likely to occur unless their status is raised, their voices heard, and their ideas about school improvement and community development respected.

Technical Orientation (Ahmed and Khan)

The Technical orientation takes efficiency as its underlying image and core value, and sees change within a context where the development of skills and techniques is more important than anything else. It addresses technical concepts such as skills development, technical know-how, and development of better techniques and tools that play a pivotal role in the development of change in that particular context. The success of a change in the Technical context (whether the school or community) depends on the skills, knowledge, expertise, and techniques of those directly involved in the change process. The underlying philosophy in this orientation assumes that the TEs can best effect change in schools and communities by enhancing the skills and technical knowledge of the key agents and by developing better techniques and methods for change. Guided by this assumption, technically-oriented change agents' actions include the inculcation of procedures and development of skills in the primary implementers of change.

Ahmed and Khan's key assumptions and core values of change share an underlying concern about how to do the job or how to get things done efficiently. These two TEs therefore concentrate on enhancing the technical proficiency of teachers, head teachers, and SMCs as the primary facilitators of change in schools and communities. The expansion of technical knowledge, skills development, and production of better techniques and materials play key roles in their Technical orientation. The Technical orientation offers a particular view of the different dimensions that provide a conceptual basis for an orientation at both the theoretical and practical levels. The Technical orientation views change as a technical phenomenon dependent on the effectiveness and technical proficiency of the people directly involved in the planning and implementation of the change. Change is likely to develop when its key implementers are equipped with advanced skills, wider knowledge, and better techniques. In the Technical orientation, teachers and SMCs are the primary implementers of change in schools and communities respectively, because they are closest to the actions and implementation of the change.

The image of these agents is that of technicians or engineers who have the technical know-how, practical skills, and effective techniques for stimulating the change. Thus, the Technical orientation sees the school as a training center or workshop where teachers and SMCs are prepared to develop the knowledge, technical skills, and the tools and techniques that they need in order to bring about positive changes in schools and communities.The Technical orientation addresses the key concepts of efficiency, techniques, tools, technical knowledge, skills, creative thinking, reasoning, training, task, information, and communication. For the Technically-oriented TEs, key actions involve developing the change agents' skills through training, preparation of tools and materials, demonstration of techniques, and inculcation of policies and procedures. The desirable skills include good command of the content and pedagogy of change, efficient problem solving, articulate communication, and effective use of technologies. These dimensions establish the parameters distinguishing the Technical orientation from the Political. The Political orientation is concerned about the legitimacy of authority; the Technical orientation lends considerable attention to development of technical proficiency.

It advocates that empowerment of the key change agents comes from their technical efficiency in affecting the conditions, situations, and processes important to change. The agents need to have practical answers to the issues inherent in the change process and have the skills to use the most effective means and ways to affect change in schools and communities. Thus, the efficiency engineering or scientific management of change (House, 1981) becomes a fundamental principle in this orientation. The efficiency engineer, as House describes, turns the change into separate tasks and analyzes the performance of those tasks; each task involves technical questions and unforeseen challenges, which the change agent as an engineer or technician must address in a logical and systematic way. The Technical orientation shares with the "technological perspective on school reform" (House, 1981) the basic principle that change can best be achieved by employing technical skills, creative thinking, logical reasoning, and techniques relevant to the context.

The Technical orientation also has some similarities to the empirical-rational orientation (Erchul & Martens, 1997); both assume that people are essentially rational and are likely to change when the change is justifiable to them on an intellectual level. In other words, the chances of an innovation succeeding increase when the implementers have a clear vision and in-depth understanding of the innovation (Warwick et al., 1992). The Technical orientation has as its core focus teaching key implementers practical skills and better techniques for change; whereas the technological perspective and the empirical-rational orientation, besides skills development, additionally focus on producing a wider theoretical knowledge base for change so as to intellectually justify the change. Ahmed's and Khan's Technical orientation also resembles Thiessen's (1989) "structured direction" and Favaro's (1983) "objectivist" orientation. These orientations view knowledge and efficiency as powerful forces to stimulate change in schools and in other contexts.

All three orientations emphasize providing key implementers with a recipe for change; they differ only in the nature of the recipe and how it is transmitted to the implementers. The structured direction and objectivist orientations emphasize the importance of setting out explicit directions and prescribing structured procedures for change. Together these two orientations see the change agents as technical experts who give clear instructions and directions for how to approach a change, whereas the implementers of the change become mere recipients of the experts' knowledge. The two TEs who operate through the Technical orientation help teachers and SMCs improve and renew their knowledge and develop in them the skills to participate in and implement change. The interactions between the two parties are more didactic and instructive than facilitative or transactional; the TEs tend to direct the teachers and SMCs about the rules and procedures they ought to follow and the technical skills they need to develop in order to implement a change.

Spiritual Orientation (Karim)

The Spiritual orientation regards change as more of a moral enterprise than a political or technical endeavor. This orientation sees change in the context where moral knowledge, moral reasoning, moral feelings, and spiritual consciousness are considered to be the most powerful forces to affect change. The Spiritual orientation takes self-transcendence as its underlying image. Self-transcendence means going beyond one's predefined professional tasks through one's own intuitive thoughts, consciousness, creativity, and dedication in order to fulfill not only professional but moral obligations. The underlying assumption in the Spiritual orientation is that change is best achieved by developing the moral dispositions of those directly involved in the change. In line with this assumption, actions concentrate on awakening moral and spiritual awareness and developing moral virtues in the key agents of change. The analysis of Karim's espoused beliefs and action theories makes it apparent that he embraces a Spiritual orientation to change in schools and communities. He stresses the importance of a change agent's spiritual being or innerself; thus, change agents (teachers, local leaders, and SMCs) must take change as a sacred calling, a moral responsibility, and a spiritual endeavor.

They therefore need not only technical proficiency and authority but also a strong spiritual force igniting them from within so that they can persist in the change. Karim's Spiritual orientation therefore pays considerable attention to evoking the spiritual aspect of teachers and others involved in change. While political autonomy and technical proficiency enable one to make independent and informed decisions about change, spiritual conscientiousness allows one to judge one's actions and decisions bearing on others and not to surrender to the complexities, eventualities, and challenges inherent in the change process. Karim feels that if a change agent has the belief that he has a moral responsibility to change, he will acquire the freedom and technical proficiency that he needs to bring about the change, even if he does not have them at the beginning. Karim's strong allegiance to the moral and spiritual underpinnings of change reflects the conceptual basis for the Spiritual orientation. First, this orientation views change as a moral and spiritual phenomenon dependent on the moral dispositions (commitment and perseverance) of those who implement it. A change will succeed when its key implementers have a strong moral stance, conscience, and spiritual force, which in turn strengthen their determination to persistently engage in the change.

Teachers, SMCs, and local leaders have the potential to serve as the moral agents of change in schools and communities. The image of the change agent in the Spiritual orientation is that of a missionary or moral educator who transcends beyond the "professional-self" in order to bring about positive changes in schools and communities – a person who inspires others through modeling good behaviors and devotion to both professional and moral obligations. These change agents therefore need a moral anchor and spiritual conscientiousness to justify how their actions and decisions affect others in schools and communities. To develop such change agents, the Spiritual orientation perceives the school as a moral agency, which promotes moral virtues, such as compassion, honesty, dedication, fairness, and commitment in teachers, SMCs and, by implication the entire community. The Spiritual orientation deals with the key concepts of moral disposition, spiritual awareness or consciousness, self-transcendence, devotion, honesty, compassion, inspiration, persuasion, and awakening. Karim therefore relies on lectures, augmented by citations from the holy *Qurán*, *hadiths*[2] and sermons of the *Imam*[3]*,* to inspire and persuade teachers and local leaders to become role models (virtuous and righteous) by adhering to the moral aspects of their role in schools and communities. To foster change this way they also need key skills, including intuitive thinking, tolerance, positive role modeling and ability to inspire others.

These principles reveal that the Spiritual orientation concerns itself with developing the moral disposition of teachers and local leaders than with raising their authority and power. Power and authority, according to this orientation, come from the agents' moral and spiritual dispositions rather than from their political independence and technical proficiency. If they are morally developed and spiritually strong, the change agents will acquire the power, authority, and technical skills through their own creativity, intuitive thinking, and perseverance. As change agents, teachers, SMCs and local leaders can influence others through inspiration and persuasion, rather than by political power or technical tips. Thus, Karim relies on using religion (the *Qurán*, *hadiths* and sermons of the *Imam*) as a means to inspire teachers, SMCs and local leaders towards change in schools and communities. The Spiritual orientation is closely related to Miller's "transpersonal or holistic" orientation to curriculum (1983). Both orientations recognize the importance of one's spiritual being or inner self as a source of creativity, compassion, openness, and dedication to one's professional and moral responsibilities.

These two orientations share the underlying assumption that compassionate and dedicated teachers or other change agents see themselves in others and others in them (Miller, 1983). Thus, they attend to how their actions and decisions bear on others. They recognize the fluidity of the change process and can diligently engage in that process. The Spiritual orientation also has some links to House's "cultural perspective" on school reform (1981) in that it recognizes the importance of shared values, sense of community, and adherence to common principles and norms resting on a particular ideological or socio-cultural vantage point. However, it differs from the cultural perspective in certain respects. The cultural perspective emphasizes the importance of cultural integration, adaptation, tolerance, and socio-political cultures and relationships in the wider society. The Spiritual orientation focuses more on moral virtues such as honesty, compassion, fairness, and dedication as core principles to bring about positive changes in schools and communities. It recognizes the importance of one's conscience and of the feeling of being emotionally moved (Schiendlin, 2003), which one needs in order to engage in an intensive process of change. Karim tends to persuade teachers and leaders to work beyond their official responsibilities. Becoming a role model himself, he encourages the teachers and leaders to be virtuous (compassionate, honest, tolerant, devoted and perseverant) and serve as role models in their schools and communities (Campbell, 2001; Fenstermacher, 2001; Saskin & Saskin, 1990). His persuasive and mesmerizing lectures aim to increase the teachers' and local leaders' motivation and commitment to persist in change.

Comparison of Change Orientations

The five TEs share three distinct change orientations: Political, Technical and Spiritual. Each orientation is formed by a different set of beliefs, assumptions, values, and practices embraced by the TEs. While the political orientation takes the authority system as its root image, the technical orientation rests on efficiency as its underlying principle. The spiritual orientation, on the other hand, takes moral disposition as its core foundation. Table 3 juxtaposes the core principles and dimensions that provide a conceptual basis for each orientation: Each orientation is concerned about certain conditions, situations, and apparatus that the change agents need in order to affect changes in schools and communities. The Political orientation concentrates on getting the agents equipped with power and authority so that they can make independent decisions and have control over the change processes in their schools and local communities.

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[2] Sayings of Prophet Muhammad Peace Be Upon Him.

[3] His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan is the 49th hereditary *Imam* (spiritual leader) of the Shia Ismaili Muslims.

Table 3: Comparison amongst Change Orientations

Orientations ⇒	Political	Technical	Spiritual
Key Emphasis	Legitimacy of authority system	Technical proficiency	Moral and spiritual disposition
Core Values	Power Independence	Efficiency Inculcation	Inspiration Self-transcendence
Conception of Change	Political Phenomenon	Technical Phenomenon	Moral and Spiritual Phenomenon
Conception of Change Agent	Activist	Technician Engineer	Missionary Moral Agent
Conception of School	Socio-political Institution	Training Center Workshop	Moral Agency
Key Actions	Empowerment	Skills development	Moral development
Key Concepts	Negotiation Influence Power and authority Rights and voices Freedom and choices Interests	Production of Tools and Techniques Technical Know-how Practical Skills Efficiency Logical Thinking	Intuitive Thinking Creativity Commitment and Loyalty Fairness and Honesty Inspiration Persuasion

The Technical orientation focuses on instilling better techniques, technical knowledge and practical skills in the change agents so that they are able to plan, implement and effectively manage changes in their schools and local communities. The Spiritual orientation, on the other hand, is committed to developing moral virtues and igniting the spiritual force in the change agents so that they are self-motivated and able to inspire others towards change in schools and local communities. The Political orientation sees power in the empowerment and autonomy of the key agents, the Technical orientation locates power in the professional expertise and efficiency of the agents; and the Spiritual orientation situates power in the moral and spiritual dispositions of the agents. Although the five TEs represent three apparently distinct change orientations, some common elements still emerge across these orientations. For instance, Ali's and Faisal's dominant orientation is the Political orientation.

However, in the background, they also seem to have some features of a Technical orientation. For example, their underlying assumptions and core values of change reveal that some of their specific actions and key methods include helping teachers, head teachers, and SMCs improve their knowledge and technical skills. Thus, their overriding orientation is Political, but they also use some aspects of a Technical orientation. In other words, they use the Technical orientation in the service of their Political orientation. They assure that teachers, head teachers, and SMCs are likely to have more authority, freedom and empowerment when they develop in-depth understanding of and technical skills for change in schools and communities. Ahmed, on the other hand, operates through a Political orientation to change in schools and a Technical orientation to change in communities. This raises the possibility that his initial dominant orientation was Political one, but in community development work the Technical orientation dominates as a means of serving Political ends; namely, he believes that developing SMCs' knowledge and skills will empower them to take on a greater role in schools. Karim holds the Spiritual orientation as his superseding orientation, but still helps teachers improve their knowledge base and practices of change in schools.

He also tends to mobilize local leaders and use their authority and influence in order to affect change in local communities. Thus, Karim's interactions with teachers and local leaders also include some aspects of the Technical and Political orientations respectively. Similarly, in the background of their overarching orientations, each TE has an Islamic perspective about change. Each of the five TEs works with a religiously motivated community and therefore makes reference to religion and religious authorities during their interventions in schools and local communities. For example, all five of them affirm that they have both professional and religious responsibility to help teachers and SMCs bring about positive changes in their schools and communities. "I work even on weekends because I am accountable to my *Imam*", Ahmed says. However, such religious perspective and devotion to change is more prominent in Karim's Spiritual orientation than in the other TEs'.

Conclusions and Implications

My analysis of the TEs' change orientations leads to a number of conclusions, deriving from the TEs' change strategies, orientations, and their overall role in school improvement and community development. First, the five TEs have particular orientations which define their roles and shape their specific actions and methods for change. Each TE's change orientation serves as a lens through which that TE sees and approaches change.

For instance, Ali, Ahmed and Faisal operate through a Political orientation, which guides their main role and shapes their strategies for change. These politically-oriented TEs therefore see their role as that of facilitator and take such specific actions as engaging key implementers (teachers, head teachers, SMCs, and local leaders) in negotiations and respecting their voices and ideas about what to change and how to implement the change. Ahmed and Khan embrace a Technical orientation, which provides a backdrop to most of their actions and methods for change. These two TEs see their role as that of technical expert and therefore invest most of their energies in developing skills in teachers and SMCs. Karim's Spiritual orientation defines his role as a critical friend and guides his actions to focus on teachers' and local leaders' moral development. At the level of practice, there are a number of similarities in the TEs' main roles, strategies and specific actions. For example, all the TEs use workshops, dialogues, observations, and conferences with teachers, head teachers, SMCs or local leaders. Similarly, two or more TEs assume the same overarching role or employ the same broad strategy. However, at the theoretical and philosophical level, each TE remains distinct from the others in terms of how and why he enacts a certain role and adopts a particular strategy. When I probed why the TEs choose certain roles and prefer certain strategies, I discovered that, even though two or more TEs assume the same role or use the same strategy, each has a different explanation and reason for his role and actions.

Thus, what appear as similar roles or strategies are still distinct, because each TE's ultimate objective and rationale for adopting those roles and strategies differ from the others'. For example, Ali and Karim both play the role of a critical friend, but differ in that each has a different reason for becoming a critical friend. Ali feels that becoming a critical friend of teachers allows him to engage the teachers in systematic and critical analysis of their practices so that they can improve their professional repertoires through self-reflection (MacKinnon, 1996). Karim thinks that, acting as a critical friend, he can help teachers reflect on and improve their actions and decisions on moral and ethical grounds. Thus, Ali sees his role as a critical friend in the light of his Political orientation; when teachers develop their analytical and pedagogical skills, they will become more empowered and have a greater influence on change in their schools, he believes. Karim perceives his critical friend role through his Spiritual orientation, believing that, when they become reflective and conscientious, teachers will continuously examine their actions in order to have a positive impact on their students' moral and intellectual development. Although Ali and Karim both engage teachers in "reflective practice" (Schon, 1983), each has a different meaning of and reason for adopting such a practice, as MacKinnon (1993) argues: "Slogans about reflective practice hold all sorts of meanings for different people" (p.261).

Thus, Ali's and Karim's explanations and justifications for assuming a critical friend's role and adopting reflective practice are deeply connected to and guided by their particular orientations to change.The second conclusion I derive from the five TEs' underlying concepts and practices of change. The TEs' Islamic beliefs and values provide the foundations for their professional pursuits and, more specifically, for their approach to school change and community development. These TEs have a wider religious and socio-cultural perspective about not only what should change in schools and in local communities but also how and why the change should occur. This religious perspective is explicitly embedded in Karim's change orientation and practices; however, the other four TEs also operate through some implicit Islamic beliefs and values about change. These five TEs draw their Islamic perspectives about education and change mainly from three sources: the *Quránic* injunctions about knowledge and education; the Prophet's role as a teacher and His *Hadiths* about education; and the tradition of Ismaili *Imams'* initiations to improve the quality of education and life for the Ismaili community in particular and other communities in general.

The *Qurán* clearly underlines the importance of education, for example, *"Allam-al-insaan-a- malam ya'lam"*[4] (He has taught man that which he knew not), meaning that mankind is destined to know the unknown. Islam encourages the spirit of inquiry and recognizes its virtues; in fact, the *Qurán* suggests that the whole universe is the subject of observation and knowledge (Mondal, 1997). Islam emphasizes that a society cannot be developed unless its human resources are properly utilized through cultivation of knowledge. The Holy Prophet declared education the foremost duty of every Muslim man and woman. Therefore, Islam considers teaching a sacred religious obligation which every literate Muslim should undertake, even without any remuneration (Baloch, 2000). Similarly, the Ismaili *Imams* have always regarded education as the most urgent and essential duty of the community. The *Imams* have not only urged their followers to get better education but have also devoted their time, energies, resources and wisdom to establishing schools and other educational institutions. For example, in 970, the 14th *Imam* (Al-Muizz) established the Al-Azhar University in Cairo, which has since been an internationally recognized center for Islamic education.

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[4] The *Qurán* : Surah 96, Verse 5.

The 48th *Imam* urged the Ismailis and other Muslims to see education as the only sound foundation for any prosperous society (Aziz, 2000) and established schools in the Indian sub-continent and Africa. Continuing the Ismaili tradition of making education a top priority, the present *Imam* Aga Khan IV has established more than 300 schools and other educational institutions in most of the developing world, particularly in Asia and Africa. Inspired by these Islamic traditions and their *Imam's* passion for education, the TEs feel a great sense of obligation and moral responsibility to bring about change in their schools and communities. In fact, their Islamic perspectives about education in general and Karim's in particular resemble Catholic teacher educators' perspectives on education and change. In Catholic education, religion has been historically a major dimension of the humanities (Sloan, 2002). Sloan argues that, "Without a study and understanding of religion, the understanding of philosophy, history and the arts would all be impoverished" (p.12). Sloan further suggests that a broadly conceived religion could provide "an integrated curricular core for the otherwise rudderless and drifting modern university" (p.12). Similarly, Islamic education advocates that there should not be divisions between religious, moral, and secular values.

Rather, all of these should be integrated into a common faith and common goals of education (Baloch, 2000). Thus, teachers and teacher educators in both the Catholic and Islamic education systems tend to perceive their roles not only as paid employees but also as leaders and guides who promote the common good of their societies; they care for their students in such a way that the students' physical, intellectual, and moral talents develop in a harmonious manner (Baloch, 2000; Buetow, 1988; Carter, 1984; Pocock, 1984). Such religiously-oriented teachers and teacher educators work with deep faith and with ardent love for their God. Like Karim, they see their role as inspired by Jesus Christ or Prophet Mohammed (Peace Be Upon Them) and therefore search for a spiritual meaning in their professional endeavors. For such teachers and educators, educational experience is incomplete unless it has a spiritual dimension and purpose (Dunne, 1998). Commenting about the unwavering commitment of lay teachers in a Catholic school in Newfoundland, one inspector says:

> …in the ordinary (lay) schools too, I have met with teachers whose zeal, intelligence and tact it would be hard to speak too highly of and who are an honor to their profession, no one could expect to witness greater devotion or under the circumstances, better results [Punctuations as in the original text]. (Dunne, 1998, p. 80)

This kind of religious, socio-cultural perspective and devotion constitutes an important aspect of an orientation towards change. It appears especially relevant in situations which bring religious orientation, school change and community development together. For example, the TEs recognize the importance of the Islamic values of social solidarity, mutual responsibility, and brotherhood in facilitating both personal and collective development in schools and communities. Historically, the Islamic view of change has been participatory in nature and revolutionary in approach; the sense of brotherhood and community in some, if not all, Muslim societies has therefore provided a powerful impetus for both educational and social changes. The spirit of self-help and collective approach to socio-economic and educational development remains alive in many Muslim societies. Indeed, it now seems to fit a recent trend in social and economic development. Such participatory and community-based initiatives have acquired much momentum in the late 20th century, not only in Muslim communities but also in other religious and secular community development movements around the world (Bacchus, 1983; Jamil, 2002; Poster, 1982, 1990; Rennie, 1990). Thus, the TEs' conceptual frameworks and practices of change raise the possibility that school change and community development in Muslim societies are likely to succeed if approached with an Islamic spirit and views of change.

However, it is important to note that such Islamic perspectives should not be taken as rigidly doctrinal approach, but a broadly conceived framework for change. The third conclusion I draw is that the TEs operate within one broad framework for change: broadly "Socio-Educational Change", and specifically "Community-based School Change". Although different TEs have particular orientations, assume various roles and use certain strategies at different times and situations, all five of them actually operate through a Socio-Educational Change framework, stimulating school improvement on the one hand and community development on the other. The Socio-Educational Change framework is an overarching orientation within which the TEs operate through Political, Technical, and Spiritual orientations. This broader orientation sees school change and community development as mutually supportive courses of action. Change in one context influences change in the other context. For example, school improvement is stimulated through increasing communities' awareness about education and their active participation in school management and resource generation. When they engage in the day-to-day management of their schools, community members develop their own administrative, technical, and leadership skills. The underlying principle in the Socio-Educational Change framework is that the stronger the coordination and interactions between the school and community, the greater the chances for change in both contexts.

While operating through a Socio-Educational Change framework, the TEs assume a broader role, encompassing the roles of both educational reformers and community developers. In other words, the Socio-Educational Change framework defines the TEs' role as agents of educational and social change. Keeping in mind this broader orientation, I thought of various metaphors to describe the TEs' role and chose the metaphor of "bridge" because it best describes the TEs' role as agents of both educational and social change. This particular metaphor, which most TEs used to explain their roles, captures the nature and scope of work that the TEs do in schools and in communities. They play the roles of bridges between schools and local communities; between schools and district education authorities; between local leaders and community members; between the AKES,P and public educational stakeholders. Figure 1 graphically represents this metaphorical description of the TEs' role.

Figure 1: The TEs' Role as a Bridge
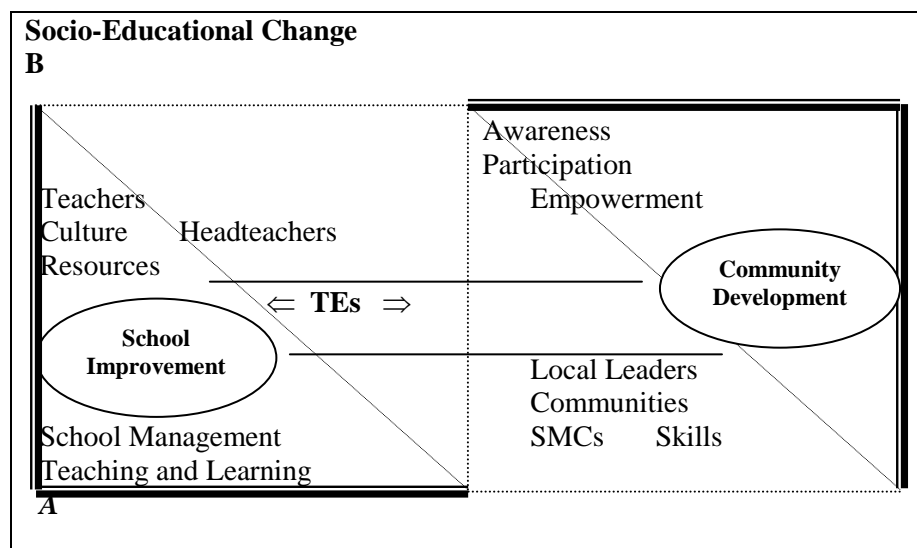
In this Figure, I try to portray the TEs' model of change and their own role as a bridge between the two contexts of change. The two symmetrical triangles, A and B, represent the two contexts of change: school and community respectively. The circle in the center of each triangle highlights the TEs' broad agenda for change: school improvement and community development. Each of the elements listed inside the triangles illustrates the areas that the TEs attempt to improve in order to achieve the broad change in the inner circles. Similarly, each of the elements outside the triangles A & B specifies the stakeholders whom the TEs see as key agents of change in the respective context. The TEs move between the two contexts of change, thereby playing the role of a "bridge" in order to strengthen relationships and coordination between the school and the community. Thus, within the Socio-Educational Change framework, each TE operates through his particular orientation to change. In other words, the five TEs have three distinct orientations to a broader Socio-Educational Change, more specifically a Community-based School Change age.

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