

**From BAH to *ba*: Valence Theory
and the Future of Organization**

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
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Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
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Abstract

This thesis traces the history of organization from the society of Ancient Athens, through the medieval Church, the Industrial Age, and the 20th century – the latter characterized by the Bureaucratic, Administratively controlled, and Hierarchical (BAH) organization – until today’s contemporary reality of Ubiquitous Connectivity and Pervasive Proximity (UCaPP). Organizations are rarely, if ever, entirely BAH or entirely UCaPP, but do tend to have tendencies and behaviours that are more consistent with either end of a spectrum delineated by this duality. Valence Theory defines organization as being an emergent entity whose members (individuals or organizations) are connected via two or more of five valence (meaning uniting, bonding, interacting, reacting, combining) relationships. Each of these relationships – Economic, Socio-psychological, Identity, Knowledge, and Ecological – has a fungible (mercantile or tradable) aspect, and a *ba*-aspect that creates a space-and-place of common, tacit understanding of self-identification-in-relation, mutual sense of purpose, and volition to action. Organizations with more-BAH tendencies will emphasize the fungible valence forms, and primarily tend towards Economic valence dominance; more-UCaPP organizations tend to emphasize *ba*-valence forms, and are more balanced among the relative valence strengths.

The empirical research investigates five organizations spanning the spectrum from *über*-BAH to archetypal UCaPP and discovers how BAH-organizations replace the complexity of human dynamics in social systems with the complication of machine-analogous procedures that enable structural interdependence, individual responsibility, and leader accountability. In contrast, UCaPP-organizations encourage and enable processes of continual emergence by valuing and promoting complex interactions in an environment of individual autonomy and agency, collective responsibility, and mutual accountability. The consequential differences in how each type of organization operates manifest as the methods through which organizations accommodate change, coordination, evaluation, impetus, power dynamics, sense-making, and view of people. Particular attention is paid to the respective natures of leadership, and effecting organizational transformation from one type to the other.

Set in counterpoint against Zen-like, artistically constructed conversations with a thought-provoking interior *sensei*, the thesis offers a new foundational model of organization for the current cultural epoch that enables people to assume their responsibility in creating relationships and perceiving effects in the context of a UCaPP world.

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A doctoral thesis is a marathon, and in many ways appears to be a solitary, isolating process. At the same time, to successfully complete this marathon requires the assistance and support of so many wonderful people that it truly cannot be considered as anything else but a collaboration, reflexively an emergent organization not unlike those about which I write.

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Preface: Experiencing the Process of Thesis

A doctoral thesis seems to be many things: a write-up of a research design and execution that demonstrates a certain level of academic skill; a tangible artefact of some years of concentrated focus and effort; a journal in which one's adventures are reported during a quest for previously unknown knowledge; an initiation ritual undertaken by a select few to gain admittance to a relatively exclusive, not-so-secret society.

The thesis document itself, as one of my committee members recently noted, is typically a formulaic piece. It begins with a review of extant literature covering the general and specific fields of investigation, and the statement of a problem. This is followed by an exposition of the methodology and method(s) that were used to investigate said problem, and the findings subsequently revealed. After some considerable analysis, there is a discussion of how the findings inform some resolution of the problem, and the implications thereof. Finally, there is the author's reflection on the conclusions, some enumeration of the limitations of the study, suggested guidance for transforming discovered theory into practical application, and a statement of what further research may be inspired by the findings and conclusions of this research.

Indeed, this thesis includes these components. It also includes one additional component that is not typically found in academic theses, save those that draw from arts-informed inquiry (Knowles & Cole, 2008). This thesis specifically unpacks methodology into explicit – how the empirical research and analysis are conducted – and tacit, namely, how I as researcher and author negotiate the non-linear, emergent, sense-making process that manifests as the aforementioned formula more-or-less dictates. I have chosen to be very explicit about this tacit methodological process using a narrative representation of my actual, internal dialogues, collectively entitled, *Conversations with Nishida*. One such conversation precedes each “formula” chapter with an intention to convey my state of mind to you, the reader. I invite you to pause and contemplate each *Conversation*, to share the cognitive, emotional, spiritual, and perhaps even psychic space from which the ensuing chapter emerged.

My choice of the fictitious “inner Zen master” character, Nishida, not only reflects the authentic nature of my own reflections on both the experience and the content of my research project. He is also inspired by the very real founder of the Kyoto School of Philosophy, Nishida Kitaro (b. 1870; d. 1945) whose work forms one of the philosophical bases of this thesis, as will be explained in detail in the chapter entitled, *The Place*.

My interactions with Nishida, the character, were often quite surprising and unexpected. Often, my inner Zen master challenged me with a problem or question or paradox that my otherwise rational and logical mind had not discovered, and these led to some of the more interesting observations and conclusions of the research. These “aha” moments of insight are, I hope, accurately captured and conveyed in the *Conversations*, and are as much a part of my method as are in-depth interviews and grounded theory analysis.

Finally, the *Conversations* chapters were a joy to write, and the “wise master” – as curmudgeonly as he sometimes behaved – a joy to come to know. I hope that you will enjoy them as much as I have.

Part I:

Ground—The Invisible Context

A Conversation with Nishida: The Obvious

“This study of yours, it is like studying the air. A fool’s quest if you ask me.”

I didn’t ask him, but that never, ever prevents Nishida-san from stating his mind, nor offering a challenge. And this provocative statement of his is clearly a challenge. It is not a direct challenge to the topic of the thesis project, or to embarking on the thesis research itself. My inner Zen master is challenging my state of mind, to ensure that I inhabit the particular state of mind that will enable me to see what I need to see. Ahh...

“You are correct, *sensei*. It is like studying the air. I must endeavour to see that which others cannot see. The air is invisible to everyone, save for its effects. The zephyr-like breeze ruffles the bulrushes, and the gale moves large branches and may uproot great trees. The freshness of dew-laden dawn awakens us, and the weight of summer’s humid burden oppresses. The air can be clear or blanketed with fog. There are many ways to study the air even though we cannot see it directly.

He sighs the heavy sigh of a teacher who has all but given up hope for the student that is as dense as the fog I invoke. “If you wish to study wind or humidity or fog, I suggest you speak to a physicist, and I am no physicist. But if you want to study the *air* and you are coming to me for guidance...” His voice trails off.

“But I am not studying the air. I am studying *organization*,” I protest.

“Precisely. Organization. Air. There is no difference. Each is invisible. Obvious until it is no longer present in someone’s life. Creator of many effects that are well studied by those who think themselves to be physicists but are not. You seek to study that which is obvious to everyone and therefore your study is of no value to those who will not value the obvious. It is a fool’s quest.”

He smiles the wry smile of a teacher who has just set the answer before his student, sitting in silence to see if it will be taken up. He waits, watching as I turn his words over and over in my mind.

“But...” I begin, tentatively. “But if I can show people the value in the obvious, that which they experience every day and take for granted, it is no longer obvious. They begin to think differently, not just about what is obvious, *organization*. They begin to *think* differently... about everything.”

“Ah,” he exhales with a satisfied smile, “now not so foolish. Unusual, perhaps. But perhaps an unusual comparison is an appropriate starting point.”

I give him a quizzical look.

“It is, after all, an unusual undertaking to investigate what appears to be obvious,” he replies. “And, you must admit, this is an unusual conversation with which to begin such an inquiry.”

A Brief, 3,000-Year History of the Future of Organization

As the proverbial journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step, so too does the thesis journey begin with a single thought or realization. It seems fitting, therefore, to acknowledge the origin of this thesis's seminal thought by recalling the famous opening of Marshall McLuhan's most influential work, *Understanding Media*:

In a culture like ours, long accustomed to splitting and dividing all things as a means of control, it is sometimes a bit of a shock to be reminded that, in operational and practical fact, the medium is the message. That is merely to say that the personal and social consequences of any medium – that is, of any extension of ourselves – result from the new scale that is introduced into our affairs by each extension of ourselves, or by any new technology. ... Many people would be disposed to say that it was not the machine, but what one did with the machine, that was its meaning or message. In terms of the ways in which the machine altered our relations to one another and to ourselves, it mattered not in the least whether it turned out cornflakes or Cadillacs. The restructuring of human work and association was shaped by the technique of fragmentation that is the essence of machine technology. The essence of automation technology is the opposite. It is integral and decentralist in depth, just as the machine was fragmentary, centralist, and superficial in its patterning of human relationships. (McLuhan, 1964, p. 7-8)

In essence, the inspiration for this thesis, and the specific objective of this chapter – namely, reconsidering the nature of *organization*, and tracing its history through the cultural epochs defined by successive transformations in human communication – is complete in that one, tightly-woven paragraph. Each successive period, from the primary orality of Ancient Greece through to contemporary, multi-way, instantaneous, electronic interchange can be characterized according to the ways in which the prevailing form of human interaction, “altered our relations to one another and to ourselves” (McLuhan, 1964, p. 8). In particular, the unique forms and structures of interpersonal association – *organization* – are characteristic of the age in question. Those forms and structures shed light on the complex interconnections among the societal institutions that govern, educate, facilitate commerce, and foster artistic reflection on the culture of the day.

Thus arises the central question of this chapter: How has *organization* as a distinct entity¹ both shaped, and been shaped by, the dominant technology of human interaction throughout the history of Western civilization? Further, is there an overarching

¹ I suggest that it might be useful to consider “organization” not in the generic sense of a collective undertaking or enterprise, but as an autonomous entity, agent, or actor. This conception is consistent, for example, with business corporations being considered as legal “persons” whose members must owe their first duty of care to the corporation. In many cases, organization members are asked to sublimate, compromise, or even sacrifice, their personal values in favour of organizational objectives (e.g., Fayol, 1949; Gee, Hull, & Lankshear, 1996). In this sense, *organization* (denoted by the use of italicized text) can be thought of as having behaviours, characteristics, and externally perceived intent distinct from those of some, or many, of its members. In a later chapter, I will discuss the idea of how individual roles, and hence, behaviours, are often situationally imposed; again, this can be perceived as *organization* imposing its (pseudo-)independent will, so to speak, on the individuals in question. Organization (without italicization) denotes a generic or, in some cases, specific grouping of people.

understanding of organization that can account for its dominant form in each of the four major cultural epochs identified by the Toronto School of Communication (de Kerckhove, 1989; Blondheim & Watson, 2007): primary orality of Ancient Greece; phonetic literacy leading to the manuscript culture of the Middle Ages; the “Gutenberg Galaxy” of mechanization peaking at the Industrial Age; and today’s era of instantaneous, multi-way, “electric communication,” as McLuhan called it?

The Toronto School represents a line of reasoning that amalgamates the thinking of the classicist, Eric Havelock, political economist, Harold Adam Innis, and McLuhan. Blondheim and Watson (2007), and other authors in their edited volume, focus particularly on Innis’s works and those of media observer and philosopher, Marshall McLuhan. Innis and McLuhan demonstrate how it is the nature of technological media – from the spoken, written, and printed word, through various modes of transportation and trade, to contemporary information and communication technologies – to create change in both human cognitive processes and social institutions. Some authors (de Kerckhove, 1989; Gibson, 2000) include Havelock as a key member of the Toronto School for his contribution on the societal effects of phonetic literacy that Plato describes (Havelock, 1963). Using somewhat more contemporary language, I frame the primary thesis of the Toronto School as follows:

The Toronto School holds that the dominant mode of communication employed in a society or culture creates an environment from which the defining structures of that society emerge. These structures might include those institutions that define the way commerce and economics are conducted, the ways in which the people govern themselves, the forms and expressions of religion, how the populace is educated, and ... what is accepted as knowledge. (Federman, 2007)

If the Toronto School’s distinctive interpretation of history is indeed valid, then the ways in which people come together, and have come together for collective endeavours throughout the ages, should closely correspond to the nature and effects of the dominant mode of communications at the time. For example, one would expect that in pre-literate, Ancient Greece the democratic organization that saw its zenith in Periclean Athens would emerge from an environment shaped by direct, participatory and collective authority, corresponding to the lack of an authoritative “author,” or controlling central figure in the narrative culture of primary orality. Similarly, cultures in the early stages of phonetic literacy would likely develop organizational structures that reflect separation, decomposition, and central authority – all characteristic effects of literacy. One would therefore expect to see development of delegation via proxy authority, emerging over time into a large central bureaucracy among the literate, with those who are illiterate subject to the control of those who held the power of the written word. Subsequently, a mechanized-print culture would be expected to develop organization structures that fragment integral processes into various stations or offices, linked functionally with an externally imposed, objective purpose. Finally, in an age of massive, instantaneous, multi-way electronic communications, more participatory and collaborative organizational forms might emerge that hearken back to aspects of Athenian democracy. These new forms would challenge the underlying assumptions of industrial efficiency that are predicated on functional decomposition and sequential assembly—two concepts that could equally characterize print literacy and modern organization theory.

But, we are getting ahead of ourselves. Let us first go back in time approximately 3,000 years to revisit an ancient culture that, as will later be shown, might well be considered as remarkably contemporary in nature.

Primary Orality and the Organization of Athenian Democracy

It is close to the turn of the fifth century, before the Common Era. Cleisthenes, with the support of his politically powerful clan, has just successfully overthrown the tyrant Hippias, and established a new system of governance for Ancient Athens. This system was specifically designed to minimize the possibility of one individual accumulating sufficient power and influence to enable a return to tyrannical rule (Whitehead, 1986). Rather than the traditional tribes based on strong family ties, Cleisthenes established fundamental sovereign power in the local village or town, called a *deme*. Ten new tribes, or *phylei*, were defined, each organizing between six and twenty-one demes, creating phylei of approximately similar population. To minimize intertribal inequity with respect to resources or access to transportation, each phyle included demes from city, coastal, and inland agricultural regions.

Cleisthenes also instituted citizenship reforms that enabled more direct participation in governance. Although far from modern democratic conceptions of universal suffrage, equality, and fundamental freedoms, Cleisthenes's reforms nonetheless enabled all freeborn males over the age of 18 to automatically become citizens, so long as they had fathers who were citizens, irrespective of property ownership or lack of noble lineage. A general assembly – *ecclesia* – comprising nearly 30,000 eligible citizens (of which approximately 8,000 were required for a quorum) governed the approximately quarter-million people of Athens. The agenda and day-to-day governance responsibilities of the *ecclesia* fell to the *boule*, a steering committee of sorts comprised of 500 members, selected by lot from among the phylei. Each phyle appointed 50 men to serve on the *boule* for one year; no person could serve as a member of the *boule* more than twice in his lifetime, thereby limiting the potential for an individual to accumulate excessive administrative power (Cummings & Brocklesby, 1993; Ober, 2006; Whitehead, 1986).

Individual responsibilities rotated among the people who were amateurs at their respective jobs. Ober (2006) observes that, “in the Athenian model there was very little in the way of executive-level command and control, and nothing like a formal hierarchy” (n.p.). Rather, political power was collectively shared among non-professional citizens who were convened in physical proximity in the *ecclesia*. Their collective powers of reward and sanction could only be enacted via an annual “performance review” of responsible individuals' respective contributions to, or potential for undermining, the political and cultural norms of society. Any individual who was deemed to have accumulated too much personal power could be ostracized – in effect, banished for ten years by vote of the *ecclesia* general assembly, although this was considered to be an extreme action, rarely undertaken.

Since *boule* councillors sat for only a year, there was little opportunity for a self-serving institutional culture to develop. Further, because of the high degree of participation, there was tremendous transparency into the *boule*'s operation. The general population developed a common knowledge, and sense of the intricacies and complexities of decision-making. Ober, for example, focuses extensively on the concentration of knowledge among a relatively local populace as the key reason for the structural success of Athenian democracy:

Both specialized technical knowledge and generalized tacit knowledge necessary to making good decisions are increasingly accessible to the deliberations of the group as a whole. As councillors learn more about who was good at what and who to go to for what sort of information, they become more discriminating about their recommendations and as a result the whole council is increasingly capable of doing its difficult job well. Moreover, because each councillor has a local network of contacts outside the council, each councillor is a bridge between the council and some subset of the larger population. ... Athens as an organization comes to know a lot of what the Athenians know as individuals. (Ober, 2006, n.p.)

Concentration of power or influence was explicitly discouraged by design, not to mention the threat of ostracism. More than knowledge, however, the strong sense of identity, and the economic and affective ties with both the greater organization of Athens and the councillors' local deme or home village, coalesced to ensure optimal decision-making. Individuals in positions of influence maintained their strong connections to their respective social contexts – their demes and resource-balanced *phylei* – thereby grounding their decision-making equally in both local and more widely applicable considerations.

From an organizational systems perspective, Cummings and Brocklesby (1993) summarize some of the key characteristics of Athenian democracy during what is often called the Golden Age. First, the governance structure was recursive, meaning that the smaller organization of the deme appears similar in structure to the *phyle* (tribe) which itself appears similar to the organization of the *polis* (city-state) as a whole. Next, the overall organization was organic, emerging from the bottom-up, as opposed to being an externally conceived structure being imposed on the social environment. Manville and Ober describe it as a “system [that] was not imposed on the Athenian people, but rather it grew organically from their own needs, beliefs, and actions – it was as much a spirit of governance as a set of rules or laws. ... [T]he system was holistic – it was successful because it informed all aspects of the society” (Manville & Ober, 2003, p. 50).

Perhaps more important, individual jobs were rotated among the *boule* members so that there was both a continual growth in overall opportunity, expertise and experience, as well as a safeguard against concentrating knowledge (and therefore power and influence) in any one individual or small group. The organization design specifically mitigated against the formation of bureaucracy. Accordingly, accountability was to the whole of the citizenry, administered via either the general assembly or law courts. The latter were comprised of limited-term, appointed citizens, “many of whom, due to the ‘multiskilled’ nature of the system, had been in positions similar to those being evaluated. This may have alleviated the animosity often directed toward specialist internal auditing units within many, particularly modern, organizations” (Cummings & Brocklesby, 1993, p. 348).

Decision-making processes in ancient Athenian democracy were both centralized and decentralized according to what made sense in the circumstance, as opposed to having been procedurally imposed. Whitehead (1986) notes that the site of pertinent knowledge determined the “common sense” site of decision-making rather than any constitutionally or procedurally predetermined office. Territorial behaviour that is often associated with bureaucratic control appears to have been absent from this system, likely because the transient nature of any individual's responsibility decouples their personal status and identity

from the responsibility (i.e., bureaucratic office) they held at any given time. Simply put, no individual had a vested interest in accumulating power via control, since the system was specifically designed to protect against such a concentration of power. Rather, influence could only be generated through garnering public support.

In short, the organization of Athenian democracy reflected its culture. Cummings and Brocklesby (1993) describe that culture as “unified and cohesive at all levels of the system” (p. 349). Individual subcultures among the *phylei* and *demes* were respected: Local, traditional beliefs were maintained so as not to be “abrasive” towards the organization as a whole. It was not that Ancient Athens was particularly homogeneous. In fact, Ober describes that “Athens was a vast city, a Mediterranean crossroads with an ethnically diverse population, including naturalized citizens with prominent political careers” (2000, n.p.). Nonetheless, Cummings and Brocklesby report that,

the citizenry shared a common bond and identity when viewing themselves in relation to outsiders. They were a breed apart. This ‘identity’ was often rallied around in times of adversity and celebration. A perception of shared adversity, and a common cause, helped enhance unity among the citizenry. (Cummings & Brocklesby, 1993, p. 350).

Ancient Greece in the fifth century B.C. was also a primary-oral society, that is, phonetic literacy had not yet been introduced. Understanding the characteristics of primary orality offers an insight into the underlying cultural context of the Athenian organizational structure.

Walter Ong (1982) describes the primary attributes of orality. Orality is evanescent, existing only at, and for, the time that it is created. Its structure is formulaic, additive and recursive, rather than hierarchically organized with complex subordinate constructions. Orality exists “close to the human lifeworld” (p. 42). In other words, events and circumstances expressed in a primary-oral society are concrete and subjective, rather than abstract and expressed from an objective standpoint. Ong further characterizes oral engagement as “agonistically toned” (p. 43), leading to active, direct engagement, argument, and verbal combat. This is distinct from written literacy whose tone is more detached, even when arguing or refuting another author’s writing. With respect to the nature of learning, orality is “empathetic and participatory rather than objectively distanced” (p. 45). Oral learning is based in communal, actively participatory experience in which the participants help to create the experiential learning environment, rather than being at a cognitive, temporal, and physical distance from the source of knowledge. Finally, orality creates community and is necessarily homeostatic, requiring constant repetition and continual engagement for its continuity and survival.

How the organizational structure of the Athenian polis emerged from the effects of primary orality can be easily seen. The three principal administrative bodies – the *ecclesia*, the *boule*, and the law courts – were, in a sense, evanescent: constituted into existence at, and for, the time that they sat, namely, four times a month for the larger body, annually for the *boule*, and as needed for jurors. Rather than being fixed, the governance structures were homeostatic, requiring a continual flow of participants in order to sustain. Whitehead (1986) notes that the polis, *phylei*, and their component elements replicated the natural structure of the local *deme*—what could be considered a higher level of organization replicated the lowest level.

Decision-making among the members of the ecclesia was, more often than not, a noisy affair, with robust confrontations among diverse opinions being relatively common. Although those with specific knowledge offered their expertise on matters ranging from military to religious, that expert advice did not always carry the day. Ober (2006), for example, recounts Herodotus's story of Themistocles proposing an expansion of the Athenian navy in the 5th century B.C. When Persia invaded Greece, the citizens were forced to make a decision: whether to flee their homes, attempt to defend their city-state on land, the result of which would likely end in defeat, or meet the invaders in battle at sea. Elders sought the advice of the Oracle at Delphi who, in characteristic fashion, provided an ambiguous, but apparently pessimistic, response. Ober notes:

In a hierarchical political order, there would never have been a public debate on the oracles. In a traditional republican Greek regime (e.g. Sparta), in which such issues were discussed in public, the authoritative opinion of elders, backed by religious experts, would prevail. But in democratic Athens the premise was that all citizens had the right to publicly express their views and that each knew something that might be important in deciding on the best policy. No plan could be adopted if it contradicted the knowledge and will of the majority of the Assembly. (Ober, 2006, n.p.)

Among these citizens were those who were intimately involved in provisioning the naval fleet, and in its operation, who could offer particular knowledge that recontextualized the Oracle's prediction. The eventual plan – to engage the Persians in a naval battle – “rested on the conviction that even the poorest Athenians, the ones who would be rowing the warships, knew something important about how to defend the community” (Ober, 2006, n.p.). The ecclesia, that forum and process of participatory engagement, settled on the correct tactical decision in a manner consistent with being a primary-oral society. Hierarchical religious authority can be legitimately challenged by those who are physically present and directly engaged, based on how each individual constructs meaning from both personal and shared contexts—a communal, actively participatory experience.

The political decline of post-Periclean Athens is largely attributed to broadening the scope of Athenian political influence to incorporate poleis that did not share Athenian cultural grounds and traditions. More important, perhaps, was the fact that administration was being spread farther and wider over larger geographic areas, counter to the primary-oral tradition that grounded the Athenian system:

It was Alexander, and then the Romans, who would display more adequate procedures for the development and maintenance of large and diverse empires... Demagogy would have been disastrous for a system such as that of Athens, with its properties of individual participation in return for collective government. (Cummings & Brocklesby, 1993, p. 355)

The argument that Cummings and Brocklesby suggest to explain the decline of post-Periclean Athens, and the concomitant rise of Alexander and the Romans, exactly corresponds to that of the Toronto School. The environmental influences of phonetic literacy enable not only long-distance communication, but true delegation of authority by proxy and the creation of an efficient bureaucracy. McLuhan points out that,

an increase of power or speed in any kind of grouping of any components whatever is itself a disruption that causes a change of organization. ... Such speed-up means much more control at much greater distances. Historically, it meant the formation of the Roman Empire and the disruption of the previous city-states of the Greek world. Before the use of papyrus and alphabet created the incentives for building fast, hard-surface roads, the walled town and the city-state were natural forms that could endure. (McLuhan, 1964, p. 90)

He goes on to observe that “the Greek city-states eventually disintegrated by the usual action of specialist trading and the separation of functions... The Roman cities began that way – as specialist operations of the central power. The Greek cities ended that way” (p. 97).

Phonetic Literacy, the Romans, and the Catholic Church

As I have described elsewhere,

...phonetic literacy is a very ingenious invention and proved to be an excellent choice for expanding empires, spheres of influence, and spans of control across vast geographies. The written word travels well, alleviating the necessity for transporting the person along with his ideas or pronouncements. Instrumentally, phonetic literacy takes what is integral – the words coming from someone’s mouth – and fractures them, separating sound from meaning. That sound is then encoded into what are otherwise semantically meaningless symbols that we call letters. Those letters are then built up hierarchically, from letters into words, from words into sentences, from sentences into paragraphs, and from paragraphs into scrolls and later, books. (Federman, 2007, p. 4)

More important, the phonetic alphabet, when introduced into an extant primary-oral culture, produces a cognitive shift in that culture concerning not only what is known, but what *can* be known. Instead of knowledge being a direct experience that passes from person to person, in a sense of a bard or story-singer² reliving the experience for his audience, literacy means that what is to be known is only a written representation of the actual, visceral experience that comprises knowledge. Literacy separates the knower from that which is to be known. It inserts a proxy representation – words – of the experiences to be known, as well as an author who asserts his *authority* with respect to that representation.

In my examinations of the ancient historical roots of knowledge construction (Federman 2005; 2007), I argue how separation of the source of knowledge from an ultimate knower and the insertion of proxy representation create the enabling conditions for action at a distance. The ability to literally effect remote control is significantly different from the circumstances of societal interactions within a primary-oral culture. In a primary-oral culture action is a result of direct, face-to-face contact with individual or societal authority. For a

² The term “story-singer” is a reference to the discoveries of Milman Parry and Albert Lord in the primary-oral society of South Serbia in the early 20th century. See Adam Parry’s (1971) *The Making of Homeric Verse*, and Albert Lord’s (2000) *The Singer of Tales*.

society in which phonetic literacy has become the dominant means of communication, written language conveys both the proxy *representation* of an authoritative author's words, as well as the proxy *authority* of the author's station or office. The remotely located, literate recipient of an authored document not only ascribes attributes of reality to *words*—themselves proxy representations that are, in actuality, merely ink marks on linen or papyrus or sheepskin. A literate person is also able to call into existence the power and authority of an unseen, and often unknown, author by uttering the sounds represented by those ink marks. In a society in which relatively few people have command of the word, that literate person inevitably inherits aspects of that author's authority by the proxy vested in those written words. He³ becomes, in effect, the personification of proxy authority. For example, in the case of the growing dominance of the Church in the early Middle Ages, he who had command of the Word became the proxy of God, himself⁴. It is perhaps not surprising that the New Testament Book of John begins with the invocation, “in the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and *the word was God*” (John 1:1; emphasis added).

Hierarchical structure – the basic construct of phonetic literacy – and proxy delegation of authority are key characteristics of a bureaucratic organization. Hence, it is little surprise that, by the Middle Ages, the Church began to emerge as a remarkably functional administrative agency, taking on characteristics of coordination and control that, in retrospect, have become known as bureaucracy. As the Roman Empire declined, so too did secular administrative authority. The Church administration filled the power void, assuming many of the responsibilities of local municipal and regional administration (Miller, 1983).

Prior to the ninth century, local churches were privately founded and maintained by a local patron. Local clergy – bishops and priests – were primarily subjects of the patron, with little control exerted by Rome. In most instances, the lay patron appointed the local clergy who owed primary allegiance not only to the local patron, feudal lord, or king, but as well to the local diocese cathedral chapter of clerics that advised the bishop. As Maureen Miller describes,

...all in all, the Church in the ninth century was local, decentralized and intertwined with the secular power. The bishop or abbot answered to his king more than the pope, many proprietary churches were just beginning to answer to the bishop rather than their lay proprietor and the pope can hardly be said to have exerted universal authority. This local and feudalized organization of the Church matched the local, feudalized, “tribalized” nature of society during the ninth century. (Miller, 1983, p. 280)

This description corresponds well to a society fractured by the effects of literacy: the literate elites creating an administrative bureaucracy that oversees the illiterate masses who still live within a “tribal” – that is, primary-oral – subculture. Still, the early Church did not yet possess a truly effective, universal means of wielding and enforcing its administrative control through the proxy exercise of power at a distance. It was only in the ninth century that the practice of excommunication began to establish what Miller (1993) terms a

³ Among European societies that had recently become literate in that historical epoch, literacy was exclusively a male prerogative.

⁴ Arguably, this situation remains true in contemporary evangelical Christian communities. See Elisha (2008) and Lindsay (2008).

“corporate identity” for the Church, thereby enabling it to assert more centralized power through delegated control.

Although it had been previously available as a disciplinary measure, excommunication served only as an ecclesiastical sanction in the early Middle Ages. By the ninth century, however, those who were excommunicated could hold neither military nor public office, and civil magistrates enforced excommunication dictates of the local bishop. Excommunication evolved into a powerful force for corporate discipline, not only removing an individual from participation in the spiritual realm, but from the realm of civic engagement, as well.

In practical terms, the extension of excommunication from its strictly ecclesiastical context to one that affects all of one’s community life – in this case, effectively separating an individual from active participation in the society in which they lived – is consistent with the environmental influences of phonetic literacy. As I mentioned earlier, phonetic literacy separates that which is integral into individual, functional components, constructing distance between an individual and what they once possessed as intrinsic to their being—be it creating distance in knowledge via an author’s authority, in governance via proxy delegation, in craft skill via functional decomposition, or even in one’s place in society through excommunication.

Although similar to the relatively rarer practice of ostracism in Athenian democracy, there is a key distinction – a reversal (McLuhan & McLuhan, 1988), in fact – that, again, is indicative of the environmental differences between primary-oral, and phonetically literate, societies. Ostracism (lasting ten years) required a consensus vote of thousands of fellow citizens in the ecclesia—an expression of a common societal mind that the ostracized citizen had accumulated too much individual power. Excommunication permanently banished a non-compliant individual on the say-so of one man who possessed the delegated proxy of what was becoming supreme authority in the Church and through much of Western European society.

Through the codification of canon law, and its universalizing throughout Western Europe, papal legal authority was effectively established by the eleventh century. Pope Gregory VII, in the late-eleventh century, implemented a more formal, bureaucratic system of Church offices and functions. He eliminated both the influence of local, lay patrons to install clerical officials, and the earlier practice of nepotistic and hereditary influence, the latter corrected by instituting clerical celibacy. Church power and operations were grounded in legal authority, ultimately arbitrated by the central authority of the pope and officials in Rome. Those in relatively superior positions appointed officials in subordinate positions, with the rule of (canonical) law holding supreme. Even for the pope himself, the office was distinct from the individual holding it (Miller, 1983). The effect of literacy in enabling the solidification of bureaucracy as a governing principle is demonstrably evident:

Although Church government from the earliest times depended upon written records, the increased dependence upon law and central authority in the governance of the Church made written documents even more essential to Church administration. Whereas the Chancery under Gregory VII consisted of seven notaries, soon thereafter it grew to one hundred scribes and a corresponding number of higher officials to carry out the responsible duties. (Miller, 1983, p. 285)

The emerging bureaucracy of the Church influenced secular organizations throughout European society as well. From the twelfth century, bureaucratic and administrative practices common in the papal chancery began to be introduced into royal chanceries. Primarily because of their literacy – but equally, because of the opportunity for Church control to infiltrate secular institutions – bishops, cardinals, and other churchmen populated, and were highly influential in, royal administration throughout the Middle Ages. Note, for instance, the derivation of the word “clerk” from “cleric” (Tierney, 1992). Miller sums up the significance of organizational change through the Middle Ages and, consistent with literacy, its slow, but pervasive, replication:

The High Medieval reorganization of Church government created a streamlined, hierarchical organization and increased papal power so vastly... These papal claims aided the growth of civil government ... by sharpening ideas about secular authority. And, on a practical level, the Church aided secular rulers in developing their own administrations by supplying a model of administration and trained personnel. Most important for the development of modern organization was the Church’s borrowing of Roman law which, incorporated into the canon law, was most influential in developing public law in the emerging nation states. (Miller, 1983, p. 289)

None of this organizational evolution could have occurred without the presence of phonetic literacy both to enable the instrumental skill of those who possessed it, and to create an appropriate cognitive environment that could conceive of, and create, bureaucracy.

Gutenberg’s Influence: Mechanization, and the Rise of Modern Organization

Printing from movable types was the first mechanization of a complex handicraft, and became the archetype of all subsequent mechanization. ... Like any other extension of man, typography had psychic and social consequences that suddenly shifted previous boundaries and patterns of culture. (McLuhan, 1964, p. 171-172)

Notably, the era ushered in by Gutenberg’s iconic printing of the Bible on a movable type press has, as its hallmark, uniformity of production, and economical repeatability from an original specimen. Eisenstein (1979) points out that, prior to mechanized print, scribed manuscripts could well be duplicated if they were sufficiently important—items like royal edicts and papal bulls. It was the *mass production* of both the mundane and the masterful, the triumphant and the trivial, that the mechanized printing press enabled. Perhaps more influential, the advances in structural elements that overlaid the actual text made the eventual book more attractive to readers. Eisenstein elaborates:

Well before 1500, printers had begun to experiment with the use of graduate types, running heads ... footnotes ... tables of contents ... superior figures, cross references ... and other devices available to the compositor—all registering the victory of the punch cutter over the scribe. Title pages became increasingly common, facilitating the production of book lists and catalogues, while acting as advertisements in themselves. Hand-drawn illustrations were replaced by more easily duplicated woodcuts and engravings—an innovation which eventually helped to revolutionize technical literature by introducing

exactly repeatable pictorial statements into all kinds of reference works.
(Eisenstein, 1992, p. 52-53)

Uniformity, repeatability, and structuring elements that are distinct from, but support, the content are indeed the hallmarks of both books and the societal culture that arose from the environment of mechanized print, not to mention mechanization and industrialization in general. The general availability and economy of printed materials fostered an explosion of literacy in the various vernacular languages of Europe, and wrested control of education from the Church. Setting the stage for the Enlightenment and the Age of Reason, print literacy created yet another cognitive shift in the psycho-social environment that gave dominance to the practices of objectivity, separation, and distance, and functional decomposition in almost every aspect of human endeavour: from literature (with an all-seeing, all-knowing author with his own distinct narrative voice) and art (perspective), to philosophy (Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*), architecture (Italian piazzas) and science (with the supposedly neutral, objective observer), including the emergence of engineering, anatomy (at the time, a sort of "engineering" study of the human body), and modern manufacturing. As one might expect, that psycho-social shift also set the stage for the multi-layered, bureaucratic, administratively controlled, hierarchical organization (Eisenstein, 1992; Federman, 2007; McLuhan, 1962) that helped usher in modernity.

In the context of modern *organization*, the three dominant effects of what McLuhan calls "The Gutenberg Galaxy" – uniformity, repeatability, and supportive, structuring elements – are best documented by the three chroniclers of post-Industrial Age management: Frederick Winslow Taylor, Max Weber and Henri Fayol.

Taylor's landmark, 1911 work, *Principles of Scientific Management*, outlines his recommended methods to achieve uniform, repeatable, and efficient management of labour: (a) decompose work into tasks or "elements," and develop "a science" for each one; (b) select and train workers according to a scientific approach; (c) create cooperation between workers and managers to ensure the work is being done according to the developed science; and (d) divide the work between managers and workers so that each performs the tasks to which they are respectively suited—workers are suited to "do" and not think, while managers are suited to think and not do. Indeed, Warner and Witzel point out that Taylor's scientific management principles were a result of the need created for "professional managers" when ownership separated from management control in the late nineteenth century. Its apparent effectiveness became legendary worldwide: For the first half of the twentieth century, Taylor's "American 'way' of doing business was seen as superior to all others" (Warner & Witzel, 1997, p. 264).

If Frederick Taylor's application of rational science was seen as a superior way of *doing* work, Max Weber's "ideal type" of rational control was – and in many circles, still is – seen as a superior way of *organizing* work for maximum efficiency. It is commonly accepted that Weber's bureaucracy describes an administrative structure in which there is a clear division of labour defined along the lines of hierarchical class. Managers occupy functional offices with a clear distinction being made between the permanence and functional necessity of the office, and the person who contingently holds that office or position. Administrative operations are governed by well-articulated, explicit, and codified rules that apply not only to the labourers, but to the professional administrators themselves. For example, among those rules are the specifications for administrator compensation: administrators do not earn their

income directly from the production under their purview, nor from the privilege of administration, but rather from a rule-based salary.

Although bureaucracy seems to provide an efficient and apparently fair means of control through equally applied rules and well-documented processes, there is a danger that the rules themselves become paramount, without consideration for the ensuing effects on people's lives. "We become so enmeshed in creating and following a legalistic, rule-based hierarchy that the bureaucracy becomes a subtle but powerful form of domination" (Barker, 1993, p. 410). In fact, Weiss (1983) maintains that Weber's expression of the concept of *Herrschaft* refers specifically to domination, rather than the softer, more "managerial" notion of leadership, an interpretation that is more commonly put forward. According to Roth and Wittich's interpretation of *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft – Economy and Society* (Weber, 1921/1978) – those so dominated by bureaucratic rules do so more or less willingly, requiring only a "minimum of voluntary compliance" (p. 212) and conformity to rules reflexively legitimated by the bureaucratic system itself.

Weber's use of the term "ideal type" is not necessarily to be interpreted as the most desirable form, or most efficient. Rather, Weiss (1983) suggests that Weber's then-contemporary usage more closely relates to an archetype—an objective model that is, in practical circumstances, unattainable. Similarly, in maintaining that bureaucracy represents *rational* control, Weber is not referring to that control necessarily being reasonable, merely logical: "Bureaucratic authority is specifically rational in the sense of being bound to discursively analyzable rules" (1922/1964, p. 361). As well, such authority is not meant to suggest culturally normative behaviour, administrative direction consistent with the underlying values, mission, vision, or intentions of the organization, or even efficient operations: "Weber was concerned with domination rather than efficient coordination" (Weiss, p. 246).

Weber himself called this rational but oppressive form of social control an "iron cage" that dominates not just people's behaviours, but other, potentially alternative, means of control:

Once fully established, bureaucracy is among those social structures which are the hardest to destroy. Bureaucracy is the means of transforming social action into rationally organized action. ... [an individual] cannot squirm out of the apparatus into which he has been harnessed. (Weber, 1921/1978, p. 987-988)

With earlier forms of hierarchical control, such as those exhibited in the medieval Church, a human presented the face of control to those controlled even in the presence of written rules. Modern bureaucracy as documented (but not necessarily prescribed) by Weber, introduced a form of *mechanized separation* by creating an abstract system of processes that nominally implements and enforces the rules, removing human discretion, emotion, and ultimately, direct human responsibility for action and consequences. In effect, early-modern *organization* subsumes and subjugates itself to a mechanized, administrative automaton. Bureaucracy becomes an administrative machine of which people are merely components, replicating the mechanizing and dehumanizing effects of industrial, factory apparatus.

Taylor and Weber clearly contribute ideas and principles that encompass two of the three aforementioned hallmarks of mechanized, industrial, modern, *organization*, namely,

uniformity and repeatability. By “scientifically” measuring the best worker’s performance and seeking to replicate that performance in other workers under the direction of managers, Taylor sought to create uniformity and efficiency in production. Weber’s ideals of rational bureaucracy in which human judgement is removed from operational decisions in favour of systematic, rule-based processes ensured repeatability throughout an organization, especially when direct supervision was impractical, if not impossible. Henri Fayol’s contribution to modern management provides the third component, namely, the elements that structure professional management practice itself.

Fayol’s classic chapter on General Principles of Management first appears in a 1916 bulletin of the French mining industry association, and is later incorporated in his 1949 book, *General and Industrial Management*. Given the pervasiveness of Fayol’s Principles throughout the contemporary business world, it could be considered as the wellspring of modern management practice. In it, he describes his fourteen principles through which managers “operate” on the workers:

Whilst the other functions bring into play material and machines the managerial function operates only on the personnel. The soundness and good working order of the body corporate depend on a certain number of conditions termed indiscriminately principles, laws, rules. (Fayol, 1949, p. 19)

However, unlike his American and German counterparts in the modern managerial triumvirate, Fayol eschews rigidity and absolutism in management practice:

It is all a question of proportion. Seldom do we have to apply the same principle twice in identical conditions; allowance must be made for different changing circumstances, for men just as different and changing and for many other variable elements. (Fayol, 1949, p. 19)⁵

Still, by his own description, Fayol’s fourteen principles provide the structuring elements that are distinct from, but support, the content of management decisions. These principles include:

1. **Division of work**, “not merely applicable to technical work, but without exception to all work ... result[ing] in specialization of functions and separation of powers” (p. 21).

2. **Authority and responsibility**, “the right to give orders and the power to exact obedience” (p. 21). Bound up with this principle is the “need for sanction,” both positive and negative, corresponding to assuming responsibility for acting with legitimate authority.

⁵ Despite Fayol’s arguably more enlightened contribution to management theory, Taylor and Weber seem to have “won” in influencing both management education and practice throughout the 20th century. For example, Jones (2000) chronicles contemporary implementation of Taylor’s methods on the factory floor, while Barrett (2004) describes Taylor and Weber’s influence in an online software development environment. Wilson (1995) demonstrates how information technology recreates Taylor and Weber’s principles in the guise of what has been commonly known as knowledge management and organizational reengineering – the latter made (in)famous by Hammer and Champy (1993) – “to obviate the need for the more traditional organizational structures ... [that] has resulted in a relentless drive towards organizational (workforce) conformity in response to the demands of greater technological efficiency” (Wilson, p. 59).

3. **Discipline**, based on agreements between the organization and its workers, irrespective, according to Fayol, of whether those agreements are explicit, tacit, written, commonly understood, “derive from the wish of the parties or from rules and customs” (p. 23).

4. **Unity of command**, so that any individual has only one direct superior exercising legitimate authority.

5. **Unity of direction**, expressing one plan and one ultimate leader for the organization.

6. **Subordination of individual interest to general interest**, “the fact that in a business the interest of one employee or group of employees should not prevail over that of the [business] concern” (p. 26).

7. **Remuneration of personnel**, assuring “fair remuneration” for services rendered, encouraging “keenness,” and “not lead to over-payment going beyond reasonable limits” (p. 28). Fayol encourages bonuses to “arouse the worker’s interest in the smooth running of the business” (p. 29), which means not only providing a motivation to work efficiently as recommended by Taylor (1911), but to enact control and ensure compliant behaviour as described by Weber (1921/1978).

8. **Centralization**, that Fayol claims “like division of work ... belongs to the natural order; ... the fact that in every organism, animal or social, sensations converge towards the brain or directive part, and from the brain or directive part orders are sent out which set all parts of the organism in movement” (p. 34).

9. **Scalar chain**, the linear hierarchy of authority along which information passes, with the proviso that, for the sake of efficiency a direct “gang plank” of communication is permitted between employees at equivalent levels of responsibility in two, distinct reporting chains, with the permission of their respective managers.

10. **Order**, referring to both “material order ... a place for everything and everything in its place” (p. 37) for supplies, and “social order ... the right man in the right place” (p. 38) for the job, echoing both Taylor and Weber.

11. **Equity**, or equality of treatment, best accomplished, it seems, under well-defined rules with sound managerial judgement.

12. **Stability of tenure of personnel**, that expresses in other words the concepts of professionalism and specialization.

13. **Initiative**, “thinking out a plan and ensuring its success” (p. 40), notably “within the limits imposed, by respect for authority and for discipline” (p. 41).

14. **Esprit de corps**, through which Fayol warns against a manager dividing his⁶ team, “sowing dissention among subordinates” (p. 41), and, misusing written communication: “It is well known that differences and misunderstandings which a conversation could clear up, grow more bitter in writing” (p. 42).

⁶ Gender specific, since managers were exclusively male in Fayol’s context.

It seems that in this last principle, Fayol's experience agrees with McLuhan's observation and the prediction of the Toronto School. Separation, isolation, and creation of division among people are recognized consequences – and according to Taylor and Weber, perhaps even the tacit objectives – of the industrialized environment enabled by mechanized print literacy.

Structural Determinism Versus UCaPP Ontology: Parallel 20th Century Discourses, and the Context for the Future of *Organization*

As I have outlined throughout this chapter, during each of the major nexus periods at which the speed and geographical scope of human communications accelerate significantly, the socio-structural underpinnings of the society of the day – and specifically the nature of *organization* – correspondingly change. In composing a history of the future of *organization* from today's standpoint, the acceleration in communications and resulting period of extraordinary transformation unavoidably contextualizes the ensuing composition. The contemporary nexus through which we are now living is first heralded by Morse's demonstration of the telegraph in 1844, inaugurating an era of instantaneous, electrically-enabled telecommunications that contracts both physical and temporal separation on a global scale.

In his book, *The Rise of the Network Society*, Manuel Castells echoes the primary thesis of the Toronto School of Communication. He captures the extent of, and essential reason for pervasive, epochal change when he writes, “because culture is mediated and enacted through communication, cultures themselves – that is, our historically produced systems of beliefs and codes – become fundamentally transformed, and will be more so over time, by the new technological system” (Castells, 1996, p. 357).

As has been demonstrated throughout history, such fundamental transformation from one cultural epoch to the next – the latter being enabled by “the new technological system” of the day – takes a considerable length of time. As of this writing in 2010, 166 years after the new era was telegraphed into being, Western society remains bound to its Gutenbergian roots among many fundamentally important institutions, like its education system, governance models, and most models of commerce. Yet, the elements of transformation are also becoming increasingly evident. Now, within the first decade of the twenty-first century, many people are experiencing the effects of always being connected to some multi-way communications mechanism for the first time in their lives, and are slowly adapting to it. Yet concurrently, a large and growing demographic have *never not known* such connectivity:

Unlike we who were socialized and acculturated in a primarily literate societal ground, in which our experience with technology and media is primarily within a linear, hierarchical context – all artefacts of literacy – today's youth and tomorrow's adults live in a world of *ubiquitous connectivity and pervasive proximity*. Everyone is, or soon will be, connected to everyone else, and all available information, through instantaneous, multi-way communication. This is ubiquitous connectivity. They will therefore have the experience of being immediately proximate to everyone else and to all available information. This is pervasive proximity. Their direct experience of the world is fundamentally different from yours or from mine, as we have had to adopt and adapt to these technologies that create the effects of ubiquitous

connectivity and pervasive proximity [abbreviated to “UCaPP”]. (Federman, 2005, p. 11; emphasis added)

In other words, in the context of a Toronto School reading of history, the 20th century can be understood as a time of transformation from the separation and isolation of a mechanized environment, to connection and relationship that is more in concert with a UCaPP world. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to expect two distinct but parallel histories of organizational discourse to emerge over course of the century: one whose primary focus is instrumentality, consistent with the prior epoch, and another demonstrating more of a dominant concern for humanistic and relational issues that is consistent with effects of UCaPP.

The story of organization theories through the 20th century is often recited chronologically (Sashkin, 1981; Lewin & Minton, 1986; Shafritz & Ott, 1992; Parker, 2000), despite the inherent dualism in the supposed debate between a more-functionalist or “rational” emphasis, and a more-humanist or what is often called a natural systems focus. Parker observes that “both ‘sides’ needed the other, and ... the former was generally dominant (in the guise of managerial functionalism)” (p. 29). The prominence of one school of thought through a particular decade seems to encourage a response by researchers, theorists, and practitioners from the other. Nonetheless, there seems to be a direct lineage in the respective discourses leading back to Taylor, Weber, and Fayol as the fathers of the “rational” camp, and Mary Parker Follett as the mother of the “humanist” camp, respectively.

The Instrumental, Institutional, and Managerialist 20th Century

As modern, industrial *organization* was tested under the extreme conditions of war production in the early-to-mid 20th century, management theorists were able to contextualize, contest, and confront the pure instrumental rationality and “ideal types” suggested by Taylor and Weber, and Fayol’s administrative management approaches. Herbert Simon (1946/1992, 1947) examines administration and the challenge of empirically analyzing its operations. Later, Simon and James March confront the issue of why bureaucracies – “the machine model of human behavior” (1958, p. 36) – result in as many unintended results as they do intended outcomes. To a contemporary reader, their findings of that time are not surprising:

...the elaboration of evoking connections [i.e., organizational complexity], the presence of unintended cues, and organizationally dysfunctional learning appear to account for most of the unanticipated consequences with which these theories deal. Many of the central problems for the analysis of human behavior in large-scale organizations stem from the operation of subsystems within the total organizational structure. (March & Simon, 1958, p. 47)

In the post-war period, characterized by massive industrial growth, high employment, and growing affluence (especially in North America), researchers realized the importance of connecting the human components of the industrial machinery to the technological components in order to achieve greater productivity and effective deployment of resources. Through their examination of work teams in coal mines, Eric Trist and Ken Bamford (1951) discover that the most effective teams adapt their work methods in

response to the technological and situational circumstances of the moment. Such action represents a major deviation from the “one best way” (Taylor, 1911) to perform a job recommended by the prescripts of Scientific Management.

Emery and Trist later generalize this finding as *socio-technical systems design* (1960). They suggest that group and large-organization structure and operation should be minimally pre-designed, with the work group able to respond to specific contingencies as they occur. Contingent responses would be based on well-defined domains of responsibility that correspond to group and organizational boundaries, appropriate information flow, and fundamental compatibility between the organization’s processes and its objectives (Cherns, 1976).

Burns and Stalker (1961/1992) and Alfred Chandler (1962), seemingly influenced by the work of Bamford, Trist, and Emery, began to outline ways in which optimal organization structure conforms to both an organization’s strategy, and the external conditions to which it is required to respond. Chandler’s extensive and influential study of the evolution of corporate structures at DuPont, General Motors, Standard Oil, and Sears, Roebuck and Company justifies the instrumental logic used to build industrial conglomerates through the third quarter of the 20th century. Burns and Stalker, recognizing the structural changes that were becoming visible throughout society, describe what they observed as a contingent duality, namely “mechanistic and organic” management systems:

...the two polar extremities of the forms which such systems can take when they are adapted to a specific rate of technical and commercial change ... explicitly and deliberately created and maintained to exploit the human resources of a concern in the most efficient manner feasible in the circumstances of the concern. (Burns & Stalker, 1961/1992, p. 207)

So-called mechanistic management corresponds to relatively stable and static conditions, and reiterates the fundamental principles of bureaucratic, administrative, and hierarchical organization management originally described and codified by Taylor, Weber, and Fayol. However, as the reality of quickly changing conditions and unforeseen interactions and outcomes became apparent – in other words, general instability in the midst of overall social change that characterized the 1950s and ’60s – so too did the need for another way of thinking about organization structure. Burns and Stalker’s description of organic management systems recognizes certain precepts that differ significantly from the well-ordered management principles prescribed by Fayol. In some circumstances:

- specific knowledge trumps legitimation and seniority with respect to task responsibility and control authority;
- communication follows a natural network of connected interests rather than hierarchical control paths;
- the content of communications is informative and advisory rather than instructive and authoritative; and
- one’s concern for specific tasks and the overall objectives of the organization must take precedence over personal loyalties and obedience to one’s superior.

Although the description of such organic approaches to management strategy and structure (the latter remaining stratified by knowledge, expertise, and experience if not by traditional class and social hierarchy) may appear to be consistent with the effects of what is now known to be the beginnings of massive connectivity, it remained exclusively functional and instrumental in its intent. Organic systems were seen to require an even greater commitment of an individual employee as a “resource to be used by the working organization” (Burns & Stalker, 1961/1992, p. 208) than in the case of mechanistic systems. In fact, the authors explicitly describe the importance of individuals assimilating the “institutionalized values, beliefs, and conduct in the form of commitments, ideology, and manners” (p. 208) of the organization to reinforce relatively more tacit control in the wake of the expected loss of formal, hierarchical, control structures.

The need for socio-technical systems design to perceive, recognize, and structurally respond to environmental factors – be they market, regulatory, or resource-constraint in nature – led to a scaffolding of sorts in functionalist, instrumental management thinking that continues to influence many contemporary organizations. Lawrence and Lorsch (1969) write that an organization’s internal structure, processes, and group make-up would have to match characteristics present in its external environment for it to be able to effectively perceive and process relevant information, and conduct business transactions. Moreover, organizations must be responsive to environmental change. “As the relevant environment changes, however, organizations not only need suitable matched units, but on occasion also need to establish new units to address emerging environmental facts and to regroup old units” (p. 28). A year later, they are quite specific about the modern organization’s functional and structural responsiveness to changing external factors:

Rather than searching for the panacea of the one best way to organize under all conditions, investigators have more and more tended to examine the functioning of organizations in relation to the needs of their particular members and the external pressures facing them. Basically, this approach seems to be leading to the development of a ‘contingency’ theory of organization with the appropriate internal states and processes of the organization contingent upon external requirements and member needs. (Lorsch & Lawrence, 1970, p. 1)

Kast and Rosenzweig provide a “more precise” definition that emphasizes the functional and instrumental view of organizations framed in terms of structural contingency:

The contingency view of organizations and their management suggests that an organization is a system composed of subsystems and delineated by identifiable boundaries from its environmental suprasystem. The contingency view seeks to understand the interrelationships within and among subsystems as well as between the organization and its environment and to define patterns of relationships or configurations of variables. It emphasizes the multivariate nature of organizations and attempts to understand how organizations operate under varying conditions and in specific circumstances. Contingency views are ultimately directed toward suggesting organizational designs and managerial systems most appropriate for specific situations. (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972/1992, p. 304)

Henry Mintzberg (1979, 1983), in what is among the most widely cited models of structural contingency theory, describes various coordinating configurations among five basic organizational components. The description of these components offers a detailed and usefully descriptive analysis of the structural “machinery” of modern organizations. In the second chapter of his 1979, *The Structuring of Organizations*, Mintzberg describes “the five basic parts of the organization,” that include the strategic apex, the “middle line” of functional management, the “technostructure” of analysts, the support staff, and the operating core of people who do the actual production work of the enterprise. These generalized structural components overlay three distinct models of workflow that account for varying relative amounts of interdependence among workers. Mintzberg’s account is a logical, modernist extension of the factory model of organization that yield five ideal types that correspond to distinct contingent environments: the simple structure, the machine bureaucracy, the divisionalized form, the professional bureaucracy, and the “adhocracy,” subsequently called the innovative organization⁷.

Recognizing the permeability of organizational boundaries, together with the specific application of general system theory (von Bertalanffy, 1950/2008) to social systems, enabled Daniel Katz and Robert Kahn to describe how the “system concept” applied to organizations as open systems (1966/1992). Despite their eponymous treatment of the *Social Psychology of Organizations*, the actual emphasis of Katz and Kahn’s work remained solidly functionalist and socio-technical, as opposed to, say, *relational* or humanistic. For example, the purpose of an organization considered as a system “should begin with the input, output, and functioning of the organization as a system and not with the rational purposes of its leaders” (p. 271). They go on to describe the open-systems approach as one that “begins by identifying and mapping the repeated cycles of input, transformation, output, and renewed input which comprise the organizational pattern” (p. 279).

The apparent dichotomy of open versus closed systems models for organizations in the paradigmatic context of functional, contingent determinism led to an equally dichotomous conclusion. A closed system perspective could be appropriate to model organizations in relatively stable, predictable environments, while open systems might prove to be more useful when there was an “expectation of uncertainty.” James Thompson (1967/1992) suggests a reconciliation of sorts that proposes a rational response to contingent and constrained conditions for what he termed, “complex organizations ... [that is,] open systems, hence indeterminate and faced with uncertainty, but at the same time as subject to criteria of rationality and hence needing determinateness and certainty” (p. 285). By proposing approaches whereby an organization could navigate amidst an interdependent environment while retaining some measure of self-determinism, Thompson contributed to establishing contingency thinking as a foundation for the (late-)modern, functionalist organization.

There have been numerous refinements of structural contingency theory – and considerable defences mounted against its critics (Donaldson, 1985, 1995) – through the end of the 20th century. Eric Trist expands on Thompson in proposing organizational ecology that redirects analytic attention from specific organizations to:

⁷ Mintzberg later (1989) added “ideology” as a sixth basic component that encompasses norms, beliefs and culture, and yields a sixth organization type, namely “missionary” or idealistic organization.

...the organizational field created by a number of organizations whose interrelations compose a system at the level of the whole field. The character of this overall field, as a system, now becomes the object of inquiry, not the single organization as related to its organization-set. (Trist, 1977, p. 162).

Continuing to draw on biological metaphors, and almost as a logical extension to Trist's work, Hannan and Freeman (1977), apply biological population analysis, with a particular focus on theories of organic populations in particular environmental "niches" amidst natural competition. Adding considerations of an organization's adaptability in response to resource availability (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) helped to explain the diversity of organization types as they adapt to specific environments, in a manner not unlike Darwinian natural selection. These ideas were further expanded into the concepts of institutional isomorphism (Meyer & Brown, 1977; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) and economic sociology (Morgan, Whitley, & Moen, 2005) to explain why many organizations evolve to look alike. Westwood and Clegg explain:

Legitimacy concerns translate into practices of isomorphism on the part of organizations unsure what their structure should be: sometimes the isomorphism is coercively mandated, by external actors; other times it is normatively mandated, but of particular interest are the many cases where it is mimetic. In these, organizations consciously choose to mimic what appears as a highly valued form of social capital associated with structural design. Choosing something associated with prestigious social capital factors, such as designs operated by very visible, successful, or influential organizations would be the basis for these structure choices (Westwood & Clegg, 2003, p. 274)

Ironically, all of these theories position *organization* as a relatively passive responder to environmental change (Hernes, 2008), contrary to the image of innovator and shaper of economic landscapes that many organizational leaders might prefer to hold. Nonetheless, among those theorists with a functionalist and instrumental orientation, the various permutations of structural contingency theories remain the *ne plus ultra* of strategic organizational analysis for efficiency and effectiveness. In a relatively recent debate on organizational structure published in the Westwood and Clegg volume (2003), Bob Hinings claims that organizations are "rightly" understood by way of their structure. He explains that such an understanding is the way that their members consider organization and their individual roles within it, and the way in which processes and systems are "structurally enshrined" and legitimated through those with authority and their ensuing relationships. Accordingly, structural contingency theory is the primary vehicle through which structure informs organization theory by,

...establishing the relationships between structural aspects of organization and such factors as size, technology, task uncertainty, strategy, and ideology. Organization efficiency and effectiveness are a function of the fit between structure and these contingencies. Organizations adapt to these contingent conditions in order to remain effective. Contingency theory continues to be an important, parsimonious, and empirically tested approach to understanding organization. (Hinings, 2003, p. 275-276)

Hinings argues that even when analytical research and managerial concerns are centred on processes, strategy, quality improvement, and other operational positioning, the processes and activities under examination are “actually embedded in new roles, relationships, and authority, the stuff of structure” (2003, p. 280). On the other hand, this observation may well be explained as an issue of managerial socialization through reproduced experience and training in management schools (Huczynski, 1994). If one is taught to think in structures, if organizational structures are what are manifestly evident when one reifies the concept of *organization*, then organizations look like structures by definition.

For example, the immediate reaction of one of this research project’s participants⁸ to a description that characterizes the investigation as considering the nature of “the organization of the future” is to respond specifically in structural terms, critiquing various non-hierarchical, and generalist versus specialist, organization structures. It is seemingly difficult for some to conceive of organization in terms other than structure-to-fulfil-a-purpose. Thus, it is possible that Hinings’s contention – “structure also needs to be a prime analytical construct for organizational theorists because it is central to the thinking of managers” (p. 280) – is more a matter of managerial training and socialization, rather than an endorsement of universal empirical validity⁹ or claim to truth. Another alternative is to consider a different analytical construct, derived from a parallel organizational history of the 20th century, that may be able to facilitate a change in dominant managerial thinking, one that may be more consistent with contemporary circumstances.

The Humanist, Relational, and Collaborative 20th Century

If one considers Frederick Taylor as the grandfather of the functionalist line of managerial thinking through the 20th century, Mary Parker Follett is the grandmother of the humanist and relational line of thinking. In her classic, 1926 article, *The Giving of Orders*, Follett identifies the need to reconcile the inherent conflict in an individual between resisting taking orders, arising from the natural animosity felt towards “the boss,” and the requirement to follow orders necessitated by a desire to retain one’s employment. Follett claims that if both the boss and the employee “discover the law of the situation and obey that ... orders are simply part of the situation, [and] the question of someone giving and someone receiving does not come up. Both accept the orders given by the situation” (1926/1992, p. 153). In that case, the order becomes “depersonalized,” according to the language of scientific management. That is, the requirement to act or perform in a certain way is removed from the arbitrary exercise of power that derives from the legitimated hierarchical power dynamic and instead, becomes contingently based. In effect, the situation and not one’s superior office is giving the order. As well, both superior and subordinate receive the order equally and simultaneously.

⁸ This participant is notable in this context as he has had formal managerial training that emphasizes a structural approach to organizational conception, an example of Huczynski’s contention.

⁹ For instance, a rigorous empirical test of Mintzberg’s (1983, 1989) typology by Doty, Glick, & Huber (1993) found very few organizations whose ideal type matched their context, and no difference in effectiveness between those whose structural design matched the context and those that did not. In fact Doty, et al. were unable to prove any of the testable hypotheses predicted by Mintzberg’s model.

This reasoning might appear to be an early argument in favour of structural contingency theory (and other, related contingency theories in general). However, Follett's emphasis is less focused on *organizational* contingent response, and more on *human* responses – “the essence of the human being” (p. 155) – that fundamentally reorganizes the impetus of the conventional superior-subordinate relationship, and explicitly acknowledges the effects of organizational actions on organizational actors:

We, persons, have relations with each other, but we should find them in and through the whole situation. We cannot have any sound relations with each other as long as we take them out of that setting which gives them their meaning and value... (Follett, 1926/1992, p. 154)

...if taking a *responsible* attitude toward experience involves recognizing the evolving situation, a *conscious* attitude toward experience means that we note the change which the developing situation makes in ourselves; the situation does not change without changing us. (Follett, 1926/1992, p. 156; emphasis in original)

The iconic exemplar of a changing situation changing those involved is the famous Hawthorne Experiments (Mayo, 1933/1945; Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1940/1964), conducted at the Hawthorne Works of Western Electric Company in Chicago between 1924 and 1932. In the summary introduction to their chapter on classic writings of Human Resource theory and Human Relations movement, Shafritz and Ott observe:

The Mayo team ... redefined the Hawthorne problems as social psychological problems—problems conceptualized in such terms as interpersonal relations in groups, group norms, control over one's own environment, and personal recognition. ... The Hawthorne studies showed that complex, interactional variables make the difference in motivating people—things like attention paid to workers as individual, workers' control over their own work, differences between individuals' needs, management's willingness to listen, group norms, and direct feedback. (Shafritz & Ott, 1992, p. 144)

Martin Parker (2000) credits Mayo and his team for being first to apply learning from the social sciences in order to motivate workers to achieve organizational goals and objectives without feeling oppressed or alienated. Parker goes on to identify the contributions of researchers and practitioners such as Douglas McGregor, Rensis Likert, and Chris Argyris, among others, as “prescriptions for satisfying workers and managers simultaneously but they reframe elements of the early human relations studies by moving the focus of attention from the social structure of the workgroup to *more interactive formulations of the relationship between social identities*” (p. 38; emphasis added). Clearly, by the 1960s – when these authors were active – the bifurcation between the functionalist-instrumentalist and humanist-relational schools of thought was well established.

Douglas McGregor (1957/1992, 1960) outlines his Theory X and Theory Y approaches to understanding employee motivation. Theory X posits that employees are reluctant and “indolent” workers; management, therefore, must intervene and maintain firm control to accomplish the necessities of organizational productivity. Theory Y, on the other

hand, maintains that such disagreeable employees are created by the treatment they receive from management. By understanding that basic needs (e.g., Maslow, 1943), once fulfilled, are no longer motivational, employees' higher level "ego needs" can provide adequate motivation so long as management arranges "organizational conditions and methods of operation so that people can achieve their own goals *best* by directing *their own* efforts toward organizational objectives" (McGregor, 1957/1992, p. 178; emphasis in original). He goes on to describe how more self-management, self-direction, and job enhancement through encouraging individual initiative can transform a Theory X style of organizational management to Theory Y.

In articulating the dichotomy of perceived employee behaviour from his vantage point of post-war industrial growth, one can interpret McGregor as reporting on his observations of the dual – and duelling – discourses approaching the midpoint of the epochal transformation. That he cannot entirely distinguish the managerial consequences of fully implementing Theory Y – namely, the full extent to which relationships that beget mutual trust and respect regardless of position are necessary – is likely a sign of his own social conditioning. Both Theories X and Y begin with the same premise of a privileged position for management: "Management is responsible for organizing the elements of productive enterprise – money, materials, equipment, people – in the interest of economic ends" (1957/1992, p. 174, 178). Challenging that basic premise via "management that has confidence in human capacities and is itself directed toward organizational objectives rather than towards the preservation of personal power" (p. 180) opens Theory Y to its full transformational potential: "not only enhance substantially these materialistic achievements, but will bring us one step closer to 'the good society'" (p. 180).

Similarly, Rensis Likert (1961, 1967) describes four "systems" that provide finer granularity to McGregor's two theories. System I and System II organizations are more and less extreme versions of McGregor's Theory X. In contrast, Likert's first gradation of McGregor's Theory Y, namely System III, prescribes a "consultative" approach to management in which decision control remains with a manager despite consultations with workers. System IV describes a fuller realization of Theory Y in which mutual relationships support a fully participative form of decision-making and group management. Likert emphasizes that such a degree of participation necessitates a significant change in what was the prevailing management practice and philosophy at the time:

The leadership and other processes of the organization must be such as to ensure a maximum probability that in all interactions and in all relationships within the organization, each member, in the light of his background, values, desires, and expectations, will view the experience as supportive and one which builds and maintains his sense of personal worth and importance. (Likert, 1967, p. 47)

In the mid-1970s, Chris Argyris and Donald Schön introduce an organizational behaviour frame through which the dynamics of interpersonal relations in group environments become explicit. Their theories of action (1974) examine the organizational implications of what a person or group *espouses* in response to particular circumstances as compared to their actual actions—what Argyris and Schön term *theories-in-use*. They argue that individuals' understanding of the specific organizations of which they are members continually evolves based on an ever-changing perception of theory-in-use. Irrespective of

formal structures, or explicitly enumerated visions, missions, goals, or other espoused attributes, “individual members are continually engaged in attempting to know the organization, and to know themselves in the context of the organization. ... Organization is an artifact of individual ways of representing organization” (1978, p. 16). In other words, *organization* may be contingent (as was becoming the popular and prevailing view in the functionalist discourse), but its contingency in this respect has more to do with individuals’ interactions and interrelationships than with any determinism imposed by external factors.

Around the same time as Argyris and Schön, Karl Weick extends the idea that, essentially, organization is a state of mind, a social construction based on the collective experience of actors who mediate their enactment of reality through language, “the interaction between sensemaking and actions” (Hernes, 2008, p. 118). The sense that individuals make of their organizational environment is inextricably tied to the processes contained therein, a “concern with flows, with flux, and momentary appearances. The raw materials from which processes are formed usually consist of the interests and activities of individuals that become meshed” (Weick, 1979, p. 444). Sensemaking, in the context of organizing, involves the negotiation of meaning between interpersonal – or what Weick calls “intersubjective” – interactions, and individual responses to structural directives, constraints, and normative behaviours that Weick terms “generic subjectivity.” He writes:

I would argue that organizing lies atop that movement between the intersubjective and the generically subjective. By that I mean that organizing is a mixture of vivid, unique intersubjective understandings and understandings that can be picked up, perpetuated, and enlarged by people who did not participate in the original intersubjective construction. (Weick, 1995, p. 72)

In Weick’s conception, *organization* has no existence aside from that enacted by its members through the collective meaning they make. Further, as Hernes explains, those enactments are intentional, as are the outcomes: “what takes place is a direct consequence of what we enacted” (2008, p. 126), principles of complexity notwithstanding, apparently. Nonetheless, Weick centring organizational enactment on both the conceptual abstractions and concrete interactions of its members sets the stage for radically different organizational metaphors – ways of conceiving *organization* – and therefore, for radically different organizations.

As the 20th century settles into its role as the so-called information age, the metaphor of computer and communication networks begin to infiltrate organizational thinking. Not surprisingly, information networking technologies are initially considered primarily from an instrumental standpoint. For example, Manuel Castells astutely notes, “in the 1980s, in America, more often than not, new technology was viewed as a labor-saving device and as an opportunity to take control of labor, not as an instrument of organizational change” (1996, p. 169). Podolny and Page, however, view the emerging notion of a network organization as an alternative to the primarily economic (instrumental) conceptions of organizations and organizational control as either hierarchies or markets. Instead they see this new form “as any collection of actors that pursue repeated, enduring exchange relations with one another and, at the same time, lack a legitimate organizational authority to arbitrate and resolve disputes that may arise during the exchange” (1998, p. 59). They describe how a more loosely connected organization may lead to better learning, a reconception of status and

legitimation in organizational contexts, and potentially even economic benefits from lower transaction costs and greater adaptability.

Some authors see the emergence of non-hierarchical, loosely-coupled networks – often enabled through Internet technologies and often without legitimated loci of authority and control – as an archetype for emergent organizational design (Powell, 1990; Beekun & Glick, 2001; Nardi, Whittaker, & Schwartz, 2000, 2002). Others generalize the form and operating principles of the “organization of the future” from the success of the open-source movement (Ljungberg, 2000; Markus, Manville, & Agres, 2000; Federman, 2006). Even some of the most hierarchical and bureaucratic organizations in the world, the U.S. military (Alberts & Hayes, 1999) and the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (Ward, Wamsley, Schroeder, & Robins, 2000), sought out network models of organization to counter the problems and inefficiencies associated with more traditional organizations being rooted in “Industrial Age mindsets, cultures, and norms of behavior. It has to do with the reward and incentive structures, loyalties, and the nature of the interactions among the individuals and organizational entities” (Alberts & Hayes, 1999, p. 58).

The metaphor – or actual reification – of a non-hierarchical network implemented via computer and communication technology, as appealing as it may seem as an antidote to centuries-old hierarchical and bureaucratic socialization is, by itself, no panacea. Ahuja and Carley (1999) investigate a so-called virtual organization in which computer-mediated communications connect members of a geographically-distributed enterprise, in a way that enables direct contact among people, regardless of formal organization structure. The authors argue that such a virtual organization would tend to display an emergent structure driven primarily by information flow that would distinguish between centralization – tasks mediated through a supervisor – and hierarchy – the creation of organizational levels, especially with respect to control, authority and decision making. Their findings suggest that traditional organizational forms are difficult to overcome, whether they are based on class-creating legitimation or on similarly class-creating possession of specialized information:

Once certain people had been identified as possessing specific types of information or knowledge, the group members had a tendency to direct suitable inquiries to those individuals directly ... [the] consequences of this communication and interaction pattern ... [means] the informal structure of the virtual organization becomes stabilized with respect to roles, thus stratified and centralized. (Ahuja & Carley, 1999, p. 752)

Almost as a reinforcement of hierarchical socialization, traditional levels of authority also permeate the virtual organization with respect to authority and decision making. In the Ahuja and Carley study, people who are more senior in their respective “real” organizations assume greater authority compared to those who are more junior. Two distinct hierarchies emerge: one formal, and one informal. The authors are moved to consider,

...to what extent do virtual organizations resemble traditional organizations? Previous researchers have argued that the difference is largely one of decentralization versus centralization, non-hierarchical versus hierarchical. We find that this distinction is misleading. We found evidence of both centralization and hierarchy in a virtual organization. However, this structural form emerged in the communication structure and was not equivalent to an authority structure based on status or tenure differences. In many traditional

organizations the centralization or hierarchy is in the authority structure and is related to status and tenure differences. In other words, we found no evidence that the formal and informal structures in the virtual organization were indistinguishable. (Ahuja & Carley, 1999, p. 754)

Or, stated another way, technology alone is not sufficient to overcome workers' socialization in traditional hierarchies and control mechanisms, particularly when power is involved (Wilson, 1995)—Taylor and Weber live on, online.

The expected radical change in organizations seems not to be driven as much by the structural metaphors of network technologies – the Internet being among the more obvious examples – but rather by some of the experienced effects enabled by massive interconnectivity. More than a decade before the invention of the world wide web, William Kraus observed that hierarchical control in organizations imposes a self-perpetuating value system that tends to reinforce the mechanisms of the bureaucratic hierarchy¹⁰. In response, he describes twelve characteristics of a “collaborative organization structure” (1980) that can be loosely categorized into four themes, each addressing one major aspect of a hierarchically-dominated corporate value systems: (a) decoupling status from both task and formal organization structure; (b) decoupling compensation from status; (c) creating an organic and contingent organization structure; and (d) designing tasks that are integrated and interdependent to promote mutual success.

Kraus's proposal directly challenges the ingrained notion that status is a scarce resource. In the collaborative organization, status and prestige – conventionally signified and legitimated by one's position on the organization chart – necessitate attributes that engender trust and encourage cooperation that transcends departmental boundaries and strict functional demarcations. As identity, status, and power do not inhere in the organization chart, typical organizationally dysfunctional behaviours such as defending territory become unimportant in the collaborative environment. Natural leaders emerging in such an environment represent an interesting retrieval of the role of “elder” in a tribal society. Changing what is culturally valued permits departmental boundaries to be breached, especially via interconnected, diverse social networks, to accomplish tasks more effectively based on trust, without potentially losing status or power.

Sally Helgesen (1995) draws from both her earlier study of women-led organizations, and the then-emerging metaphor of the world wide web to characterize the type of organization Kraus describes as a “web of inclusion.” She describes such organizations as being “especially apt to be driven by clearly articulated values” (p. 286), and emergent from the processes and relationships that integrate thinking and doing, especially among front-line workers. Thus, traditional power relations are decentralized and diffused through integrated networks of individuals that form and re-form based on specific, situational expertise, prior experiences working together, and open communications throughout the organization, irrespective of traditional rank or hierarchical position. In Helgesen's web of inclusion, “information flows freely across levels, teams make their own decisions, work on specific projects evolves in response to needs as they arise, and task is more important than position” (p. 280).

¹⁰ This is consistent with Castells description of a bureaucracy: “organizations for which the reproduction of their system of means becomes their main organizational goal” (1996, p. 171).

Christian Maravelias (2003) provides an example of such an organization in action. Skandia Assurance Financial Services self-organizes amorphous teams around specific projects, comprised of people who operate in a high-trust environment.

What drove individuals to work harder and smarter were [sic] not a pressure to subordinate to a distinct culture, but the lack of any clear system to subordinate to... a form of reflective attitude among participants, making them aware of the value of acting in a manner that made them trustees... (Maravelias, 2003, p. 557)

The high trust culture enabled a distributed form of control, a form of peer control, which did not restrict individual freedom, but used it as its primary means of operation. ... [I]t was not an organization made of aggregates of people, but of a subtle system of professional roles... In fact, to a certain extent the distinction between professional and private concerns had not become less, but more important. ... It was the individual's, not the organization's, responsibility of drawing this line [between professional and private concerns]. (Maravelias, 2003, p. 559)

At Skandia AFS, individuals' mutual control based on creating and valuing shared and distributed power among all members of the organization means that control shifts from an impersonal bureaucratic hierarchy to an environment of mutuality among the individual members. In addition to Kraus's suggested attributes, such a profound transformation of the locus of control may be a determinant of an organization that has evolved according to the humanistic, relational discourse of the 20th century.

Approaching the discourse from a sociological theoretic frame, Paul Adler and Charles Heckscher (2006) posit "that a new and possibly higher form of community might emerge, offering a framework for trust in dynamic and diverse relationships, and reconciling greater degrees of both solidarity and autonomy" (p. 12). They describe *collaborative community* as a "dialectical synthesis of the traditional opposites *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*" (p. 15), where the former denotes traditional, mostly patriarchal community with strong, common socialization, and the latter denotes business association and relations in which people will essentially act as so-called *homo economicus*¹¹. Adler and Heckscher explain that social organization has traditionally been divided among hierarchy (divisions of labour with legitimated authority); markets (price-determined value exchanges among competing actors, all of whom presumably act rationally); and community (in which actions are mediated through shared values and commonly agreed behavioural norms).

When the dominant principle of social organization is hierarchy, community takes the form of *Gemeinschaft*. When the dominant principle shifts to market, community mutates from *Gemeinschaft* into *Gesellschaft*. We postulate that when community itself becomes the dominant organizing principle, it will

¹¹ From John Stuart Mill's and Adam Smith's work, this term refers to self-interested "economic man," concerned solely with building material wealth, and therefore acting in an entirely rational, instrumental, and efficacious fashion.

take a form quite different from either *Gemeinschaft* or *Gesellschaft*. (Adler & Heckscher, 2006, p. 16).

This third, “quite different,” form is fundamentally based on three principles: (a) shared values among all members of the group—“value-rationality [in which] participants coordinate their activity through their commitment to common ultimate goals [whose] highest value is interdependent contribution, as distinct from loyalty or individual integrity” (p. 16); (b) an organization that stresses “interdependent process management through formal and informal social structures” (p. 17); and (c) a construction of identity that is interdependent and reconciled from among conflicting aspects into a whole that is negotiated from among competing interests.

Values in a collaborative community are jointly constructed among all the members of the group; trust in this environment is based on the degree to which all members believe that everyone can make a worthwhile contribution to the shared values which are,

...timeless statements of what the group *is*. Purpose is a relatively pragmatic view of what the group is trying to achieve, given the environmental challenges, in the foreseeable future. ... A collaborative community emerges when a collectivity engages cooperative, interdependent activity towards a common object. (Adler & Heckscher, 2006, p. 21)

The purpose must both be determined and shared by the group as a whole; it is not the preserve of a small elite group, nor can it be imposed on the larger group in a manner that would be characteristic of *Gemeinschaft* (and most conventional organizations, as well). However, the authors note that achieving shared purpose in this collaborative sense is extremely difficult, especially when shared values and purpose are contested among the members based on individual needs and perspectives. As well, in larger organizations, like traditional corporations and even modern public institutions for example, relationships of power and the goal of production to create profit (or profit-equivalent) in a competitive environment tends to oppose collective, values-based purpose. Indeed, Weber characterizes the “iron cage” of control (1921/1978) that bureaucracies create in which individuals succumb to “unshatterable” power relations that, some might argue, transcend human judgement and any sense of compassion. Adler and Heckscher observe that Weber does speak of a type of organization that governs itself through value-rationality (“*Wertrationalität*”) in which common purpose and values determine the group’s direction. They note, however, that Weber was skeptical as to whether value-rationality has sufficient strength to sustain a large, *formal* organization. One example of such a value-rational group – although not usually thought of as an organization *per se* – is the so-called Community of Practice that is described and characterized by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (1991; Wenger, 1998; Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002).

In Adler and Heckscher’s description, two primary elements characterize collaboration: “contribution to the collective purpose, and contribution to the success of others” (2006, p 39). The former presumes assuming responsibility greater than one’s own nominal mandate while remaining within the bounds of building agreement among other team members. It also presumes active engagement among all members rather than deference to a (legitimated) superior. The latter aspect serves to strengthen collaborative relationships and to build mutual trust. As the research findings will later demonstrate, there

is a marked difference between collaboration as both Adler and Heckscher describe and some participants experience in their respective organizations, and the commonly expressed “teamwork” that is more consistent with the functionalist discourse characteristic of what I would term the *primary-purposeful organization*.

A collaborative community faces numerous issues that challenge the conventional socialization of its members. Its boundaries are amorphous and often in flux with more dynamic connections and reconfigurations. Among its members, highly diverse levels of skill and expertise are continually being brought together in a variety of configurations in which relative authority becomes highly contingent: authority becomes based on value-rationality, rather than on assigned or attributed status, or one’s nominal position in a legitimated hierarchy. The requisite shared understanding and commitment necessitates ongoing public discussions and vigorous negotiation among potentially conflicting individual values. In a “traditional” organization defined primarily by its purpose,

...the ‘mission’ was eternal and defining; in collaborative ones the generation of shared purpose becomes, as it were, an ongoing task rather than a fixed origin. It is evolving and fluid, and organized systems are needed to renew shared understanding and commitment. (Adler & Heckscher, 2006, p. 45)

Although Adler and Heckscher do not explicitly mention it, this sort of lively values dialogue becomes a widely-held value in itself, as will be seen later among some of this project’s participant organizations. Resolving the aforementioned challenges in collaborative communities requires interdependent process management practices that accomplish the organization’s shared purpose(s) among people with highly diverse knowledge, skills, experiences, and worldviews.

Entering the 21st Century

The 21st century begins with the challenge of making sense of two, parallel discourses that take up diametric polarities. On one hand, the functionalist, instrumental, managerially oriented recitation of 20th century organizational history tends to reinforce the bureaucratic, administratively controlled, hierarchical (BAH) organization as the optimal means to respond to the myriad challenges of the contemporary world. Elliot Jaques (1990) praises hierarchy, and lauds managerial capacity, knowledge, and stamina as natural justification for subordinates to accept the boss’s authority. Concurrently, the critical management literature (Barker, 1993; Barrett, 2004; Gee, Hull & Lankshear, 1996; Jones, 2003; Ogbor, 2001; Wilson, 1995) decry the ways in which the managerialist discourse manipulates, subjugates, oppresses, and alienates those who occupy (particularly the lower strata within) that hierarchy.

On the other hand, the humanist, relational, collaborative story that begins with Mary Parker Follett and leads to writers such as William Kraus, and Paul Adler and Charles Heckscher, describes a very different history, and very different framing of organizational outcome. In the Adler and Heckscher volume (2006), there are a number of examples from various contributing authors that describe specific organizational behaviours (mostly of groups within larger organizations) that correspond to aspects of their ideal-type, collaborative organization. There is even a description of what is referred to as a “Strategic Fitness Process” (Heckscher & Foote, 2006) that claims to engender the collective leap of

faith required to begin the transition from traditional, BAH, behavioural and attitudinal norms to unifying strategies based on knowledge, trust, and trans-boundary initiatives¹².

Relative to the entire 3,000-year history of *organization* and its epochal transitions, it is not surprising that one can construct two distinct, but necessarily related and entwined, organizational histories of the 20th century. The first tells a story that is the very logical, linear, and sequentially causal extrapolation of what began in the Middle Ages and evolved primarily through the Enlightenment period to modernity. The second story is emergent from the complexity that characterizes conditions of ubiquitous connectivity and pervasive proximity—UCaPP. These conditions are not only prevalent in the contemporary world but, as I contend at the beginning of this chapter, dominate the structuring forces of human interaction among those societal institutions that govern, educate, facilitate commerce, and foster artistic reflection on complex, interacting cultures today.

If history provides any guidance whatsoever, it is likely that, in retrospect, these two stories will be cast in the context of yet a third, integrative story in a manner consistent with what Roger Martin calls “the opposable mind” (Martin, 2007). As Martin suggests, that third story would imagine a new way to frame those parallel and opposing narratives, speaking to *organization* in a way that is consistent with the UCaPP world into which the 21st century is transforming, while simultaneously making sense of the parallel discourses. This thesis aspires to be at least among the first telling of that third story, and seeks to discover two things. First, the 20th century literature outlined throughout this chapter describes various external attributes, individuals’ behaviours and interactions, and general managerial characteristics of two organization types: those that can be characterized as predominantly BAH; and those that Kraus (1980), and Heckscher and Adler (2006) call collaborative (that may well possess many more distinguishing characteristics, of which collaboration is but one), which I call UCaPP organizations. This thesis will describe some of the key differentiating aspects of the internal dynamics between these two organizational types by exploring the question, *what are the key characteristics that distinguish BAH and UCaPP organizations in their respective attitudes, behaviours, characteristics, cultures, practices, and processes?*

Second, as an early version of that third story, this thesis will address a more foundational question: *is there an over-arching model that can account for both BAH and UCaPP organizations and distinguish among them?* I intend to propose a theory that unifies both forms of organizational behaviour, BAH and UCaPP. It will additionally offer a model of praxis that will help those in either type of organization to create a better understanding of contemporary organizational dynamics for more *effective* decision making and organizational transformation that is consistent with the dynamics and complexities of the UCaPP world.

¹² The SFP as described by Heckscher and Foote is a semi-proprietary consulting methodology that is a facilitated amalgam of action research and David Bohm’s process of dialogue (Bohm, Factor, & Garrett, 1991), with a smattering of polarity management (Johnson, 1992). It is an example of what I refer to later as a *culture change venue* within an organization. These methods are also addressed throughout the literature on organizational learning (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Laiken, 2002b; Senge, 1990; Webb, Lettice & Lemon, 2006).

A Conversation with Nishida: The Question

“Answers. Answers. Everyone is always looking for answers,” complained the master, shaking his head in that world-weary way he has. “I do not know why they come to me for answers.”

“Perhaps because you are wise, *sensei*,” I respond.

“Then it is clear that you are not,” he rejoins, now quite energized and far from the weary old man persona he had assumed only a moment before. “Wisdom comes neither from seeking nor possessing answers.”

Now it is my turn to feel weary. What is this thesis process other than looking for answers, answers that no one had previously found? After all, isn’t contributing significant new knowledge to the field all about finding new answers? Or perhaps...

“Questions!” I blurt out. “Wisdom does not come from having the right answers, but from asking the right questions.”

“And how do you know that you have the right question?” Nishida asks, raising one eyebrow. I just know he’s baiting the trap.

“You have the right question if it leads...” I begin tentatively.

“Yes?” he prods.

“...to the right...”

“Answer?” Nishida smiles wryly. “Then you still have no knowledge. And it seems that you have no method other than running in the maze along with your laboratory rats chasing after your own tail.”

I knew better than to correct his impression that social scientists use lab rats. Well, at least *some* social scientists... and literal lab rats. But still, I *do* know that I have the right question. At least I think I know. After all, I have been living with this question for several years now. It pervades every aspect of my thinking. I can barely read a news report without automatically connecting what happens in the outside world with what is happening in my interior world defined by my research question. Oh, Nishida is indeed a wise master!

“I know that I have the right question because I live it every day – every minute of every day. It is as if my eyes view the world through lenses that are shaped by my question. The way I live my life and experience the world, moment-to-moment, creates the sense I make of the question. And conversely, my sense of the question creates the way I experience my life.”

“So now you are beginning to find the path to wisdom,” he states. “If you can live your question fully, then you have found the

question that is right for your life and the particular path on which you find yourself. If you are very fortunate, as you explore and experience that path, you may well, 'without even noticing it, live your way into the answer,' as a poet-acquaintance¹³ of mine once said.

¹³ Rilke (2000) p. 34.

Understanding Reality's Production: On methodology and method

It is that methods, their rules, and even more methods' practices, not only describe but also help to *produce* the reality that they understand. (Law, 2004, p. 5; emphasis in original)

The implication of John Law's assertion – that methods are generative in addition to being indicative and connotative – suggests that in selecting a methodology and its associated paradigm, a researcher assumes a considerable responsibility. In making his case Law argues for a complexity approach to understanding processes in the real world, noting that imposing an arbitrary order via one theoretical model or other imposes limitations and restrictions that may constrain the world to “behave” in the particular way the model suggests (and therefore enable it to be successfully modeled as conceived by the researcher or theorist). However, a successful characterization of any particular phenomenon does not necessarily mean that the world's processes are best described by that model; nor does one plausible interpretation preclude another model from providing an equally accurate, compelling, reasonable, or useful frame through which one can better understand any arbitrary slice of reality. He writes:

What is important in the world including its structures is not simply ... [that they are] complex in the sense that they are technically difficult to grasp (though this is certainly often the case). Rather, they are also complex because they necessarily exceed our capacity to know them. No doubt local structures can be identified, but, or so I want to argue, the world in general defies any attempt at overall orderly accounting. The world is not to be understood in general by adopting a methodological version of auditing. Regularities and standardisations are incredibly powerful tools but they set limits. Indeed, that is a part of their (double-edged) power. And they set even firmer limits when they try to orchestrate themselves hegemonically into purported coherence. (Law, 2004, p. 6)

Law draws on Latour and Woolgar's seminal, 1986 examination of how scientific facts are produced in the context of “laboratory life” to make the argument that science produces the realities that it describes. This is not an arbitrary, “anything goes” epistemology, but rather the product of a rigorous and difficult process of what I describe as “adding to the cultural compendium of wisdom” (Federman, 2007). Heterogeneous research practices and diverse contexts contributed by researchers and participants alike produce heterogeneous perspectives and interpretive realities – both of which are, arguably, imaginary constructs – that nonetheless manifest in multiple real effects and consequences. Law then proceeds to suggest that “perhaps there may be additional *political* reasons for preferring and enacting one kind of reality rather than another” (p. 13; emphasis in original).

In considering the researcher's responsibility in his or her knowledge contribution, these “ontological politics,” as Law calls them, loom large, especially in the context of both affecting and effecting human behaviours in social settings. Peter Drucker differentiates between natural laws that operate irrespective of humanity's often limited ability to understand and describe them, and the basic assumptions held by a particular select group of researchers and practitioners in any given field of human endeavour. These assumptions

...largely determine what the discipline assumes to be reality. ... For a social discipline such as management, the assumptions are actually a good deal more important than are the paradigms for a natural science. The paradigm – that is, the prevailing general theory – has no impact on the natural universe. Whether the paradigm states that the sun rotates around the earth or that, on the contrary, the earth rotates around the sun has no effect on sun and earth. A natural science deals with the behavior of *objects*. But a social discipline such as management deals with the behavior of *people* and *human institutions*. Practitioners will therefore tend to act and to behave as the discipline's assumptions tell them to. Even more important, the reality of a natural science, the physical universe and its laws, do not change (or if they do only over eons rather than over centuries, let alone over decades). The social universe has no 'natural laws' of this kind. (Drucker, 2001, p. 69-70)

The researcher constructs a system of meaning through which sense is made of perceptions and lived experiences. Those who hearken to the researcher's findings may rationalize behaviours in themselves and others that become reflexively justified according to those interpretations. Karl Weick (2001) argues that normative behaviours in a social setting create interpretations of events that become reified in social relationships, and subsequently crystallize into organizations. Over time, interpretive justifications of events become based on these social expectations of behaviour rather than on individuated reasons. The combination of justification processes and expectations create the effect of self-fulfilling prophecies, as well as self-perpetuating conceptions of reality.

In constructing his "Position Paper for Positivism," Lex Donaldson (2003) recognizes that such sense-making underpins social constructionism which explains "micro-level processes whereby organizational members behave and bring about organizational changes" (p. 124). However, he dismisses the validity of constructionism as an appropriate research paradigm for organizational studies in favour of "a superior, more objective view that the analysts can help actors attain through de-reification ... [of] the common sense of people at a specific time about their organization" (p. 125). The value of a positivist approach, Donaldson argues, is that it seeks to explain social interactions in a deterministic manner, based on testable hypotheses that can be deduced from theories, the consequences of which can be observed empirically. Seeming to ignore Drucker (let alone Latour and Woolgar), Donaldson contends that the objective of positivism is,

...seeking to build a science of social affairs of a broadly similar type to natural science. The success of the natural sciences provides an inspiration and role model for positivist social science. Positivist social science aims for theoretical generalizations of broad scope that explain social affairs as being determined by causes of an objective kind that lie in the situation rather than in the minds of people. (Donaldson, 2003, p. 117)

Donaldson, a major proponent of structural contingency theory (1985, 1995), contends that individuals are effectively constrained by their situations, deterministically responsive to external conditions, and that the collective behaviours of an organization's members are shaped by material and social-environmental factors. The deterministic conclusion that Donaldson draws leads him to assert that "reliable, scientific knowledge

about social affairs will be built most rapidly by following the positivist approach” (2003, p. 117), which is based on “systematic inquiry through rigorous empirical research, [that] can yield knowledge that is superior to common sense” (p. 118).

Thus, positivism is grounded in a phenomenological understanding of organizations as “concrete, stable, and identifiable entities with distinctive boundaries that can be described and analyzed, using appropriate research methodologies” (Chia, 1996, p. 143). The positivist approach assumes that:

...(a) ‘objective’ reality can be captured; (b) the observer can be separated from the observed; (c) observations and generalizations are free from situational and temporal constraints, that is, they are universally generalizable; (d) causality is linear, and there are no causes without effects, no effects without causes; and (e) inquiry is value free. (Hassard, Kelemen, & Wolfram Cox, 2008, p. 143)

Is a positivist approach appropriate for answering the research questions posed in the previous chapter? If one reads the historical argument presented in that chapter as technological determinism¹⁴, a positivist-informed contention logically follows: that the nature of UCAPP organizations should be obtainable through positivist means. However, if one instead chooses to interpret history through the lens of complexity as multifaceted societal and cultural interactions that propagate through a multiplicity of human feedback and feedforward networks, it is difficult to see how positivist assumptions might apply in any but the most simplistic of analyses.

More specifically in the context of the current project, contemporary BAH organizations that are predominantly functionalist and instrumental in their foci exist alongside UCAPP organizations, and have been explained in various contingency theory terms using positivist methods. Is it reasonable to conclude that positivism is an adequate investigatory framework to simultaneously explain these two, diametrically polar organizational incarnations? The question is especially salient when one realizes that both organizational forms exist in the midst of the same social “causes of an objective kind that lie in the situation,” to use Donaldson’s language (2003, p. 117), apparently denying the foundational premise of contingency theory¹⁵.

As useful as positivist approaches may be in certain contingent contexts, understanding the nature and characteristics of UCAPP organizations, and the influences and emergent processes that may effect transformations from BAH to UCAPP and vice versa, necessarily requires other methods derived from a different worldview:

¹⁴ Technological determinism is the doctrine that suggests that the construction and dynamics of the social world unavoidably and inevitably follow the dictates effected by the introduction of particular technological innovations. It views the world as a Newtonian clockwork following laws of sequential causality that can be empirically discovered. In contrast, a complexity understanding of the world suggests that technologies enable environmental conditions that encourage change from a prior state of homeostasis, in other words, emergence.

¹⁵ Ironically, in the positivist paradigm, this observation would falsify contingency theory, rendering it unreliable and unscientific, according to Donaldson’s reasoning. However, this reasoning simply reflects Kuhn’s (1962) idea of paradigm incommensurability.

Social construction, or *constructivist* philosophy, is built on the thesis of *ontological relativity*, which holds that all tenable statements about existence depend on a worldview, and no worldview is uniquely determined by empirical or sense data about the world. (Patton, 2002, p. 97; emphasis in original)

The preceding argument highlights the importance of assuming a constructivist¹⁶ standpoint when attempting to understand individual and collective interpretations of experiences and events. The primary ontological assumptions of constructivism, can be summarized as follows: (a) truth is formed by consensus among “informed and sophisticated constructors, not of correspondence with objective reality” (Patton, 2002, p. 98); (b) facts have meaning only within the context of a framework of values that are imposed on any assessment of apparently objective discriminants; (c) supposed causes relate to effects only by being so ascribed; (d) events have meaning only within a context; changing the context will change the meaning and effect of a given occurrence, rendering the process of generalizing dubious at best; and (e) constructivist inquiry yields results that have no special legitimacy over any other, but contribute to the complex emergence of experienced reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 44-45).

One must remain cognizant of the problematics and limitations of constructivism when attempting to understand newly emergent phenomena like those of the UCaPP world. On one hand, “constructivism assumes the relativism of multiple social realities, recognizes the mutual creation of knowledge by the viewer and the viewed, and aims toward interpretive understanding of subjects’ meanings” (Charmaz, 2000, p. 510). Michael Quinn Patton describes it this way:

Because human beings have evolved the capacity to interpret and construct reality – indeed, they cannot do otherwise – the world of human perception is not real in an absolute sense, as the sun is real, but is ‘made up’ and shaped by cultural and linguistic constructs. ... *What is defined or perceived by people as real is real in its consequences.* (Patton, 2002, p. 96; emphasis in original)

On the other hand, reality that is perceived and constructed according to a well-entrenched contextual ground is, *de facto*, the interpretive lens through which one interprets all subsequent events and actions. The interpretation persists, irrespective of any as-yet-unperceived changes in the dynamics of the ground that created the meaning in the first place. A way to reconcile this apparent paradox of constructivism – that the effects of individually perceived reality may persist long past the time when the circumstances that constructed said reality have substantially changed – may be through the application of a complexity model as suggested earlier by Law. Indeed, constructivism is quite consistent

¹⁶ The distinction between constructivism and social construction is subtle: one deals with individual perception and sense-making, the other with group process: “It would appear useful, then, to reserve the term *constructivism* for the epistemological considerations focusing exclusively on ‘the meaning-making activity of the individual mind’ and to use *constructionism* where the focus includes ‘the collective generation [and transmission] of meaning’” (Crotty, 1998, p. 58; emphasis in original).

with the principles of complexity theory as outlined by Paul Cilliers's characterization of complex systems, if the system in question is a system of *meaning*.

Complex Systems of Meaning

Cilliers (2005) provides a concise, but useful, summary of complex systems framed in the context of their applicability to organizations. Complex systems are comprised of a large number of elemental components, any (or all) of which may be simple. These elements exchange information via interactions, the effects of which propagate throughout the system. Because complex systems – and in particular, systems that are interconnected via a network – contain many direct and indirect feedback loops, interactions are nonlinear with non-proportional effects. This means that seemingly small interactions may have quite substantial effects throughout the system, and what appear to be substantial interactions may have quite insignificant system-wide effects. Complex systems are open with respect to their environment, which means that there are continuous information exchange processes among the system, its components, and their mutual environment.

Complex systems also possess memory – a history of interactions, exchanges and effects – that is distributed throughout the system, and influences the behaviour of the system. This memory is significant: the behaviour of the system is determined by the nature (effects) of the interactions, not by the content of the components. Hence, the overall system's behaviour is unpredictable based on an understanding of the components' individual behaviours alone. The resultant patterns of system behaviour are called emergence, and refute models predicated exclusively on deterministic causality. Finally, complex systems are adaptive, and can reorganize their internal structure based on information exchange, as opposed to the action of an external agent (Cilliers, 2005, p. 8-9).

Weick (2001) cites Gergen's (1982) three principles of constructivism that I recount here, with particular points of comparison with complex systems emphasized: (a) as events occur, they change the *emerging current context* from which both earlier and subsequent events have meaning; (b) the reference against which the interpretation of any event is contextualized is itself the product of a *network of interdependent events and interpretations*, often mutually and collectively negotiated among a *network of people*; (c) as a consequence of the previous two principles, the meaning of any given event is interpreted differently by different people, with *collectively agreed meaning being achieved through processes of consensus*, or the exercise of power (Weick, 2001, p. 10).

Complex systems are often described in mathematical terms using Henri Poincaré's topological approach. In mathematics, and particularly in topology, solutions to sets of nonlinear equations are often depicted as sets of curves drawn through an *n*-dimensional *phase space*, where *n* represents the number of variables in the equations. A point that "travels" along one of these curves defines the state of the system at any time; its movement over time is called its *trajectory*¹⁷. The trajectory of the point is called an *attractor*, with three topologically distinct forms: *point* (a system that eventually reaches stable equilibrium,

¹⁷ This concept is most easily imagined as a point moving through physical space relative to reference axes of length, width, and breadth. At any time, the "state" of the physical system can be defined in terms of the point's position; its path through space is the trajectory. Similarly, in a complex system, there would be more dimensions, each dimension, or variable, referring to a parameter that uniquely defines an aspect of the system being described.

representing the end of change and growth; i.e., death), *periodic*, meaning a system that has regular oscillations between two states, and *strange* that applies to chaotic systems such as those characterized by Cilliers as exhibiting properties of complexity.

Strange attractors tend to create distinct patterns of trajectories for a given system, although the precise location of a point in phase space at a particular time cannot be accurately determined. This means that the system is non-deterministic – its future state cannot be accurately predicted from its past state(s). Substantial changes in the type, shape, or existence of an attractor, corresponding to substantive changes in the nature of the defining parameters (e.g., contextual ground of the system), is called a *bifurcation point*, and marks a state of instability from which a new order of greater complexity can emerge (Capra, 1996).

Now, consider a system of meaning, such as that typically described as emerging from empirical observations analyzed according to a particular research paradigm. Constructivism holds that people confer meaning onto their lived experiences by virtue of a complex intermingling of individual and collective past experiences that provide context – in other words, the system's history – to current perceptions of events. A (contingently) stable meaning or interpretation can be considered to be an *emergent property* of that system of lived experiences. In complexity terms, that stable meaning can be described as one point along a trajectory of meaning that travels through a phase space defined by a set of parameters that might include individual history and memory, group history or collective memory, consensus processes, cultural influences, normative behaviours of one or more social networks, and other similar factors, forces and causes¹⁸.

A person's constructed reality, that is, the trajectory of meaning through the phase space of lived and interpreted experiences, can become disrupted when one or more of the parameters of that phase space significantly change. Although an individual may attempt to hold onto familiar, "privileged" (Weick, 2001) interpretations, the time during which the formerly stable meaning becomes disrupted is chaotic, and hence, often confusing for the individuals and groups concerned. At the bifurcation point, sufficient interpretive energy must be injected into the meaning system to enable emergence: the creation of a new stable state of higher order than before. In other words, the creation of new meaning and interpretation of events that is significantly different from the person's prior understanding informs future sense- and meaning-making. This complexity understanding of meaning-making not only informs the current research process; it will also provide a useful framework through which I will later contextualize processes of organizational change.

Because the research seeks to discover what is expected to be a radical shift in organizational perception – from BAH to UCAPP – the specific methodology employed must be a sufficiently sensitive instrument to be able to recognize and report on any potential bifurcation that might occur during the time scope of the research, or laterally among the participating individuals and organizations. The methodology most appropriate to this undertaking is *constructivist grounded theory*, as characterized by Kathy Charmaz (2000).

¹⁸ Used in the Aristotelian sense of formal, material, efficient, and final causes, as opposed to linear, deterministic causality.

Regrounding Grounded Theory

Charmaz describes the nature of grounded theory and the reason to augment it with a constructivist standpoint:

The grounded theorist's analysis tells a story about people, social processes, and situations. The researcher composes the story; it does not simply unfold before the eyes of an objective viewer. This story reflects the viewer as well as the viewed. ... We can use [the critiques of grounded theory] to make our empirical research more reflexive and our completed studies more contextually situated. We can claim only to have interpreted *a* reality, as we understood both our own experience and our subjects' portrayals of theirs. (Charmaz, 2000, p. 522-523; emphasis in original)

Grounded theory as originally conceived by Glaser and Strauss (1973) is rooted in the notion that comparing observations among cases enables theory to emerge, rather than beginning with preconceived hypotheses to be verified or refuted¹⁹. Like positivist methodologies, objectivist grounded theory presumes a reality external to the researcher that can be objectively discovered, characterized, and reported. In addition, it adopts a post-positivist standpoint that recognizes the existence of a subjective social reality, but attempts to explicitly exclude its effects from influencing the objective reality under study. Post-positivism uses human behaviours, responses, and interactions as consequential effects of structural and environmental causes, using the former to deduce the latter.

Grounded theory begins by collecting data concurrently with its analysis. Analysis begins with coding data based on actions, events, and concepts provided by participants in the actual words used, a technique called *open* or *line-by-line coding*. Constant comparison of coded incidents and events among various participants enables individual accounts to be eventually categorized, as open codes are combined and connected via the more conceptual process of *axial coding*. As more encompassing theoretical categories are discovered, the researcher returns to collect additional data that augment the emergent theory by filling in gaps in data created by subsequent questions suggested by the initial data analysis. The researcher formally reflects on this recursive process through *memo writing* that enables him or her to develop nascent ideas, see emergent patterns, and reconcile the developing interpretive analysis with their own lived experiences. The process is repeated until one reaches *saturation*, that is, when no new information emerges from coding, comparison, and reflection (Charmaz, 2000; Patton, 2002; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

In essence, Kathy Charmaz uses the analytical techniques of grounded theory, contextualized in a constructivist standpoint, to enable the emergence of knowledge “that fosters the development of qualitative traditions through the study of experience from the standpoint of those who live it” (2000, p. 522). She describes its purpose, one that is

¹⁹ A rift occurred between Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss concerning the evolution of grounded theory. Strauss, in collaboration with Juliet Corbin (1990), developed ever more prescriptive techniques that, according to Glaser, appeared “to be forcing data and analysis through their preconceptions, analytic questions, hypotheses, and methodological techniques” (Charmaz, 2000, p. 512), effectively making it more science-like. Nonetheless, both Glaser's more classical approach and Strauss and Corbin's more analytic approach remain solidly objectivist in nature and (post-)positivist in outlook.

consistent with both the philosophical standpoints offered at the beginning of this chapter, and my own objectives:

A constructivist grounded theory distinguishes between the real and the true. The constructivist approach does not seek truth – single, universal, and lasting. Still, it remains realist because it addresses human *realities* and assumes the existence of real worlds. ... We must try to find what research participants define as real and where their definitions of reality take them. ... We change our conception of [social life] from a real world to be discovered, tracked, and categorized to a world *made real* in the minds and through the words and actions of its members. (Charmaz, 2000, p. 523; emphasis in original)

Research Design

In order to explore the individually-experienced nature of *organization* in the dual meaning contexts of the BAH and UCAPP discourses, the study examines five organizations, selected purposefully with maximum variation (Patton, 2002, p. 234-235) among organization types, sectors, sizes, ages, profit-objectives, participant gender, and scope of responsibility. I recruited the organizations through several means: two of the organizations were aware of my research through prior engagement and volunteered their potential participation (subject to review of the informed consent documents and their internal approval process); I was introduced to one organization through a mutual acquaintance; two of the organizations became aware of my recruiting efforts via people who read about my recruitment endeavours on my weblog (Federman, 2005-2010).

Because I am seeking to understand issues surrounding the nature of *organization* from the contexts of both BAH-conception and a conception grounded in UCAPP effects, I chose to limit the selection of organizations to those that are primarily grounded in Western cultures and sensibilities – the source of BAH effects – with a grounding in a literate, rather than primary oral, society. Thus, for instance, I would not choose an aboriginal or First Nations organization to include in this study, as such organizations emerge from a primary oral culture (Ong, 1982). Neither did I select organizations that are based in non-Western countries.

After securing institutional approval (Appendix A) from each participating organization, an email was sent by the organization to its members inviting them to contact me directly if they were interested in potentially participating in the project. I provided all those who responded with an informed consent package (Appendix B) that briefly described the project, the role they might play in it, and the potential risks and benefits of participation. In total, eighteen of the people who responded from among the five organizations that agreed to participate completed the informed consent package.

From December, 2007 through June 2008, I conducted relatively unstructured, in-depth interviews (Fontana & Frey, 2000) with each of the eighteen participants, with equal numbers of men and women. Although I acknowledge that racial, cultural and ethnic backgrounds might well influence individuals' experiences in organizations when considered from the ground of relationships, the overall sample size of this study is, of necessity, sufficiently small so as not to enable specific selections on these, and other, diverse grounds. Based on the information and preliminary analysis from the first research conversations, and

in keeping with the principles of theoretical sampling (Charmaz, 2000, p. 519; Strauss & Corbin, 1998, chap. 13) in the context of a grounded theory study, I returned to ten of the participants from three of the five organizations for second interviews between March and September, 2008.

Research Participants

All organizations were offered the option of having their identities disguised. Of the five, two not only requested confidentiality, but required me to sign a non-disclosure agreement concerning any confidential information that might be disclosed to me during the research conversations. I considered this to be advantageous to the interview process, since I could assure the participants from these organizations that they did not have to be guarded in their comments; that I was bound by the same confidentiality requirements as they. The authorizing individual at another organization said that he would reserve judgment with respect to identity confidentiality, pending the research findings (that organization remains confidential). Finally, two organizations gave permission for their organization's identities to be revealed, with two of four participants from one, and both participants from the other organization, giving permission to use their real names.

According to the admittedly subjective and limited criteria described in the previous chapter, I assessed that two of the organizations were predominantly BAH in nature, two were predominantly UCAPP, and one appeared to be more-UCAPP at the beginning of the study and more-BAH in its behaviours and characteristics by the end. Interestingly, the two organizations identified as more-UCAPP agreed to reveal their identities in the research, while the two, more-BAH organizations requested confidentiality. The organization that appeared to transition from more-UCAPP to more-BAH was the one that reserved judgment. It is unclear – and not a part of the scope of this research to conclude – whether a more-UCAPP organization would generally be more willing to be open about its internal processes and organizational behaviour. However, I would suggest that such openness is consistent with UCAPP behavioural findings, and with the explanatory theory that will be discussed later in this thesis.

A more detailed summary of the participants and the research conversations can be found in Appendix C. Briefly though, here are the five participating organizations, in alphabetical order:

Organization A is a division of a Fortune 50 company in the information, computer, and communications industry and is therefore very large, well-established, and global in its for-profit business operations in the private sector. Organization A had recently undergone several years of significant organizational change and disruption to many of its members, and at the time of the research conversations was in a period of relative organizational stability. The five participants from Organization A include “Adam,” “Frank,” “Karen,” “Robert,” and “Roxanne.” One of the participants, Robert, has direct, supervisory responsibility; Roxanne has project management responsibility over a very large project team whose members come from various parts of the organization. The others are relatively senior specialists in their respective areas of expertise. I would consider Organization A to be a more-BAH organization.

Organization F is a small, four-year-old company with profit aspirations, considering itself recently out of start-up mode. Throughout the course of the study,

Organization F grew from about twelve, to over twenty people. It offers web-based business services, primarily to other small enterprises and home-based businesses, although some groups in larger firms do use its services. Organization F's three participants include "Aaron," "Jeff," and "Matt," Matt being the founding CEO of the company. Organization F appeared to be more-UCaPP in its nature at the beginning of the study, but by the time of the second set of research conversations, it seems to have adopted considerably more-BAH behaviours and organizational constructs.

Inter Pares is a social-justice, non-governmental organization managed explicitly on feminist principles. It is politically active, tending to work with marginalized and oppressed peoples in Canada and in the emerging world. Inter Pares's thematic foci tend to be related to issues like women's rights, local control over natural resources, sustainable agriculture, community rebuilding after war, and similar peace and justice endeavours. Its two participants are Samantha ("Sam") and Jean, both of whom agreed that their organization demonstrated behaviours and an organizational philosophy that are characteristic of what I would call an archetypal UCaPP organization. However, it was not always so: Inter Pares transformed from being a more-BAH organization approximately fifteen years ago, primarily so that its internal dynamics and culture would be consistent with its espoused, externally represented, values.

Organization M is a ministry of a provincial government in Canada. Consequently, it is a relatively large, very bureaucratic, administratively controlled, and hierarchical organization—as BAH in its operations as Inter Pares is UCaPP. According to one of the participants, Organization M became increasingly more BAH in its nature beginning approximately twenty-five years ago, resulting in a significant shift in the nature, scope, and breadth of individuals' jobs, and their attitudes towards their employment in the organization. The four participants vary in tenure from less than one year in the organization, to over thirty years; it was fascinating for me to see the differences in their ascribed relationship to the organization, and their individual outlooks based on the length of their employment. The participants include "Mary," "Mina," "Sean," and "Stan."

The fifth organization is *Unit 7*, an approximately 100-person advertising and direct marketing agency based in New York City. Unit 7 is part of Omnicom, the largest conglomerate of advertising, marketing, public relations, branding, and event management organizations in the world. It is a for-profit corporation, tending to work with some of the largest organizations in the United States, including those located in the pharmaceutical, financial, health care, industrial, and manufacturing sectors. At the time of the study, Unit 7 was a little over four years into a transformation from being a BAH organization to becoming a more-UCaPP organization; as reported by the participants, the transformation has been, and continues to be, a considerable challenge for many individuals, and for the organization as a whole. The participants include Cindy, "Frances," Loreen (the CEO), and "Roger."

Research Conversations and Analysis

Over a period of nearly eleven months, I engaged in a total of twenty-eight research conversations, totalling 38.3 hours; eighteen initial conversations, averaging about an hour-and-a-half in duration, and ten second conversations, averaging about an hour each. The initial conversations were open and unstructured beyond the initial question – "Let's begin by me asking you to describe what you do in [your organization]" – founded on an

underlying and constant awareness of the necessity to gain trust, and establish and maintain rapport with each participant. I incorporated many of the approaches enumerated by Oakley (1981) to de-masculinize what might otherwise be a more formalized interview: creating reciprocity between me and the participant; encouraging emotional responses from the participant (and allowing them in myself); encouraging the participant to mostly control the flow and sequence of narratives; and by far most important, allowing the participants to create any new, emergent meaning from a contextual ground that may change during the research conversation(s).

The first interviews sought to discover a reference base of each participant's constructed conception of *organization*. Although I did not directly ask the following questions, these suggest the types of information, knowledge and recounted experiences that seemed to be useful to this endeavour at its outset, and served to guide me through the conversation:

- How does the participant situate her/himself in their organization; in particular, what sort of language is used to describe their situation (e.g., functional, hierarchical, relational, etc.)? What is the primary (and other influential) linguistic basis from which meaning is made in their organization?
- How does the participant describe his/her interactions and relationships among individuals, workgroups, and geo-dispersed or organizationally-dispersed groups/teams, both intra- and inter-organizationally (e.g., functionally, transactionally, exchange of flows, etc.)?
- On what basis are connections primarily formed and maintained within the culture of the organization (e.g., administratively, directly interpersonal, task-oriented, political loyalty, etc.)?
- By what processes are the effects of decision-making and subsequent actions anticipated (e.g., deterministic metrics, explicit analysis of secondary effects, mechanisms primarily designed to keep one's proverbial *derrière* from being exposed, etc.)? How common are so-called unintended consequences of decisions and actions (that can be interpreted as a proxy for systemic lack of anticipation)? How are the decision processes situated within the Competing Values Framework (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983) axes of flexibility, structure, and outcome?
- What are the natures of participants' own attachments to their workgroup, department, and organization (e.g., mercantile/instrumental, identity-forming, social/hedonic, knowledge/experience expanding, etc.)?

The second conversations in which I engaged with some²⁰ participants from Organizations A, Organization F, and Unit 7 were structured around more specific questions that arose from initial data analysis. Many of the issues pertained to gaining a more in-depth

²⁰ Participation in the second round was voluntary; one participant from each of Organizations A and F chose not to participate. Additionally, consistent with grounded theory methods with respect to data saturation, I did not feel that additional data were required from either Inter Pares or Organization M, each of which seemed to be archetypal exemplars, respectively, of UCAPP and BAH organizations.

understanding of participant-reported behaviours, observations, experiences, and perceptions that seemed similar among different organizations and may even have had similar instrumental outcomes. However, they often seemed to have opposite intentions, meanings, and effects, comparing one organization to another. For example, in two organizations, participants report that inclusive meeting attendance – especially in the context of relatively high-profile or strategic projects – is an important part of the organization’s culture. However, further probing reveals that for the more-BAH organization, inclusive meeting attendance is perceived as a defensive move, for example, in the context of someone making a case for their own organizational survival; a way to be seen by superiors as demonstrating one’s value (both individual and group) to the undertaking, even if that value might be judged as tenuous; or aggressive, as in the case of someone seeking to expand their domain of influence or control. This appears to be especially true when a person of higher rank or authority is present at the meeting. On the other hand, in the more-UCaPP organization, inclusive meeting attendance is viewed as an important process to “socialize information” (Sam-1-27)²¹ that transcends individual, subject-matter-specific responsibility in order “to understand the organization, and to make sure we understand and can represent the collective mind, the collective positions and approaches” (Jean-1-37).

During some conversations, I perceived a connection or parallel among some seemingly unconnected aspects of information offered by a given participant. In those, relatively very few, instances, I would suggest the connection and ask if it made sense – that is, was meaningful and significant – to the participant. In some cases they agreed; in others they did not. Where I have included such an elicited connection in the analysis, I make my suggestion explicit in the text.

The approximately thirty-eight hours of research conversations resulted in slightly more than five-hundred, single-spaced pages of transcripts. Research participants each received copies of their respective transcripts and were invited to make any changes they saw fit so as to accurately reflect their opinions and observations. The revised versions were loaded into the Transana qualitative analysis software system (Fassnacht & Woods, 2008), and the data were open coded (Charmaz, 2000, p. 515-516; Strauss & Corbin, 1998, chap. 8), producing codes (“keywords” in Transana terminology) that are described in detail in Appendix D.

Throughout this coding process, and the subsequent axial coding process that combines initial codes into larger categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, chap. 9), I wrote numerous research memos that I posted on my weblog (Federman, 2005-2010), many of them as part of a series tagged as “EMD” or “Emerging from the Mists of the Data.” I received a number of comments on these analytical reflections from members of the public (including some research participants), and these contributions both influenced my thinking and enabled me to more clearly articulate ideas in their formative stages as I responded to the various comments, critiques, and suggestions. These contributors provided knowledge that was valuable to my process and at times, I had the distinct impression that they felt

²¹ I am using a notation for direct quotations from participants in the form of Name-Conversation#-Paragraph#. Thus, Sam-1-27 refers to the first conversation with Sam, paragraph 27 in the transcription as it is loaded into the Transana database.

some sort of personal identification with participating in my research process, and gratification that their contributions were indeed valued.

I should note that during the process of axial coding, I made one complete pass through the data with each particular category theme at top of mind, continually asking, “what does this particular excerpt tell me specifically about this theme?” This focus enabled me to better understand the nuances of the participants’ responses, especially since many of the conversation excerpts (“clips”) had multiple initial codes, often spanning several category themes. In all, I made ten complete passes through the data over the course of most of a year during the analytic phase of this project.

The themes that emerge from the data and create the framework for understanding the key distinctions between BAH and UCAPP organizations are:

Change: including creating and initiating change within the organization; individuals and the organization as a whole responding to changes both among internal and external constituencies, and environments; and assimilating the consequences of change.

Coordination: including the processes through which the members of an organization achieve a sense of common purpose; how the organizations understand collaboration and teamwork (and whether they recognize the distinction between the two); and the underlying philosophy of information flow throughout the organization.

Evaluation: including the distinctions between the two types of organization relative to how contributions are valued, and how each judges effectiveness.

Impetus: including how leadership is regarded and constructed; the decision-making processes with respect to goals, objectives, intentions, and commitments; the nature of extrinsic motivation in each type of organization; and the dominant sensory metaphor.

Power dynamics: including how authorization and approval for individual or group action is accomplished; how the nature of individual autonomy and agency is regarded in each organization type; and how issues of control, resistance, power, and empowerment are accommodated.

Sense-making: including how the organization deals with ambiguity, contradiction, and uncertainty, as well as inconsistent information in its environment; and how it accommodates diverse ideas and opinions among its members.

View of people: including whether the organization’s dealings with its members are primarily instrumental or relational in nature; as well as whether its underlying philosophy that guides its policy-making favours individuality or collectivity.

In addition to these seven major themes for which there were clear behavioural, attitudinal, and cultural distinctions between more-BAH and more-UCAPP organizations, there was one additional theme that emerged from the data that appeared to be common in its responses among members of both organizational types. ***Belonging, membership and boundary*** speaks to issues of identification among individuals and the larger groups with which they associate, be they workgroups, departments, or the organization as a whole. While analyzing the data, focusing on this particular theme, it became increasingly apparent that there is something special – dare I say *powerful* – about the process and nature of identity construction between individuals and the specific organization(s) of which they are members, and conversely, organizational identity with respect to the individuals who

comprise its membership. As we shall see in the subsequent chapters, the nature of the distinctions between the two organizational types that emerged from parallel 20th century discourses, and the key similarity, provide intriguing clues to the fundamental nature of contemporary *organization* itself.

A Note on My Standpoint

In making the argument that research into human systems *produces* those systems, and in adopting a constructivist approach to research methodology, it should come as no surprise that I do not believe that any researcher – and especially *this* researcher – can be truly objective. I have been influenced in my sense-making by a combination of more than two decades in and about the corporate business world, and fifteen years reflecting on and researching the nature of that world and my experiences in it. The most recent six years of formal study, culminating in this thesis, have been especially influenced by a focus on the critical management discourse and organizational learning for social and cultural change (in addition to the influences of a number of other disciplines and fields of endeavour). It is therefore safe to say that I am not an *a priori* fan of BAH organizations in the general case.

Nonetheless, because I am very conscious of my inherent bias, I am equally aware that my role in this undertaking is not to demonize BAH organizations, but rather to represent as fairly as possible the lived experiences of my participants. It is, therefore, fair game if *they* choose to demonize the idiosyncrasies, dysfunctions, blind adherence to procedures and protocols, and perceived illogic of their own BAH organizations.

Among the reasons I have gone out of my way to elicit my participants' feedback at various stages of the thesis process is to ensure that their characterizations have been fairly and honestly represented. Among all the feedback I have received, in very few cases have any of the participants disagreed with any aspect of my representation or interpretation of our conversations. In each case of such disagreement, I entered into conversation with the participant to ensure a mutually agreeable understanding of the sense that was made and reported herein.

As I have mentioned – and will reiterate through the latter part of the thesis – BAH and UCAPP represent two idealized, extreme ends of an organization-type continuum. *They do not inherently represent opposing value judgements with respect to management effectiveness, fair or unfair treatment of workers, social responsibility, or any other proxy for a so-called measure of goodness.* Organizations may exhibit particular characteristics that place them at some point along that continuum, but that placement is not static; rather (as we will see in a later chapter) at any given time, their location is a result (emergent property) of complex interactions among the members of that organization. As the research will show, mostly BAH organizations may develop – and even encourage – aspects of UCAPP; mostly UCAPP organizations may require aspects of BAH.

Although I argue that a UCAPP organization is more *consistent* with contemporary societal conditions, that is not to say that UCAPP characteristics are optimal or most appropriate for all contemporary organizations all of the time. Nonetheless, given the feedback of many of the research participants, and those who have contributed via my weblog and thesis wiki site, UCAPP organizations seem to be very attractive and compelling to most people. Thus, the descriptions and analyses of the five participant organizations in

the following chapters may indeed appear to be more favourable towards those organizations that exhibit more-UCaPP tendencies.

Part II:

Figure—That Which is Seen

A Conversation With Nishida: The Mountain

“Why do you climb the mountain?” he asks.

“Because it’s there?” I reply.

“Not so good a joke, but an acceptable answer for some. But why do you climb the mountain?” he insists.

I ponder that simple question. Why *do* I climb the mountain? We sit in silence, meeting one another in a *place of mutual awareness*, he more confident than I that the key to insight is on that metaphorical mountain. Of course!

“Because...” I begin, “because the key to insight resides with the mountain.” I am careful to be as non-specific as befits a student of his particular brand of philosophy. I continue: “There are insights to be found at the base of the mountain and among the surrounding foothills. There are insights scattered along the way that leads from the well-explored flatlands to the slope that I intend to scale. There are insights at the summit, perhaps the best view of the overall insights to be seen.”

“And?” He waits, with that slight smile crossing his face indicating that I am indeed on the right path. The right path!

“And there are insights that can be discovered on the mountain path, on the journey up the mountain itself.”

He frowns. “What of the journey downward? Are there no insights on that path? Is it the same path up as it is down, even if there seems to be but one path?”

Now it’s my turn to frown. Just as you can never step twice into the same river, it’s not the same path up as it is down. I missed that one, and it is so obvious—in retrospect. “No, *sensei*. The path downward is a different path from the one leading upward. Each direction provides its own insight.”

“If your intent is to explore the paths, then you are right. The direction matters. If, however, your intention is to explore the mountain, why are you distracting yourself with the path?”

Busted! Never, ever try to outsmart your *sensei*.

“Why do you climb the mountain?” he asks again, very calmly, very patiently. He waits. Again, the smile.

“I climb the mountain to discover the insights that reside with the mountain.”

“Then why do you insist on climbing it? If you find yourself at the summit, you can discover what you seek by descending. If you find yourself in the meadow, your quest for discovery will lead you to

ascend. When you are on the mountain path itself, you must travel by both ascending and descending to complete your journey. Only when you can reconcile the various directions and the unique insights they reveal will you uncover the knowledge you seek.”

Pluperfect Tensions: Organizations M and A

Perhaps it is indicative of the ubiquitously connected and pervasively proximate time in which we now live that Heckscher and Adler (2006) proclaim the conception of contemporary firm as “collaborative community.” A simple search via Scholar’s Portal²² on titles that contain variations of the word “collaborate” yield nearly 90,000 articles and books published over the last decade alone. This study’s BAH and UCAPP participant organizations both claim to encourage collaboration among their various constituencies. But as Loreen observes,

I think it’s [collaboration] a very misunderstood way of working. That if anyone were to look at that as a vernacular shift from teamwork, it’s completely different from teamwork. I often will ask how we got to a strategy ... what is the process they used to get there. And so a typical response could be, oh we definitely collaborated—we had everyone in the room. Everyone from the team was in the room. So that’s a meeting. It’s not a collaboration. (Loreen-1-95)

Loreen alludes to an important semantic distinction between a team and a collaboration—one that will be examined in greater detail in this, and the subsequent chapters. Yet, in the sort of difference in intent and effect that Loreen, the CEO of Unit 7, perceives lie the significant distinctions that characterize organizations as being either more-BAH or more-UCAPP. The distinctions appear when one considers the meaning-producing contexts of the overtly intended, the unintended, and the sometimes more manipulative, tacitly intended effects created in each organizational environment. These environments range from the most BAH among the participant organizations, through the organization that seems to define the clearly UCAPP form of collaborative management. Each organization tells a unique and revealing story that defines its location on the BAH-through-UCAPP continuum.

Organization M: The Contemporary Archetype of Bureaucracy, Administrative Control, and Hierarchy

In general, BAH organizations can be thought of as being primarily concerned with the instrumentality of their processes; in other words, accomplishing the nominal purposes and objectives assigned to each *bureau* in the bureaucracy. At one time in the government, policy analysts and advisors enacted the role of helping to develop the impetus for government initiatives. Although the political imperative set the thematic direction for public policy, it was the analytic role of the civil service that translated those themes into the motive force that drove legislation and regulations. This has changed, according to Organization M’s Mary: “The authority that people had as a policy advisor is pretty well gone. The authority that managers had is pretty well gone. The policy is coming from the top down now, not from the bottom up” (Mary-1-23).

Mary describes how a new government’s assumption of partisanship on the part of civil service members created an immediate distrust of their motives, and hence, their

²² An online database of indices pointing to journals published by the major academic publishers, full-text scholarly resources, collections of dissertations, and other miscellaneous publications that are salient to an academic audience.

presumed ability to perform their jobs appropriately. “Even though I’m in the same position, I could see the mistrust because part of my job was to go to the House and somebody would stand in front of me and I couldn’t do my job” (Mary-1-47). This mistrust resulted in the creation of a political functionary layer, inserted between the politicians and the civil service, that assumed the direct responsibility for policy creation, notably without the thought and analysis that characterizes the civil service’s nominal policy role.

From her perspective as a policy advisor, Mary describes the deterioration of the quality and value of her position, as policy is now being directed from the senior hierarchical level of political operatives:

I haven’t done a briefing in years and our jobs have been really devalued. There’s zero creativity now and ... [there used to be] tons. I used to do Cabinet submissions. And I probably, in the first ten years I was there, might have done twenty or thirty. I probably haven’t done more than two or three in the last twenty years. (Mary-1-57)

I would imagine that within our ministry, the people that are actually doing stuff that our ministry takes ownership of, are basically writing as directed. (Mary-1-67)

That direction comes within strictly segregated areas of responsibility that are well-defined and non-redundant among the ministry’s various branches. Each branch looks after its own, relatively narrow considerations. This parochial behaviour is consistent with the characteristically BAH assumption – derived from Henri Fayol’s (1949) “division of work” principle – that a large and significant issue, when fragmented and decomposed into its component parts, will reveal itself completely through a detailed understanding of each individual piece.

Coordination in such a BAH environment involves delegating responsibility among the branches so that there is minimal, if any, topical redundancy or overlap with respect to those pieces. Simultaneously, the ministry attempts to ensure that each piece is indeed the responsibility of one branch or another.

The reproduction of tasks being mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive with respect to an all-compassing objective inheres in each individual, even to the most junior of personnel. Mina, with only one year’s experience in the ministry, defines her role in terms of a “portfolio” of three, distinct jobs²³. The juxtaposition of the three jobs in one body is a fascinating, fractal microcosm of BAH division of work: they don’t particularly relate to one another in theme, synergies, expertise, or any other common attributes or characteristics of the task responsibilities themselves. Rather, they seem to fulfil fractioned, functional requirements of the ministry that are able to co-exist in one position because the individual jobs are mutually exclusive, and collectively exhaust Mina’s required work time. In that sense, they indeed comprise a portfolio. They are a basket of unrelated tasks that not only represent the functional decomposition of the organization but, in a sense, functionally decompose the integral individual herself.

²³ Mina’s specific jobs are not identified to protect her confidentiality.

Water-tight Bureaucracy

As previously mentioned, policy is dictated directly from the hierarchical layer of political functionaries to be “written as directed.” Members of the civil service have increasingly become isolated from each other, and from the general flow of information. “To be honest, now there’s such water-tight compartments, I can’t even tell you the details of the [policy papers] that are happening, whereas before, we used to—there used to be a lot more sharing” (Mary-1-35). The introduction of the political layer changed not only the traditional, linear, bureaucratic information flow. It also transformed delegation of control through vertical organizational channels. Hence, it also changed the relational dynamics of power throughout the organization. As Mary describes, “there’s just such a hierarchy now of people who are political that are running things. They will make a policy decision that they want to do something ... [and] we stopped doing recommendations”(Mary-1-35), significantly reducing the civil service’s influence in public policy.

Mary’s personal experience of deskilling, devaluing, and disempowerment in her work role encouraged her to become active in the union. After listening to various anecdotes, I ask Mary whether the union is paralleling the government in the way it is run, how its members and middle management ranks are being disempowered and deskilled, and how diverse opinions are systematically ignored. She responds: “You know, it actually is. I never thought about it that way, and it wasn’t supposed to be” (Mary-1-96). In fact, the union seems to be replicating the precise power dynamics that are effected in the management structure and operations—a form of “reproduction of the system of means” to which Castells (1996, p. 171) refers.

Thus, if there is dysfunction, inequity, and exercise of privilege in the workplace, it is not unexpected that there might be analogous dysfunction, inequity, and exercise of privilege in the union. Mary realizes this dynamic has indeed occurred:

[The union president] often makes policy, and this is what bugged me on the board. He could have showed [the policy letter] to the board, but he didn’t. So he’s making policy on his own all the time. I guess that sounds pretty much like the current government. Wow. Wow. Yeah, I never thought of that. (Mary-1-107)

Mary’s characterization of “water-tight compartments” seems to be a significant innovation in BAH control that, in an ironic way, seems to be perversely consistent with the contemporary, massively interconnected era. In traditional bureaucracies, information and delegation would travel along a linear chain of command as originally described by Fayol (1949), with relatively little substantive change over the decades. Managers at various hierarchical levels would serve as the gatekeepers and governors of that information, giving them considerable control, and therefore, “information power” (French & Raven, 1959).

Individuals in the political layer between the politicians and civil service now have the ability to directly connect with and control those who fill discrete positions anywhere throughout the bureaucratic hierarchy. Although there remains a very clear and explicit status hierarchy in government, and an administrative bureaucracy that involves complicated, procedural rigour, control-from-the-top can be effected as point-to-point connection, isolating an individual from intervening or subordinate bureaucratic levels.

Traditional administrative bureaucracies would typically create so-called silos in which information flows vertically in an organization, but is impeded from horizontal dissemination except for specifically designated “bridges” or “gangplanks” as Fayol originally called them—positions whose control connected two or more functional areas. With the form of direct control present in contemporary government structures, vertical flow of information has become likewise impeded.

To effect this type of direct-from-the-top control of substantial content – that is, the development of public policy – necessitates a particular sort of bureaucratic apathy among those with nominal, legitimated power. Individuals’ power-to-control ambitions must be diverted from directing substantial issues to controlling more trite and trivial aspects of individual behaviours often typified, if not caricatured²⁴, in hierarchical, administrative bureaucracies.

A hiring strategy that effectively destroys institutional memory over time is one way to distract civil servants from the reality of their loss of policy power. Relatively young and inexperienced people, albeit with formal credentials, are being hired and rapidly promoted, according to Mary. With little to no prior experience and no institutional memory among the new senior ranks in the governmental bureaucracy, the politicizing of what used to be the civil service’s policy role – its locus of power and influence with respect to the public interest – is more easily accomplished. The distraction creates a shift that encourages a greater focus on individual status and intra-organizational power dynamics, taking a significant toll in organizational effectiveness and culture.

Organizationally, this control shift has created a new form of what I might term *discrete-office* bureaucracy, in which information flow and delegation can be effected point-to-point, from the top (political layer) of the hierarchy to any arbitrary member situated at any arbitrary lower level. Sean, for example, describes a situation in which he received what appeared to be two separate assignments, one via this discrete-office dynamic and the other via the normal delegation mechanism from his direct superior. Before expending too much effort on what would have been redundant tasks, he was able to discern that the two seemingly independent requests were, in fact, one and the same. Sean sums up his reaction to this type of dilemma: “The entire information flow process is frustrating sometimes because you just never, well, not never, but at this point I’m not a hundred percent confident that I’m talking to who I should be talking to, when I’m talking to them” (Sean-1-47).

Official hiring approaches in Organization M seems to be divided between the classical divisions of “thinkers” – relatively more senior positions involving analytical and decision-making responsibility – and “doers,” those involved in relatively lower-level tasks. For the latter category, often aimed at recruiting relatively less-qualified people, there are internship programs intended for managers who have justified entry-level positions to fill. However, Mina claims that the program is less about filling required roles within the civil service:

Essentially, it’s a way to bring people into the government. So, you are encouraged to look for work while you’re there as an intern. You can stay in

²⁴ Viz. the television program, *The Office*, or the satirical comic, *Dilbert*.

the program as long as you want, up to two years. Or, you can start looking as early as you want. Your mostly direct goal is to get a job. (Mina-1-268)

People could leave their rotation in the middle, or they could leave two months into it. It's considered ambitious [if they leave early]. It's good for them, right? It's a loss for the manager. They were hoping to have them for longer than two months, or however long they were there, but that's the purpose of the program. It's the intern's career, and it's their choice. (Mina-1-292)

In the description of the program's operation, the specific intern seems to be irrelevant to the job, and the specific job is irrelevant to the intern—the program is effectively a staging platform that matches a relatively anonymous person into an arbitrary, permanent job. Structured as it is, with no apparent commitment to the hiring manager or her/his task requirements, the program is designed to foster individualism, and deny any feeling of collective responsibility or collaborative mentality. In other words, it promotes isolation, independence, and tends to preclude fostering a culture of collective benefit throughout the organization.

For more senior, and senior-track positions, there is an emphasis on hiring credentialed, but relatively inexperienced, new members:

With respect to the young people coming in and being hired. I've noticed ... there's a trend that they're all coming from Large University. They generally all have, I think, an MPA [Master of Public Administration degree]. ... People who have been around for a long time will not go for the [more senior and supervisory] jobs; ... they feel that the competitions are skewed so that the younger people will win. (Mary-1-41)

In addition, there has been a concerted effort to eliminate access to paper files that comprise the tangible form of a government's long-term organizational memory (Mary-1-131/135), a plan that many are resisting (Sean-1-207). Mary comments on the "trend that was there about ten years ago to give people early retirement—there goes the institutional memory. But when the paper's gone too ... it's just weird" (Mary-1-141). The combined effect of both the hiring strategy and the elimination of documents is to gradually erase institutional memory from the managerial ranks of the organization, making them more susceptible to being controlled by the political functionary hierarchical layer previously mentioned. Without ready access to historical precedents via either records or direct memory, those who traditionally might have been considered in the class of "thinkers" now effectively become little more than higher-status "doers," as Mary has described.

This structural change in the hierarchy does not consider the organization's members instrumentally, nor does it consider them strictly in interpersonal relational terms. Rather, in *effect*, it seems to make the rather startling statement that not only are people irrelevant, but so too are the espoused purpose and objectives of the organization itself. The organization's in-use theory appears to have become an instrumental means through which to effect

partisan political policy using BAH control mechanisms²⁵. The participants' experience with the internship program, described earlier, is consistent with this rather contentious observation.

An individual employed under the two-year internship program is under no obligation to complete either the first or second one-year work term if s/he locates a job at any time during the year, whether it is related to the assigned work-term tasks or not. There seems to be an air of irrelevance associated with both the task and the specific person: the task is of nominal importance in that it must have prior justification, although there is no imperative for it to be completed; the view of the intern him/herself is simply that of an undifferentiated future bureaucrat.

The ramifications of this shift are that, over time, members become disengaged with the nominal purpose of what should be a purposeful organization. Instead, they become hyper-focused on retaining the hierarchical trappings of office to the point where some managers' assumption of the privilege of absolute control over individuals almost defies credulity in a contemporary context. For example, during a dispute mediation between an individual who is a union member, and her manager,

the mediator told both parties to write their list of what they wanted. The manager came back with her list, and one of the things she wanted my person to sign off on was, the manager is always right. It was weird, like, that was what she wanted, I am always right, whatever I say. (Mary-1-165)

There is another explanation that is perhaps not quite as stark as the contention that the governmental organization's purpose and its members are irrelevant. What is particularly notable about how the organization has evolved over the past two decades is the change in structural thinking about *organization* caused by partisan political concerns in what might otherwise be considered a typical BAH organization. Organization M seems to view *relationships* – albeit partisan relationships – as its dominant organizing factor, rather than the more usual and expected structuring influences of an office's instrumental responsibility or purpose. In effect, the introduction of the political layer of the hierarchy and discrete-office control creates a new, very contemporary, mutation of the centuries-old BAH organization. This new variation of the traditional form involves two distinct classes of “thinkers” and initiates direct control of individual “doers” by one of the thinker classes, in parallel to the nominal hierarchical chain of command. As I will discuss in a later chapter, implicating relationships as a fundamental structuring element in a contemporary organizational form represents a significant conceptual change that is definitively characteristic of the UCAPP world.

²⁵ I would say that this contention is not unique to Organization M; it seems to be endemic to many, if not most, contemporary, highly partisan, nominally democratic jurisdictions. This observation in turn raises a concern about the nature of democratic process (aside from the periodic exercise of a minority of the public marching to polls and casting ballots). If, as I argue, contemporary societal conditions mandate connections, juxtaposition of meaning-making contexts, and complex analyses of complex problems, the very structure of government organizations may well be inconsistent with the ideals of contemporary democracy and democratic principles. This, however, is a topic for a different thesis.

Speaking With One Voice

Just as many individuals seem to place their personal interests above those of the organization as a whole, each branch vigorously represents its own interests – often in contention with its sister branches – relative to the ministry as a whole. Thus, the ministry’s nominal, politically obligatory objective of representing a single, unified approach to complex issues is a challenge. Given the specificity of functional responsibilities distributed among the branches, there seems to be no space for nuance, negotiating meaning or consensus, or holding polarity tensions (Johnson, 1992) when coordinating complex issues:

Ideally, each person would speak only about their area of expertise, or their branch’s interests. ... So you’ll get two people addressing the same issue, and if they’re taking a different tack on it, you’ve got to find a way to make sure you resolve it, and have only one person speaking... Where there is a contradiction [in approaches] ... it’s just been a matter of whoever has got the technical rights to that particular issue. It’s within their area of jurisdiction, they pull rank and that’s that. It’s designed to be that way ... so that, at the end of the day, the ministry speaks with only one voice, and it’s not a fractured voice. (Sean-1-27/29)

Sean’s description of how such issues are resolved – those who possess the “technical rights” to the issue “pull rank” – is completely consistent with both the status hierarchy and fragmented scopes of responsibility that define a BAH organization. The ministry’s consultative committee process is a useful illustration of these characteristics. As part of the process of drafting legislation, the government often consults with a committee of stakeholders representing various interested and relevant public constituencies. Because of his technical knowledge and functional role, Sean believes it would make sense for him to directly participate on the committee, and has advocated to be included. However, ministry representation on these committees is restricted:

The consultant that is running the committee process, and the government agency that is helping them run it, are very reluctant to add [ministry] people to the committee, because ... they want to make sure [public committee members’] input is heard, and the more government members that you add, the more you are likely to just sort of be doing a fancy consultation, rather than actually taking their [i.e., the public members’] input seriously (Sean-1-43).

Hierarchical status and class – those whose office nominally defines domain responsibility – determine who represents the ministry on these committees, as opposed to subject matter experts like Sean—those who do the actual analytic work.

The director of my branch is our ministry’s member, our ministry’s representative. He is assigned work though the committee, and myself, and a colleague with the branch are the ones who are actually doing the work, because he’s got the actual running the branch to do. So we look at the actual issues, do the meat of the work. (Sean-1-37)

After each committee meeting, Sean receives minutes and a debrief from his superiors who actually attended. “We try to figure out what’s going on, because, you know, the minutes of the meeting are very minimal, and you can’t really tell what the interactions are and where the pressures are coming from on particular initiatives in committee” (Sean-1-37). Such fragmentation of responsibility, separating “thinkers” from “doers” *à la* Frederick Taylor, has its consequences. Sean describes one of the more ironic cases in which bureaucratic procedure, nominally designed for efficient transmission of information and coordination of activities, actually *hinders* information conveyance needed to properly contextualize an issue:

As [the committee members] identify issues, I’ll go through the minutes, and like, oh, they could have thought about this, they could have approached it this way, this was an option for them too. And my advice, while it does get back to them eventually, it goes through a formal approval process, it goes to my director, and it’s noted at the start of the next meeting, at which point it’s not the most helpful. It’s more distilled and it’s distant from when they were actually making those decisions. (Sean-1-49)

Thus, the resolution of ambiguity, ambivalence, nuance, and diverse contexts does not involve direct interaction or conversation with the committee. Instead, it remains a fractured, jurisdictional concern, mediated by bureaucratic, hierarchically defined procedures. The committee may indeed make a clear and distinct decision, but it is without the benefit of appropriately hearing relevant information that would have informed its conclusions or recommendations at the time. According to administrative procedure, information-flow is technically well-coordinated with its ideation of an efficient decision-making process. But as Sean notes, “So there’s the ideal process, and the reality is fairly far from it” (Sean-1-91).

To find compromise – a middle ground that perhaps holds a third or fourth alternative to the two distinct positions held by different factions – requires connection, juxtaposition of contexts, meeting of minds, and mutual understanding. The bureaucracy of Organization M, based on what Mary describes as “water-tight compartments” (Mary-1-35), precludes these precursors to comprehensive meaning-making. With a considerably narrowed scope of ground conditions, the sense that the organization is able to make of any given issue becomes, in effect, limited to that particular outcome desired by those in a superior position of control. Processes of deliberation in Organization M are structurally designed to preclude meaningful connections and deep contextual understanding in favour of distinct, dichotomous, right-and-wrong clarity—a sensibility necessarily requiring unity because “the ministry speaks with only one voice” (Sean-1-29).

The government is making a notable attempt to reduce individual ministries’ insular view of their particular areas of concern, especially with regard to major issues or broad themes of public interest. These more complex matters require multiple ministries to coordinate their policy and program initiatives. Thus, the government has created small, cross-ministry organizations. True to BAH form, all of these working groups respect strict hierarchical levels: members in any given group are of the same senior management rank, constructing Henri Fayol’s equal-rank “gang planks” to effect inter-ministry coordination.

Success by the Numbers

Stan describes the extreme emphasis the organization places on quantification and (supposedly) objective measurements to demonstrate accomplishments. However, he suggests that metrics are specifically selected to illustrate the success of the system and its overseers, rather than the true effectiveness-relative-to-intent of the program. One example²⁶ describes how a particular government initiative that funds locally administered programs throughout the province has three metrics: a measurement of local intention, that is, the intended number of people who will be served by the program; a measurement of provider agreements, that is, the number of people that individual service providers agree to serve; and a measurement of actual services provided to the public. Funding is provided to local authorities based on the measurement of intention, and the minister reports the success of the program to Parliament in terms of that number. However, Stan relates that in a major Canadian city, less than 25% of the intended number of people are actually served, a number that is relatively hidden from scrutiny.

Similarly, Stan outlines the budget reconciliation process, designed so that the budgeting system – not to mention the government itself – is not embarrassed or shown to be deficient in fiscal control. Managers are given a personal, financial incentive to have their actual annual expenses fall within 2% of their final budget. However, that final budget estimate is actually locked-in less than three months before the end of the fiscal year. Effectively, managers win their bonuses for managing a 2% budget-versus-actual margin over a period of less than one fiscal quarter.

The extreme focus on quantification even extends to whether the organization considers the morale of its members to be important:

I think a lot of managers and directors ... don't want to invest in people, because, investment in people, you cannot quantify it. It's not quantifiable. And you cannot see the outcome right away. But, for [my manager], if she could [increase the number of signed agreements to provide services], it's quantifiable. She can see the outcome of it right away. But whether my morale is going up or down, she couldn't care less. And I think a lot of organizations feel that. (Stan-1-80)

Nominally, as with all quantitative measurements, the numbers do not lie. However, despite the measurement system in Organization M being specifically designed so that the measured results are likely to appear favourable, irrespective of the actual outcomes, Stan laments,

...performance measurement shouldn't be taken in isolation. It should be taken in context with other, broader things. [Service provision] shouldn't be taken in the context of just providing X-number of [services] to people. It should be taken in the context of other things. Health. Community. (Stan-1-47)

It is almost as if the organization is incapable of making sense of a situation or understanding the effects of initiatives – the *quality* of what it is doing – without a nominally

²⁶ Details are deliberately vague to respect Stan's confidentiality.

objective, external framework, and directed procedures on which to rely. Sense-making in complex environments typically involves assimilating and integrating diverse thinking, and drawing on multiple, meaning-making contexts. However, the more procedural, the more fragmented, and more removed from actual context this interpretive process becomes, the less overall sense is actually made. An organizational view based on extreme administrative instrumentality and objective quantification may be unable to perceive quality. It is perhaps even true that an extreme-BAH organization is neither designed nor instrumented to actually make sense.

Organization A: UCaPP Islands in a Sea of BAH

Organization A is a corporation that has grown considerably through mergers, especially over the past several years. During the last decade, it has assimilated at least six other large organizations, creating, in one sense, a *bricolage*²⁷ of organizational cultures, behaviours, and attitudes. Organization A's still-evolving culture is set against a context of an extremely competitive industry, the challenges of serving a highly knowledgeable and demanding customer market, and management ideas that are rooted in the BAH mindset of the past century. Members of the organization have developed what could almost be called a reflexive response to significant organizational change.

“Hey folks, you understand why we merged and what Wall Street expects from us. It's our, essentially, common duty how to figure out how to meet that.” (Adam-1-8)

The expectation to which Adam refers is to “obviously achieve what's euphemistically called the merger synergies, which really translates to the elimination of redundant things—essentially cuts” (Adam-2-8). Such a hegemonically imposed “common duty” results in what Adam calls a “feeding frenzy at merge time. Everybody is trying to find a place, and try[ing] to leverage it to figure out how they can best benefit from it, personal[ly]” (Adam-1-48). People jockey for position in competition with each other for a reduced number of jobs. Perhaps mirroring the competitive market environment of Organization A's industry, continually competing for survival is one of the key issues front and centre in many people's minds. In conventional BAH discourse, competition is perceived as a beneficial way of allowing the best ideas, methods, and capabilities to surface. More competitive individuals combine to create a more competitive company that will be better positioned to succeed in a very competitive marketplace. In this, Organization A seems to be following modern BAH contingency theories (e.g., Hannan & Freeman, 1977; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) in adapting its internal strategies to match its perception of external realities in the knowledge economy in which it participates.

In a so-called knowledge economy, it is cliché to say that knowledge is power. However, when knowledge is construed as an input commodity, a raw material, or resource

²⁷ *Bricolage* generally refers to a visual or musical artistic composition comprised of found objects as both materials and instruments, arranged in diverse styles, and often set in a new context, to provide a new meaning in a manner often characteristic of post-modern expression. In a cultural context, the term is often used to convey the idea of using various materials and objects symbolizing class differences to create new cultural identities, often in opposition to the establishment status quo as a response to perceived or felt hegemony and oppression.

that enables production in said economy (e.g., Drucker, 1969), it can become constructed as a rivalrous resource in the context of individuals “competing” with one another for their own jobs, as in the case of post-merger Organization A. In this knowledge-based organization, disruption in information flow creates disruption in the ability to accomplish the work of the organization, in other words, to achieve the organization’s objectives and purpose. Knowledge, an inherently non-rivalrous resource and the organization’s life-blood, is turned into a scarce and rivalrous commodity by an artificially constructed, internal marketplace for employment.

I think it’s motivated by two factors. One of them is that some view it as an opportunity to move on, move up, and others, as an opportunity to protect their current position. So in both cases there’s a certain amount of tension because information is not flowing, and for us that becomes an issue, because information that’s needed to make decisions and recommendations and plans becomes fragmented and becomes a little bit twisted by the interests of the supplier of the information. (Adam-1-52)

In creating an ironic rejection of Fayol’s (1949) classical management principle of putting the organization’s concerns above those of the individual, the organization engineers this otherwise unintended consequence of information flow reducing to a trickle. At times when people see opportunity to either survive, advance, or protect territory (Adam-1-52), it is literally counter-productive for the senior management of the organization to create conditions of rivalrous knowledge that restrict the flow of information. Employees’ personal concerns make overall organizational objectives almost instantly irrelevant. Adam describes the circumstances of one such situation:

I’m working on this project, and I’ve been very diligently trying to get one of the folks who’s essentially a peer of mine, to include me in his plans, because we’re both planning in kind of the same area. So, you know, I wanted to establish a relationship where he feels that we’re sharing something. So I made the first opener. I made the second opener. I made the third opener. It’s no longer an opener, I suppose. The third contact, and I’m still having trouble getting myself invited to the regular meeting that he’s holding. (Adam-2-94)

What information sharing does occur during times of organizational flux is often facilitated by pre-existing allegiances. In general, people’s personal attachments to particular organizational entities – divisions, departments, and workgroups – transcends the strictly instrumental association with the particular location of that function in the bureaucratic organization chart. Seeming to ignore this very human dynamic, redistribution of departmental location in post-merger Organization A was arranged by function, consistent with the traditional BAH principle of functional decomposition: “if you think you do [Systems Architecture], you’re in this group. Otherwise you don’t do [SA]” (Frank-1-180).

Organizational Affinities

This pure, functionally oriented group alignment disrupts people’s affective connections to, and identification with, their previous workgroups. In many cases, the disruption creates problematic mixed loyalties and awkward situations, reported by both

Adam and Frank. One example demonstrates how knowledge and reorganized hierarchy intersect in a somewhat surprising way. In the organization cultural construct that enshrines (rivalrous) knowledge as power, sharing knowledge becomes a privilege of one's power and relative hierarchical position—almost becoming a matter of personal identity and self-image. Adam describes what has become the inevitable initial response when asking for information assistance:

It starts out a hundred percent of the time, there's like, should you be talking to me? Why should I talk to you about this kind of stuff? ... It happens all the time. All the time. I know because I'm having discussions with other folks and we mention one person, and there's quiet. And the next thing you hear is, oh yeah, he's in that chain of command, so I know that he's just looked him up [laughs], trying to figure out do they matter or they don't matter ... regardless of whatever they've got to say. (Adam-2-126)

Karen echoes Adam's observation of how people ascribe relevance to an individual and their request for assistance based on their relative location in the organizational hierarchy. "Sometimes when I'm reaching out to someone new, they look me up and they see who my reporting hierarchy is, and they're like, who are you? What do you do? People look me up and say, you do what?" (Karen-1-270).

Karen's experience seems to be contextualized by a somewhat different psychosocial ground than many others. More than most people, she has lived in a place of continual organizational flux over the past decade. Her experiences are not so much the result of specific structural changes in the organization, although she has certainly felt the effects of administrative, bureaucratic, and corporate restructurings over the years. Rather, she situates herself where the bureaucratic and hierarchical nature of the organization appears to be less strictly enforced, and is therefore less restricted with respect to the latitude she enjoys in enacting her various roles. It is a place in which Karen creates connections that take on a more network-like quality, better described by Granovetter (1973) or Nardi et al. (2000, 2002), than Fayol (1949).

Karen defines herself in terms of various activities she undertakes on behalf of various constituencies, and the multiplicity of connections she enacts in response to *ad hoc*, often unforeseen, requirements. Uncharacteristic for a primarily BAH organization, she explicitly identifies that the majority of her organizational contributions do not neatly fall into a functionally defined niche that is a proper subset of her manager's decomposed responsibility: "If you consider the work I do ... more than half, and sometimes eighty percent of the stuff I do has nothing to do with his stuff. ... What I do doesn't neatly fit in anybody's function" (Karen-1-248). Instead, Karen locates herself on the basis of exchanges and interactions *in relation*, creating strong connections with sales teams, technical departments, marketing staff, legal counsel, and executive offices.

Nonetheless, even while Karen individually maintains strong relations among various organizational constituencies, on a macro-scale, "the culture clashes have been just awful; painful from my perspective," (Karen-1-180). Karen's relative autonomy and relational connections would indeed make her perception of the organizational culture changes particularly "painful": the organization has shifted from what Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983) describe as an open-systems model with greater internal flexibility, an external focus on customers and markets, and an emphasis on ends, to the diametrically opposite internal-

process model of high corporate control, an internal focus on processes and procedures, and an emphasis on means²⁸.

BAH Theories of Coordination and Change

A large part of BAH control is effected through the annual objective-setting exercise. Robert describes his department's process of objective-setting that is, in characteristic fashion, hierarchical. Objectives are set based on the needs of the business perceived from the highest level of the organizational hierarchy, and decomposed level-by-level all the way down.

You go through a large objective setting [exercise], and so I will set the objectives for my organization, and then each of my managers [set theirs] based on those objectives. A lot of times we jointly set the expectations for the organization. Based on those they will set the objectives for their contribution to our bigger division's objectives. And once they do that, then the people that report to them set their objectives to contribute to their manager's objectives. It's almost like a top-down, hierarchical objective setting. Objectives are both in business needs, you know, projects that we do, as well as personal growth. And so first the business need, then the how—your approach to your job, developing leadership, and then personal growth. (Robert-1-57)

Adam agrees:

There is a sort of a top down, development of expectations that start with very elastic statements of intent from the executives that are passed down through the ranks. And every time it goes down a rank, it is recast in some fashion that is relevant to that particular organization. (Adam-1-68)

Thus, the discrete, purposeful, and strictly instrumental involvement of both individuals and entire departments parallels formal organization structure, consistent with received organizational culture. From the historical lens that originally frames this study, this mentality could be considered as a retrieval of the factory decomposition of the guild's integrated involvement in a craft that is a hallmark of the Industrial Age. Such a metaphorical connection is consistent with the desired "factory efficiency" of a primary-purposeful organization—even those squarely situated in the so-called knowledge economy. More important, the perceived efficiency of functionally decomposing large organizational objectives ultimately into discrete, individual tasks is a characteristic of more-BAH organizations.

²⁸ These are two quadrants of Quinn and Rohrbaugh's (1983) Competing Values Framework of organizational effectiveness. The other two are the rational-goals, and human-relations models. The authors propose three axes that represent paradoxical dilemmas in organizational design, presented in a model deliberately constructed to highlight the polarity tensions among the competing considerations of internal vs. external focus, flexible vs. stable structure, and means vs. ends in outcomes.

The focus on internal processes, procedures, and consistency – especially with respect to administrative matters – is perhaps no better illustrated than in Robert’s account of the organizational history of the Advanced Research and Development (ARD) division:

If I go back, and I have to go back a number of years, we had what we would call the RS community, Research Staff, when we were ARD. And there was very little hierarchy at that time. And, that kind of work, because it was more of an academic environment – this is twenty years ago – people didn’t have that need to grow and succeed from a [hierarchical] position perspective. Succeeding from ‘doing good work’ was good enough, that the salary ranges were pretty open ended, so even though there was only one flat level, there was a huge variance in how much people were paid based on how good they were, and what they contributed to the business...

Then technical community got melded with the business community, and that’s when we started to become level conscious like that, because there was nowhere in the structure to support such a wide band of salaries in just one flat thing, so basically we had an organization structure that mimicked the business side. But then the unfortunate thing about that is that in order to progress in your career or get paid more you had to become a manager. It was just the approach to do it. Recently, we went back to the ARD structure, probably about two, three years ago. We stayed hierarchical like that from a responsibility [perspective], but rather than the hierarchy being based on straight management responsibility, really, we enabled a technical ladder based on role in the organization, and based on your technical credentials. You know, the move up levels in our current technical ladder, at least in the Advanced Research and Development community, different levels require different levels of degrees and experience in order to qualify. (Robert-1-29)

This account provides almost a textbook case on how BAH requirements alone can drive a change that significantly alters the culture of a (sub)organization, and the morale of its members. To support a higher salary range, the only administrative response available to the BAH environment was to force technical-stream researchers to assume people-management responsibilities, something to which many technically oriented researchers and developers are often ill-suited. Eventually, ARD reverted to a merit- and qualification-based status hierarchy, away from the exclusively administrative-oriented hierarchy, thereby enabling the parallel class- and status-derived salary “ladders.” However, this attempted correction introduces its own dysfunctions, because of the near-exclusive reliance on administrative procedures that precludes human judgement, as Karen relates:

[The old ARD] had gotten away from this rigid hierarchy based on degrees, and people could get technical titles if they had done technically innovative work, had patents, et cetera. I had even known of an individual who got the highest possible technical rank based on his expertise and patents—and he didn’t even have a college degree.

My young colleague, a young man in his twenties, who has patents, he’s brilliant. He came out of the Internet culture, the start-up culture. He never

took the time to get a degree. Doesn't matter that he's got patents, that he's invented stuff. They can't get him on the technical pay plan. He is really, really unhappy and hates the title he has.

There were a bunch of people who left ARD in the late nineties in the tech boom. This gentleman who had been with Organization A, I don't know how long, maybe twenty years? Had patents, knew the systems and culture and the network. [His former manager] could have put him to work in thirty seconds and he could have been productive, because of his background and experience. But he had the wrong degree so she couldn't hire him. (Karen-1-97)

According to basic tenets of BAH that emphasize suitability to occupy one's *office*, people are interchangeable and functionally replaceable so long as they have the same specifications, much like machine parts. A BAH organization ideally views its systems as well-understood, well-integrated, and *distinct from the people who occupy them*. Like their mechanical analogues, they are therefore able to be replicated and scaled by duplication with no expected change in outcome or effectiveness, given sufficient quality control; in the BAH organizational context, that means *people control*. This logic sketches what could be considered as the prevailing BAH theory of change—replicate what has worked in the past to accommodate growth in the future. It accounts for the emphasis on credentials – the quality control specifications, so to speak – in Karen's recollections.

However, it is precisely this logic – the BAH theory of change – that “was disastrous,” according to Robert, when Organization A's American operations centres went global. From a ground of functional decomposition, workload productivity measures, and purposeful utility, there was no reason to expect that replicating existing, successfully implemented domestic systems would not work. Yet, the global dissemination of these systems essentially failed. Robert now believes the organization is coming to grips with “how we're influencing each other as we go global. ... When we, the big Organization A, are going to influence throughout the world what we're also finding is, parts of the world are influencing us” (Robert-1-85). This reflection captures a notion that characterizes an essential principle of the massively interconnected world – one to which I will later return – namely *tactility*: one cannot touch without being touched.

Project coordination in Organization A has an almost factory-like, “just-in-time” quality to it. Adam's role is related to high-level, strategic, project planning. Even though he regards himself as a “generalist,” his involvement is limited specifically to his area of expertise, as and when the next higher hierarchical level considers his specific technical opinions timely and necessary. The workflow is thus considered as a more-or-less linear series of decomposed tasks with relatively limited scope, rather than, say, being regarded holistically relative to an entire project, or with respect to other initiatives occurring elsewhere in the organization. Adam gives the distinct impression that each functional area of project planning works discretely, independent of other areas, save for well-defined interfaces through which one stage of the project passes to the next.

We hardly ever finish a project. The type of projects we get involved in, they tend to be at least a year long, and most of the time, multiple years. ... I personally don't tend to stay with them until they're finished. I simply get

involved with multiple projects in the initial phases, and they do finish within the planning period, which is usually a year or a year-and-a-half. (Adam-1-118)

Similarly, Robert and his department have no involvement in the development or implementation phases of projects, nor in their final reconciliation. Essentially, once a project passes his area of responsibility, it's gone. "In my present role as an architect, I am only engaged in the front end of the process. And so, once it gets beyond the requirements and stuff like that, I don't follow it through into general availability and I don't track the life cycle" (Robert-1-130). His participation is limited to that which satisfies his officially sanctioned objectives.

Indeed, almost all Organization A participants agree that, to their knowledge, there is no downstream revisiting or verification of the business case made for a given project. "I am unaware of re-evaluating the business case," says Adam. "As a matter of fact, I am also unaware of systematic, uniform, post-project business case verification. ... Whenever I've asked, has anybody ever checked to see if we met the business case or not, most of the time I'm met with silence" (Adam-1-36). When asked about the same issue – whether he has ever heard of a post-mortem analysis performed on the business case used to justify a project – Robert replies, "I have not, but especially in the new Organization A, I would highly doubt that it doesn't happen, because they're very conservative on the tracking of [personal expenses], down to the dollar" (Robert-1-130).

This, once again, seems to confirm an inherent faith in the correctness of the system and administrative processes. So long as the plan is well-vetted, everything will proceed exactly as the plan predicts including the forecasted business results, even though such a presumption rarely bears up under scrutiny in common experience. This seems to be a tacit BAH premise of activity coordination—BAH organizations trust their systems, but not necessarily their people.

There is an additional reading of this situation that suggests an interesting power and control dynamic in operation. Bureaucratic administrations often impose mechanisms to give the *appearance* of tight fiscal controls through extensive business case review and vetting processes, combined with an obsessive focus on the minutiae of individual expense management²⁹, thereby effecting a form of *hegemonic* control over personnel. However, those with senior-level, legitimate power are rarely challenged or called to account for the validity of their business decisions, unless such decisions lead to public embarrassment. In effect, the system protects the integrity of the BAH power structure by never retrospectively and reflectively questioning a prior decision. In even more extreme BAH organizations, like Organization M, for instance, this apparent protection-denial mechanism is taken one step further by creating performance metrics specifically designed to demonstrate success, irrespective of whether the *intended* outcome is, or is not, achieved.

Perhaps, then, the previously proposed BAH premise should be slightly revised: so long as the plan is well-vetted, everything will proceed exactly as the plan predicts, subject to

²⁹ Robert on expense policy enforcement: "If you travel, the policy is you can spend \$40 a day. Now, if on one of those days you spend \$41, I don't care if the next three days you spend \$20, you'll be put on the list and the list will go up levels of management, and you'll get a hate-mail from multiple levels above you on what part of the expense policy don't you understand?" (Robert-1-105).

checking-up on the people, or ensuring the people will check-up on themselves (See Wilson, 1995).

Learning the (Cargo) Cult of Success

In theory, the BAH coordination approach based on functional decomposition is designed specifically for efficient operations, since individuals provide their specialist contributions precisely where and when they are needed. However, the approach as instantiated in Organization A limits the potential for experiential learning, and creating synergy with subsequent planning processes. Those whose contributions are sought at a project's beginning rarely have the opportunity to experience and understand its later-phase effects and outcomes. In other words, Organization A seems to have deliberately limited its ability to learn by limiting an individual's future participation in areas that they nonetheless affect. Instead, success or failure in achieving a particular outcome is generally attributable to the accuracy and completeness of determining the component tasks, the performance quality of the workers accomplishing each of those tasks, and the effectiveness of the managers managing the workers.

From this relatively simplistic, linear logic comes the phenomenon of ascribed success: that success in attaining objectives and planned outcomes is, in and of itself, an endorsement of the planning and management methods that were employed. This leads to a sort of circular reasoning. If an organization is successful it is because of its management practices, and the validity of its management practices is conversely demonstrated by its business success. Essentially, success becomes its own justification of the means employed, and that such success can be replicated by emulating those successful means. Such mimicry, or direct emulation, of successful means can be considered to be a form of "cargo cult"³⁰ (Worsley, 1968), or in more modern, business parlance, "best practices."

Adopting so-called best practices of other organizations is often founded in the "errant belief that there are certain practices that are truly 'best' and that replicating another organization's processes, strategies, and ideas within your organization will somehow miraculously yield a better reality" (Sanwal, 2008, p. 51). Sanwal debunks "the myth of best practices" as not accounting for specific organizational culture and behaviours, differences in extant processes, and complex interactions among the various intertwined constituencies. Pawlowsky (2001) distinguishes the more deterministic assumptions of conventionally considered "best practices" from the in-depth, reflective, problem solving approaches of, for example, Argyris and Schön (1978, 1996). de Haën, Tsui-Auch, and Alexis (2001) find that, "in fact, strategies and knowledge are often 'discovered' in interactive, informal processes and made sense of only retrospectively. Hence it is doubtful that the optimal strategy or 'best practices' can be identified" (p. 917). And, the editors of the *Handbook of Organizational Learning and Knowledge* simply conclude, "the expectations of managers have often remained unfulfilled. Hopes of rapid change and smooth, almost effortless transferability of best practices from other organizations have often proved illusory" (Antal, Dierkes, Child, &

³⁰ Cargo cult is the term coined by Worsley to refer to a superstition among the indigenous people of Melanesia after the second world war. They believed that by building replicas of the air-fields, control towers, and airplanes, they could entice the U.S. military personnel to return, bringing with them the valuable goods – cargo – to which they had access during the war years. The term is used metaphorically to refer to any practice that emulates another, previously successful practice with the aim of "enticing" success.

Nonaka, 2001, p. 928). Rather, they emphasize the importance of organizational culture and embedded sense-making processes, “unlearning” ingrained practices, and problematizing the traditional loci of learning in the organization as crucial to truly assimilating new knowledge. As we will see in subsequent chapters, these authentic learning (as opposed to “best”) practices tend to prevail in more-UCaPP organizations.

Nonetheless, “best practiciness” (Sanwal, 2008) seems to flourish in the procedurally oriented BAH organization that often tends to avoid reflection and critical questioning. To understand how this occurs, consider the two distinct, sense-making mechanisms that predominate in Organization A with respect to acquired companies. The current Organization A is the result of a number of acquisitions, framed as mergers—precursor Company S acquired Companies P, M, A, B, and C over a period of approximately a decade. Consistent with a belief that “success is its own justification,” the processes, methods, systems, and senior management personnel from the more successful precursor organization should tend to dominate after each subsequent merger. Indeed, all Organization A participants confirm this to be the case: in Organization A’s culture, one ascribes greater success, and therefore dominance, to the acquiring company. For instance, Frank identifies the relative success of his precursor organization by pointing out that Company S acquired Company A, thereby demonstrating the superiority of Company S’s management processes. He notes that precursor Company A, “in my view was not real good on the execution side, and that’s why they got bought for billions [of dollars]” (Frank-2-26).

In most cases, Company S’s policies and practices were immediately imposed on the acquired companies. For example, Roxanne, Karen, Frank, and Robert all note the change in telecommuting policy after the acquisition of their respective precursor companies. Company S’s policy – essentially, no telecommuting is permitted – was imposed on all acquired companies as a means to impose more direct managerial control over employees, an ascribed contributor to Company S’s presumed superiority. The policy apparently ignored the fact that, in the merged organization, a vast number of employees are not physically located in the same part of the country as their direct supervisors, let alone in the same office. It is therefore impossible to accomplish greater supervision and control through this policy because of the geographically dispersed workforce. Nonetheless, the policy stood—a clear indication of cargo-cult mentality at work.

On the other hand, another sense-making mechanism ascribes greater success, and therefore managerial precedence, to the component company that has the most successful product line among the precursor companies. This view holds even if the component companies are in different markets with completely different market dynamics. Company C – the most recently acquired company – is in one of the fastest growing, most successful business sectors in Organization A’s broad industry. Its recent run of success is largely due to one unique product offering to which Company C has exclusive rights. However, the cargo-cult principle of ascribed success has resulted in a number of Company C’s practices being adopted organization-wide. For example, the anti-telecommuting policy has been reversed, since Company C permits – indeed, encourages – telecommuting. Frank describes the conflicting sense-making dynamics that occurred after the acquisition of Company C:

Company C over the last number of years has been [in] a fairly hot and lucrative market. Their culture has been very different in a number of ways, which then means the way they operate and respond to things is different. ... There’s the thought of, well, Company S is the one that bought Company A.

Company S is the one that bought Company C. And, of course, as you merge, then obviously you have folks coming from those other companies, and the question is, what is the prevailing overall philosophy of the merged company? And, I'm not saying that there aren't good things to come from Company C by any means. (Frank-2-2/24)

But the organization did adopt many other policies and practices from Company C. As well, it rewarded many Company C senior managers with plum, senior positions, despite some of them having little experience in their newly assigned areas, according to Karen (Karen-2-176). Adam observes the result of applying an ascribed-success form of sense-making:

The business unit that has the most successful product line seems to have been favoured as far as taking on increasing leadership position. ... I think what's happening is, they obviously have a product that's more appealing at this point. But Organization A has a whole suite of products. Because that particular product is more appealing and sells better seems to have been the justification to put those folks in more sort of decision-making roles. ... I mean, there is something to that logic, but [chuckles] sometimes it seems a little bit cavalier way of making decisions. (Adam-2-2/8)

Indeterminacy of Initiative

Although such observations among the members might lead to morale-impairing cynicism, one generally cannot completely suppress individual initiative and motivation, especially when it might reflect well on the individual. Adam describes taking initiative when he recognizes an opportunity that has not been identified in the official plan:

When we recognize an opportunity ... we look for executives that might be stakeholders in that, usually up the chain of command. I think that's probably the main way to make yourself known, and you know, somehow demonstrate that you're contributing, that you're aware of the problems. (Adam-1-90)

Taking business initiative, that Adam frames as a "survival tactic," nevertheless requires that the action must be sanctioned by a more senior individual in the hierarchy "up the chain of command." In contrast, Karen often acts autonomously on opportunities she sees. There are functionally derived positions in the company charged with the nominal responsibility to perform tasks similar to those Karen has taken up. However, she describes the qualitative difference between one of her roles, and that of others who perform what might at first appear to be a similar function:

These business customers ask really hard technical questions as part of their buying process, and they put out these really ugly R[equest] F[or] P[roposal]s, with many, many detailed technical questions. Here is where my role differs from other organizations who are either charged with developing product collateral, or developing technical architectures and designs, or just answering RFPs. I take the questions and answers [that I provide] and turn them into RFP boilerplate material so the entire sales force can benefit by this work. (Karen-1-1)

Karen autonomously identifies the need for this particular RFP coordination effort that is perceptible only in a larger perspective. Her effort might not be strictly justifiable, otherwise it would have been previously defined as part of another department's responsibility. Yet her initially unofficial contributions have proven to be of tremendous value over the years, primarily because of Karen's sensibility, broad knowledge, and self-directed performance in that role as it relates to the various diverse constituencies with whom she is involved. In another, more explicit example of her felt autonomy,

...I reached out to [the technical protocol expert], and he had suggested that I could help communicate the message. And he said, maybe you ought to check with [your boss], and my first thought was, well why would I want to check with [my boss]? I probably haven't had a manager who's been involved in my work since 2003. Why would I get permission to do work? So, mostly, I feel like I know the invisible boundaries for how far I can go. And I just sort of have a sense of how far I can stretch in the ether. (Karen-1-163)

To the best of Karen's knowledge, her apparent autonomy and the resultant breadth of independent initiatives she has undertaken over the years are relatively anomalous compared to other Organization A employees. In several private correspondences subsequent to the research conversations, Karen reports feeling a strong relational connection to the organization despite feeling a lack of authentic reciprocation on the organization's part³¹. Indeed, the other participants unanimously report that Organization A considers its employees in a strictly instrumental context. When asked to reflect on whether the organization cares about its people, Adam responds: "I don't know if it's really genuine, and the caring, it's a little bit cold to the extent to which you can help your supervisor" (Adam-2-50). In short, Adam suggests that the organization's attitude is, "employment at will, and we own you. You do what you need to get done to keep the company going" (Adam-2-70).

Such instrumentality is perhaps best captured in Robert's description of promotion through the technical ranks. To be promoted to a higher level in the technical ladder requires appropriate academic qualification, sufficient years of experience and demonstrated consistent contribution. "But unless there is a need for the business that requires that level of competence, it's just not an automatic" (Robert-1-35). The reasoning is that there is an expectation of a greater contribution if someone is promoted to a higher level. However, if there is not a deemed business need for the greater contribution, there is no promotion.

If one subscribes to the notion of paying a person for the imputed value of their contribution to the organization³², the logic behind Organization A's compensation strategy may seem reasonable at first. Nonetheless, it conveys a significantly instrumental – almost

³¹ For example, Karen recently celebrated her 40th anniversary with Organization A (and precursor companies). She was asked to select a present from a catalogue, and received a mass-printed certificate. Although she appreciated the acknowledgement of her length of service, she ruefully recalls how her 20th and 25th anniversaries were commemorated with certificates "which were classy things done on cream-colored parchment or some other quality paper, personally signed by the president of [Organization A]. Those were elegant things. The certificate now is loud and garish, like a brochure" (Personal correspondence, January 10, 2010).

³² As opposed to alternative compensation schemes such as paying "market value," equal pay for all workers, or self-determined compensation as in the example of Semco (Semler, 1993).

mechanistic – view of a person. However, it equally assumes that a person who acquires a higher level of competence through experience or additional education would work below their theoretical potential unless that supposed business need materializes, after which the person would somehow increase their level of “production.” In essence, the BAH organization casts knowledge workers into the classic, Tayloristic frame of “soldiering” assuming that the “indeterminacy of labour problem³³” applies equally to so-called knowledge workers.

Counting on Quality

Retrieving further aspects of its Industrial Age, factory-oriented heritage, the BAH organization feels compelled to quantitatively track its production – presuming *intangible* production can or should be quantified – among the knowledge workers that comprise Organization A’s personnel. In order to comply with the discipline and control of the Accomplishments, Deliverables, and Hard Deadlines (ADHD) system, Karen expends a significant amount of effort accounting for her time and entering it into a system that cannot possibly capture the complexity of knowledge-work productivity.

The [ADHD] system is clearly designed for a factory mentality, a factory approach. You did what, how many times, and what’s your goal for how many more times. And so as soon as the edict happened that we had to use ADHD, I quickly observed that I was going to have to have things to put in there that I could quantify. So I count how many times I work on executive projects. I count how many times I give speeches. I count how many times I update any document I post on the corporate sales website. I count everything. (Karen-1-69)

The BAH coordinating construct of functional decomposition theoretically presumes high-level organizational “thinkers” have already established that doing so-many of a particular sort of activity will ultimately lead to the organization accomplishing its objectives, goals, and desired outcomes. The individual accomplishing and counting his or her decomposed tasks will thus enable the organization to accomplish its ultimate purpose.

What the system cannot capture are the qualitative aspects or business effects of any of these contributions³⁴. ADHD places explicit importance on those items that can be quantified, potentially reducing an individual’s personal incentive to undertake activities that are, *de facto*, crucial to the success of the organization, but can be neither derived via functional decomposition, nor quantified. As Karen observes, “there’s nothing that gives real

³³ The “indeterminacy of labour problem” is a key component of Labour Process Theory (Braverman, 1974). It suggests that the performance and production of the entire organization is contingent of the productivity of the slowest worker, since industrial processes are linearly connected, as in a factory assembly line. For knowledge workers, Sewell (2005) suggests that the indeterminacy factor is reversed: knowledge productivity proceeds at the pace of the “smartest” worker, since all others could potentially benefit from that person’s expertise, once shared.

³⁴ Since the research conversations were conducted, the ADHD system has been modified to accommodate a limited form of qualitative goal tracking. However, its focus remains on what individuals deliver as contributions to the organization’s deterministically connected, top-down, fractioned objectives.

rational guidance on how knowledge workers should cope with this thing. ... How do I try and describe what I do in a widget manner?" (Karen-1-85).

Organization A's almost exclusive focus on that which can be quantified means it must develop measurements of accomplishments accordingly, much like Organization M. However, such metrics are not able to assess the quality of the accomplishment or judge its effect in other than the most rudimentary, deterministic fashion. Conversely, those projects that may be deemed strategically important, for instance, but cannot be moulded into a quantitative box for evaluation, are effectively ignored.

Roxanne, for example, reports that there is no specific performance reporting of her project (Roxanne-1-55). Presumably, participants' individual activities are accounted for in the overall ADHD system, respectively by the participants' home departments. However, there is no ability to measure "contribution to the business" since this project works in anticipation of long-term, future needs—it cannot be defined according to a functional decomposition of near-to-medium-term business objectives, and is therefore treated as an exception.

However, the organization was only able to perceive the purely instrumental aspect of producing the strategic document. Karen, who was not originally assigned to the project team,

...recognize[d] that project was so strategic and so visible, that it needed to be the best it could be. ... I think the organization knew that the project was important, but no one else in the team had the skills to polish and package it as I did. ... Project management is not the same as editing and polishing obtuse technical writing to be understandable. (Karen-1-234)

Even though the company could understand the strategic priority to accomplish the project, it had no ability to perceive the need for quality editing. Indeed, none of the quantitative reporting that the Accomplishments, Deliverables, and Hard Deadlines system facilitates would be able to represent relative quality of the work accomplished, effectiveness of the deliverables provided, or whether the results provided by the hard deadlines actually delivered what was *intended* to be accomplished. When considered together with the evaluation processes of the other distinctly BAH organization in this study, Organization M, it again raises the fascinating and crucial question: *does a BAH organization have the ability to perceive quality?*

Like Organization M, Organization A employees are partially evaluated on personal development objectives, also tracked via the ADHD system:

If you want to improve your skills, or want to become expert in a particular situation or you want to pursue a particular project, that's not otherwise identified as coming from the top down, you could also put that as something to be measured against at the end of the year, whether you met that or not. (Adam-1-68)

Robert classifies these as one among several other "quality of life objectives" – including so-called morale objectives – that are framed in terms of fostering professional growth of individuals through training and opportunities in assignments and leadership. Specific examples of these are literally counted against Robert's own objective targets as a

manager each year. As one might expect, morale objectives must first be justifiable relative to business needs. Hence, the otherwise nuanced and intangible notions of morale and quality of life, at least in Organization A's context, are bounded by the alignment of business objectives and an individual's attainment of a particular skill. Although this primarily instrumental orientation might be considered preferable to Organization M's seemingly perfunctory approach to personal development, it is indeed a supreme challenge for an organization in whose culture quantified evaluation has become so engrained, to be able to conceive of mechanisms that can accommodate criteria that are inherently qualitative and subjective.

BAH Motives

The discourse surrounding Organization A's impetus – those considerations that provide the motive force for both individuals and the organization as an entire entity – almost exclusively involve the three most common extrinsic influences: money, competition, and survival. Robert confirms that “Organization A is very driven by the financial community” (Robert-1-105). Roxanne, responding to a question of whose priorities are considered primary in making “tough decisions,” asserts, “the shareholders, of course, the people who have Organization A stock” (Roxanne, 1-125).

The ever-present influence of Wall Street is exacerbated by the prevalent discourse of industry competitiveness and an organization feeling a pressure to respond to each vagary of its customer market as a matter of corporate survival. Although meant to spur employees to ever-increasing levels of performance, such pressures seem to take their toll on productivity and morale. For example, Robert describes the evolution of the Advanced Research and Development division from originally being more oriented towards basic research to becoming focused on specific business-purposeful goals:

The decline, I think, happened over multiple years, probably over a ten year period of time or more. ... From the ARD perspective, there was high pressure, time-to-market opportunities. We gotta get to market quick with different products, and so we would get ready to meet that opportunity, whatever it takes to meet that opportunity. And then the business would change its mind, this is not working, I want to do something else completely different, and then we would rally and try to meet that thing, and then they said, nope, we're gonna try something else. (Robert-1-99)

Similarly, Roxanne speaks about having a sense of futility relative to the overall, long-term relevance of the work in which she is engaged:

I have learned that I don't have control over many things in my life, and this is one of it. We are working just toward a goal that we see and we have seen these achievements, ... but how much control I have from here— You know, I'm giving you the worst case, to be honest with you ... I have seen some other architectures, that they never made it to that point [of implementation]. So I think probably this is the way to protect myself, that if this doesn't happen, I didn't have control. (Roxanne-1-151)

She speaks about this as being “sad,” but a lesson learned from the reality of not being in control—realizing the nature and extent of the organizational limitations she faces.

In a relatively more BAH organization, there seems to be a lesser sense of being able to influence long-term outcomes, especially with respect to the lasting contribution of individual efforts. This leads to a sense of futility and long-term apathy, key factors contributing to a loss of quality and, I contend, a systemic reduction in an organization's ability to innovate.

Part of that sense of futility and fatalism comes from the experience of seeing external forces beyond one's control or influence making one's work irrelevant. Consequently, through the BAH principle of ascribed attribution, the person him- or herself becomes irrelevant:

I was part of that organization, which was at some point the best place to be, and it started to die as soon as [that particular] service is declining, and [another service] is the future. The life cycle comes to the end, and some people ... have to leave. (Roxanne-1-187)

Characteristic of BAH organizations, it seems, if there is no more need for the "office," there is no more need for the individual who happens to have been occupying that office at the time, often irrespective of that individual's talents and capabilities. Similar to the experience that Roxanne relates, such a situation nearly occurred to Karen several years previously, undoubtedly accounting for her unceasing focus on continually justifying her existence.

Despite the BAH mentality and heritage of Organization A, it is not immune to the effects of existing in a world that is becoming increasingly UCAPP. First, there is the influence of non-Western cultures on traditional, BAH mentalities. Frank reflects on his time on assignment in South Africa as a manager in an Organization A joint-venture. He describes how a relationship-oriented environment affects worker engagement:

If they perceived you just as a boss, then you have a certain type of relationship with them. But if they also perceived you as a friend, and wanting the same things that they want, then their willingness to not only work with you, but support you would increase dramatically. I think that there are people who believe that, particularly in South Africa, relationships play a much bigger role than perhaps we do here in America and the Western world. (Frank-1-88)

Second, there seems to be the beginnings of a recognition that the fragmented BAH mentality imposes its own limitations on a business's ability to thrive in the contemporary world. For example, Karen relates a new executive's message to employees that encourages breaking down bureaucratic barriers and adopting a more integral view of themselves and their work:

He told people to work across the boundaries. There's all these silos and barriers and dividing lines, and he actively encouraged people to work across those boundaries. He said, you guys [use our products and services]. What do you want? You're not only employees, you're consumers. Think about, what do you want? What would make your life better? Bring your whole self to work. Urging people to work across organizational boundaries, I thought was quite revolutionary for Organization A. (Karen-2-2)

Nevertheless, it will yet take considerable time, and a seemingly monumental effort for Organization A to truly transform so that it is more consistent with contemporary times. In the meantime, its members will increasingly feel the disparity between their lived reality within the organization, and life influences outside. Roxanne reflects this inner conflict, coping psychologically and emotionally by bringing a more humanistic attitude to her direct relationships in a manner that is decidedly UCAPP amidst Organization A's BAH environment:

That is the area where I feel I am still a human. I feel I'm not only selling my labour. I am putting some value in this. I am creating an environment, and putting some value in the job, connecting people together and get connected to people, and that is the part that I enjoy and it's very pleasant for me. ... I worked, and I secured my paycheque at the end of the month. ... But at the end of the day, when I think about the conversations that I had with people, the way the meeting went, and the way we interacted as a bunch of human beings, you know, maybe on a one-on-one basis or as a group, maybe it's psychological value. I feel it has some values for me personally. The other person at the end of the conversation or the interaction may have received the same kind of value. (Roxanne-2-58)

A Conversation with Nishida: The Destination

“People always rushing, forwards and backwards.” The master grimaced at the crowds scurrying beyond the *dojo* window in the blustery autumn weather. “If the ones running forwards exchanged destination with the ones running backwards, each would be precisely where they would want to be. Then, no rushing.”

“But even if they did so today,” I begin, “there would still be a need for them to end up somewhere else at some time—perhaps tomorrow.”

“Then perhaps it is not the destination in which they are so interested,” muses Nishida, cocking one eyebrow in my direction. By now, I know that look. I take a deep breath, preparing to be wrong, no matter what I say.

“Each destination has a purpose, a reason for someone to travel there.” I explain. “They could be heading to the shop to buy goods for the evening meal. Or to the library to obtain a volume for study. They might be meeting with a friend or a lover, or even a teacher.”

“Would that the purpose be so compelling that its reason could hold them,” responds Nishida. “But reason cannot, so purpose is not.” He turns slightly away, as if to stare out the window once again. His eyes, however, remain fixed on me, as I puzzle this latest conundrum.

“I agree. The purpose of the destination is temporary, serving only until the transient need is fulfilled. There is purpose in the travel itself, for were it not for the travel, the needs would remain unmet, despite the purpose being present at the destination.” There, I thought. That should be a sufficient koan-like response.

“So you say that the purpose of the travel is the purpose of the destination, that one fulfills the other.”

“Yes, *sensei*.”

“Yet a moment ago, we decided that the purpose is not compelling. So no reason to travel, but travel they still do.” The old man appears to be quite satisfied in tying me in mental knots.

“Then there is no purpose to any of it!” I blurt out.

“The first sensible thing you have said all afternoon,” replies Nishida, quite calmly. “These rushing people give far more of themselves in travelling than they do being present at their destination because the purpose is indeed quite irrelevant. They will be as they become; purposes will always present themselves accordingly. But it is the voyage itself that compels, that produces the energy of transformation. Thus, to understand their voyage is to better understand their *reason* which, of course, is an entirely other matter.”

Present Transitions: Organization F and Unit 7

Organization F: Espoused Perception vs. In-use Reality in UCaPP and BAH Transitions

Organization F did not intend to be in the business in which it now finds itself.

The company was a design firm. They found that they were having a really difficult time [doing administrative functions] ... so they decided to put together our own little internal tool that can do this. ... It reached a point that they realized, this little tool we've got here, this is something special. I think there's a lot of people out there that could really use this. (Aaron-1-25)

Although some might call it idealistic, Aaron expresses the original essence of Organization F's culture with respect to economic objectives, and the relationship between work and life:

Profits have never been what anybody's been in this for. The money is just there to remain sustainable because we all truly like and enjoy what we're doing, and like working with each other, and it sounds like a lot of crap, but, you know, we're all kind of these people where work is just part of life. (Aaron-1-25)

It's almost kind of a European thing, we're not living to work, we're working to live. ... Work is important, and everyone's got to care about what they're doing, but life comes first. (Aaron-1-31)

During our first conversation, Jeff describes the early stages of the entrepreneurship as being "like family," and as it grows employees are, "all buddy, buddy, and that's the way it's still now, maybe not as much to the full extent, but pretty much everyone here's like friends" (Jeff-1-51). He also notes the workflow and managerial delegation processes, such as they are: "They're not like bosses. They're not going to say, Jeff do this. Jeff do that. I just knew what had to be done" (Jeff-1-51). These analogies – comparing the business environment to being with family and friends, and Jeff just knowing "what had to be done" – are characteristic of a very different type of organizational behaviour than exhibited by the two, previous BAH organizations.

Leading a New Organizational Culture

Matt, the CEO, confirms Jeff and Aaron's impressions by describing the founding culture of the organization, a culture that relies on maintaining the "value set" and "retaining the intimacy ... [as] an opportunity and a challenge, and to me that's energizing" (Matt-1-71):

We have sort of a culture of fostering trust, and people rely on each other. And part of fostering trust is in trusting people, giving them responsibility. So yeah, as quick as we can, if we find someone who has an area of expertise, we try to let them run with that. ... [I] do what I can to get out of the way, and get the rest of the organization out of the way, so that those people can pull in that direction. ... It rubs off on the organization, and it all comes

together, fits together, so long as people are headed in the right direction.
(Matt-1-95)

Matt describes his role as leader of the organization, expressing the espoused theory of the organization's leadership model:

My role is to set the course. ... I basically try to be responsible for getting nothing done, but helping to facilitate other people getting what they need done in as ideal a fashion as possible, ... generally making sure that their activities are aligned with those of the organization as a whole. (Matt-1-7)

He subsequently self-ascribes the particular leadership attributes he deems to be strategically crucial to success as an entrepreneur:

I'm the sort of person who will see things, or know things for how things are going to be. Where they're headed. I tend to live six months down the road, but if not further, in my head. And the things that are concerning me today are the things that are going to be issues in six months...

At the end of the day, I can probably push through any decision I like, but I like to make sure that people understand it, that I've gotten their feedback, because I'm often not spot on, or there's a better way to look at things, so [I] take counsel from those around me inside and outside the organization, and trying to refine and clarify my vision of things and where things should go.
(Matt-1-11)

Matt claims that he encourages an organizational culture in which "difference is a core value at Organization F. I think that just being able to disagree at any time lets people assert themselves as individuals, and they feel heard, and they feel like it's a trusting environment" (Matt-1-123). He concludes his description of the espoused leadership model in terms that are quite contemporary³⁵ in their reference to collaborative contributions of ideas to create a shared vision and sense of purpose:

I like to think of Organization F as a relatively organic organization, where there's a series of small insights that lead one to a path, and then, more insights are layered on top of that, and I don't know if consensus is the right word, but people work towards a more shared vision of things, and you choose to execute on something. (Matt-1-13)

Aaron's description of the ideal way to grow the organization captures the spirit of autonomy and collaborative coordination that seems to characterize Organization F as a UCAPP organization, at least initially:

Well I would like to think that as long as you just kept all of your people in small, relatively coherent units with very well-defined responsibilities, and let

³⁵ See, for example, Maccoby and Heckscher (2006), who frame leadership in terms of collaborative community, and Schrieber and Carley (2006), who speak to participative leadership as a means to increase social capital among all members, enabling more effective adaptability.

them sort of self-organize, and let them come up with their own directions and own solutions to their own problems, and have one leader within that group who got to choose the members of that group with the blessings of the other members of the [larger] group. Because that's basically the way it works here. ... That's to maintain the really close dynamic. (Aaron-1-43)

Jeff agrees that this is the best way to foster mutual trust throughout the organization as it expands:

If you've screened and hired the right person, I would trust them, like, this guy is my friend. ... It's less realistic in terms of scalability that you know all hundred people [in a future organization]. ... It might not be scalable in the future, but that's the way I would like to do things. ... Generally that's how the culture is now. (Jeff-1-315).

In describing the hiring of the new marketing manager, Matt emphasizes the importance of beginning the integration and cultural socialization processes as part of the hiring process.

We spent a lot of time and energy investing in ... setting expectations, listening to, understanding really some of the emotional concerns around stuff. ... They knew this person. They've been exposed to this person. They did work with this person, so it wasn't like a, just drop somebody in and just deal with it. There were relationships that existed before. There were positive experiences. We tried to nurture those kinds of things. (Matt-1-103)

In these comments, Aaron, Jeff, and Matt touch on a key issue that may differentiate BAH and UCAPP organizations: creating and fostering trust. In particular, they each identify the importance of incorporating mechanisms that socialize the entire organization for strong trust when introducing new members—processes that may obviate, or at least lessen the need for, traditional mechanisms of control.

As discussed in the first chapter, among the characteristic aspects of a more-UCAPP organization are connection and collaboration. It thus makes sense to create those circumstances from the very beginning of developing the relationship between the potential new member and the organization as a whole. When a new member joins an organization, there is often the impetus to perform, to produce, to prove oneself relative to task and completion of objectives. This traditional personal impetus, the drive-to-action, so to speak, naturally lends itself to instrumentality and interactions that are more transactional in nature. What better time is there than during an extended hiring process to focus on creating strong relationships with the new member and conveying the sense of the organizational culture? Encouraging cultural integration from first contact, as it were, seems to be an optimal way to facilitate a sustainable UCAPP environment as the organization grows. However, there are other, conflicting influences that might impede sustaining a culture that Matt might have underestimated: “For me, retaining that intimacy is *just* a challenge” (Matt-1-71; emphasis added).

The Cultural Challenges of Becoming a Small Company

As the organization expands, Aaron perceives the pressure of a presumed need to become isomorphic with conventional, corporate organizations (See DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Hinings, 2003). Given that the organization's founding culture seems to be based on creating strong relationships of trust, he reflects on its seemingly inevitable demise:

We know full well that won't be a sustainable culture as we continue to grow, because, obviously, every time you add a person to the organization, the number of relationships within that organization, they increase exponentially, you know, and so as we continue to add more and more people, we recognize that's not going to be possible. (Aaron-1-31)

Jeff confirms Aaron's observation of a gradual transition to a more BAH-like structure, seeing clear distinctions among individuals performing separate functional responsibilities: "I can see a distinction between marketing now and development and support. I can imagine in the future maybe it will be on a different floor or a different department, and I can see communications being more difficult" (Jeff-1-115). As the organization seems to be passing the proverbial knee in the organizational growth curve (at twelve people), it is becoming more formal, structured and fragmented, perhaps to be "a lot more scalable' relative to future growth.

The issue might not be scalability *per se*, but rather a received conception of *how* an organization scales, responding to the demands of internal growth through assigned division of labour, separation of supervisory and direct task responsibilities, and instituting consistent procedures and processes throughout the organization—in other words, enacting bureaucracy. Larry Greiner (1972/1998), for instance, posits that there is a certain inevitable evolution of phases of stable and steady organizational growth, each phase ending with a characteristic crisis and "revolution" that heralds the next phase³⁶. Such a stepwise model is consistent with the contingency theories and structural typology models that I described in the earlier section on "the instrumental, institutional, and managerialist 20th century"—the paradigmatic environment from which Greiner's evolution model emerged. As we will see with more-UCaPP organizations, changing the notion of *what it means to scale* changes the corresponding conception of how an organization responds to that growth.

Jeff confirms that the perceived need to adopt a more formal, BAH structure in response to growth demands was based on outside advice: "The advisor worked for one of the big companies. She's now a consultant. And basically when we were growing she whipped us into shape. Like defining roles and creating, like, persons we're really missing" (Jeff-1-245). He frames the change from a relatively *ad hoc* collaborative arrangement that is consistent with UCaPP behaviours, to a more formal, BAH structure—what Jeff refers to as an inevitable, "necessary evil":

³⁶ According to Greiner, a young, entrepreneurial organization evolves through "creativity" until it faces a crisis of leadership; subsequent evolution through a phase of explicit "direction" ends with a crisis of autonomy; a phase of "delegation" ends with a crisis of control; this leads to a phase of "coordination" that results in a crisis of "red tape"; ending with an organization that finds its stability in collaboration. Greiner notes that the solution to a previous phase's crises itself becomes problematic at a certain future time as the organization grows.

I notice things are changing and these changes have to occur ... I understand they're for the better. It's like changing diapers to using the potty. That's the norm, and that's what we, from her experience is what we should do. (Jeff-1-253)

Knowing the theme of my research investigation, a number of colleagues have personally shared their own experiences of participating in very small organizations through a period of growth. Based on many of these shared anecdotes, among many start-up and grassroots organizations, and certainly consistent with Organization F's experiences, a small and new organization often tends to naturally adopt impetus and coordination mechanisms that are more collective and equitable, based on collaboration, consensus, and lack of status, class and hierarchical privilege³⁷. In the absence of an externally imposed structure to the contrary, it is not unreasonable to conclude that these mechanisms that are consistent with more-UCaPP behaviours are more consistent with naturally occurring, humanistic interpersonal dynamics. In contrast, the more-BAH structure that is considered "the norm" is a socialized, learned response, but arguably not a "natural" way of organizing. Aaron observes:

As you move to this kind of heavy, over-organized structure that I feel we're gravitating towards, you're forgetting these people are people. You're forgetting that they have different strengths, different things that they're good at, and different desires. You're just trying to take people and put them into this totally unnatural structure. (Aaron-1-93).

Although Matt and Jeff claim to want to preserve the small-organization, UCaPP-like culture, the pressure towards organizational isomorphism with larger organizations seems to be compelling. Aaron muses,

...I don't know that it's being implemented to get power, so much as it's just being implemented because "that's just the way you do things when you grow," you know? And so, I don't know that maintaining our kind of unique organizational structure was ever in the cards. (Aaron-1-101)

Jeff, almost in denial about the seemingly inexorable pressure to change, explains:

It's kind of like a military operation where you have soldiers who are not organized, there's no command structure, to now there's a command structure, and by doing so we can all be more productive. ... So the hierarchy is there on paper, but it doesn't really exist in our company. (Jeff-1-259)

Within nine months of this conversation, the emergent hierarchy "on paper" is actualized and explicit. At the time of the first Organization F conversations, there was almost no bureaucracy but there was most certainly a traditional hierarchy of authority. One would expect that the hierarchy would likely crystallize and be made explicit over a relatively short time, exemplified by the emergence of administrative procedures and processes (that can be rationalized and justified in terms of efficiency), leading to more bureaucratic

³⁷ See also Leung (2003) and Matherne (2007) for analyses on how this situation changes as an organization grows out of its start-up phase.

structures and practices throughout the organization. This is, indeed, what transpired over the ensuing nine months to the second set of conversations.

For a variety of reasons and justifications – including a felt pressure towards organizational isomorphism, the socialization of both legitimate and thought leaders in the organization to traditional control structures, and an appeal to efficiency and productivity – Organization F transitioned from more-UCaPP behaviours in its entrepreneurial phase to more-BAH behaviours. Part of the motivation may be Organization F’s self-identification as a legitimate, “small company,” having matured and eschewed the label of start-up. Over the nine months between the first and second conversations, Aaron laments:

I do feel like we’ve gone backwards a lot from that new school sort of approach, to, in a lot of respects, we may as well be an industrial era company at this point. We’re a staff of just over twenty, and about one-third of the staff is in management. (Aaron-2-4)

All new employees in Organization F are oriented by beginning in support. For an organization that espouses the primary importance of customer service throughout its business, such a placement as a mandatory initial assignment accomplishes the objective of connecting every employee directly to the organization’s customers. “It’s based on belief that, if you’re going to be working on the product, you need to have an intimate understanding of our customers and their needs, and their pain points” (Matt-1-41).

It may appear as slightly odd that a novice who would likely have never had occasion to use Organization F’s application would be asked to provide support to customers seeking assistance with the application. One might be moved to ask whether this is truly indicative of the espoused theory of customer focus, or whether it simply fulfils the organization’s instrumental interest by serving up the customers as training fodder for new employees. This duality potentially offers opposite readings of the alignment between espoused and in-use theories relative to customers and service. However, if one considers the *intended organizational effect*, this is indeed an appropriate strategy. Organization F intends to empathize with the challenges of small business owners, its target market. Having every employee speak directly with customers over a period of time is important, so that everyone in the organization can contextualize their eventual “real” work and role in that visceral experience.

In addition to reinforcing organizational values of customer service, everyone answering support calls creates the impression of levelling the relative power and status hierarchy, as front-line call answering is often equated to lower status in many organizations. During the first conversation, Aaron specifically mentions that those who take support calls are often able to effect remedial application changes very quickly—everyone is empowered to help customers. These dynamics are consistent with UCaPP behaviours; specifically, everyone knowing what to do so that organizational impetus is emergent, yet coherent and consistent towards common effect.

In contrast, by the time of the second conversation nine months later, customer support has evolved to become more BAH in its realization. The discourse of “everyone does support” as a matter of organizational culture gives way to more “practical,” expedient, and instrumental considerations:

Everyone does support, and there is a tier of dedicated support people who train any new employee, and give them a lot of information on how to use

the ticketing system [which administratively mediates between the ‘dedicated support people’ and the developers who were previously empowered to directly fix problems]. And we hired our first dedicated support person, ‘Faith,’ and we’re going to be hiring a few more people. Even though everyone is still going to do support, but they’re going to be like the experts, specialists in support. (Jeff-2-97)

With a relatively lower status, functionally decomposed support group, there is far less direct empowerment of individuals to fix problems in favour of a mediating administrative, “ticketing system,” and less frequent direct involvement of more senior organization members.

Privileged Specialists

As the organization grows, Matt specifically identifies the value of role specialization in task focus: “I can tell you that organizations as they grow, they need some more specialization, they need some more role definition. It’s been my experience to just make things clearer and smoother for everybody” (Matt-1-77). This, according to Matt, becomes especially important to manage organizational changes imposed by growth in the business.

Specialization in function and the apparent emergence of a hierarchical bureaucracy seem to have resulted in diminishing coordination among the newly emerging specialist departments.

I think that they [marketing] are largely out of sync now with what happens in the rest of the company. I think that the rest of the company has no idea of what marketing does, and I think that marketing largely has no idea of what the company does. ... They’re just kind of out of sync with what it is that we do here, and they’re out there selling an absolutely incredible product that doesn’t really exist. ... There’s not a whole lot of communication between, you know, the different parts: our development team and our support team, and our marketing team, and those employees that don’t really have a team, so we kind of call them, like operations. (Aaron-2-78/80)

As Organization F appears to have transitioned to become more BAH over this period of growth, there are two tacit assumptions demonstrated in Matt’s assertion with respect to the value and importance of role specialization, and its reification at Organization F. First, task or subject-matter specialization necessarily implies bureaucratic and hierarchical organization, essentially becoming isomorphic with traditional organizations. Bureaucratic structure, in and of itself, will necessarily accomplish the requisite internal communication and coordination functions that are enacted among the leaders of those specialized role groupings, that is, among the managers.

The second tacit assumption is that the task of management is a privileged subject matter, distinct from the technical subject matter of developing and running the application service itself. The role separation of “those who do” from “those who think” or manage is, of course, a construct that dates from the earliest conception of scientific management, and the advice of Taylor and Fayol that has informed a hundred years of management practice.

Thus, as one might expect, with the hierarchical stratification of Organization F, the senior management structure has become more formalized into a steering committee:

None of us are even privy to what happens at those steering committee meetings. There's "Lee" [CFO], ... there's "Mick" [outside consultant, who] just kind of facilitates a lot of stuff. ... I suspect that's where a lot of this, oh, this is just how you do things, originates. (Aaron-2-92)

Additionally, "Casey," the newly hired development manager, attends the steering committee meetings. Casey's hiring and inclusion as a member of the steering committee has had the effect of moving the technological decision process from being highly consultative to being exclusive and privileged within the span of nine months.

Matt acknowledges there is a hierarchy of expertise in the organization that provides legitimation for influencing decisions, and a separate hierarchy of legitimation by virtue of organizational rank.

Said another way, there are people at all levels of the organization that have outright ownership or domain expertise in various areas, and for the most part, if the decision is going to have anything to do with them, that person will be the go-to person maybe to set the course, and we listen to them. Or, we're certainly taking it into account. And then there's other, organizational higher-level decisions, that we get the feedback and then we decide within the steering committee, if that makes sense. (Matt-1-27)

In all cases, it is the *legitimation* of hierarchical position, either through knowledge-status or rank-status, that confers the value of an individual's opinion—a defining characteristic of BAH. There is, of course, a consequence on the morale of people like Aaron who were specifically attracted by the UCAPP nature of the organization's earlier incarnation:

I actually care about the results and the outcome and the health of the company, and I actually think about what I'm doing, and that's a problem, because somebody's already done the thinking for me, you know. We hire thinkers from outside to sit up top, and I'm just supposed to be a doer. (Aaron-2-48)

The nominal reason for dispensing with a more collaborative approach is its perceived lack of efficiency, weighed against the (presumed) limited amount of time available to bring features and functions to the market.

A lot of the feedback [on the collaborative approach] was great and everything was working well. So I was thinking, wow, this is really good for the product. This is a good method to work, however, it's very time-consuming. ... Is that the way we should spend more time working on these [collaborations], or maybe spend less time and get it done faster and move faster? (Jeff-1-69)

Without having a well thought-through, consensus-creating process, Organization F began to slowly move away from collaborative consensus, and more towards a hierarchical

and bureaucratic model of responsibility and decision-making, in which the CEO “comes up with” the specifications and design:

Right now we’re a growing business, we’re expanding, and we can’t really have time like that. ... I pretty much go to each person and get their opinions [on] what our CEO came up with ... and generally if they all fall into place, and everyone is kind of saying, yeah, yeah, and everyone is going in that direction, that’s great, it’s pretty much done. (Jeff-1-65)

In the second conversation with Jeff, he describes how even this process became too cumbersome. In admitting there is less participation and involvement in decisions, primarily because “the technology hasn’t caught up,” Jeff describes what appears to him to be the logical solution:

Currently, I would say that there is less democratic say, but only because we haven’t developed a system to do it better. ... [The] plan is to build a system to prioritize features, and anyone can add votes. Matt might have some infinite vote, where he can just make something go higher. (Jeff-2-65)

In fact, design decisions have become the almost exclusive realm of the steering committee, with its hierarchical status and class decision-making privilege, consistent with a more-BAH organization. Note how Jeff acknowledges the reification of Matt’s *de facto* overriding influence on decisions to be taken. Jeff confirms that this envisioned system is a way of obtaining limited input from various constituencies on design features and product direction without actually having to engage and consult with them. It implements a nominal form of the more “democratic” processes that originally existed in the start-up without requiring the CEO to cede control—an excellent example of a (somewhat dysfunctional) socio-technical³⁸ approach that would be characteristic of a more-BAH organization.

What might be called consultative processes in BAH organizations would be expected to have an instrumental, if not perfunctory, quality to them. They equate merely giving participants a chance to speak, with participants truly being heard, or better yet, actively participating in a collaborative, consensus-building process. It is telling that Jeff describes what is perhaps a quintessentially bureaucracy-like response to a disagreement:

I think there is one person who disagreed with something wholeheartedly. Take it away. We shouldn’t do this. And I made sure that I spoke to him, got his opinion. I wrote them down and made sure [to tell the] CEO, this person didn’t like it for these reasons. As long as he understands them. Are we going to do anything about it? Like, maybe. Or, like no, but at least have them heard, on the record, and *included on a piece of paper*. (Jeff-1-87; emphasis added)

³⁸ The proposed voting system crosses an organizational technical subsystem with the social system of nominal collaboration in order to achieve a potentially optimal balance between the technical and human requirements of the organization. The fact that its proposed implementation is such that the CEO has an infinite override is a not-well-veiled instantiation of BAH leader control under the guise of a form of more participatory organizational democracy.

From the inception of the organization, and at the time of the first conversations, there had been a culture not only of “everyone doing support” and taking trouble calls from customers, but also of empowering the front line people to fix problems. One might easily explain this apparent empowerment in terms of many of the “support” personnel being, in fact, the developers. Nonetheless, there was a casual leeway permitted throughout the organization that enabled discretionary and empowered autonomy among those employees with the appropriate technical skills to indeed fix problems.

By the time of the second conversation, nine months after the first, the reported differences in experience between Aaron and Jeff are remarkable. Jeff seemed reluctant to admit directly that the organization’s renewed emphasis on “growth, growth, growth” seems to have shifted priorities from responding to customer-reported problems to adding new features. His cautious account nevertheless tends to corroborate Aaron’s assertions:

I do not feel remotely empowered to resolve customer issues anymore, whereas there was a time that I did. I feel that as we’ve added more resources, they’ve become a lot more difficult to harness, because we’ve added a whole lot more bureaucracy and red tape, and so whereas before I was okay with the fact that we sometimes couldn’t fix things because we just didn’t have time or the ability. Now I feel like, we *choose* not to improve the quality of what it is that we’re doing and, so I don’t really feel empowered to do my job. ... I’m not really satisfied with working for that sort of organization, where we’re now putting growth ahead of quality. (Aaron-2-6)

The inconsistency in perception between Jeff and Aaron is not necessarily surprising, since Jeff is vested in his sense-making of the organization as a collaborative, participatory family, and would tend to minimize or rationalize any evidence that is inconsistent with that sense-making (Argyris, 1994; Weick, 1995). Aaron, on the other hand, had recently tendered his resignation just prior to the second conversation; as such, he had far less vested in what remained of the organization’s espoused theory.

Questioning Questioning

Being able to assimilate diverse opinions, and resolving conflicts by promoting and enacting processes of dialogue (Bohm, Factor, & Garrett, 1991), polarity management (Johnson, 1992), and integrative thinking among diametric options (Martin, 2007) are characteristics that tend to mitigate the hegemonic effects – culturally coerced groupthink – that often colonize the culture of BAH organizations. An indication of how effective that mitigation may be – not to mention how well the organization is able to make sense of its environment – lies in how well the organization fosters a culture in which inquiry is welcomed and valued as reflective practice. Unfortunately, to the BAH-minded organization, inquiry often appears as dissent, or worse, as personal threat:

I’ve been sat down by the CEO a couple of times about my “attitude,” because I’m too negative and critical, and I’ve been asked if I value criticism, or if I’m willing to shelve it for the good of the organization, and that question right there was kind of when it dawned upon me that I was in a place that had its priorities wrong... (Aaron-2-8)

As Organization F moves away from its entrepreneurial, UCAPP personality in favour of more BAH-like behaviours, Aaron describes how inquiry became increasingly shunned, and the consequences of that transition:

There's not enough value placed on—I don't even think it's criticism. I think it's just introspection, asking questions. ... In this organization, I have often stood alone in asking questions in the past. And, if nobody asks questions, the company gropes about blindly and makes mistakes, because nobody's thinking about the reasons behind what we're doing. And a lot of the questions that I ask are, why are we doing this? Is it just because this is what we see others do? Have we thought about whether it actually makes sense? (Aaron-2-18)

As was clearly seen in Organization M, a BAH organization will often circumvent the possibility of self-questioning by appealing to supposedly objective metrics that seem to confirm success, without actually measuring the intended effects. Organization F primarily values customer service as a key element of its organizational identity. According to Aaron, there is a degree of self-deception occurring as the organization sets its metric to ensure reporting of excellent customer service:

It's said that the only question that you need to ask your customers to gauge their true end satisfaction is, on a scale of one to ten, how likely are you to recommend us to a friend or colleague. And if the answer is nine or ten, it's a yes. Anything else is a no. Well, when we asked our customers that question, did we give them a scale of one to ten? No. We gave them a yes or no. And so, 99% of them said yes. If I were to guess, none of those people are actually referring friends. In fact, if we look at our numbers, none of those people are actually referring friends. So it's kind of a meaningless statistic that we've used to puff out our chests and feel good about ourselves. And I think everybody here is genuinely convinced that every one of our customers is ecstatic and everyone who checks out the software loves it, and everyone who doesn't, just doesn't get it. (Aaron-2-68)

As Aaron previously mentioned, Matt shepherds ideas through a steering committee that helps provide strategic and tactical guidance in his decision-making process. Rather than authentically seeking collaboration in decision-making, Matt's approach seems to be a way of bridging an espoused collaborative and consultative process with an in-use theory that reflects his self-identified role of "setting the course" (Matt-1-7). He admits that he could "probably push through any decision I like, but I like to make sure that people understand it" (Matt-1-11). As such, difference is invited – even valued – but as a way of enabling Matt to discover dissenting opinions in order to effectively neutralize them with a minimum of conflict. In the following excerpt, note how he does not mention attempting to understand and appreciate the source of the dissenting opinion; rather his interest seems to be more consistent with pushing through his ideas, albeit softly:

In other cases, there will be disagreement. If I really believe in [my idea], and something needs to be done, then I'll invest time in that individual to help describe to them ... diving deeper into this, so they really understand where I'm coming from, and usually once they do that, ... *once they get into the set of*

shoes I need them to be in, it's usually a lot easier to convince them that, in fact, this is what we need to do" (Matt-1-21; emphasis added)

From both Aaron and Jeff's descriptions of their experiences during their first conversations, I have little doubt that the early years of the start-up organization saw little difference between the espoused and in-use theories of leadership and impetus in Organization F. They both describe the organization as highly participatory, with considerable, lively engagement among all the employees, especially with respect to debating the future of the organization's offerings. However, as the organization transitioned from its UCAPP origins to becoming a self-described small company, adopting many BAH behaviours in the process, the leadership model seemed to transition as well.

Aaron's subsequent experience – and to a lesser extent, Jeff's³⁹ – of the in-use leadership model in Organization F is, to paraphrase King Louis XIV, *l'organisation, c'est moi!* "It was almost just more like it's very tribal, I guess. He's the chief of the tribe. You know, everybody has input. Everybody has autonomy, but if he says the word, that's the word" (Aaron-1-115). During the second conversation, Aaron is even more explicit about what he perceives as a more autocratic leadership practice:

It took me a while to see it, but this is our CEO's company. There are a lot of euphemisms to suggest otherwise. ... I suspect that he thinks he is hiring people to do things exactly the way that he would do them. I certainly have enough [experience] to know that it is usually very important to let your people do things their own way, and it may not be exactly the way you would have done them, but that does not make it wrong. And it makes me feel like what I do is not particularly valuable. (Aaron-2-24)

I've had [Matt] sit me down and ask me if I thought I could do what he did. And if I'd answered yes, I wouldn't have had a job anymore. [chuckles] But that, in and of itself, illustrates just how autocratic it is. The organization has not been set up as a living, breathing organism. It has been set up as an extension of *one* living, breathing organism. (Aaron-2-28)

Matt's use of the word, "convincing," and Aaron's experiences in expressing dissent, may be crucial distinguishing factors in placing Organization F along the BAH-UCAPP spectrum, and suggesting the direction of its transition. In the more-BAH organizations, decisions made by those with legitimate power, relatively higher in the hierarchy, can be disseminated and enforced throughout the organization with little need to "convince" other organizational members of their necessity or propriety. Coercive influence is sufficient to ensure compliance, as is the experience in Organization A and, aside from the employment protection provided by the union grievance procedure (Stan-1-67), Organization M.

³⁹ In several instances, Jeff uses a military metaphor to express these ideas; for instance: "I feel it could be like a military structure where ... for example, Matt said to me, do this, and I didn't agree with it, and I let him know that I don't agree with this for so-and-so reason. ... Even though I don't necessarily agree, as long as he understood those things, I'm going to carry out those words, whatever" (Jeff-1-87).

On the other hand, as we will see in the next two organizations, decisions in a more-UCaPP organizational context that are not unanimous will cycle back through the collaborative decision-making process for reconsideration if they turn out to be problematic. Where there is legitimate power via a nominal hierarchy in a more-UCaPP organization, those higher in the legitimating hierarchy must make a specific effort to ensure that they are honestly listening to, and truly considering, opinions and situation analyses that differ from their own. Techniques that specifically invite and integrate diverse contexts, drawn from the contemporary organization development repertoire and mentioned earlier, take on an increased importance in a UCaPP environment to ensure that the legitimate leader is honestly and authentically consulting, not merely convincing.

Organization F is an organization that seems to espouse UCaPP principles but is struggling with BAH isomorphism as it grows. Matt's approach to convincing someone of the correctness of his vision and ambitions might be a sign of in-use theory separating from espoused theory in what is nominally collaborative decision making, but in fact is the legitimate leader increasingly exerting his will—even if he honestly believes otherwise. “The business continues to grow. It will be a challenge to retain [our culture] and to continue to deepen it, because the status quo is not acceptable, in my opinion” (Matt-1-71). One is left to wonder whether the “status quo” to which he refers as being “not acceptable” is the quickly vanishing culture of the UCaPP start-up.

Unit 7: The Game of Organizational Culture Change

Unit 7 began its corporate life as an extremely BAH organization, enacting some of the worst dysfunctions of that organizational form:

In October 1996, a group of five partners ... found[ed] LLKFB, an independent direct marketing agency. ... Over the next four years, LLKFB attracted an impressive roster of clients and exhibited steady revenue growth. In November 2000, LLKFB was acquired by Omnicom [DAS division] for stock and a four-year earn-out⁴⁰. Along with four of the five original partners, LLKFB's eighty-five employees joined DAS. ... After a disappointing financial performance in 2001, LLKFB ... “ended 2002 with our highest revenue ever, a 110% increase over 2001, and we delivered a 46.4% profit margin before bonuses” [according to Loreen Babcock, one of the original partners. However,] “people were overworked and under constant pressure; there was little positive recognition. Our saving grace was that the quality of the work was excellent,” says Dr. Mark Spellman [then a consultant doing consumer behaviour analyses]...

“Our bottom-line focus was so stringent,” said Loreen, “that if you needed paper clips, you were asked how many you wanted ... and a single digit was always the right answer. ... Unfortunately, we had become a pretty unlikable company. As practitioners, we had become so focused on the numbers that we had lost sight of the client. ... [Our process consultant's] insight was that

⁴⁰ A financial arrangement for the acquisition of a company in which a significant amount – often 40-60% – of the purchase value of the target company is earned over a period of time based on meeting certain financial performance targets.

we had some of the best processes they had ever seen, but none of them were connected. The reason that we were disconnected was an absence of collaboration among the leaders of the firm...”

[Mark Spellman adds,] “There was a culture of fear in the agency, which showed itself at its worst as saying, ‘either fit in, or get the hell out of here.’ ... And the belief that fear was a motivator cast a cloud over even those who did not fundamentally believe that. My experience with Loreen was that she had always tried to motivate people by pride in the highest quality work and in the highest quality relationships with clients. However, her enforcement of those high standards was sometimes interpreted negatively because it occurred within a wider culture of fear.” (Maher & O’Brien, 2007, p. 2-5)

A UCaPP Leader

During my initial conversation with Loreen, she identifies how the purchase of the company by Omnicom – and especially the ensuing financial incentive of the earn-out – distracted attention, focus, and effort from what were the original goals of the organization. At the time, ironically, what is typically an effective extrinsic motivator – linking individual financial performance and compensation to one’s sense of self-worth and relative value to the organization – was actually counter-productive.

Her epiphany came with the realization that recreating relationships among people, rather than maintaining an exclusive focus on objectives, goals, and outcomes, was the key to healing the organization’s many dysfunctional aspects.

While the company needed to rebuild, a strict focus on the revenue wouldn’t have put the health back to the company. So I sought out different views on how to rebuild cultures, or to create a culture. ... The defining moments of that work were that the rules of the game really became about what would be acceptable behaviour and standards. It did lead to some revenue, the revenue goals, but the required moves of the game, and the forbidden rules that had dire consequences, [i.e., termination] had everything to do with the behaviour. (Loreen-1-27)

Loreen changed her own perception of what it means to be an organizational leader. Similar to Organization F’s CEO, Matt, Loreen understands her role to be an environmental enabler in the organization. Notably unlike Matt, Loreen does not see herself as being responsible for ensuring people are aligned:

How I perceive [my role] is the responsibility to create an environment where people feel like they can learn and prosper. So I feel that a big part of my responsibility is to help people know how to work in the environment so they can achieve those goals, they can feel good about the people they are working with, and those people are making a contribution, as are they, and those people are helping them learn as they are helping other people learn. (Loreen-1-5)

Loreen established the organizational ethos of Unit 7 that attaining objectives, achieving goals, and indeed, attaining overall business success all are emergent from the appropriate environment. This is not a surprising stance, considering that, “we didn’t have an environment to speak of, and we very much had an abrasive command and control way of running the business. There was a lot of induced fear” (Loreen-1-17). In enacting that ethos, Loreen describes how she continually and actively senses the organizational environment:

I’m often in sessions where I’m in collaboration with people, so I can observe the strengths of people and how they contribute, and that helps give me a gauge of where else they could contribute in the organization, and what challenges they would be valuable on. (Loreen-1-7)

What strikes me as noteworthy in Loreen’s reflection is how she views her role in terms of learning, of discovering individuals’ untapped potential, and of actively creating new opportunities to which individuals can contribute. This description is in stark contrast to the two organizations I identify at the BAH-end of the organizational spectrum. Additionally, in comparison to Matt, Loreen does not speak about setting the direction for the organization or coordinating (aligning) individuals’ activities or ambitions with those of the organization. Rather, she asserts,

We have a practice here of making sure that people are vested in this being a place that they want to come to and work in, and that they can grow in. ... That it’s not all about what I create for them. It’s also about how they help create it. So we’ll often invite them in to design a way of working in an area they feel would greatly enhance their experience at Unit 7. (Loreen-1-7)

As a notable departure from conventional ideas of organizational leadership that suggest individuals align their values with the espoused mandate of the organization (Bass, 1990; Kent, Crotts, & Azziz, 2001; Krishnan, 2002), for Loreen, it is important that the more senior members of the organization understand how members’ personal values are mutually aligned as a way of creating the organization’s collective values. She expresses this idea in terms of what individuals wish to accomplish *for themselves* that the Unit 7 environment can facilitate:

Part of nurturing the environment is to allow yourself to understand what the needs are of all the individuals that come into your company. Why are they here. For a lot of people, it’s a job. But the bigger question is, why are they *here* then, because they could have a job in many places. What do they want to learn? What do they want exposure to? What are their goals? What are their goals in their life, that they think they’d like Unit 7 to satisfy? It’s a good starting place for us to make sure we can meet those expectations. But that understanding of what is important for them to accomplish – goals for their life versus strictly what we need them to accomplish – is nurturing. And they will in turn pass that on to the people around them. (Loreen-1-167/170)

Like many good leaders, Loreen seeks counsel for the myriad decisions that must be made. Unlike many other leaders, she takes counsel not from a select cadre of trusted, senior advisors. Instead, she extends the notion of trusted advisors to everyone who shares a vested

interest in the success of the organization, irrespective of rank, status, or tenure. Loreen seeks out diverse opinions, not for the purpose of neutralizing dissent, but rather to prevent homogeneous thinking and the stagnation that comes from the predictability of the metaphorical echo chamber:

[You want to be] sure that you're opening up to the perspective of a variety of people who have a much different perspective than you have. So it wouldn't be uncommon for most major decisions, for me to be in a room with five to seven other people in a conversation. Sometimes they tend to be the same five to seven people, depending on the level of decision, but more and more I find myself making sure that I have a more appropriate diverse group in the room so I'm benefiting from much different ways of thinking. (Loreen-1-77)

Some of that diverse group comes from various seniority levels throughout the organization:

What's non-traditional about it is the level of contribution [more junior employees] have in almost every decision of the company. They're often amazed that they're at the table in those kinds of conversations of these kinds of decisions. I'm starting to branch out beyond the typical five to seven because it's occurring to me that pretty much I'm hearing the same thing, even from myself. So it is time to be true to a true collaborative model and be sure that we have enough diversity in the room, and so where those same five to seven people did make up that diversity for a period of time, we've become a little bit homogenous in how we think through all the decisions that have to get made on an organizational level. So now we're benefiting greatly from making sure we create that diversity with different *types* of people. (Loreen-1-81)

In gathering together an ever-changing group of advisors drawn from all ranks and all areas of the organization, Loreen accomplishes two things. First, by changing the people who are involved in senior-level decisions in the organization, more members gain exposure to a wider breadth of organizational issues and concerns. Organizational knowledge is shared widely through active engagement with live, complex issues, rather than through passive acceptance of received wisdom. Equally important, diverse contexts and perceptions contributed by diverse members encourage a type of creative disruption of organizational status quo.

They bring whole new ways of us looking at things. They'll ask a question and we'll say, gee, we've never thought about it that way. It might be somebody who joined the company two weeks ago as an account coordinator, an entry level position. They might have had an experience through a parent who has told their stories at work, or something they've learned at college, or they had an internship, or they're very well-read or connected, and they put a question on the table that completely changes the way you think about it. And that's what we're working very hard not to dismiss, is how much we can learn from anybody, versus it has to be the

same five to seven people, because they're at a certain status. These decisions are no longer driven on status. (Loreen-1-83)

Collaborating on Common Sense Leadership

Leadership embodied in an individual faces the risk of homogeneity, predictability, and routine over time: knowledge, context, insight, ability, and specific skills are necessarily limited in any one person, or indeed, in any one group comprising a leader and a management board, steering committee, or the like—especially if such exclusive participation is “driven on status.” In contrast, one can consider leadership as an emergent process that involves environmental sensing via diverse perceptual sensors. Sensing a UCAPP environment means perceiving multiple, continually evolving contexts, from which resulting decisions are measured against emergent, organizational values that represent a mutual alignment of its members' values. In addition, both the sense-making process and ensuing decisions must be open to continual scrutiny and challenge in what one could characterize as a *culture of inquiry*⁴¹:

If you're not constantly willing to doubt that you have the right answer. If you're not willing to ask yourself everyday, is there a different answer that I haven't thought about, and a lot of times that's going to require a different perspective around you. Now you may get a lot of that from someone you know consistently helps you get to new perspective. But, it was a big insight for me in the leadership team to realize at what point did that become a homogenous group. And it wasn't that we're homogenous people—we had gotten to a homogenous way of working through issues. (Loreen-1-101)

Diversity of voices, in Loreen's opinion, is the way to counter this risk. “We just started to hear the same thing. It became very predictable how we would address an issue. It became *very predictable*. And I believe that true collaboration takes that predictability out of the equation” (Loreen-1-108). Whereas bureaucratic and administrative procedures, by definition, ensure consistency and predictability that would tend to be anathema to innovation, more-UCAPP behaviours – Loreen's “true collaboration” – become the stimuli for new ideas, new insights, and innovation.

Loreen did not come to these realizations overnight. She, too, had to “unlearn” behaviours acquired during the LLKFB years. Cindy reports that Loreen transformed from a more forceful and directive approach to one that is more consistent with a culture of inquiry—a culture that seems to be a necessity in a more-UCAPP organization.

⁴¹ The term, “culture of inquiry” is widely used among those exploring education reform, the history and philosophy of science, and the so-called learning organization, among others. Several of my participants among multiple organizations use the term to suggest an organizational culture in which questioning and inquiry is specifically invited and welcomed as a means of introducing diverse standpoints, interpretation of events, and reflective analyses of both current and proposed courses of action. The concept is integral to Senge's (1990) work as the basis of organizational learning, and Bohm, Factor, and Garrett's (1991) proposal for the process of dialogue. It is explored in the context of required skills for contemporary managers by Thompson (1993) who suggests, “the twin challenges of exploding complexity and mounting diversity require us to become experts at inquiry” (p. 101).

She's really changed her way of leading by trying to lead with questions instead of by telling. Lead with questions and allow people the opportunity to think. It's a slower process, but it was very effective. Having people understand why they wanted to do what they wanted to do. Why? Why are we doing this? What's the end result you want, and then leading, beginning with the end in mind. (Cindy-1-108)

This, of course, makes sense. "True collaboration," in Unit 7's parlance, requires the type of deliberative, common understanding of contexts and meaning-making that only the authentic practice of inquiry can accomplish⁴². The ethos that Loreen encourages throughout her organization is to create authentic engagement among diverse groups of individuals. These engagements invite a sufficient range of environmental sensing to inform decisions and directions in ways that potentially discover new and innovative insights, understandings, and approaches to Unit 7's business—*predictability is "taken out of the equation."*

In involving so many individuals in what is traditionally senior-level decision-making, there is a fine line to be walked between leading-by-consensus and enabling honest engagement with the issues. Even when an organization explicitly uses consensus decision-making (as we will see with Inter Pares), decisions are not taken simply by either calling for members to give up their positions, or working to convince others to give up theirs. The key element at play in more-UCaPP organizations is a fully realized *sense-making* – as distinct from *decision-making* – process. When an appropriate common sense⁴³ can be made of a situation with respect to the totality of its environmental context, the appropriate decision for the organization becomes a shared volition to action—evident to all, if not simply "obvious."

Collaboration at Unit 7

Loreen asserts "that collaboration really has to become part of the fabric of the company and how the company works, as opposed to someone making sure that the collaboration happens" (Loreen-1-93). In draping that fabric, she draws a clear distinction between collaboration and the more commonly enacted construct, teamwork:

I think [collaboration is] a very misunderstood way of working. That if anyone were to look at that as a vernacular shift ... it's completely different from teamwork. I often will ask how we got to a strategy, how we got to the answer to the question. And they know that what I'm asking is, what is the process they used to get there? And so a typical response could be, oh we definitely collaborated—we had everyone in the room. Everyone from the team was in the room. That's a meeting. It's not a collaboration. This is also a realization of a more definitive definition of what collaboration is, it's going

⁴² Balancing inquiry and advocacy in order to reach a collaborative understanding (although not necessarily agreement) is intrinsic to the process of dialogue as described by Bohm, Factor, and Garrett (1991); see also Laiken (1997).

⁴³ I use the term *common sense* here in its original, Aristotelian connotation. The *sensus communis* was considered to be an integrative, perceptual sensibility, the meaning-making sense that unites perceptions from the five other senses to provide consolidated meaning that, in turn, enables cognition (Gregoric, 2007).

to be through experience, not through words. If I walked into a space, and I saw five people who don't work on that account routinely, and there wasn't one person driving, or judging all of the statements they were making, that to me would be a true collaboration. (Loreen-1-95)

Teamwork⁴⁴, as Loreen distinguishes that term from “collaboration,” is consistent with a primary-purposeful organization in which the overall objective is functionally decomposed, ultimately into discrete, individual tasks. Hence, every member of the team is present by virtue of what skills, capabilities, and experiences they each can contribute based on a pre-determined understanding of the team's requirements. Loreen sees that approach as limiting, if not problematic, since it often leads to stifling creativity, and precluding new ideas:

It's very typical once they start giving their ideas that we'll spend the majority of our time letting them know why that isn't possible—let me give you the history of the client. But the purpose of actually inviting people into a collaboration is, well, to use some of your words, to let us hear what we haven't been hearing. So maybe they don't have the entire history, but if we allow ourselves not to get caught up in what they don't know and listen to the contribution that they're providing, it's just a different place to live in, in terms of hearing what it is they're really saying, and how it could contribute to addressing the challenge we've just been given. (Loreen-1-99)

When one is working to a tight timeline, with a hard deadline imposed by the client, it appears efficient to adopt a just-in-time mentality in which people become involved at precisely the right time for their (instrumental) contribution, and no longer. This is, for example, a typical mode of operation for a project team, or a classic BAH model of input-process-output workflow. Loreen sees this as problematic for her organization and explains how coordinating via a collaborative, as opposed to a(n ineffective) teamwork, model proves to be more efficient in the long run:

How do you mobilize the agency *now* to address that [client] challenge? So there are times, for example, that someone's going to have a strength being at the front, helping them think through a way to approach the challenge. That may be their primary strength, and five minutes with them might set the whole thing on a course that could take half the time even of the deadline.

⁴⁴ Laiken (1994a, 1994b) distinguishes between *effective* and *ineffective* teamwork, whose behaviours correspond closely to what Loreen calls “collaboration” and “teamwork,” respectively. Many people use the two terms – collaboration and teamwork – interchangeably despite, for example, Loreen's astute observation of the discursive difference between the two. In personal conversation with Marilyn Laiken (January 11, 2010), she agrees that the vast majority of people neither practice effective teamwork, nor are able to distinguish between effective and ineffective teamwork, despite the importance of understanding and enacting that distinction to create a “high-performing team” (1994a). Because several of my participants draw that distinction using the differentiating language of teamwork vs. collaboration, and because it has also been used in the cited literature (Adler & Heckscher, 2006), I have chosen to use that terminology throughout this thesis to distinguish a BAH model of purposefully – if sometimes only nominally – working together (teamwork) from a UCAPP form of consensus-based cooperation, often with an emergent purpose (collaboration).

Because that's also going to give insight into who should be at the table, when should they be at the table. They've already got a running start on the best way to approach it. Now, unfortunately, that person may not be brought in until it's time to approve something, which is the exact wrong time to get that person involved, because they're probably not going to agree. (Loreen-1-121)

By involving more diverse people in various initiatives, collaborative thinking is explicitly encouraged as an organizational value. Roger observes the business benefits in hearing from unexpected individuals throughout the organization:

You kind of look at that person a little bit differently. Okay, maybe he's just an account coordinator [one of the lowest ranks in the agency]. There's some good processes going on there. How can we tap that now for other pieces of the business? So, it helps bring people in a room that normally we don't hear from. ... It allows people to contribute that don't normally contribute. ... It takes all silos out of the agency. (Roger-2-16)

Roger identifies one of the key elements that enables complexity and emergence in organizations: creating connections among people where instrumental situations that might otherwise create such connections would not exist. Just as Loreen identifies the value of creating heterogeneous consultation groups to inform and advise her own decisions, every aspect of the agency's internal operations can be similarly informed. As Roger observes, "It's bringing diverse people together. What I like about it most is I hear people speak that I never heard speak before. And I think that's showing people, hey, we value what you're thinking. Speak more!" (Roger-1-141).

Conflicts of a Collaborative Culture

An intrinsic aspect of Unit 7's new culture is welcoming dissent and divergent opinions, but not as an opportunity to find the "strongest" idea in a competitive sense (Organization A), nor as a way of nominally espousing participation in decision-making while actually stifling opposition (Organization F). Rather, inviting diverse opinions "to the table" is consistent with holding the tensions of polarities (Johnson, 1992) and discovering new, integrative approaches (Martin, 2007), without feeling the need to resolve them to a single voice (Organization M)—clearly, a UCaPP distinction. This discipline appreciates the nuanced differences of various approaches. Loreen expresses it as follows:

When looking to create a culture of true collaboration, you have to be willing to be non-homogenous, which means you're going to bring together a lot of people who think very differently, who are very different, and that it's not about whether or not you're going to have conflict. You're *going* to have conflict. It's about how you develop the skill to work through the conflict. (Loreen-1-47)

Thus, true collaboration is more than reaching agreement. Being honest and authentic in the process of resolving contentious issues is crucial both to enabling effective collaboration, and to creating a culture relatively free of ongoing enmity, petty power politics, and sabotage. "You try and get that stuff on the table at the moment so you're not

harbouring, and not agreeing to things and then walking out saying I can't believe that person can even think that way" (Loreen-1-269).

In staking this claim on what has become a core value for Unit 7, Loreen acknowledges that the cultural change which promotes collaboration is threatening to some, and that fear has the potential to undermine the organization's transformation: "it's actually a challenge to their confidence in terms of their ability to fulfil their role" (Loreen-1-261).

Among the more challenging, if not obscured, issues for any organization attempting either to make the transition from more-BAH to more-UCaPP or to struggle with retaining UCaPP aspects under BAH-isomorphic pressures, is how to decouple status, responsibility, content expertise, and one's sense of identity. Traditionally in the BAH mentality, status and organizational identity – one's social station in the organizational hierarchy – is associated with the office one occupies. The right to that office originates in possessing, or being believed to possess, particular ability, content expertise, or both. That ability and expertise may be rooted in a technical subject matter pertinent to the organization's specific purpose and needs, or it may originate in the subject matter of management itself.

The status ascribed to an individual holding any particular office is often jealously protected as a matter of individual *identity*. Since the office is inextricably tied to a set of skills and capabilities manifest in one's responsibilities in the primary-purposeful organization, anyone else potentially impinging on those responsibilities threatens not only the status, but the identity of that office-holder. As well, in some organizational contexts, many people hold the belief that even the act of seeking or accepting assistance is a sign of one's lack of competence—behaviours reflecting attitudes that Adam reports in Organization A.

Unit 7's culture change means that one's position is explicitly not in jeopardy if they seek assistance, support, or in any way demonstrate a lack of knowledge or skill—in fact, a primary qualification for a job at Unit 7 is precisely the willingness, ability, and mindset to seek collaborators for any endeavour. As Frances explains:

It leads to a question of who's best for the task, and who needs support, and who can we each call on to team up with, because generally things are done as a team. And, sometimes saying that you're not the right person for this job, do you want to switch out. (Frances-1-19)

Effecting a change in organizational culture requires a serious commitment from the organization's legitimate leadership not only to *enforce* the change, but to actively *participate* in the change themselves, especially if it means changing their own behaviours with respect to the perceived threat to their hierarchical entitlements. Cindy speculates on the source of resistance to Unit 7's cultural transformation:

People who have been resistant are the ones that want to hang onto the hierarchy. ... I don't know if it's their jobs *per se*. Maybe it's the pride. Ego. You know, sharing that [status]. Whoever wants to be a [game] leader has the opportunity to rise and claim that. ... Why would [senior managers] feel threatened? Because they're certainly not going to lose their job over it, by collaborating. Because the culture of the company is collaborating, their job will be more threatened by not collaborating, than by allowing the collaboration within each game design. (Cindy-1-94)

It seems that so-called resistance to *change* may actually be resistance to *change of identity*. In many organizations, repressed insecurity over one's position often leads to gamesmanship as a form of manipulation. At Unit 7, the collaborative organization is all about gamesmanship.

Game Design: A venue for culture change

As an explicit mechanism to signal change from the LLKFB way of operating to the new culture of Unit 7, Loreen adopted the vocabulary of designing a board game based on consultation with a business anthropologist. Loreen describes the discursive and practical mechanics of what essentially became an exercise in organizational redesign:

It involves a set of questions, including the point of the game, who the players are, how they are expected to behave, what moves are allowed, and what happens if the rules are broken. I decided to apply the approach to LLKFB in April of 2005, so I brought five people together for three days to design how to play our game. We started by understanding the game we had been playing, which was a necessary, but painful, exercise. After that, we designed the game for the organization that we wanted to become, and identified what learning we would take on that year in order to win our game. (Maher & O'Brien, 2007, p. 10)

Game design is now used to define appropriate and inappropriate behaviours for the agency as a whole, and to direct individual, mostly infrastructure, projects. Cindy, an Executive Assistant at Unit 7 and a game "owner," describes the game-design metaphor:

It's fun for people to participate and make change happen, and the idea was to get everyone's involvement. Those people, you know, complainers, can get involved in a game, and help design and make the change in Unit 7 that you want to see. Invite people in, and within the game, you do check-ins, and you learn how to plan. You learn what's really involved in trying to carry out an initiative. You use the same principles as you do in a task force, except in the game design, there's no hierarchy, and that's kind of fun. Anyone can be a leader, and so you're in there with very junior people, and then very senior, and then people like me, an executive assistant is able to [laugh] lead the group. (Cindy-1-15)

The specific behaviours that game design enacts correspond not only to those that are desirable in the new culture. They also represent behaviours that are consistent with UCAPP organizations: collaboration, elimination of traditional rank and status hierarchy, inclusive and full participation among heterogeneous participants, a sense of personal responsibility for effecting collective change, referent as opposed to legitimated leadership, and the use of checking-in as a coordinating practice. Cindy sums up the effect of game design on Unit 7's members: "It's empowering. Anyone can get involved and work with senior management and get something done in the agency. Their voice matters—they're contributing" (Cindy-1-76).

In Unit 7, the game-design metaphor is a critical element in effecting cultural change. It serves as a transitional change mechanism from traditional, hierarchical leadership to a non-hierarchical, non-status, participatory model that parallels the existing function-oriented

managerial roles in the organization. A large part of organizational change must necessarily be discursive, modifying and evolving the behavioural and cultural vocabulary that creates one's social location in the organization, and therefore informs expected normative behaviours. For example, the nominal purpose of the game-design metaphor is “a way to make getting things done at Unit 7 fun” (Cindy-1-5).

Perhaps of greater importance, game design resocializes organization members by subverting the common, division-of-labour expectation that management is solely responsible for ensuring that things get done, or more generally, initiating change. In doing so, it provides a coherent structure in which the effects that some feel over the loss of legitimated hierarchical status can be mitigated. For example, Frances describes what became a major initiative throughout the agency—for organizational members to experience, as closely as possible, what it feels like to live with Type 2 Diabetes⁴⁵:

It also strikes me, as I say, it was not delivered top-down. You know, it wasn't something that Loreen worked on, or that Loreen and I worked on, and said here's the program. It was an idea she had. It could bubble up, and it wasn't the leadership, or people perceived as leadership. The beauty of it was, the traffic manager, a production manager, a creative guy, you know, a bunch of people involved, me. And, it was seen as—How do I say this? You know, the working class, a bad phrase, but it wasn't imposed. It was created. (Frances-2-90)

Game design's initial use on organizational infrastructure issues means that the transitional leadership model can be rehearsed in the context of the business without directly or indirectly risking, or adversely affecting, the revenue-producing aspects of the business. The game-design metaphor includes language describing required, permitted, and forbidden moves for various undertakings and initiatives throughout the organization. For the all-encompassing game of Unit 7 itself, called *Collaborative Invention*, Loreen describes how seriously they consider playing the game:

We have three forbidden moves, and the forbidden moves have a consequence of dismissal—that they could not be tolerated within the organization because they were the very moves that got us to where we were. ... So, suddenly I did find myself making decisions about very senior people, C-level people, not on performance – some of them very high performers –

⁴⁵ The “B-Roll Diabetes Initiative” was a 3-month project, named after a recently deceased, and well-liked, member of Unit 7 whose nickname was “B-Roll.” Over half the agency voluntarily modified their diet, adopted exercise regimes, and attended lunch-time education programs to experience the lifestyle changes necessitated for those diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes. Not only was it an education about the disease, but also about advising their pharmaceutical clients. As Loreen explains in some amazement, “I can't believe how instantly I felt like I knew nothing. And how many years I've been actually guiding clients on how to create useful behaviour interventions to help people be more successful. Suddenly I find myself not knowing a thing” (Loreen-2-54).

but because they were not playing by the rules of the game in effect, playing the forbidden moves⁴⁶. (Loreen-1-29)

When taken in the context of the rules of game design, one can see that in Unit 7's game structure which prescribes inclusiveness, check-ins, elimination of hierarchical privilege, and referent leadership within the group, impetus is emergent from the processes rather than from an individual leader. This form of emergent, collaborative leadership is neither anarchic, nor is it strictly democratic in the sense expressed by Organization F's Jeff. As Cindy explains,

...the rules are that the customer and owner⁴⁷ have to agree where they're going. So they have to go together, and then everyone, even the co-collaborators, we all have to agree on where we're going. So we can disagree, but we have to wait until we all agree before you just go ahead. That's why I know how important it is to bring people on board. And it was such a new initiative, such a different way of thinking, that people had to let go of their regular, their normal way of getting things done. And because it was a slower process, people are impatient with that. They want to just get things done quickly. But this process requires thinking, taking a little more time, and so, learning something new. (Cindy-1-52)

A critical risk to the ultimate success of this process – and indeed, a risk to effecting a transformation of organizational culture overall – is an appeal to efficiency and expediency—a deadline-focused, time demand that seemingly cannot tolerate inclusive deliberation and consensus. Such a risk seems to be evident in Organization F, for example, that is moving away from inclusive consultation to a form of representational consultation in which permanently installed representatives are exclusively those with higher rank and status. Additionally, as I described in that case, achieving consensus seems to be taking on characteristics of either subtle coercion, or backing away from approaches that differ from those of the boss.

Another risk to the type of transition represented by the game-design metaphor lies in individual resistance among those who previously held – or, in the context of a more conventional organization, would expect to hold – legitimated power and authority. The resistance is typically manifest through individuals expressing their hierarchical entitlement through what could be characterized as passive-aggressive behaviours directed towards the game owner.

A foundational operating theory of BAH is that the formal organization structure represents a form of meritocracy—an individual occupies an office and assumes its status

⁴⁶ The forbidden moves are, “triangulation,” that is, going behind someone's back to undermine them; enacting command-and-control by “pulling rank”; and physical, verbal, or non-verbal abuse, or failing to respond when made aware that such abuse is occurring.

⁴⁷ Although “customer” and especially “owner” might be considered as being analogous to a team leader or project manager, suggesting an implicit status hierarchy, the rules of the game design preclude acting on that hierarchical implication. As they are enacted, owner and customer are more akin to subject-matter coordinating roles for the game's theme, be it for coordinating client workflow through the agency, or redesigning the lunchroom facilities.

and rank by virtue of being qualified for that office. Having a responsibility that may “rightly” belong in one’s legitimate bureaucratic domain usurped by a game owner of lower corporate class may well be perceived as a punishment or chastisement for inadequate performance. The usurped person may act out if s/he feels unjustly treated. Such inappropriate acting out can be exacerbated when that person is supported by another, hierarchically senior individual in ways that undermine the game design process:

Some people are having a very hard time operating within the game because they want to operate from their position and title. And so, what I ran into was someone in a position who wanted to protect a position of a person who really should be over that area. ... She took it from me. Didn’t even want to operate within the game. But the thing is, she would never have started the project if it hadn’t been for the game design. But now, she’s wanting to take it over, and take it out of the game design. She could accomplish it within the game design, but she’s taken it over, for her own purpose and personal accomplishment. (Cindy-2-2)

The Culture Change Venue

As we have seen in Organizations M, A, and to an increasing extent, Organization F, traditional inclusion criteria for team membership focus primarily on individuals’ functionally determined or hierarchically privileged roles. In contrast, among other things, Unit 7’s extraordinary ethos of inclusion, irrespective of nominal rank or role, encourages unanticipated contributions in the construct of its game-design metaphor. The game venue therefore enables unexpected influences in organizational interactions to occur that encourage continual emergence, from which innovation is born. More important, Unit 7 actively demonstrates how it values its members’ contributions through enacted process in the culture, rather than by a more perfunctory, formal acknowledgement—for example, through an exclusive – and often exclusionary – recognition event. At Unit 7, full participation in game design and embracing its underlying ethos is a form of organizational currency—not only an expression of values, but an embodiment of one’s recognized *value*.

In contrast to a BAH organization like Organization M, for example, in which Stan laments that his potential cannot be perceived, and therefore he is not provided the opportunities to contribute as he might desire, conditions in a more-UCaPP organization enable and *encourage* impetus to emerge from anywhere in the organization. In Cindy’s case, for instance, being owner of Unit 7’s workflow process game enrolls her prior expertise in project management and current enthusiasm; she can both perceive the opportunity and avail herself of an enactment venue.

Thus, the game-design metaphor strongly and visibly embodies the attributes that characterize the cultural change that Loreen initiated in creating Unit 7 from LLKFB. Game design is a venue of performative behaviour that encompasses the new ethos and organizational cultural norms to which the organization aspires. The organization’s legitimate leaders not only support this venue through tangible commitment; they also fully participate, thereby reducing the traditional, hierarchical power differential in the eyes of other members, being seen as willing to learn.

In effect, game design at Unit 7 creates a quasi-artificial environment within which traditional hierarchy is set aside in favour of in-game roles in a way that is not dissimilar to

online gaming environments with its concomitant effects on construction and expression of self-identity (Williams, Hendricks, & Winkler, 2006). In a sense, it can be considered a transitional structure that enables class-diverse collaboration without suddenly disrupting the expected power dynamics among traditional actors—it is a *venue of culture change*.

The importance of a specific, structured, culture change venue – a performative social location in an existing organization in which new cultural practices can be enacted – is often overlooked, or dismissed as time-consuming, distracting, irrelevant, or gimmicky. Simply announcing new cultural practices is insufficient to effect sustainable culture change. Conversely, even simple enactments may be effective, so long as they are valued and sustained. For example, with the departure⁴⁸ of the Chief Strategy Officer, Loreen was able to signal the end of hierarchical structure by deliberately not naming a replacement to that position. Instead, as Frances relates, “nobody is the boss, myself included, and we’re all practice leaders, and yet, all of us have different areas of expertise. So the issue is calling on one another for support” (Frances-1-19), an obvious encouragement towards collaboration.

However, as both Loreen and Roger point out, collaboration is not an intuitive skill for most people. Collaborative practices must be deliberately enacted, and their value must be accepted by all participants in the collaboration for the restructuring initiative to work. Perhaps not surprising in retrospect, but unexpected at the time, the suddenly leaderless strategy group did not automatically adopt new behaviours. By leaving the strategy group to its own devices in attempting to create a collaboration out of a team, the content part of people’s individual work truly becomes more individual and isolated from the other members of the group. The process aspects that mandate collaborative coordination through checking-in and offering mutual support in a specific venue of knowledge-sharing were largely ignored among the strategy staff. The lack of knowledge sharing – referred to as “socializing information” by Inter Pares, another UCAPP participant organization – precludes emergent collaboration, especially in the absence of specifically mandated cooperation. As Frances observes,

...the group’s not functioning as a traditional group, so I feel like I have to do all my work alone. ... The weekly meetings were sort of discarded. ... There’s a dynamic where, in a traditional sense, if people are expected to be cohesive, they figure out a way to be. If you’re not expected to be cohesive, then some people will and some people won’t. ... When I reached out to help, there’s a feeling like it will take so much time to bring me up to speed, it’s not worth it. (Frances-2-32)

The weekly meetings, newly instituted by Frances, could be considered as a simple form of culture change venue for the strategy group. However, they quickly fell by the

⁴⁸ One of the casualties of playing “forbidden moves.” Loreen holds very real coercive power that seems to negate the UCAPP ideals of no enacted hierarchical rank. There are two considerations that mitigate the exercise of that power so as not to undermine Unit 7’s BAH to UCAPP transition. First, the rules of the game are explicit and well-known among all members; in effect, it is not the legitimated leader doing the firing, but the result of an individual deliberately defying the rules in a contemporary recollection of Mary Parker Follett’s “orders given by the situation” (1926/1992, p. 153). Second, Loreen’s use of executive power – a BAH artefact – was accompanied by significant and severe misgivings (personal correspondence, October 8, 2007) that effectively checks its arbitrary or authoritarian use.

wayside because they appeared to be extraneous when compared to exigent client demands and deadlines. It was never understood that these meetings coordinated activities, socialized information, and began to create the particular form of relationships among the group that are necessary for changing to a more-UCaPP model for the strategy organization. On the contrary, deadlines and similar demands impose an instrumental focus that tends to reinforce long-engrained, BAH practices. Combined with an inability to recognize and appreciate the value of a form of culture change venue that would inculcate collaborative practices within the group, the meetings appeared to be superfluous and an unaffordable luxury of time. The result is a less effective group.

When a venue of cultural change is endorsed, it must take precedence over other concerns to truly effect lasting and sustainable change, lest it be marginalized in the name of expediency to support the comfort of the status quo. Persistence in pursuing the effects of creating change is necessary, but not necessarily sufficient; strength is often required. It is perhaps ironic that coercive, legitimated, and hierarchical leadership is occasionally needed to enforce the transformation away from coercive, legitimated, and hierarchical leadership.

Unit 7's game-design metaphor is disruptive to traditional, BAH power dynamics not only because it eschews traditional hierarchies and the ascribed superior abilities of those who hold particular job titles. More important, it mandates processes that actively undermine the forces that provide BAH structures their coherence, their circular logic, and the dominance of individual, independent performance and task-orientation over almost any other consideration. In addition, game design reinforces referent leadership as the working assumption in Unit 7. As Cindy notes, "people like me, an executive assistant, is able to lead the group. But all the other people in the group have to agree that you can lead and own it" (Cindy-1-15).

Game design brings an interesting polarity tension to light. Loreen identifies a number of behaviours required to enact true collaboration: questioning, offering advice, and eliminating hierarchical status. For collaboration to occur these must be offered in the context of a safe environment that neither tacitly nor explicitly impinges on individuals' competence and ability. However, the person who may be less confident – perhaps someone who is more junior in nominal rank – often feels very unsafe *because* of these very behaviours that are strongly encouraged in the environment. Thus, a paradox arises in the minds of people whose nominal hierarchical positions construct them as more junior, and therefore more vulnerable to traditional power dynamics. Unless appropriately mitigated, the polarity tension creates an insecurity that inhibits collaborative dynamics and processes. Cindy explains:

They don't want to think they're doing something [for which] maybe they're going to get in trouble. You're a real junior person, and you think that person has kind of power over... or maybe being able to approve a raise for you, or someone who could fire you... So, because a junior person doesn't have enough experience, emotionally and intellectually, to handle that kind of problem-solving skill, where you're open to looking at how you're doing things, and working with someone in authority to work something out, because you're not really equal. Even with true collaboration, you're always going to have people with perceived status. (Cindy-2-64)

Therefore, to reduce the inhibitors to collaboration that are introduced from previously socialized, power-oriented behaviours, there need to be legitimated, very visible, and explicitly valued resocializing constructs to reinforce the desired transformative behaviours. In Unit 7's case, the game-design metaphor, and how it has been integrated into the cultural vocabulary, the day-to-day way of working, and even the employee evaluation process serves this reinforcing purpose. As a culture change venue it has the effect of transforming the extant organizational culture, as well as providing guidance and reassurances for more-junior staff via its explicit rules and roles. Even those who have had limited employment experience nonetheless have grown up learning that hierarchical privilege and power are the context of the working world—questioning suggests incompetence, ignorance, or both, and therefore begs the question of one's worthiness for the position. In the traditional, BAH world, a culture of inquiry is misread as a culture of inquisition.

Realities, Responses, and Challenges

As one might imagine, the reaction to such a drastic change in organizational culture is not overwhelmingly positive, especially among those who value status and hierarchical rank as an expression of self. Roger explains:

We actually had a lot of staff leave because of the process⁴⁹, which is fine, because they weren't right for this process. ... I had an employee come to me. This person was an excellent employee, and we miss the value that they bring, but they said to me, I need the spotlight to be on me. (Roger-1-189)

A large part of effecting change throughout the organization involves appropriate recruiting. The large turnover that accompanied Loreen's introduction of Unit 7's new, collaborative, and non-status culture created an opportunity to repopulate the organization with those who more intuitively embody the new values. Roger explains: "I'll interview people where I'll have no experience in what they do, but just getting to know who they are for the cultural fit. That's really important for us, obviously" (Roger-1-205). Loreen describes how new employees receive some orientation in Unit 7's culture expressed as game design:

We are making sure that everybody who walks in the door is personally presented with the game, and explained the game of Unit 7, so they understand, what are the required moves, what constitutes doing well at Unit 7. We need to fine-tune this, because it's clearly an area that we need to put some attention on. The Human Resources director will facilitate it, but it will be a combination also with myself. I think it would be important for them to hear it from the very senior levels of the company, because it is important for people to understand the level of commitment throughout the entire organization. (Loreen-2-68)

Despite best intentions at orienting new members, it is one thing for a person to hear about the organizational values embodied in the concept of game design explained by one or

⁴⁹ Turnover between 2005 and 2006 was 59% as those unwilling to play the new game were encouraged to move out of the company at considerable cost in severance, recruiting, and maintaining client relationships (Maher & O'Brien, 2007).

more senior people within the organization; it is quite another to experience those values during the hiring process and initial orientation period in the organization. Senior members must especially be cognizant of the delicate balance that exists in the intersection of espoused and in-use theories with respect to hierarchy and status. New employees who might hold a hierarchical/status model of management must understand the commitment to Unit 7's organizational values held by senior members. Additionally, it is equally important for them to actually experience that commitment. As Loreen observes:

One of the things that I have learned is that it just takes a lot of repetition and patience—it is very new to people, and they need to hear it a lot. But also importantly, they need to see it demonstrated, actively demonstrated on a daily basis. Let's take very veteran, senior people, [at the] top of their game. [We have experienced] some new learning [about] what it's like to take those into the company and have them sign up for a way of working that is completely different than they've been trained most of their career. (Loreen-2-82)

Cindy agrees:

I think there needs to be more done in the hiring process to get people up to speed on what the culture is. Unit 7 itself has a game that outlines the whole culture of the agency. Unless a new employee gets that so they understand right up front when they're interviewed, this is what's expected of me, they're going to have a problem. (Cindy-1-142)

The embodied experience of being inculcated into the organizational culture from the beginning of the hiring process, more than just the initial orientation period, seems to be essential to acculturating new members. This seems to be true irrespective of whether the organization is on the BAH (Organization M) or UCAPP (Inter Pares, as will be seen in the next section) ends of the spectrum. Organizations must be deliberate about representing their intrinsic nature and values through both the hiring and orientation processes.

As one might expect, cultural values are fundamental to the annual review process. Like many contemporary organizations, the annual review at Unit 7 situates achieving specific accomplishments as its foundation. That one's goals and objectives are set by individual members (rather than by top-down decomposition) is not particularly unusual. What *is* telling is the specific vocabulary used—goals and objectives are framed as “promises.” Cindy explains:

You say you're going to do something, or maybe you want to grow in your position, and then you set up promises that the employee will make, that I will do this and this and this by a certain date. So Loreen will give these people an opportunity within the company to do something. Maybe take an initiative and make something happen. There are check-ins, and people might be given a raise based on this new initiative. (Cindy-1-170)

The process of sense-making for individual evaluation is consistent with sense-making throughout the organization. Key to making sense at Unit 7 is gaining a holistic appreciation of the total context of the environment in which the individual finds

him/herself. Thus, one makes promises *in relation to that total context*, rather than simply setting objectives that are a strict subset of the organization's overall objectives delivered from on high. In addition, the language itself is indicative of a relational orientation in the organizational psyche: one makes promises to other individuals; goals and objectives are institutional, and therefore impersonal. Compared to more-BAH organizations, such as Organization A, for which goals and objectives are defined quantitatively, “keeping promises” can be evaluated using a more descriptive, subjective, and qualitative form.

Promises are a way of having your mind think in terms of setting goals and milestones in a fun way—it's not a checklist at all. In fact, it takes a lot of work, because you have to write a story in the front. What the story right now has to do with your situation, where you're at. What you've accomplished in the past. Where are the opportunities for growth? Where are areas of improvement you need to make? And Loreen will craft these beautiful written stories ... and she's helping teach some people how to write these things. ... It's a very different way for a goal process—more time consuming, and it takes a lot more thought. (Cindy-1-172)

Beyond conventional metrics and more than delivering on promises, employees are evaluated on the basis of spontaneous, peer-reported assessments of collaboration and group contribution:

We're very clear with people what the expectations are for them in the environment. So a lot of the measurements become what myself and others hear about these people, and from who[m]. Are we hearing, on a routine basis, this person is, valuable to me, they're a great contributor, they're always willing to do whatever. Do I hear from five to ten people, in a six month period that, wow, I'm so glad that they've committed, that they've joined my collaborations on X occasions because they always provide such great value. Am I hearing enough that the person is a good collaborator? That's the primary metric. (Loreen-1-155)

This particularly reflexive assessment of team leaders' performance is considerably different – and sometimes unsettling – to more (conventionally) experienced individuals. Especially in the advertising industry, people are measured quantitatively, according to their business and fiscal performance relative to predefined organizational objectives. Loreen explains how she translates Unit 7's values of a relational, rather than instrumental, view of people into the evaluation process, especially among more senior members:

High performance for them is, you know, they have good relationships with clients, they're bringing revenue into the company, or sustaining more organic growth of the current clients. That's what they're going to consider performance. It's all important, and I factor that into performance, but the performance of how they're nurturing the environment, and the people in the environment is equally, if not more important, than the financial performance. (Loreen-1-162)

It comes as a surprise to those who might nominally hold a higher organizational rank that members at a relatively low rank may rate them poorly, and this ranking carries more weight with the CEO than does their business performance:

That is a difficult place for people to live, especially very senior people. They could be very high performers, but when the conversation is on the table – to work with you is not inspiring, they’re not learning, they don’t have exposure in developing client skills – that takes us to a place of, I must hear from your team that they’re feeling different about your leadership or you may need to seek a new environment. It is completely unsettling to some people that I wouldn’t take their performance over what they would consider very junior people on their team to be saying about them. (Loreen-1-161)

Although Frances was not a member of LLKFB, she expresses the simple rationale behind embedding collaboration in the formal evaluation process:

Companies where it’s all revenue-based, and decisions are made purely based on revenue, can be very unpleasant at times. So, in my experience, collaboration is the way things work best. ... I think it’s interesting reframing it as a business objective—something that I think is really good to elevate and make really clear. (Frances-1-147)

With a primary relational view of people, the value of collaboration predominates at Unit 7 as it becomes both the *de facto* way of working and an explicit business objective. However, this relatively unusual orientation presents an interesting and challenging dilemma with respect to engaging the clients. Advertising agency clients in general are socialized to expect a purely instrumental view of people—a person’s value is strictly calculated in terms of a (usually high-priced) hourly worker. However, unlike the conventional teamwork model, instrumentalism is incompatible with true collaboration. Hence, there is an inherent contradiction in creating a collaborative environment internally while maintaining the existing economic (billing/value) model externally. As Frances asks,

...if five people from Strategy are involved in one account, how does it get billed? Why does the client pay the five-times premium to educate five people, when in the normal course of events, there’s only one person. ... And it’s a legitimate concern on their end. ... You know, that can’t work in the traditional model, because clients are trained on a value-per-person basis. (Frances-2-52)

Nonetheless, she can identify at least one instance in which the client has been “invited in.” In an example of how the boundaries between nominally distinct organizations can be dissolved, Frances describes some of the coordinating activities between Unit 7 and its client, Account R:

It’s actually a fantastic example, one of the healthiest examples that I’ve seen. The account team is really enmeshed with the client. Two of the team spend at least two days a week out there, and I think the account executive at least as much. And the client has been here quite a bit as well. ... Account R treats

us as full partners, and that's terrific—a fantastic example of the way it can work. (Frances-1-172)

The emerging practice of consistently aligning organizational behaviour with respect to both internal and client (external) matters demonstrates the growing pervasiveness of the collaborative culture at Unit 7. Roger notes that the transition away from people working independently, calling for assistance instrumentally, was slow:

It was definitely gradual because we all had to learn it. I mean, I had to think about who to invite in, and by now it's more natural for me for most things. I think we all have to learn how to collaborate, who do we talk to, and how to really think about other people's feelings, *what they would want*. (Roger-1-139; emphasis added)

Notably, Roger identifies the importance of “thinking about other people's feelings” in the context of collaborative behaviour—whether someone else would want to be invited to participate, rather than whether the project leader would want them to participate. This framing represents a significant reversal in one's typical organizational orientation – of self in relation to the organization – that will be explored in greater depth in a later chapter.

Checking-In on a Culture of Inquiry

A large aspect of individuals' perception of caring is entwined with the culture of inquiry—a distinguishing characteristic of a UCaPP organization, and central to Unit 7's transformation. An important consideration in establishing a culture of inquiry involves distinguishing the practice of checking-in from the discipline of checking-up:

The practice of checking-in is different than the discipline of making sure. Making sure will have a pretty strong positioning of, “I'm pretty sure you haven't [done something] so I'm just here to make sure.” But checking-in is a sincere checking-in—so, where are we at? Where are *you* at? Do you think you're on track? Do you not? What else would you need? So, that sincerity of checking-in for the sake of helping versus of judging. And also, taking assumption off the table. I've just learned that, if you do it consistently, checking-in is just one of the most powerful behaviours for yourself and for everyone involved. [It is] the core to collaboration. (Loreen-1-281)

As espoused in the organization's values, the emerging culture of inquiry requires a leader to approach checking-in from a place of humility, opening her/himself to learning. Checking-in behaviour stands in opposition to checking-up that originates in a place of authority, power, and wearing a mask of omniscience. The common socialization of checking-up is manifest in the assumption that the boss will fix the problem – even if it means “fixing” the employee – when things go wrong:

How [checking-up] will be construed is when you act on that, it will be easily perceived as, you're going to fix their problem. That I'm going to just come and fix their problem. That I've concluded that they can't do it... Now maybe they can't do it the way they've been doing it. But, the action's probably going to be swifter, it'll probably be more higher-profile because there will be a reason that we have to be in that place, and there will be

people brought to the table now. But instead, those people [could have been] brought to the table before the breakdown, which is very proactive, that we can catch by checking-in. (Loreen-1-285)

At the core of a culture of inquiry is how power differentials must be decoupled from the act of inquiry through this process of checking-in rather than checking-up. People of unequal power in an environment of insecurity perceive questioning as a challenge or threat, thereby hampering collaboration. In response, individuals – and occasionally entire organizations – enact what Chris Argyris calls “defensive reasoning,” “defensive rationalizing,” and “organizational defensive routines” (Argyris, 1994) to prevent embarrassment. “So it is important to have the ability to let go of hierarchy—where the power is coming from on the questions” (Loreen-2-112).

Check-in provides a non-judgmental, relatively safer way of notifying that a project is going off the rails, to enable more resources to be brought to bear in collaboration. BAH organizations regularly implement checking-up disciplines that theoretically prevent errant human judgment from damaging systematic processes, or impeding progress towards achieving the organization’s objectives. But equally, they have socially built-in protection mechanisms that tend to obscure problems before they reach breakdown and then hide, minimize or otherwise obfuscate the breakdowns themselves—the previously mentioned “organizational defensive routines.” Collaboration in an authentic culture of inquiry works in the converse, acknowledging as axiomatic the limitations on human judgment, knowledge, and the reality of unpredictability, mitigating the ensuing effects through a genuine practice of checking-in.

What’s the Matter With Kids Today?

The fundamental change in power dynamics that Unit 7 has enacted through cultural transformation is consistent with the expectations demonstrated by people who have recently entered the workforce. What may appear to be an inflated sense of entitlement among some younger people, I characterize as having a refreshing sense of empowerment that rejects the hegemony of traditional BAH practices and expectations. Loreen brings an intuitive understanding of this principle to her reflection on the generation newly entering the workforce:

If you were to take some of the newer generation coming through, they want responsibility and exposure beyond their primary function. So, they seem to have a respect and understanding they’re going to come in at entry level. While they accept that, they don’t want to be isolated to the scope of that role. They want to have exposure, they want to make a bigger contribution than what that role will require. I’ve been paying a lot of attention to that, and that’s why the game design has become very powerful here, because it’s a way for them to contribute to the environment, which they like—a lot. It’s actually the younger generation that gets much more engaged in that proposition than most people. (Loreen-1-171)

Loreen’s insight provides considerable guidance in negotiating between the received reality of a traditional corporate environment, and the lived reality of a generation bringing a context of collective life-experience in the connected world. Many among contemporary

youth have already experienced being valued for contributions unrestricted by externally and (in their view) arbitrarily imposed structures. Unit 7's game-design metaphor enables these individuals to satisfy their life-expectation of not being arbitrarily restricted to the limitations of a predefined role, while simultaneously being able to accept entry-level task responsibilities delimited by actual experience, knowledge, and expertise. In effect, Unit 7 has decoupled specific subject matter expertise and the ability to contribute to, and fully participate in, the organization's operational infrastructure. As Roger confirms,

...being involved in things that [young] people aren't normally involved in, having strategy sessions for the direction of the company, and having lower-level people, like really getting rid of that hierarchy. Making people feel that the company is there for them and cares about them. (Roger-1-135)

Involving people who are at junior levels in the company provides an especially strong reinforcement of the organization's values and ethos. Not only do people feel valued and appreciated; people who, by virtue of their rank, are not typically involved in strategic decisions become involved at the earlier stages, thereby facilitating the common sense of organizational "ownership"—people care about an organization that demonstrably cares about them. Loreen continues:

What I'll hear routinely that I think is very powerful is, yeah, I'm going to go home at five o'clock. I've been here since nine o'clock. I'm going to go home at five unless you give me a reason to stay. But if you think that I'm going to stay because you think I should know to stay, because that's the way the game is played until I get to a certain place, no, I'm not going to do that. But *if you give me a reason to stay that is meaningful to me, that I know I'm making a contribution*, I'm in. It's not about, I have to leave at five. It's about, *is it worth me being here?*" (Loreen-1-203; emphasis added)

This sentiment contrasts with the resentment-building controlling attitude that Loreen identifies as explicitly problematic, but embedded in the BAH hegemony:

I think where the problem is, and I think not just our company but many companies have to work through, is how to get out of, we paid our dues so you have to pay your dues. And how we stay very conscious of, what is the value to them for them being here, not just what is the value to me? (Loreen-1-205).

Loreen frames these considerations in the distinction between the "boomer" concept of work/life balance – "how many hours you're not at work" (Loreen-1-197) – and what I call *work/life integration*. For the generation that has been socialized in the BAH-workplace world, 'what I do defines who I am.' In contrast, for the generation socialized in the UCAPP world, 'the effects I create, and how those effects are experienced by others, define who I am.' As Loreen has experienced, for these newer members of the organization, work is but one aspect that is to be integrated into the entirety of their lives, based on how they experience and perceive being valued by the organization.

In this case, that experience is facilitated by a UCAPP culture premised on a well thought-through, well-enacted collaborative culture:

When it's real collaboration, when people have real creative freedom – the authority – to make decisions that have a potential of living, there's air. There's air and light that comes into that. And you feel it. You feel the difference. (Frances-2-138)

A Conversation with Nishida: The Future

The master was standing by the window, his hand held above his brow as if to shield his eyes from the sun. He is squinting, appearing to be watching for someone.

“Who are you looking for, *sensei*?” I ask.

“Not who. What.”

“Alright, then *what* are you looking for?”

“I am looking for the future. If you believe you can see what is ahead, then I can do the same. I expect it should be along any time now,” he replies quite casually.

Nishida has always been skeptical of this thesis inquiry. Perhaps making a claim on ‘the future of organization’ is a tad grandiose, but a doctoral investigation is, by definition, new knowledge. And that necessarily concerns itself with what becomes foundational for the future. I decide to play along.

“Is it here yet?” I demand, like a petulant child.

“Not quite,” he responds.

I wait for a minute, my eyes fixed on Nishida’s unflinching gaze. “How about now?”

“Still waiting.”

Another two minutes pass, as do many pedestrians with far better things to do than stare out a window for something that will inevitably never arrive. Ahhhhh...

I pull up a straight-back, wooden chair from among Nishida’s sparse furnishings and take a seat, all the time keeping my eyes on the master. I know where this is leading and, for a change, I think I am prepared. But then again, I’ve been fooled by Nishida before. This time, though, I decide to wait out his game.

For forty-two minutes, Nishida stands by the window, nary shifting his stare. *Zen-zen*. He glances towards my direction and sees my bemusement at his apparent folly. He is clearly annoyed that, for once, I was not drawn in by the temptation of his seeming absurdity.

“You sit and laugh at me,” he scolds, “an old man, standing here for nearly an hour in pursuit of the same end as you? Have you no pity? Have you no shame in sitting there watching my suffering?”

“You may have been suffering, but I am not,” I say, performing my best Nishida imitation. “Our objectives cannot be more dissimilar.”

“Oh?” he asks. “Perhaps it is your turn to provide enlightenment for the lesson.”

“Here,” I offer. “Sit.” He plops his ancient frame onto the hard-backed chair. “You claim to have been looking for the future—”

“As do you!” he interjects.

“Not exactly.”

“And how is that?” The eyebrow raises.

“I cannot predict the future, because the future never arrives. It is always, well, in the future. What I am looking for is what we can anticipate now—the *future* of the future.”

“Ah yes.” Nishida nods his head, quite pleased that his student has begun to understand. “And the future of the future—”

“—is the present⁵⁰. I see you’ve been reading my McLuhan books.”

⁵⁰ McLuhan & Nevitt, 1972, p. 134.

Future Imperfect: Inter Pares, and the Natures of *Organization*

Inter Pares: Defining the UCAPP Organization

I also caution about seeing this as the ideal, amazing environment where we've learned how to do all these things that nobody has ever taught anybody in our society, right? (Jean-1-97).

Jean's caution notwithstanding, Inter Pares has learned to do many organizational things that have so far eluded the vast majority of contemporary organizations. Although there has been considerable discourse concerning more "democratic" forms of participatory management, and a wealth of admonitions for organizations to be more collaborative, Inter Pares has not only effected and sustained such changes, it is also quite explicit in its understanding of, and reflections on, these changes.

It was not always so: As Inter Pares grew from a start-up-sized organization of a handful of people, doubling its staff within a relatively short period during the early 1980s, it realized that the relatively conventional management structure it initially installed was not "true to its values of equality and parity, namely, where there would be parity in power and shared/equal responsibility and accountability" (Seydegart & Turcot, 2004, p. 3). Not dissimilar to the realizations that are driving organizational transformation at Unit 7, Sam relates the circumstances that provided similar impetus at Inter Pares:

I'd say it's only been since the mid-eighties that we identified as a feminist organization, where feminism became explicitly included and foregrounded within our political analysis, and our political identity. And that was initiated by the arrival of a new executive director who was a very strong feminist, and who ... identified the disparity that she saw between the collaborative egalitarian model of work that was promoted for external relations, but that was not being followed internally, because there was a hierarchy within the organization. And that was an inconsistency that she felt was an important one. (Sam-1-97)

Sam describes how the gap between espoused and in-use theories, and incorporating what Argyris and Schön (1974, 1978) describe as double-loop learning, effected a fundamental change in organizational culture and practice. In what seems to be characteristic of a UCAPP organization, individual, personal values come together at Inter Pares to create a collaboratively constructed set of organizational values that inform every aspect of its operations and programming. Just as Loreen observes that any dysfunctional disparity between internal and external practice can be easily detected by Unit 7's clients (Loreen-1-21), Inter Pares understands the importance of "walking the talk," as Seydegart and Turcot describe:

For one, it gives Inter Pares added credibility and speaks to their integrity because they actually have actively pursued, in the very way they have structured and manage the organization, their vision of a more just and equitable world and their basic principles of equity and accountability. (Seydegart & Turcot, 2004, p. 31)

Inter Pares is founded fundamentally on the values held by the individual members—those beliefs that are to be promoted, preserved and protected. Sam describes the particularly Canadian⁵¹ aspect to the universality of Inter Pares’s values:

Our values of social justice and universal equality are found internationally. What makes us Canadian is recognizing that we hold a particular place in the world, which is often a place of privilege, and how we best use that so as to work against the systems that generate that privilege. (Sam-1-3)

Adhering to these values provides guidance to the organization's operational and program choices; they are reinforced throughout Inter Pares’s management processes and preserved in its approaches to every aspect of its operation, from hiring through to its coalition and partnership engagements worldwide.

A Recipe for Emergent Organization

Jean describes the recipe for Inter Pares’s success, and the high regard in which it is held among its partners:

Our methodology is building long-term relationships. ... We find people in various ways with whom we feel we can form a common cause around some various social justice issues, and they’ll be issues arise depending on the context within which we’re working in these places. And follow the relationships. So follow the place in the centre where both we feel that we can engage and we can contribute, and the people with whom we are building the relationship also feel that they can participate in this relationship, and they’ll get something out of it, and it will be useful in the context in which they’re working. (Jean-1-3)

There are some particularly interesting, if not instructive, aspects of Jean’s description that may be applicable to organizations other than those involved in social justice endeavours. The first ingredient is to find people that share a commonality of cause around an issue or area of interest. This framing is clearly appropriate to a social justice context; it may be less clear – *but no less pertinent* – in any other organizational context. The common cause may, for example, revolve around an approach to a particular business or industry. Common cause goes beyond a specific instrumental purpose or objective which may yet to be determined. More likely, it reflects the intrinsic values of the invited participants and creates a commonality of motive force – impetus – within the context or environment.

Second, Jean suggests to “follow the relationship” or the “place in the centre where we both feel that we can engage and ... contribute.” Her selection of phrasing is particularly interesting in a way that will become apparent in a later chapter. For now, suffice it to say that the engagement or relationship connection is, ideally, balanced so that each member of the emerging organization participates in such a way that they receive “something ... useful in the context in which they’re working.” It is important to note that the “something useful” does not necessarily have to do with specific, named, preconceived objectives or goals; rather the focus is on what may be meaningful to the individual in the context.

⁵¹ In subsequent correspondence, Sam points out that activists in other Northern countries who are part of North-South relations relate to their own countries in a similar manner.

But not every arbitrary group of people who happen to meet in common cause will form into even a loose coalition; nor will these initial relationships necessarily be able to sustain themselves and emerge into viable organizations. Jean describes what she refers to as the requisite “critical mass” necessary to creating an emergent organization, the diversity of voices and perspectives needed for appropriate perception, and the importance of developing a “social contract” that will enable the coalition to sustain:

We like to work in coalition, because, in fact we think the best way of getting things done is to be able to have a lot of people, building *critical mass*, having a lot of people working on the same thing ... going approximately in the same direction, but also, bringing many, many different perspectives. Many heads are better than one when you’re looking at this sort of thing. And actually, many kinds of voices, many ways of expressing things. *Divergent views at times* are all things that are important to have when you’re trying to achieve objectives around many of the things we work on.

So there’s the critical mass in the large sense that we want to always engage in coalition building, or network building, or even little pockets of things. But also within coalitions, when the social contract begins to break down because there’s turnover in this organization, or that organization has no idea of what’s going on, what the history was, they’re not really interested in that. *Social contract* begins to break down. You have to start saying, is this something we actually want to continue to be part of? Is this a useful thing for us to be doing? One of the ways that we would determine that is, is there a critical mass within this network or coalition of people with whom we can work to make sure that things can happen, that energy is emerging out of it, and it’s not just sucking energy. And when I say critical mass, there has to be three like-minded parties—us, and at least two others who are *willing to at least ask the same questions, even if we’re not coming up with the same answers*. (Jean-1-13; emphasis added)

In summation, an emergent organization will coalesce from a place of common cause when: (a) there are many people among multiple organizations with a common sense of purpose and volition to action; that (b) bring many perspectives and approaches while the entire emerging organization is “going in approximately the same direction”; while (c) assimilating many voices which are expressing ideas and approaches in diverse ways; so that (d) energy is being created and projected rather than merely being consumed.

In the processes of creating an emergent organization, divergent views are important, but always in the context of maintaining the social contract of the organization, that is, its embodied and enacted collective values contributed by each of the participant members. Jean notes that changing some of the participants may result in the social contract breaking down as the nature of the interactions change. If the resultant organization falls below a “critical mass” it will collapse. For Inter Pares, critical mass for an extra-organizational coalition is considered to be at least three participant member organizations – including itself – that are “like minded,” that is, “willing to at least ask the same questions, even if we’re not coming up with the same answers” (Jean-1-13).

Like Unit 7, Inter Pares values diversity of opinion, multiple views and visions, and heterogeneous thinking, ideas, and approaches. Notably, this is in stark contrast to the BAH organization participants who variously insist on “speak[ing] with one voice” (Sean-1-29), or having members commit and not look back (Matt-1-25). It is not necessarily an alignment of objectives or goals that creates a successful coalition or emergent organization, or even agreement among the constituent members. Commonality of direction need be only “approximate”; more important is commonality of values, principles, cause, and, notably, *questions*.

Managing Consensus

One of Inter Pares’s key structural differences compared to other organizations is to decouple general management activities from being a distinct area of subject-matter expertise. Thus, having individual areas of managerial oversight – with nominal titles like Communications Director – is not mutually exclusive with a collaborative, co-management structure. Rather, in decoupling management functions from being distinct and separate operational responsibilities, each member of Inter Pares plays (at least) a dual role. An individual’s functional, or program, responsibility persists based on their “technical” knowledge, expertise, and qualifications; their management responsibilities, like being a member of the Coordinating Group (COG) or a reference group for co-worker evaluation, rotate among all members in Inter Pares’s co-management structure. None of the management responsibilities connote a special status or class-defining hierarchy as in a BAH organization. Sam describes the structure as follows:

Inter Pares is a consensus-based organization. We’re non-hierarchical, and we have a co-management structure in which all full-time staff are co-managers of the organization, with equal responsibility and equal salary. ... We have two main decision-making bodies, or instances in the organization. One is our monthly staff meeting, and the other is our monthly program meeting, and those are all-staff meetings. The staff meeting addresses institutional issues, and the program meeting addresses program-related issues related to our work outside of the institution as well as inside. And, there are about eight different committees as well that carry out our management functions. (Sam-1-21)

Operationally, the staff are organized into both geographic and thematic “clusters”:

There’s a geographic cluster for Asia, Africa, and Latin America. And there’s also a fundraising cluster. And we also now have thematic clusters that [include] people from across the organization who are interested in particular issues, and pursuing that cross-geographically. And so there’s migration, violence against women, and food sovereignty cluster. Oh, as well as a militarized commerce⁵² cluster. (Sam-1-27)

The major management venue and coordinating structure is the all-staff meetings, notable for the fact that “it’s not merely decisions that are taken at those meetings. It’s also

⁵² Now renamed “economic justice.”

an important forum for *socializing information*' (Sam-1-27; emphasis added). How widely any particular bit of information is "socialized" is left to the judgement of the individual:

If it's a relatively light matter, then you might just consult with a few people who are around you, or people who might have a particular expertise on some issues, or you might discuss it within your cluster. Or, if you think that it's something, due to timing, or the fact that it might be controversial, or just due to the fact that everybody might want to know about it, then you would bring it either to the program or the staff meeting. (Sam-1-27)

The basis for exercising that judgement is not merely utilitarian or instrumental; nor are the criteria exclusively serving any external objective or goal. Rather, it is a judgement that incorporates the type of holistic knowing and contextual assessment that seems to be characteristic of a more-UCaPP organization.

The Co-ordinating Group serves the function of traditional middle-to-senior management:

COG. That's our nickname for our Coordinating Group, which is a committee that serves to keep an overall eye on things, and just to ensure that there aren't any things that are falling between the cracks. They keep track of workload and mental health issues, ... and generally keep their eye on the overall picture in terms of staffing and how things are going in that sense. So, of course, it's everybody's responsibility, but [COG is] a specific place for things to be discussed if, for instance, in the annual self-evaluations, that there are some worrying tendencies that were raised, the COG would discuss it to see if they would like to propose something. (Sam-1-23)

These managerial functions, such as human resources⁵³ and general operations, are still required in this "non-hierarchical, cooperative, co-management" (Sam-1-21) model. Unlike a more traditional organization, they are performed collaboratively, with specific responsibilities not being vested in any one person. Similarly, Finance, Staff Operations, and Program Operations – the latter two being all-staff committees that meet monthly – confer collective responsibility among all members.

Inter Pares breaks from the fundamental premise of BAH organizations that draws from scientific management and administrative management theory: management functions are distinct areas of subject-matter expertise apart from the specific subject-content of the enterprise. A UCaPP organization like Inter Pares strives to create particular effects that are consistent with its values, sense of cause, and social contract among its various constituencies as its primary focus. The dual role for each participating individual is important for ensuring that subject matter-related activities and management activities are both contributing to bringing about the desired effects.

⁵³ There is a separate Human Resources committee that focuses exclusively on developing human resources policy; administration and implementation of the policy remain with the COG. Any recommendations of either the HR or COG committees must be brought to an all-staff meeting to render a decision.

In most organizations, if there is a natural, intrinsic consensus among the members on a particular issue, or if the matter is of relatively low consequence, a decision is generally taken quickly—often retrospectively framed as being an example of a supposedly participatory or democratic process. The interesting distinctions become evident when an organization that espouses participatory decision-making confronts diverse opinions:

If there's more divergence of opinion than ordinary, then we might take longer and talk about it. And, try to get a sense of where people are coming from and to talk it through, until people felt like they could all agree and come to a decision. And sometimes, there are a few people who may still feel, by the end of the meeting, that they're not necessarily in accord. And so then, usually we would touch base with the particular people who had been voicing a minority opinion, and say, how do you feel about this, and are you okay with that. Sometimes, subsequently, we say we think consensus was rushed a bit, and we might revisit the topic. But usually, there's often a process of "trusting to the wisdom of the group." If I'm the only one who thinks that, and fourteen other people that I respect a lot think differently, well, I'm going to say that, in this case, I'll go along with it and stand behind this decision. But sometimes, you might think, you know, no, I'm really right about this and I'd like to continue the conversation. ... And sometimes conversations just recur naturally on their own, whether because the topic comes up in a different form, or new colleagues arrive and the conversation just resurges naturally. So there are, over the length of one's tenure, the opportunity to talk about things more than once naturally on their own. (Sam-1-27)

The espoused processes are similar to those employed by Unit 7 and Organization F; the in-use processes appear to differ slightly, but in those differences are characteristic distinctions that reveal the locations of the respective organizations. With primary-purposeful organizations, their objective-driven intent to "move forward" seems to place a high value on making the decision, irrespective of whether the decision made is necessarily correct, effective, or appropriately understood in its complete context. There may be an emphasis on "convincing" dissenters as Aaron and Matt both report in Organization F, and "not looking back" on a decision once made. There may, as well, be an incentive to convey a sense of unanimity, expressed as "speaking with one voice" as in Organization M. Reflecting on the felt need for unanimity, it is almost ironic – but certainly telling – that the two most consensus-oriented organizations among my participants, Unit 7 and Inter Pares, explicitly invite, value, and incorporate dissent and diverse opinions. Difference informs a more reflective, heterogeneous process of consideration, especially when it comes to potentially contentious issues.

Among the various organizations, there is great similarity in form with respect to coordinating members' support for any given decision. Contemporary discourse that strongly advocates for more inclusiveness and participation in decision-making has clearly had an influence on espoused management practices across the organizational spectrum from BAH to UCAPP. Nonetheless there are considerable differences in the underlying in-use theories of action at play.

We can use an analogous approach to understanding the differences in how the respective organizations scale. One could say that any organization scales to increase its effectiveness, conventionally thought of as either achieving more of its objectives, or increasing its ability to access and deploy resources (Campbell, 1977). In contrast, a UCAPP organizations such as Inter Pares scales by increasing the scope and domain of its intended *effects* through engagements with various partners and coalition members throughout the world, irrespective of other, more traditional measures of organizational effectiveness. Sam relates a lengthy anecdote about Inter Pares's role in facilitating an extended agricultural and agriculture-policy exchange between Canadian organic farmers and their counterparts in India (Sam-1-57/63). In my conversation with Sam, I asked, "If you approach the issue of scaling from, how do we scale in terms of our core values, the effects that we want to create in the world, it seems that you're scaling pretty darn well," (despite remaining at a headcount of fifteen people). Sam agrees and explains:

I'd say that is the way that we scale up. We work a lot in coalitions, and in collaboration with other organizations in trying to implicate more and more people into, and draw more and more actors into the work that we're focused on. And we try to include in that also, infusing our ideals and approaches as much as possible or appropriate. (Sam-1-106)

Thus, both BAH and UCAPP organizations scale to increase their effectiveness. With BAH organizations, effectiveness is measured in terms of owned or controlled resources that are deployed in the pursuit of defined objectives and goals. UCAPP organizations, it seems, feel a lesser need to control or own the means – including people – that enable the creation and dissemination of its intended effects which are based in shared values and participation in common cause.

The divestiture of legitimated control that characterizes both Inter Pares, and to a somewhat lesser extent, Unit 7, is predicated on the dissemination of what is usually considered privileged knowledge. The value of socializing information can be neither underestimated nor overstated in a collaborative leadership environment that provides true empowerment—enabling every member to commit the organization to a particular tactical activity or strategic direction. Jean explains the value and seemingly paradoxical benefits of full attendance at the program meetings⁵⁴, echoing many of Loreen's observations:

We spend, some people think, an inordinate amount of time up front, having meetings with each other, talking to each other about things. In many organizations, for instance, the program meeting would be only the people directly involved in program. Here, it involves everybody. Actually, it's really, really useful for many reasons. People who are directly involved in program can often bring perspective that programmers lose sight of. And, often, somebody who might be in fundraising, or donor relations, or doing the books, will learn something about the program because of the conversations, about the context, or about the analysis, that actually makes something that

⁵⁴ Program meetings concern geo-political and thematic operations activities in which Inter Pares is involved based on the various "clusters," as opposed to management infrastructure issues that are the subject matter for the staff meetings. Both meetings are held monthly and include all members of Inter Pares.

she's just been asked to do make absolute sense. ... It makes the wheels turn easier, so you don't have to come up with fifteen administrative checks and balances, and have somebody look over your shoulder as you're trying to make every decision which, actually, is a waste of energy. (Jean-1-54)

The idea that involving everyone in all matters is more efficient over the long term is, at first blush, counter-intuitive. However, it creates unanimity in supporting decisions, eliminates undermining, and creates a shared understanding of the organization's present reality in each person's mind. Jean continues:

There's a whole bunch of fallout from having everybody there. One, is that you make a decision, and you know everybody's behind it. And nobody's going to be undermining it off in the corner, which I'm sure you've seen as well. Which [avoids] years-long battles going on, and nothing actually getting done. Or things getting done, and then getting undone, and then getting done again. We don't have that. (Jean-1-57)

This approach takes a longer-term, integrated, and holistic operational view of the organization, rather than a shorter-term, narrower-scope, instrumental view based in specific, individual concerns. In the larger context of the organization in relation to the interconnected multiplicity of its constituencies, this approach represents a form of environmental sensing and feedforward process with respect to bringing continually changing, diverse contexts, active issues, and pending decisions back to the organization. These help to reinforce the sense of common cause and vested commitment among all organizational members:

The other thing that happens is that after every meeting, I have more of a sense of where this organism is right now, and it's constantly evolving as people think, as people go through bad moods and then get out of them, or as we integrate new people and some people leave, it's always evolving. (Jean-1-57)

Sustaining a Complex Culture

The evolution of Inter Pares's direct membership is slow because of its very low turnover. Nonetheless, hiring and integration of new members is a thorough, and well thought-through process that is consistent not only with the organization's values, but also with preserving and sustaining those values. As Jean describes, "we go through a fairly rigorous hiring process, and we're looking for fit and aptitude. Sometimes we're looking for a specific knowledge or expertise, but that's actually more rare. The biggest priority is fit, aptitude, and political analysis" (Jean-1-59). She continues:

What I would mean by fit is, is this somebody who has an open mind? If one of their deeply held beliefs is challenged, are they going to just react, and just say, no, actually this is something I'm not even going to listen to? Or, are they somebody who will swallow hard and say, okay, let's talk about that. Why do you think that? Because one the things that we need to be doing in this work more is to question what we're doing. We're in a business in which we actually disagree with most of the business, but we're that forum. And so

there's all sorts of contradictions we're living everyday. You have to have a strong tolerance for ambivalence, for ambiguity. You have to have a very strong *norte*, polar star, orientation, to be able to, to be able to keep following what you think, rather than what you dragged into, in the normal course of events in this biz. There's a saying, author I don't remember. Somebody, a French philosopher who I always love, [said] this: you have to remember to live the way you think, or you are in grave danger of ending up thinking the way you live⁵⁵. (Jean-1-63)

Note the very strong connection suggested in Jean's description of fit between one's personal, lived values, and the way those values are expressed through one's actions. This points to the necessity of aligning the values of the UCAPP organization as a whole with those of the individual members, rather than the other way around.

How does an organization actually ensure the correct "fit" in selecting new members? And, without a specific human resources "expert," how does Inter Pares manage both the hiring process itself, and the necessary organizational learning that enables a consistent and sustainable hiring and integration process over time? Inter Pares's hiring committee composition ensures sustainable learning in keeping with its co-management ethos: one person who would be working with the new hire, one who has never been on the hiring committee before to provide experience, and one other who would be continually available throughout the process. After the typical short-list process of determining those who are technically qualified, articulate, (depending on the circumstances of the position) literate in both official languages, and presentable in initial interviews with the hiring committee, the top choice is invited to participate in an experience that is more initial acculturation than it is job interview:

Whoever we've recommended will be invited to come back for what we call the rounds, which is where they meet with all of the other colleagues. In the past, those were all one-on-one, two-hour interviews; we often pair up now, though people have the option of going on their own. So by then, there's only one person who's doing that rounds. They're not in competition with anyone else. And it's really an opportunity for people to explore whether we've made the right recommendation, and to get different perspectives on that person that would surface through multiple conversations. Also, for the potential incoming person, it's a chance for them to meet everybody, and to get a sense of whether this is a workplace they'd be interested in, and to have fifteen different views or facets of the organization... And also, aside from it being a more informed decision by having more information about that person, it's also a broadly shared decision. (Sam-1-39)

The extensive process of "rounds" is the beginning of acculturation into Inter Pares's social contract and appreciation of its collective values and ethos. Not only is the collaborative, co-management structure described to the candidate; the potential new

⁵⁵ From French author, Paul Bourget's work, *Le Démon de midi*, "*Il faut vivre comme on pense, sans quoi l'on finira par penser comme on a vécu*"—translated approximately as, one must live the way one thinks or end up thinking the way one has lived.

member actually participates in it as part of the hiring process. As Sam describes, “I think the process would really reveal to yourself, if you’re engaged with, and enthusiastic about this type of management model, because if you’re not, ... that could, I think, lead to some doubts” (Sam-1-47). Sam reflects on her own experience of the hiring process as a confirmation of her alignment with Inter Pares’s values:

When I first was invited to come for the rounds, I thought at first, wow, this seems really lengthy. But then, as an interviewee, when I was participating in it, I thought this makes complete sense. I think that revealed my alignment with Inter Pares’s views and philosophies on things. It seemed very logical that, if you’re going to be working with everybody very collegially, you would have a chance to meet everybody, and vice versa. Especially in a non-hierarchical organization, you could all take a decision together to welcome a new member amongst you. (Sam-1-49)

Edgar Schein (1992) describes organizational culture in terms of processual learned behaviours in response to particular situations. At the third-level of culture in Schein’s conception are the deep-seated and tacit cultural understandings that effect in-use theory of action, which “have become so taken for granted that ... behaviour based on any other premise [is] inconceivable” (p. 22). Despite the considerable time investment required, the rounds process as part of Inter Pares’s hiring ritual helps to immediately inculcate potential new employees into that third-level of organizational culture. Inter Pares’s program-operational effectiveness is completely intertwined with its value set expressed through its culture. Thus, such an extensive acculturation process – even before the new member is officially hired – is as important to the organization’s ongoing sustainability as is, for instance, hiring individuals with the appropriate content knowledge.

Consistency and alignment of values with the organization’s external constituencies is a similarly important consideration for a UCAPP organization like Inter Pares, as important as value alignment among its internal members. Sam describes the equivalently slow process of “getting to know” a new organization with which Inter Pares may form an alliance—a process quite analogous to “the rounds”:

Other organizations, we’ve gotten to know over the years – often it can be through chance meetings with people at conferences who are working in countries, and we really like their politics, or what they’re doing... We start exploring collaborations, and perhaps might plan some things together, or invite them to conferences, and then after some time, explore whether adding in a financial element in terms of raising funds on their behalf, whether that makes sense given the relationship. (Sam-1-55)

Sam gives an example of an organization in Sudan, one of whose members met an Inter Pares member by happenstance in another forum. That led to a subsequent small collaboration in another group, that evolved into a larger, direct collaboration, that resulted in a stronger direct-support connection involving fundraising. Rather than being a specific, purposeful or mission-fulfilling goal or objective, bringing in a new organization as a coalition-member is “usually a very organic process” (Sam-1-55). The decision about how to proceed emerges as the nature of the relationships evolves, without a specific, pre-determined endpoint or decision timeframe.

The evaluation process at Inter Pares – especially for new colleagues – is continual, ongoing, and holistic, rather than being framed as a periodic, singular evaluative event *per se*. Evaluation is focused on individuals’ “larger institutional integration” rather than on strictly judging performance in the context of assessing whether the person was indeed the appropriate choice for the job—more checking-in as opposed to checking-up:

We have what we call a reference group for new colleagues when they come in that, for a year, they have a group of people that they can talk to, and who assume a responsibility for their larger institutional integration, rather than having it fall just upon the people who will work most immediately with that new person. So we might set up a reference group that might meet with that person to talk about their issues, and try to problem-solve with them.

We have the possibility of a staff evaluation, where a staff can say, I would like to go through an evaluation, and have people work through with me my workload issues. And sometimes, it’s the COG [that] does what we call checking the ice, of just saying I think that so-and-so has been under a lot of strain lately, and why don’t we recommend that they take a week of paid leave, or to suggest that we change the committee structure a bit to take them off a committee, or to encourage a particular redistribution of work to help them—whatever means people think might help a person through a particularly rough patch. (Sam-1-35)

Like many other organizations, Inter Pares has a probationary period of sorts to assess the performance of new members with respect to both professional and interpersonal competencies. However, as might be expected, the process of assessment is considerably different from that in conventional (especially BAH) organizations in intent, implementation, and effect, as Sam outlines:

When staff first come to Inter Pares, after the first six months, they write a self-evaluation. An evaluation committee is appointed to discuss any issues that might be raised. And so, staff write a description of their work, and what they’ve been doing, and how they feel about their learning and their integration process, and how they’ve been performing so far, and how things are going. I would say six to eight pages. And that is circulated to all staff, and every staff member in the co-management structure writes a written response. And so it’s a really good opportunity for the new staff to get feedback on how they’ve been doing, and primarily that ends up being an affirmation and encouragement of how well they’re doing so far...

If there have been any gaps in their learning that still haven’t been covered, or any failure in the support systems to help them integrate, then those are identified and addressed, and any measures needed to address those are suggested and then monitored, usually either by the evaluation committee, or by that person’s reference group. And the notes to the evaluation meeting are circulated so everybody knows this is how the issues that got flagged have been addressed. And everybody has a chance to read all of those responses—they’re also circulated. And then after a year, the evaluation committee

touches base again, and looks at where things were six months prior, and has there been resolution to any issues. (Sam-1-65)

Like Unit 7, Inter Pares's evaluations are extensive narratives, qualitative and contextually based. True to its collaborative practices throughout every other aspect of the institution, even employee evaluation is collaborative, and founded on a notion of collective responsibility among all members—witness mention of yet to be covered “gaps in their learning” and “failure in the support systems.” The six-month self-evaluation process is framed as a collective reflection of the individual in relation to the other members and institution as a whole, and the other members in relation to the new person. Because everyone is both vested and implicated in the individual's success, the new member feels safe to make honest reflections and to seek guidance.

The difference between this milestone and a typical “probationary period,” is significant. Conventionally during this period, a person's position is tacitly, but most definitely, in constant jeopardy as their ongoing employment is contingent on a successful exit from probation—the language similarity to attaining freedom from penal incarceration is not lost on most people. On the contrary, in a UCAPP organization like Inter Pares, members assume an explicit, shared, mutual, and collaborative responsibility for a new member's integration and personal success. At the first anniversary of a new member joining, there is, as Sam mentions, a subsequent review and something more:

We have a social contract that is the staff agreement, and even though, legally, they're employed as full-time staff, it's a bit of a ceremonial welcoming to say, you made it through your first year, way to go, and people are celebrated for having made it through their first year. (Sam-1-65)

Self-evaluations are not only for new members. Each year at Inter Pares's annual retreat, members participate in a reflection-oriented self- and mutual-assessment. When compared to conventional annual review processes in more-BAH organizations, the distinction between the respective cultures of checking-in at Inter Pares, versus the more traditional culture of checking-up, becomes clear:

Every member of the co-management structure writes a self-evaluation each summer in time for our fall retreat ... where we go away for a few days, and talk about institutional issues. ... Everybody has written a self-evaluation that's been circulated prior to that retreat, so you have a sense for where people are at in the work, how they're doing, what workload issues there are. People are also meant to talk about what they're doing, because sometimes there are certain aspects that, for whatever reason, haven't been socialized, and so it's a way to share what your big priorities were over the last year, and what you've been able to accomplish. ... People have ten to fifteen minutes to talk. So it's meant to be more of an existential level, you know, this is how I'm feeling in my life, and in my work so far, and these are the major things that have been affecting me, and this is how I'm doing generally. (Sam-1-67)

For the longer-serving members, there is a recently instituted reference-group evaluation, akin to that provided to new members, which occurs at least once every seven years. It is a combination of work evaluation, a systemic reflection on the whole person in

relation to the holistic institutional environment, and a form of long-term, reflective life therapy. The reference group evaluation is a larger-scale, well-focused check-in that is substantially different from the typical annual review in BAH organizations. BAH annual reviews tend to concentrate on specific task-oriented goals and so-called growth or personal development objectives that are exclusively related to the instrumentality of the job. In Inter Pares's case, a reference group reflection includes and expands beyond the person's assigned job responsibilities to incorporate other aspects consistent with the organization's values and lived ethos.

Without the (sometimes not-so-tacit) threat of suitability for one's office as reported in a BAH environment such as Organization A, for instance, or a need to rank individuals for either rivalrous, scarce rewards or punishments, this framing of reflective assessment via checking-in helps to enable a sense of safety in the evaluative space. Moreover, by eliminating the need for either defensiveness, retrospective justification, or objective validation, the organization creates its own opportunities for learning, improvement, and continual emergence towards greater effectiveness.

One additional significant aspect of living a culture of checking-in involves the institution itself as a distinct actant that participates in the annual retreat check-in:

This is more like a program check-in. ... There are questions around the institution. Do you feel there is anything at the institutional level that you need to bring to our attention? What can we do about it? Do you have proposals? So it's ... trying to get more at the assessment part of it, but understanding that it's not an evaluation—like getting a self-assessment and kind of a cultural, ambient assessment as well. (Jean-1-97)

Overall, these extensive, holistic, and rich, contextual reflection processes create a depth of common understanding among all members. That common understanding enables the level of coordination, socialization of knowledge, and trust that provide for empowered autonomy and agency for each individual in a ground of collective responsibility and mutual accountability. It represents an organizational embodiment of “managing the action/reflection polarity” (Laiken, 2002a).

As I have mentioned several times, a significant contributor to these processes is the practice of regular check-in. Integrally considering the reflexive effects created in the union of one's personal and work lives reinforces the characteristically UCAPP notion of work/life integration: “At the staff meetings, we have personal check-ins, where people talk about their personal life and [life] at work. It's a voluntary thing, and people share elements that they feel might be affecting their work-life as they see fit” (Sam-1-27).

Integrating work and life, being aware of the social and psychological effects of such integration, and being able to articulate that intersection for one's colleagues is expressed through the colloquial term, “where you're at”:

Where you're at. I mean that as a statement about one's mental health, or psychic state, or if it's with respect to workload, then how you're feeling about that, how you're managing that. Because we feel that part of responsible management is to ask for other people's assistance when you feel like you're overwhelmed, rather than foundering under the weight of your work, and having the work suffer. (Sam-1-29)

What is interesting and significantly different from more traditional environments, is that admitting that one is overwhelmed is not understood as a sign of weakness, inability, or incompetence in one's responsibilities. If a culture is expressed in terms of collective responsibility and mutual accountability, an individual surfacing a state of feeling overwhelmed to his/her colleagues is consistent with being mutually accountable for the work getting done. Moreover, that overwhelmed individual acts on the sense of collective responsibility felt by all members to rectify the situation.

Individuals commonly feel an obligation to be individually accountable for their own psychological wellbeing, and take individual responsibility for remediation. However, in that more conventional environment, the manager faces an almost intractable conflict: s/he has a primary responsibility and individual accountability for specific objectives, goals, and outcomes for his/her department that are inevitably compromised by an individual's psychological incapacity. Resolving that tension humanistically in a primarily instrumental environment certainly depends on the individual humanity and willingness of the manager. However, that resolution tends not to scale in the individual's favour organizationally as, for example, Stan reports in Organization M, and several participants from Organization A similarly relate. Essentially, whatever individual humanity may exist between an individual and their direct superior in a BAH environment tends to scale to collective callousness the farther up the hierarchy the "resolution" originates.

In contrast, Sam describes how the tension between individual and collective responsibility is negotiated in a primary relationship-based view of people that characterizes a UCAPP organization:

I'd say there's a balance that happens. On one hand, we do have collective concern for our colleagues' mental health, but we also recognize that a certain onus lies on each individual for their own mental health, and to flag items for colleagues. And so sometimes that could be reviewed in hindsight, you know, to look back on a situation and to say, I think that as a group we should have stepped in more in that situation. And other times we might say, we've talked about this person's situation on a recurring basis, and ultimately they have to take responsibility... It's not enough to say as a group, well this person's a workaholic, and we've talked too much about it, and only they can address that. Inevitably it will have a negative impact on the work of the whole. And so collectively, we have to take steps to address it. (Sam-1-31)

The Nature of Collaborative Leadership

Coordinating tactical and strategic activities, as well as the leadership process itself, are conflated in *Inter Pares* in a way that represents something more than relatively straightforward decision-making based on objectively considered criteria. This circumstance has to do with what Jean describes as "the right and responsibility" that inheres in each member to commit the organization to a particular direction, especially with respect to external constituencies:

We are responsible for the organization, and we're all accountable to the organization. And, we all get benefit from the organization. So we work on the principle of parity. Parity of responsibility, accountability, obligation, as well as parity of what we get out of the organization. ... And I'm doing that

as a manager, knowing that I am going to be the person who manages the fallout, if there is any. So while I know that I have the right and responsibility to do these things while I'm out, I also have the responsibility to ensure that I'm right— as right as I can get. And I understand my organization as well as I can, so that I can think about what the fallout might be. Whether it's fallout in terms of, was that a very effective thing to do, to, did it undermine something else that we're trying to do? Then, when I come back to the institution, it's the institution's obligation to support me. And, if there is fallout, if there's a problem, even if they think I was wrong, [they will] support me, and be able to figure out, okay, now what do we do?" (Jean-1-43).

In this short excerpt, Jean describes Inter Pares's collaborative leadership trioka of individual autonomy and agency, collective responsibility, and mutual accountability. Collaborative leadership is situated in the context of a shared space of socialized knowledge and the common – that is, *integrative* – sense of understanding of institutional and subject-matter content, and the multiplicity of grounds that create meaning. Being true to Inter Pares's social contract, this sense of mutual understanding creates trust, from which the collective mind, positions, and approaches – “mostly approaches rather than positions” (Jean-1-37) – emerge.

One of the main, I don't know whether you'd call it methodology, probably modality is better, that we have is—we use the technical term, winging it. So, when we're here around the table, we do our analysis together. We understand our institution, we understand where we're coming from. When we engage in the conversations, we understand it better and better. That allows us to go out and be the executive director, each and every one of us. We can make decisions for our organization. (Jean-1-27)

Since each member of Inter Pares has the ability to commit the organization to external constituencies, leadership cannot be embodied in any one person. Rather, it is collaborative leadership-as-process. Collaborative leadership is neither anarchy nor simple consensus—both of which create a vacuum of leadership. Collaborative leadership and true individual empowerment do not suggest the absence of responsibility or accountability—it is quite the opposite, in fact. Notably, leadership at Inter Pares is constructed as a complex, emergent process, embodied within the entirety of the *organization-as-entity*, rather than in any one person. There is, as well, a notion of organizational mindfulness that transcends the individual's specific subject-matter responsibility: “It is our responsibility as a co-manager here, to understand the organization, and to make sure we understand, and can represent the collective mind, the collective positions and approaches” (Jean-1-37). This concept in a conventional, BAH organization exists solely as part of the subject matter expertise of the professional managers in a manner consistent with scientific management's division of labour.

When individual autonomy and agency goes wrong, when the organization becomes committed to a direction that is untenable, for instance, the immediate reaction is *not* to restrict members' autonomy or institute procedures of so-called checks and balances. Jean recoils at the mere thought of such restrictions: “That would kill us. It would just kill us. It

would kill the reason we're here. And I actually had a visceral reaction when you said that!" (Jean-1-54). Rather, there is a collective reflection on, "at what point should this person have brought this back to the group? It needed to have been more socialized that it was, and people could have helped her about raising some red flags on a few things" (Jean-1-53). And the group, collectively, extricates the institution from the errant decision.

Inter Pares delineates the diametric distinction between the BAH and UCAPP leadership and decision-making models. In a more-BAH organization, the time required to completely socialize information is seen as detracting from the efficiency required to expediently accomplish instrumental objectives. Individuals are socialized to perceive non-direct-task-related information as being generally irrelevant to their personal context—the task at hand. Hence, they are often unwilling or unable to assimilate it in the larger, organizational context, or beyond. Thus, decision-making is reserved for the elite few, relatively higher in the organizational hierarchy, whose specific subject-matter expertise is nominally the process of purposeful, objective-oriented decision-making.

Administrative and bureaucratic procedures become necessary to supply appropriate information to that small group of individuals, and to provide the organization with whatever checks and balances are necessary to ensure integrity in decision-making processes. These processes themselves often consume tremendous time and resources, sometimes overshadowing the time and effort required to actually accomplish the nominal task-at-hand in large bureaucracies. Additionally, they can become a locus of passive control as contentious or controversial issues disappear into the maw of bureaucratic and administrative procedure and review.

More-UCAPP organizations invest considerable time to socialize information and involve people who may not have a direct, purposeful reason for participating in that information sharing. However, the extensive socializing of information means that each member can act relatively autonomously, assessing circumstances with a high degree of accuracy. This socialization enables the organization to move quickly in actually accomplishing the task-at-hand. Given the right organizational context – a social contract, for instance, to which all members are committed – leadership-embodied-as-process does not have an explicit and distinct control function that creates the necessity for explicit and distinct administrative controls. Therefore, the UCAPP organization requires neither the gatekeeper aspect of decision-making nor the consequential construct of leadership being embodied in an individual.

This is counter-intuitive—the idea that involving everyone in socializing all information and collectively making all decisions provide a more expedient and effective leadership approach overall. However, it creates unanimity in supporting decisions that are ultimately taken, and eliminates undermining, and undoing and redoing initiatives depending on internal organizational politics. Perhaps most important, it creates a sense in each person's mind of "where this organism is right now, and it's constantly evolving. ... I always have an ongoing touchstone about what I'm representing out in the world" (Jean-1-57).

Leadership-as-process enacted in Inter Pares is rooted in the practical reality of human dynamics which is far from utopian. There are circumstances in which individuals may assert themselves in what otherwise might appear to be a leadership role—in this, the appearance or *figure* seems to be no different than in a BAH organization. However, it is very

different in *ground* – the context and intent – and therefore, in its *effect* compared to more conventional organizations:

It's more just the natural dynamics of leadership that happen in terms of people having greater authority based on their knowledge or expertise in one particular area, and people might turn to that, or defer to that. Or perhaps if you are a more timid person, you might not assert yourself as much as a more confident person. So there are the dynamics that play out everyday in life, but without the addition and entrenchment of it by having a hierarchical structure internally. And there's also a conscious reflection on power, in that we share institutional responsibility and privilege as much as we can. (Sam-1-97)

In other words, a UCaPP organizational philosophy, ethos, and management practices will not negate what Sam describes as the natural power dynamics that exist among people. By the same token, neither does the UCaPP organization reinforce or reward what are often problematic effects of those supposedly natural dynamics, nor those who would exploit them to their personal benefit. Irrespective of any other consideration, this aspect alone offers considerable hope to remediate many of the dysfunctions that have characterized the beginning of the 21st century—remnants of the 20th century's BAH heritage.

Finding the Natures of *Organization*

Change

In his book, *The Rise of the Network Society*, Manuel Castells (1996) describes bureaucracies as, “organizations for which the reproduction of their system of means becomes their main organizational goal” (p. 171). By continually reproducing and refining their procedures and processes, bureaucracies characteristically strive to achieve stability and predictability in their operations, a state of being “near equilibrium [where] we find repetitive phenomena and universal laws” (Capra, 1996, p. 182). The honing of their “system of means” to (ideally) achieve near-perfect predictability stands in opposition to any sort of organizational richness, variety, or adaptive behaviours that would tend to effect organic or evolutionary change at the cost of their ability to accommodate the unexpected or exceptional.

Facing change

Thus, in the face of change, BAH organizations tend to favour systems and structures that have proven to be successful, irrespective of acknowledging possible changes in context. Organization A, for example, adheres to the “cargo cult” principle of adopting what are perceived to be so-called best practices as it acquires and assimilates new companies. Organization M, through its myriad formal, administrative procedures that are “more spelled out so it's more rigid” (Mina-1-99), has become almost ossified over the past two decades. Those who might have been agents of change have been effectively blocked from doing anything other than “writing as directed” (Mary-1-67). Organization F, in transitioning to become more BAH, seeks the relative stability of functional stratification, that Jeff maintains is “a necessary evil” simply because it “is what we should do” (Jeff-1-253) compared to larger, more established organizations.

It is not that UCAPP organizations necessarily embrace change or deliberately seek change as a mandated process. Rather, Unit 7 and Inter Pares demonstrate how creating truly collaborative organizational dynamics enables change and adaptation to continually and organically emerge. Unit 7, for example, creates multiple venues in which people of various ranks from different functional areas of the organization collaborate so that new perceptions and voices are able to introduce new understandings of the organization's greater environment. Inter Pares chooses to work primarily in coalition to accomplish the same effect.

Controlling change

Change is certainly managed in UCAPP organizations, although a better word might be *accommodated*—adapted to, provided for, held comfortably, and made suitable. The systems and structures, especially those that comprise the *culture change venue*, provide mechanisms whereby changes can become well-integrated into the organization's day-to-day operations. Inter Pares, for example, describes how the values espoused in its social contract provide foundational guidance for its growth, and how that growth is slow and organic. There is a strong emphasis on acculturation whether the growth occurs among its own membership or is manifest in the effects it enables among its various coalition partners. At each turn and at every level, UCAPP organizations continually reflect on the advisability of both pursuing new directions and practices, and continuing old ones. The key question, as Unit 7 frames it, is, “for the sake of why?” (Loreen-1-9). New information and environmental influences that might spark change are invited from all quarters and socialized widely—change occurs where it occurs, without regard for the rank or status of the change agent.

BAH organizations create mechanisms that emphasize control and specific task focus which limit individuals' interest and willingness to step beyond their bounds, save to achieve a direct, extrinsic benefit. As seen in Organizations M and A, and to an increasing extent, Organization F, members are strongly socialized to accept the status quo – the way things are done are the way things *should* be done – with questioning, challenges, and dissent strongly (if sometimes tacitly) discouraged. Changes that do occur come from the top of the hierarchy, limited to a privileged cohort within the organization specifically charged with being the “thinkers.” Consequently, knowledge exchange, particularly in the form of feedback and feedforward loops, is equally limited to those whose instrumental task it is to set direction, make decisions, and initiate change.

Coordination

Teamwork vs. collaboration

Teamwork, in the discursive sense of this analysis, is consistent with a primary-purposeful organization; hence, every member of the team is selected by virtue of what they can contribute based on a pre-determined understanding of the team's requirements. It is based on the assumption that information and capabilities in a bureaucracy are fragmented among its component roles, and that the way to ensure complete information being brought to bear on a particular initiative is to identify and coordinate those necessary components.

The sports-originated team metaphor suggests a “captain,” a legitimated leader who assumes overall responsibility (that is, responsibility “over all”) for the team's assigned objective, goal, or *purpose*. It is taken as axiomatic in a BAH environment that the right team,

once assembled, with everyone delivering on their required responsibilities, will produce the desired outcome. Each team member works independently on their assigned tasks which are themselves *interdependent* so as to provide a sense of cohesiveness among the fragmented, individual, subtask objectives. If an individual fails in their assigned task, s/he is personally accountable for that failure to the BAH-style leader who him- or herself is accountable for the team's failure to those higher in the hierarchy.

In a sense, primary-purposeful teamwork hearkens to the age-old story that recounts, “for the want of a nail,” the shoe, the horse, the rider, the battle, and the kingdom were all lost. There is a sequential, linear, (inter)dependency that lies at the heart of purposeful teamwork, as reported by various members of Organizations M, A, and F. Teamwork in this sense can be considered to be the fundamental unit of BAH coordination, and comprises its fundamental vulnerability. Not only do primary-purposeful teams possess many individual and generally uncontrollable points of failure. The extreme functional and linear-process foci do not necessarily ensure that the team's product will actually produce or contribute to the intended ultimate organizational result.

Collaboration recognizes that there is much of which any *organization* is unaware. As I mentioned earlier, collaboration recognizes the limitations of knowledge, assessment, predictability, and anticipation of future need—in short, *organization* does not, and cannot, know what it does not know. Thus, collaboration depends on individuals having the agency to involve themselves in widely publicized initiatives, and the autonomy to undertake self-identified-as-necessary tasks. Individual autonomy and agency can only be effective when it is balanced by a sense of collective responsibility among the members who collaborate. Jean from Inter Pares identifies this as “parity—parity of responsibility, accountability, obligation” (Jean-1-43) among *organization* and its members. Being collectively responsible – one cannot succeed unless all succeed – means that the members of a collaboration viscerally experience mutually accountability among one another for the success or failure of the whole.

Game design at Unit 7, for instance, begins by inviting those throughout the organization who feel they can contribute to, or have a stake in the outcome of an initiative, to participate. Collaboration depends on a type of over-involvement that seeks to cover more than the initial, nominal, expected requirements, as those cannot precisely be known. Initiatives that have worked exceptionally well at Unit 7 – its relationship with Account R or the B-Roll Diabetes Initiative – are highly collaborative, each one demonstrating the three characteristics of individual autonomy and agency, collective responsibility, and mutual accountability. Collaboration provides more-than-required resources in a non-rivalrous environment where job competency is not considered an exclusive or limited commodity. Those endeavours that are more of a struggle for Unit 7 – the Workflow Process game design whose challenges exemplify the importance of creating a culture change venue – struggle because they retain some artefacts of dysfunctional teamwork mentality among some of the members. Redundancy, even if by design or self-election, suggests a lack of competency or ability to perform in those who believe they hold individual responsibility in a primary-purposeful team context. What is perceived as a threat in such a team is an asset in a collaboration. As Loreen reminds us, collaboration “is a very misunderstood way of working” (Loreen-1-95).

Checking-up vs. checking-in

The differences between BAH and UCAPP ways of working give rise to differences in the methods used to ensure that tasks will be accomplished. When a leader assumes individual responsibility for the success of his or her team, there is the concomitant responsibility to “make sure”: “The discipline of checking-in is different from the discipline of making sure. So, the making sure will have a pretty strong positioning of, I’m pretty sure you haven’t so I’m just here to make sure” (Loreen-1-281). A BAH organization’s control imperative and interdependent responsibility structure necessitate checking-up, making sure that no metaphorical nails are lost.

In contrast, UCAPP collective responsibility and mutual accountability create a different imperative—one in which all members take on an authentic concern for each other’s success via checking-in. The concern is genuinely holistic in nature, as Sam explains:

It is meant to be about how you’re feeling about your role in the organization, that’s certainly part of it. But how that has manifested in your work. Do you feel that you’re being effective ... like your talents are being used in a way that are the most effective and productive, and do you see any challenges? (Sam-1-73)

Because checking-in originates in mutual accountability rather than in judgement or evaluation, there is no incentive to obscure problems or difficulties. It thus becomes a more effective way of ensuring ongoing and appropriate coordination throughout the organization.

Alignments

Matt clearly describes how he encourages competent, independent agents to act, while he “generally *makes sure* that their activities are aligned with those of the organization as a whole” (Matt-1-7), that is, “aligned with what we’re trying to get done” (Matt-1-95). BAH organizations, like Organization A, functionally decompose overarching objectives at each successive hierarchical level so that, to a person, individual goals and tasks are aligned with those of the organization. This model extends to the organization’s nominal values; individuals are asked to subscribe and conform to organizational values, sometimes even in their private lives (Adam-2-38). When one’s own values deviate from those expressed by the organization (or perceived by outsiders), an individual may hide their organizational association in social conversation, for example (Stan-1-144).

UCAPP organizations seek to align organizational values with those of their members. Jean expresses this as “be[ing] able to keep following what you think, rather than what you’re dragged into” (Jean-1-63), recounting Bourget’s warning about the danger of “thinking the way you live” (Jean-1-63). There is, of course, a strong connection between one’s personal, lived values and the way those values are expressed through one’s actions. By adopting UCAPP alignment of values, task coordination becomes less about control and checking-up, and more about enabling autonomous agency among members who collectively know what should be done.

Evaluation

Assessment

Setting and meeting objectives is considered important for organizational effectiveness. However, precisely how those objectives are set depends on how one frames *effectiveness*, a topic into which the thesis will delve in a subsequent chapter. BAH organizations set objectives that are quantifiable and (nominally) achievable. However, as we have seen among all the BAH organizations, quantifiable and achievable objectives do not necessarily reflect achievement of the desired, intended, or even nominal outcomes or effects. Stan, for example, reports several instances of metrics designed to demonstrate the organization's success, without actually achieving the nominal public policy objectives. And Aaron claims that the metric used to measure Organization F's key success criterion – customer satisfaction – is little more than a “meaningless statistic that we've used to puff out our chests and feel good about ourselves” (Aaron-2-68).

On the other hand, UCAPP organizations create objectives that create visibility for the intended effects and provide an ongoing reflection on the organization's values in action. Assessments are qualitative, subjective, and highly contextualized; they are therefore neither easy nor quick to accomplish. Although there are specific standards for performance – Unit 7, for instance, creates both a “satisfactory and a wow area for each item that you [promise]” (Cindy-1-172) – UCAPP assessments are as much about contribution to the environment as contribution to results.

Particularly as I have framed *organization* as a distinct actant – an autonomous entity, agent or actor that has behaviours, characteristics, and externally perceived intent distinct from those of its members – any given organization can and *should* be considered for periodic reflective assessment for itself. One cannot simply take as axiomatic, for instance, the proposition that a BAH organization is always correct in its often arbitrary selection of goals and objectives. Thus, individual goals and objectives derived via functional decomposition may as well be contestable. Indeed, in a culture of inquiry characteristic of UCAPP organizations, individuals' “promises” (Unit 7) or “workload issues” (Inter Pares) must always be negotiated and reasonably contested. For Inter Pares in particular, the annual review provides the opportunity for a “cultural ambient assessment” and “program check-in” (Jean-1-95) for the institution as an entity in itself.

The fundamental evaluative concern of the UCAPP organization takes on a significantly different character from that of the typical BAH organization. In general, it asks a very different sort of question based in reciprocity or “parity”: In what ways did the individual contribute to enabling and creating the organization's intended effects, and how well did the organization respond?

Reward and recognition

Reward and recognition are often constructed as rivalrous resources based on the premise of there being beneficial motivational value in creating internal competition among members of a BAH organization. However, the tacit but clear message received by organization members is that they are always and continually competing for their respective offices unless one has job security via a collective agreement, tenure, or other, similar arrangement. Teamwork, for example, becomes necessary in this environment, beyond its

instrumentality for coordination, to establish concertive control (Barker, 1993) among its members in the absence of legitimated and explicit coercion.

Given that the UCAPP organization does not privilege one group or class over another, the espoused concept of personal success only being achievable through group success permeates among all organization members, irrespective of their nominal position, role, or tenure with the organization. When considering BAH organizations, however, the converse is perhaps more important: so-called collaborative efforts or teamwork that might be expected or encouraged among the workers cannot be contradicted by the organization's formal or informal evaluation, compensation, and recognition systems that are typically based on rivalrous rewards.

The collaborative culture of a UCAPP organization decouples reward and status from contribution as much as is feasible in the organization's practical industry or sector context. In a strong UCAPP environment, organization members contribute not only because it aligns with their personal values to do so, but because they *feel* valued in doing so. As Loreen reminds us, "give me a reason ... that is meaningful to me, that I know I'm making a contribution; I'm in" (Loreen-1-203).

Impetus

Every organization has an intrinsic motive force – the ideation which provides the impetus for the organization to move. For many organizations, impetus is expressed as a mission statement that nominally captures the organization's overall goals and objectives. For others – especially UCAPP organizations – impetus emerges from its members' deeply held values that unify in the body of the organization. Regardless of its origin, impetus defines the processes of direction-setting and decision-making, and therefore informs and provides guidance to the mechanisms of management throughout the organization.

Christening a new leadership

Although they emerged as separate categories in this analysis, coordination and impetus are traditionally conflated in the role of "leader" and in the embodied-leadership persona. This conflation only applies in a BAH context; UCAPP organizations separate the coordination-oriented managerial functions that are enacted among various structures and behaviours (e.g., game design at Unit 7, or the practice of checking-in), from the creation and maintenance of impetus *per se* that tends to be emergent from individual and collective values. In contrast, BAH organizations spend considerable time and effort concerned with extrinsic motivation – usually closely integrated with evaluation processes – since the responsibility for impetus is tightly held, not coincidentally by the same "leaders" who control coordination.

By virtue of its ubiquity among BAH organizations, a leader's coercive power via reward and punishment seems to be regarded as the most effective people motivator. In contrast, UCAPP organizations favour referent leadership that emerges organically from among a collaboration or coalition. As Cindy insists, at Unit 7, "all the other people in the group have to agree that you can lead and own it" (Cindy-1-15).

In a BAH organization, the leader atop the hierarchy has the job of knowing the direction and destination of the organization. S/he therefore has the responsibility of providing the necessary and appropriate impetus, both collectively and individually, through delegated authority via administrative procedures. Because BAH organizations coordinate

activities by aligning individual task performance with overall objectives, the leader usually deems it important to align people's directions and destinations with those of the organization. That felt responsibility often necessitates convincing dissenters to either fall in line (Organization A), or give up their dissent (Organization F).

In the collaborative environment characteristic of UCAPP organizations, diverse meaning-making contexts from which dissenting opinions emerge are well-explored and carefully considered. Inter Pares recognizes, for instance, that there is considerable value in being “willing to at least ask the same questions, even if we're not coming up with the same answers” (Jean-1-13). The BAH view on contentious issues is that “you can disagree about stuff, but then once you decide to commit to it, you commit to it and you don't look back” (Matt-1-25). In a more-UCAPP organization like Inter Pares, for instance, “the opportunity to talk about things more than once [occurs] naturally on their own” (Sam-1-27). BAH organizations consider leadership to be embodied in a person; UCAPP organizations consider leadership to be embodied in emergent, socializing processes. I will return to this topic in greater depth in the next chapter.

Sharing a vision

Despite the figure-similarity in how “shared vision” is often expressed among very different organizations, the intent or effect of such expression is vastly different between UCAPP organizations like Unit 7 and Inter Pares, and traditionally managed, BAH organizations. Many organizations refer to constructing a shared vision among their members. Matt, for instance describes, “Organization F as a relatively organic organization, where there's a series of small insights that lead one to a path, ... and people work towards a shared vision of things” (Matt-1-13). As extensively described by Gee, Hull, and Lankshear (1996), contemporary, “fast capitalist” organizations strive to instill a common, corporate vision among all of their employees with the intention that each individual will, to a greater or lesser extent, give over their own identity and values, and assume those of the organization—even extending into their private lives, as reported by both Adam and Karen (Organization A). In contemporary BAH organizations, that process of vision colonization tends to be manipulative, occasionally to the point of becoming anti-humanistic, according to the cited authors and many among the BAH research participants.

In Inter Pares, members also have a mutually shared vision, one that emerges from shared values and deeply held principles. In fact, Inter Pares's hiring process specifically selects for those commonalities, while the co-management process reinforces both vision and values in day-to-day operations. Ironically, the intent of expressing a vision is identical for both BAH and UCAPP organizations: one shared vision to be held among all members and the organization itself. The respective mechanisms for achieving that common vision, of course, could not be more dissimilar. A BAH organization develops its vision – often among a number of elite, top-level members – and offers it as a *fait accompli* for the rest of the membership to adopt as their own. In contrast, Sam describes the consequence of a UCAPP vision process, emergent from its common values, as it is accomplished at Inter Pares:

I'm completely biased, but I would argue that we're far more successful because it is truly a shared vision. It's not merely handing over an individual vision, it's because there are inimical interests within that structure. You know, there's class opposition, there's this contradiction of a company wanting to get as much as it can out of its workers, whereas that's not the

case here, so it allows for people to truly participate in owning and contributing to that vision. (Sam-1-81)

Power Dynamics

A tale of two CEOs

Loreen and Matt each play the role of legitimate leader in organizations that are in transition, from BAH to UCAPP, and vice versa, respectively. They each regard themselves as responsible for creating an enabling environment for their respective organization. Unlike Matt, Loreen does not see that task as a sole responsibility. “It’s not all about what I create for them. It’s also about how they help create it” (Loreen-1-5). In Unit 7’s game design, there is an authentic empowerment process at work in which Loreen cedes a great deal of control to those who would, in a traditional organization, have very little influence, let alone autonomy, to create aspects of that environment.

There may be considerable similarity between the two organization leaders’ description of their roles. But, there is also a key distinction that reflects the considerable philosophical difference between them, and between BAH and UCAPP organizations, with respect to power. As I previously mentioned, Matt “set[s] the course ... generally make[s] sure that their activities are aligned with those of the organization as a whole” (Matt-1-7). He sees himself as being singularly responsible for creating an environment that will facilitate the requisite instrumentality to accomplish the organization’s objectives which are, in fact, Matt’s objectives (Aaron-1-115, 2-24/28; Jeff-1-51). Loreen sees her exercise of control in terms of creating an environment in which people collectively participate, and are mutually responsible for both their own development and for the ongoing facilitation and development of the environment.

As a legitimated leader in a UCAPP organization invites multiple individuals to create an environment for collective participation, there is a deep, lived understanding of mutual responsibility for individual and collective development that pervades the culture. Leadership, as previously mentioned, transforms to become an embodied process in a UCAPP organization. It not only *can* be collaborative, it *must* be collaborative, even as it is enabled and facilitated by the nominal or legitimated leader.

Equivalently, in a BAH organization, leadership *must* be embodied in an individual who, in the best instance, embraces an almost parental caring for those who inhabit his/her environment, designed with as much cognitive, emotional, and social intelligence as can be mustered. At its worst, of course, paternalistic care reverses into a not-so-benign dictatorship, with ambitions for a totalitarian iron grip of control over employees, customers, suppliers, and its market as a whole. Loreen herself admits that the precursor organization to Unit 7 resembled this worst case: “We very much had an abrasive command and control way of running the business. There was a lot of induced fear in the environment” (Loreen-1-17).

As legitimated leaders in their respective organizations, both Matt in Organization F and Loreen in Unit 7 possess, and have exercised, an absolute veto and exclusive decision power. Their reactions reveal key differences in their fundamental philosophies with respect to: creating systems of authentic collaboration; enabling mechanisms that tend to divest absolute power rather than concentrating it in a privileged group; and encouraging a culture of inquiry rather than a culture of advocacy for the leader’s point of view. Loreen reserves

her veto and laments having to use it. Matt sees his veto as his legitimate and exclusive right as the founder of the organization.

Knowledge is power

Whether power is legitimated through rank status, or conveyed through knowledge authority, BAH organizations consider it acceptable, if not essential, to establish and maintain power and control relationships among their members. This becomes especially true when a hierarchy of privileged and legitimated knowledge is supported by the discourse of the so-called knowledge economy. For environments in which exercising overt class privilege might be deemed unacceptable, creating knowledge hierarchies is considered quite permissible, without necessarily probing how the processes that legitimate specifically privileged knowledge simply remap the prior class hierarchy. Unanimously in the BAH participant organization, academic credentials convey status and grant power through legitimizing an individual's contribution (or conversely, delegitimizing it sans credentials).

The working assumption in Unit 7 is that there is considerable potential value and insight to be gained from less formally qualified members; hence they are granted considerable power through their invited influence. Analogously, Inter Pares values indigenous knowledge in the context of international development, and does not privilege Western knowledge authority as do many other international development agencies. UCAPP organizations remain true to their ethos of eschewing power and status hierarchies, be they organizationally structural or constructed by the authority proxy of privileged knowledge.

Sense-making

BAH organizations' dependence on systems and procedures to minimize discretionary judgement means that their instrumentation must necessarily focus on verifying the correctness of those systems and procedures. As I discussed in an earlier chapter, Karl Weick suggests that the generally accepted and entrenched justification for any action or social behaviour reflects the sense that people have made of the world. It is that justification, and its supporting logic, that is given preference above any other. Thus, metrics that validate existing systems – both process systems and systems of meaning – inform the sense-making apparatus in BAH organizations as the interpreted environment increasingly resembles the preconceptions from which the systems and associated metrics emerged (2001, p. 15-23).

Thus, for example, Organization M creates budget-vs.-actual bonus targets for managers that track a minute fraction of a year's fiscal management, and chooses to report program fulfilment based on intentions rather than actual delivery (Stan-1-94/39). Organization A members almost unanimously report that there is no *post hoc* review of business cases once a justified initiative has been implemented to verify whether the nominal benefits were actually realized. And Organization F's CEO simply maintains that, "you commit to [a plan] and you don't look back" (Matt-1-25). This defensive-routine (Argyris, 1994) approach to sense-making that seems to be rife throughout the corporate world and public sector precludes double-loop learning (Argyris & Schön, 1996), that would involve submitting underlying assumptions to critical scrutiny, and questioning the validity of plans and objectives. As Stan observes:

In the government when they do performance measurement, they do it just to get the funding. And what happens, say two or three years from now, no

one goes back and looks at that performance measurement, and [asks], what happened? There's no continuity. (Stan-1-47)

One of the fundamental values in UCAPP organizations is encouraging a culture of inquiry that supports comprehensive sense-making. Loreen frames this as reflexively considering “for the sake of why” a particular initiative is being undertaken or continued. Aaron succinctly summarizes the simple sense-making philosophy underlying a culture of inquiry: “if nobody’s asking questions, that implies to me that there’s not enough thinking being done” (Aaron-2-20).

More than questioning, UCAPP organizations embrace complex, non-deterministic processes that inform their sense-making and strategic direction. They incorporate diverse voices and views, as expressed by both Unit 7 and Inter Pares. In the latter case, Jean describes how they approach making sense of complex issues:

We start from where we are. There’s a history. There’s a present. And, there is, I think, versions of futures that we then have to decide among. But it is based on our history, and our present. ... Some ideas gain traction and some ideas don’t so much. It’s based on a lot of people here who do a fair amount of reading, or are themselves involved in various policy or political organizations, or whatever. (Jean-1-15)

UCAPP organizations value heterogeneous and diverse participation to enable the widest scope of information and insights being brought to bear on an issue. In contrast, BAH organizations reserve participation in organizational sense-making as part of the instrumental role-contribution of an elite few; such participation is generally considered an indicator of one’s privileged status and rank.

View of People

One of Henri Fayol’s (1949) management principles speaks to placing organizational concerns above those of the individual. In the eyes of a BAH organization, people are relatively interchangeable and replaceable so long as the requisite qualifications of the office are met. The functional *bureau* in a bureaucracy sustains, irrespective of the individual occupant, as does the organization as a whole. Multiple offices or functions can be combined or divided in a variety of configurations with no deleterious effect. In fact, because of supposed (or predicted via assumptive, deterministic sense-making) efficiencies and synergies, such combination or division of functions are typically framed as being beneficial to the organization. Any particular individual is as irrelevant to the overall operation of an organization as a specific, replaceable machine part is to the factory machine. People are considered as instrumental by a BAH organization.

UCAPP organizations recognize that membership changes in an organization have the potential to damage the “social contract” that binds, and creates values-based cohesion. As Jean states, “when the social contract begins to break down because there’s turnover in this organization, or that organization ... you have to start saying, is this something we actually want to continue to be part of?” (Jean-1-13). Unit 7 realizes that there is more to be considered than a person’s instrumental contribution to an organization’s production—their contribution to, or undermining of, the cultural environment is a paramount consideration of that organization’s CEO.

The instrumentality with which BAH organizations regard their people leads to a fascinating phenomenon. The experience of some in Organization M notwithstanding, participants in BAH organizations report that their immediate supervisors seem to care – express warm, human feelings and emotions – towards their direct subordinates. However, when considered as a group by managers several levels higher in the hierarchy, this individual humanity scales to collective callousness: “Employment at will, and we own you. You do what you need to get done to keep the company going,” according to Adam (-2-70). Every other BAH-organization participant agrees.

UCaPP organizations tend to scale individual humanity consistently throughout the organization, including up through the ranks of any nominal hierarchy. The caring is reciprocated, especially by those who have not yet become jaded by the working world, as reported in Unit 7. Work/life balance – that Loreen identifies as a baby-boomer concept, comparing the amount of time one spends away from work relative to time spent on the job – flips in a UCaPP organization to become a consideration of work/life *integration*. The more an organization demonstrates that it cares about an individual and her/his contributions, the higher priority an organization’s needs will garner in that individual’s integrated life.

The problem with softball

The question of work/life balance compared to work/life integration manifests in another, interesting way in UCaPP organizations with respect to creating strong, affective connections among members. Often, venturing outside the workplace to have fun, and thereby creating positive affective connections among participants, is a characteristic behaviour of BAH organizations attempting to rebalance the often out-of-balance, work/life balance. Creating opportunities for social engagement is an important catalyst for healthy interpersonal dynamics. However, creating such opportunities in a way that is not holistically integrated into the work environment and the organizational culture reinforces the notion that one’s work is distinct from one’s life. To coin a phrase, what happens in Vegas may well stay in Vegas; to a large extent, what happens in the infield (or even the outfield) stays out in the field and rarely translates to the office in a way that effects cultural transformation and the healing of organizational dysfunctions.

In contrast, Unit 7’s Frances reports on how the B-Roll Diabetes Initiative created strong social and affective connections among members in a way that is well-integrated within the context of the organization’s business operations.

As a department, I was feeling like we were isolated from other departments, and it was hard to build bridges. What’s happened with this initiative is, we created a kind of a research lab that everybody in the agency was invited to take part in for fourteen weeks, to walk in the shoes of a diabetic—a type-2 diabetic. And, what happened as a result is, a few key people worked on developing the initiative with me from departments that I don't really work much with. Production, for instance. Some people from the creative team that I normally might not really get to know that well. And then, when we announced the initiative – it was to the whole agency – people got to see me like they hadn’t seen me before... And I had the chance to talk to people from a very different capacity, and I really started feeling, unlike before, I really started feeling like part of the fabric of the company, and it felt really wonderful. (Frances-2-8)

This succinctly captures the idea of “the problem with softball.” Although it is useful to create affective ties with co-workers, the activities that are typically employed are almost exclusively outside of normal work activities, like softball games, other social outings, company retreats, facilitated workshop events, and the like. In Unit 7’s case, the B-Roll Diabetes Initiative recontextualized typical, work-related activities throughout the agency so that they are engaging and fun, enabling people to collaborate in ways that defy the typical organizational separations imposed by formal structure, hierarchy, and workaday processes.

Enabling these sorts of social connections in the work context eliminates the dissonance and disconnection of being “buddy-buddy” on the ball field or bowling alley, while maintaining fragmented, bureaucratic structures and internal rivalries in the office proper. Consistent with having a fundamentally relational view of people, integrating affective and instrumental aspects of organizational life is an important aspect of a UCAPP environment. As Frances notes, “it’s not just information. It transcends the normal day-to-day business purpose for being here and connecting.” (Frances-2-12).

The contemporary reframing of the classic chicken-and-egg question – which takes priority, the individual or the organization? – plays out in consideration of an individual’s personal development. In BAH organizations, personal development is justifiable and supported when there is an identified business need; the need drives the potential for contribution as Robert reports in Organization A, for example. In a UCAPP organization, individual contributions drive the business potential and opportunity. Thus, personal development is a means to expand an organization’s horizons, so to speak, consistent with valuing diversity and heterogeneity.

What is clear above all else in an instrumental (BAH) versus relational (UCAPP) view of people is that in a UCAPP organization, someone disrupting collaborative relationships and the organization’s social fabric is equivalent to not performing one’s assigned job requirements in a function-oriented, primary-purposeful, BAH organization. This observation, as it turns out, can provide the basis of a unifying theory that connects BAH and UCAPP organizations, and informs an understanding of their respective processes of transition from one type to the other. This, too, will be extensively explored in subsequent chapters.

Simply Put

BAH organizations replace the complexity of human dynamics in social systems with the complication of machine-analogous procedures that enable interdependence through interdependent action, individual responsibility, and hierarchical accountability. UCAPP organizations encourage and enable processes of continual emergence by valuing and promoting complex interactions, even though doing so necessitates traditional, legitimated leadership ceding control in an environment of individual autonomy and agency, collective responsibility, and mutual accountability.

Neither approach is universally appropriate; nor should an organization fall blindly into one or the other without understanding the ramifications and desirability of becoming less (BAH) or more (UCAPP) consistent with contemporary society in the organization’s own complex context.

Part III:

Meaning—The Interplay of Figure and Ground

A Conversation with Nishida: The Place

“You will wear a track in my floor if you persist in your pacing,” warns Nishida. “I do not care so much for the sake of the floor, but for what is wearing on you.”

“I’m trying to understand something odd that happened,” I reply. “People who protest that they have no time to do anything, but undertake projects that they previously rejected. I just don’t understand how that happens.”

“Ah, yes. Time—” he muses. “Something nobody ever has, yet everyone manages to find. And if finding time they cannot accomplish, then making time they do instead. For all the making and finding, it is yet a surprise that there is little having, but still much passing of it.”

“Well this happened in my department,” I explain. “May I tell you about it? It might be helpful to get your perspective on it.”

“Yes, of course. But only if you are still while you tell. I fear that if you continue your incessant pacing we may both end up in the basement.”

I kneel on the cushion in front of Nishida and attempt – mostly in vain – to quiet my mind. It is a perplexing problem, and one that I somehow feel holds a critical key to my research. But I’m not quite sure what that key might look like. “Hmmm... Where to start?”

“The beginning is always a good place, unless you are the director of a television or cinema drama—then you may want to start from the middle of the ending.”

I grimace, but otherwise ignore the poke. “Alright, the beginning then. Our department appointed a new Chair, someone who was unanimously welcomed by all faculty, staff, and students. I think the major reason everyone agreed on this particular professor was the fractious nature of the department at the time. What we needed was someone who could help create cohesiveness among all the groups so the department could be a department—one unified team, albeit with multiple constituencies and two main programs. The new Chair is a specialist in organization development interventions, with a special focus on creating well-functioning, high-performing, cohesive teams.”

Nishida nods. “It sounds like a wise choice.” Despite the fractious nature, as you describe it, there was the collective insight to recognize what you needed to thrive.”

“Yes, very much so. The selection process was not so much *selection* as it was setting the agenda for the next four years. So the new Chair took that agenda and, as she expressed it to me, decided to approach at least the initial part of her term as Chair like a research

project—an action research⁵⁶ project. She conducted individual interviews with each staff and faculty member, and with groups of students. The student organization also created several focus-group events that contributed data to the effort. Then, with the help of a research assistant, the Chair analyzed the data, and from the collected information, discovered six major themes.”

“Well grounded, in theory,” chuckled Nishida.

Another grimace. For an ancient man, the master was certainly up on his contemporary, academic references. “Quite,” I reply dryly. “Anyway, the Chair and her research assistant organized an offsite retreat day to develop a vision and strategy for the department, and invited all available staff and faculty, and a selection from among the students. At the end of the day-long session, we ended up with lists of action items – each one a project or new initiative – based on the six original themes. Then the Chair stood up, thanked us for our participation and hard work through the day, and said, ‘now I would like each group to appoint a champion that will coordinate the efforts of their group to undertake the items we have identified, together.’ Well, *sensei*, I’ll tell you—there was almost an open rebellion in the room. People were quite vocal and adamant: there was already enough for everyone to do with teaching, and supervising, and new reporting requirements, and fewer resources because of cutbacks, and there was no way that anyone was going to be signed up for more projects!”

“I imagine the Chair was somewhat bemused by this response?” queried Nishida.

“To say the least! She was quite taken aback. She asked if people thought that the day had been a waste of time. It was quite the opposite, people said. Everyone agreed the day was exceptionally valuable, that the insights we had discovered about our department were especially useful. It’s just that no one was willing to take on a bunch of extra projects. She asked if we should do this again in the future. Oh yes, everyone said. Let’s do it again in six month’s time. But don’t expect any projects!”

“So what happened?” Nishida leans forward, his eyes narrowing.

⁵⁶ A form of research in which the research is conducted with, and on behalf of, the participants to effect a transformative process. Research findings – often developed with the participants – are provided to the participant community which reflexively incorporates the learning to improve a problematic situation. There may be multiple iterations of inquiry, reflection, and incorporation that comprise a process of social transformation among the community of participants.

“Six months later, the research assistant and Chair organized a... conversation café⁵⁷?”

Nishida nodded. He understood.

I continue: “Shortly before beginning, the research assistant decided – the idea just flashed into her head, she tells me – to ask people who had attended the first session whether anyone knew if anything from the original lists of projects had actually been accomplished. She figured it would take, maybe, the first five minutes of the session to cover what might have been done. After all, nobody had time to do anything, right? *Forty-five minutes later, people were still reporting on all that had been accomplished!* And these were not trivial tasks – many of them were major initiatives, like a new communication strategy for the department, a new diploma program, a new collaborative program to be initiated—all sorts of things.”

“It sounds like a good thing. In fact, many good things,” observes Nishida.

“Many good things indeed. But here’s what’s odd about it: As I was sitting there listening to all the reports, it dawned on me that had we appointed champions to coordinate activities, *nothing* would have been done. People would have been waiting for meetings to be called and plans to be discussed. But *because nobody was in charge, everybody was in charge*. Each person, individually claiming to have no time, decided that they could pick up some activity in which they had a particular interest and just do it, whether it was with other people or on their own. And mostly, these projects involved multiple people in collaboration. Everyone felt a sense of ownership, not only of their particular project, but of something more. I can’t quite put my finger on it.”

Nishida stroked his beard, sitting in silence for several minutes. “Very wise, your Chair. Very clever. In one day, she accomplishes her objective for the entire four-year term. She is resting for the rest of her time, I presume?”

“Hardly,” I respond. “But certainly, the department changed, and people were considerably more willing to engage between the programs, and among the multiple constituencies. And, there was an enthusiasm to become more involved in departmental initiatives, to

⁵⁷ A process of progressive conversations based on one or more simple, direct, but insight-seeking questions. Participants arrange themselves around multiple café-style tables and explore the question, writing or drawing their ideas on a paper table cloth. After an approximately 20-minute round, all but one of the table’s participants disperse to other tables. The remaining person acts as the table host for the next round, providing a brief description of the ideas elicited in the previous round. Each round may explore the single thematic question in ever-greater depth, or may have a separate question that builds on the prior one.

support one another, and celebrate each other's successes. It's easy to say that morale improved, but what happened is more than that. There was clearly a common sense of purpose, but it's even more than that. And it was even more than what is often delivered at typical corporate functions: a rah-rah, feel-good, motivational speaker who practices 'Chinese-food inspiration'—an hour later and you're cynical again."

Now it is Nishida's turn to grimace. I ignore his look of indigestion, and conclude: "I'm trying to figure out precisely what happened here. I think it will help me understand these new types of organizations that I am studying."

Nishida looks at me intently. "It is very simple, yet complex," he begins. "Your Chair created *place*."

"A place? I don't understand," I respond.

"Not a place. *Place*. *Basho* in Japanese," says Nishida, patiently. "*Basho* comes into being as an act of mutual determination through mutual recognition between the self that is to be both negated and determined, and the 'Thou that is recognized as a Thou'⁵⁸. *Basho* is an existential 'Big Bang' that creates a universe of common knowledge, common consciousness, and common volition to action out of a space of absolute nothingness."

"Now I *really* don't understand." I shake my head in bewildered confusion. "What does all of this Big Bang existential self with a common consciousness have to do with my department's visioning and strategy day, and everyone taking up projects for which no one claimed to have time?"

"Perhaps nothing. Perhaps everything. That is entirely up to you to decide." The master pauses, and stares at me as if with x-ray vision, attempting to peer into my mind to assess its preparedness for what he may wish to introduce. He raises an eyebrow – a good sign – and asks, "Have I ever introduced you to my master, Nishida Kitaro⁵⁹?"

"No. You studied with him in Japan?"

"In a manner of speaking," replies Nishida. "Nishida-*sensei* was a professor of philosophy at Kyoto University, considered the founder of what we now call the Kyoto School of Philosophy. He was the first to combine the Western philosophical tradition – and especially that of the German philosophers – with Zen. He rejected the dialectical logic

⁵⁸ Nishida, 1933/1970, p. 43. For future references to the works of Nishida Kitaro in this chapter, *Fundamental Problems of Philosophy* (Nishida, 1933/1970), will be abbreviated as FPoP, and *An Inquiry into the Good* (Nishida, 1911/1990), as IitG. As with the prior "Conversations" chapters, footnotes are used for references so as not to disrupt the narrative flow.

⁵⁹ In keeping with Japanese custom, the names of Japanese sources are cited as surname first.

of men like Hegel in which thesis and antithesis sum to synthesis. Rather, *basho* – place – is where polar tension is allowed to exist without necessarily resolving, thereby allowing interesting things to emerge in a manner that is very similar to your theories of complexity, emergence, and homeostasis⁶⁰. A very contemporary thinker, considering he passed in 1945 having been on this earth for three-quarters of a century.”

“I understand the concept of polar tension—holding two, seemingly paradoxical ideas simultaneously in one’s mind without feeling the need to resolve them in favour of one or the other. For example, when there are multiple, apparently conflicting contexts, each of them can contribute to making meaning, thereby creating greater understanding of a situation. But I’m still confused. Where does this *basho* come from in the first place?” I ask.

“Ah yes.” Nishida smiles. “It comes not from, but *as*, the first place,” he states, cryptically. “This is not as confusing as it first may appear. It all begins with a simple question.” He waits, allowing the room to fill with stillness. “How do you know you are you?”

The simple questions are always the most complex. There are, of course, simple answers to simple questions, but these, as the master once scolded me, emanate only from the mouths of simple people. There are no truly simple questions, he would say, only simple and naïve answers.

Naïvely, I can see myself in a mirror and know that I exist—at least in my own mind. That, of course demonstrates nothing: ‘is it solipsistic in here or is it just me?’ is a clever T-shirt slogan among the philosophy geeks. And Descartes is no help, either. ‘I think, therefore I am,’ renders me legendary only in my own mind, suffering the same existential limitations as my T-shirt-sporting friends. But, Buber—*I and Thou*⁶¹. Now there’s a possibility. I only exist in relation to another, to a ‘thou,’ where that relation is not predicated on any particular instrumentality or transaction. I regard and know ‘thou,’ therefore I am—at least with respect to the ‘thou.’

I look directly into Nishida’s eyes. “I know I am me – that is, I am an ‘I’ – when I recognize someone else as who they are.” I point my finger towards his chest. “Martin Buber, *Ich und Du*. It is even the way – in his opinion, the *only* way – to truly know God. If I interact with another person with an intent to do something, to accomplish, or to trade, for instance, I transform that person into an object—a mental conception or the idea of an instrument. The other person becomes an ‘It’ which is merely a projection of me. In that instance, it becomes

⁶⁰ IitG, Introduction.

⁶¹ Buber, 1923/1970.

almost a case of solipsism, where I am essentially the only reality that matters—no pun⁶² intended.”

“And none taken,” replies the old man, dryly, the corner of his mouth turning up almost imperceptibly. “So what you are attempting to explain is that ‘the self becomes a self by recognizing a Thou as a Thou.’⁶³”

“Yes, exactly. Just as Buber explained,” I respond.

“Nishida Kitaro also read Buber,” explains Nishida—that is, the Nishida who sits opposite me. “‘Self becomes a self,’ and so on, is Nishida Kitaro. He connected Buber’s work to the Zen conception of *pure experience*, ‘the state of experience just as it is without the least addition of deliberative discrimination.’⁶⁴ There is a consciousness of a visceral experience, of course, but no *conception* of it. Conception is thinking, and ‘thinking is the response of consciousness to a mental image,’⁶⁵ placing the particular mental image in relation with all that one has experienced.”

I interrupt my *sensei*. “Let me see if I understand this. I experience the world without necessarily thinking about what it is that I am experiencing. In other words, in this ‘pure experience,’ I am not matching a prior mental image – even a prior experience – with the current one.”

“That is correct.”

“When I do connect an experience, it is with some mental image that, in part, comprises the context of my entire consciousness. All of these mental images – ideas, really – taken together create meaning, allow me to reflect, enable me to understand experiences as they enter my consciousness and transform into thought.”

“Precisely. That is where the Enlightenment was not so enlightened.”

“The problem with Descartes,” I respond, nodding my head. “‘I *am*, therefore I think,’ might be the better representation, according to Nishida.”

“Or, as he puts it,” replies *sensei*, “it is not that there is experience because there is an individual, but that there is an individual

⁶² *It* becomes...

⁶³ FPoP, p 43.

⁶⁴ LitG, p. 3.

⁶⁵ LitG, p. 14.

because there is experience.’⁶⁶ So now you understand the connection between Nishida Kitaro and Martin Buber.”

I give *sensei* a quizzical look. “No, I don’t.”

He sighs, wearily. “I becomes I by recognizing Thou as Thou. That is both Buber and Nishida. There is no thinking about it, no material interaction, as thinking and materiality – a purpose outside of oneself – creates a mediated relationship that, in Buber’s philosophy, recreates the I-Thou relationship as *Ich-Es*. It is then not ‘mutually determining,’ as Nishida puts it. Yes?”

“Yes.”

“Good. Now, Nishida describes how, when the self determines the self by recognizing the other as other, the self is simultaneously affirmed and negated. By this he means that the individual no longer exists as a solitary entity floating in a universe of absolute nothingness. In the act of I-Thou affirmation, there is also negation of individual as lone individual. It is like matter and anti-matter coming together, releasing tremendous energy. It is the energy of existence. Mutual determination of individuals is like an existential Big Bang.”

“Now I see.”

He continues. “Nishida also says that ‘mutually determining individuals require some spatial relationship in which they exist, that is, something like an absolute space. This is a field in which they determine one another.’⁶⁷ He explains – as much as he explains anything – that this becomes a paradoxical dialectic process, affirmation as negation, and negation as affirmation.” *Sensei* moves his hands in an opposite up-down motion, as if they are a balance scale, weighing one concept against the other. “But the mutual determination of individuals is not merely a dialectical process. ... [It] has a meaning, that is, that of the determination of *basho*—a place. ... It does not merely signify a space in which things exist. It must rather signify a place in which things are mutually determining, which is, as it were, a physical space of personal action. The mutual determination of individuals is not at all an unmediated relativity of points. The mutual determination of things also implies that the place is self-determining.’⁶⁸”

I turn this over in my mind. Self. Other. Self recognizes other and becomes no-longer-self—negated in one sense. But, in another sense, self and other become something more than they were: as they

⁶⁶ *IitG*, p. 19.

⁶⁷ *FPoP*, p. 47.

⁶⁸ *FPoP*, p. 48.

come into existence, they bring a metaphysical place of existence, *into* existence. *Basho*. Place.

“So that means,” I begin, “that ‘the existence of a thing means the self-determination of *basho* itself, and vice versa.’⁶⁹”

“Nishida Kitaro could not have said it better himself,” smiles the master. “For there to be life, the mutual determination of individuals must exist as the determination of *basho*. Thus, the world of life becomes the determination of *basho*.⁷⁰ This, perhaps, connects to Jurgen Habermas⁷¹ in an interesting way, distinguishing between *lifeworld* and *systemworld*.”

“Yes. I see that. If, for example, you are creating an organization that is part of the *systemworld*, it would be determined instrumentally, external to the individuals who are later called to occupy its offices. But – and I now see this as an important distinction – if you are creating an organization that is part of Habermas’s *lifeworld*, you must create it in *basho*.”

“Very good,” says Nishida. “You now begin to see how your Chair recreated your department, from *systemworld* to *lifeworld*, in one day. But it was not merely the activity of the one-day retreat that accomplished the transformation. Listing objectives and goals that is merely an act of dividing one thing into many parts remains simply the attempted self-determination of one thing – an organization, for instance, that stands disconnected and apart in its own universe – even though there may be many people participating in such a mediating activity. The only mediating interactions and reactions that create a self-determining entity – a *lifeworld*-created organization, for example – are the mediating activities that result in mutual determination that creates *basho*.⁷²”

He continues: “As one individual recognizes another, mutually determining each other, the act of that recognition creates *basho*. They *know* each other in a profound and intimate way. There is a common sensibility, a common understanding of *place* and circumstances, and a common volition to action—commonality of purpose in each individual’s personal action that comes from their moral centre.⁷³”

“So you are saying that *basho* is also the place that emerges from their common values,” I offer.

⁶⁹ FPoP, p 51.

⁷⁰ FPoP, p. 53.

⁷¹ Habermas, 1984.

⁷² From FPoP, p. 54-55.

⁷³ From FPoP, p. 70-73.

“And values emerge from *basho*,” he responds immediately. “It is, as Nishida Kitaro calls it, ‘circular determination rather than linear determination’⁷⁴ that links past and future through one’s personal action. Personal action is grounded in those values, and it is personal action that provides one’s purpose. Purpose, as you might expect, also emerges from *basho* in the same way: it is the individual and their environment mutually determining each other, creating *basho*, emerging from *basho*, determining and being determined by *basho*. If that environment is one of your organizations—” His voice trails off.

“Yes! Of course!” I shout. “Each person who participated in that retreat day actually participated in determining the department, and in a very real sense, that determination of the department determined them as members, as well. There were new relations created that went far beyond the instrumentality of merely being a staff or faculty member, or a student. Those relations enabled a common understanding of who and where we are, and the common volition to action. Individuals took up projects not because they were instrumental projects on a to-do list, nor entwined with externally imposed, incentive-based reward-and-punishment schemes. They took up those projects because the organization’s projects became projects of their own self-determination. Our department as a separate and distinct entity – *organization* – has its own life, both determined by, and creating its own *basho*, its own *place*.

“You now understand,” intoned Nishida, looking very pleased. “In that transformation, the *place of organization* – *organization-ba* – was created.” He glances over to the front of the room, where I had been pacing. “And now, no more need for *aruki-ba* – the walking-place – I trust.”

⁷⁴ FPoP, p. 71.

Introducing Valence Theory

The Story Thus Far

The *ground* of this thesis postulates that,

...if the Toronto School's distinctive interpretation of history is indeed valid, then the ways in which people come together, and have come together for collective endeavours throughout the ages, should closely correspond to the nature and effects of the dominant mode of communications at the time.

We then trace the dominant organizational forms of the day from Periclean Athens, through the late Middle Ages, to the early modern form that emerged during the Enlightenment period in Europe, setting the stage for the Industrial Age. In each epoch of primary orality, manuscript-based phonetic literacy, and mechanical print literacy, the fundamental nature and effects of *organization* assumed characteristics analogous to those of the communications mode that, arguably, enabled structuring forces throughout the society. The 20th century – heralded by the earliest incarnations of instantaneous, electric-based communication – proved to be a time of transition from an industrial-influenced paradigm to one that has shifted in response to influences of ubiquitous connectivity and pervasive proximity.

I argue that 20th century organizational discourse can be separated into two parallel streams: one, an extrapolation of the prior era; the other, an emergence of the new. Finally, I demonstrate that those two, distinct discourses inform the attributes, behaviours and characteristics of organizations that I categorize as being either more BAH or more UCAPP in their manifestations among considerations of change, coordination, evaluation, impetus, power dynamics, sense-making, and view of people.

In many respects, BAH and UCAPP organizations could not be more dissimilar. Indeed, if one were to take a prescriptive approach to understanding organizational transition in the early 21st century, such as that assumed by Heckscher and Adler's (2006) edited collection, s/he could be excused for treating BAH and UCAPP organizations as two, distinct species. Perhaps the two types are not as incompatible as fish and fowl. But certainly, one could be forgiven for holding the metaphorical dissimilarity of, say, eagles and ostriches when considering the two, distinct realms of organizational environments.

How, then, to answer the second foundational question of the thesis: is there an over-arching model that can account for both BAH and UCAPP organizations and distinguish between them? One approach is to probe a possible mechanism of action that explains a generalized version of the Toronto School contention, that inventions and innovation of humankind profoundly transform environments of human interaction, and thereby transform humanity.

Bruno Latour (1999) describes the way in which human and nonhuman (that is, the creations of humans) actants – entities capable of action – collectively create a social fabric in which each acquires properties of the other over time. This entwining of characteristics results in the emergence of new actants within a collective, or “an exchange of human and

nonhuman properties inside a corporate⁷⁵ body” (p. 193). This intertwining, or embedding of characteristics, can perhaps be more easily understood by considering a simple example.

Latour directs his readers’ attention to the gun-control debate in the United States. The anti-gun advocates maintain that “guns kill people.” Pro-gun lobbyists disagree, claiming in a moralistic fashion that “guns don’t kill people; people kill people.” Latour disagrees with both: he suggests that neither guns, nor people, kill people. Rather, it is a gun-person – a collective of the human person and the nonhuman gun – that kills people. Aside from direct, hand-to-hand, mortal conflict sans weapons, or manual strangulation, a person does not generally kill another person. Neither does the weapon itself kill. It is only when the latent violence of the person, and the effective means of the gun to commit that violence, cross over between the two actants and exchange their unique characteristics, that the ability to kill is mobilized. Indeed, Latour suggests that the original intent of the person may only have been to injure or scare; the creation of the new actant actually interferes with, and changes the intent (1999, p. 178-179).

Over time, humans interact with each other. They may employ nonhuman tools to effect a change in social purpose. In doing so, a new level of “social complication” is created, whereby humans and nonhumans mutually mediate daily interactions. Eventually, a coherent corporate body emerges in which groups of humans are reorganized in their daily activities by nonhuman actants and the resulting networks of power, control, and resistance (Foucault, 1979, 1982). The co-option is subtle, but unmistakable: when someone is introduced as their function – for example, as the Chair of a department – they have irrevocably inherited nonhuman elements of the corporate collective. Finally, nonhumans are granted full participation in a political ecology, granted political rights, legal standing, and political representation (Latour, 1999, p. 202-211). The modern-day organization – and particularly, the specific instance of a business corporation – is a clear, if not clichéd, example of Latour’s collective of humans and nonhumans.

Each time a new nonhuman actant is introduced into the environment, the existing collectives (and their constituent components) cannot help but be affected as the process of assimilation and entanglement continues. Latour writes, “the modern collective is one in which the relations of humans and nonhumans are so intimate, the transactions so many, the mediations so convoluted, that there is no plausible sense in which artefact, corporate body, and subject can be distinguished” (1999, p. 197).

Certainly, this seems to be the case among the more-BAH organizations that participated in this study. The constituent components of *organization* in these cases appear to be specifically constructed in the service of establishing and preserving the control mechanisms of (nonhuman) systems over (human) people amidst these particular entanglements. Indeed, Max Weber is quite explicit about the nature of the human-machine collective in a BAH organization:

The purely bureaucratic type of administrative organization – that is, the monocratic variety of bureaucracy – is, from a purely technical point of view, capable of attaining the highest degree of efficiency and is in this sense formally the *most rational known means of exercising authority over human beings*. ...

⁷⁵ Although it should be clear from the context, Latour’s use of the word, “corporate,” should not be confused with the legal fiction that is a business corporation.

The fully developed bureaucratic apparatus *compares with other organizations exactly as does the machine with the non-mechanical modes of production*. Precision, speed, unambiguity, knowledge of the files, continuity, discretion, unity, strict subordination, reduction of friction and of material and personal costs – these are raised to the optimum point in the strictly bureaucratic administration. (Weber in Miner, p. 391; emphasis added)

BAH-dominant organizations entwine the technologies – or “ways of doing” as expressed by Ursula Franklin (1990) – of bureaucracy, administration, and hierarchy with people to create a relatively new actant, one that was named in 1956, “the organization man” (Whyte, 1956), or as I would now adjust the term, *organization-man*.⁷⁶ Citing more contemporary and instrumental examples, Franklin points out that such incarnations are specifically machine-analogous, “control-related technologies, those developments that do not primarily address the process of work with the aim of making it easier, but try to increase control over the operation” (Franklin, 1990, p. 18). The nonhuman aspects of BAH-dominant organizations are:

Prescriptive technologies [that] eliminate the occasions for decision-making and judgement in general and especially for the making of *principled* decisions. Any goal of the technology is incorporated *a priori* in the design and is not negotiable. ... The acculturation to compliance and conformity has ... diminished resistance to the programming of people. (Franklin, 1990, p. 25; emphasis in original)

It is not that the introduction of instantaneous communications technologies will somehow magically transform BAH organizations—that should, by now, be evident from the empirical findings of this study. In fact, as both Ahuja and Carley (1999) and Alberts and Hayes (2003) – each cited in an earlier chapter – discover when they examine structures of power and control, technology alone is not sufficient to overcome workers’ socialization in traditional hierarchies, particularly when power and privilege are involved. Modern technologies that may streamline information flow throughout an otherwise bureaucratic organization do not, in themselves, correct an entrenched, BAH-oriented, cultural conditioning.

Latour specifically characterizes this cultural conditioning as the processes through which nonhumans become a collective with humans. These processes comprise the “crossover, which consists of the exchange of properties among humans and nonhumans,” “enrolment” of nonhumans into the collective, “mobilization of nonhumans in the collective ... resulting in strange new hybrids,” and the particular direction and extent that the new collective takes with its new hybrid actants (1999, p. 194). Thus, we can understand each cultural epoch identified by the Toronto School as a characteristic, Latourian, societal hybridization in which the epoch’s dominant communication technology is “enrolled” with humans in their existing institutions – in this case, specifically *organization* – into a collective.

⁷⁶ Although Whyte’s landmark book has more to do with the transformation of the American businessman from the clichéd rugged individualist to one that must face a collaborative social ethic in the context of organization (and the resultant conflict with the so-called Protestant work ethic), my usage here retrieves Whyte’s cliché in a new form: a Latourian entanglement that creates a new human-nonhuman actant, particularly effected by BAH dynamics.

The mobilization of the technology's dominant effects imbues humanity with many of its nonhuman characteristics.

In the case of the penultimate epoch – mechanization and industrialization – this enrolment created the BAH-*organization*-man collective. Now, under UCAPP conditions, a new nonhuman (technological) actant is introduced to the collective. Especially because of the particular, dominant, consequences of social networks (de Kerckhove, 1998; Barnes, 2009; Federman, 2008a, 2008b; Gross, 2009; Walther & Ramirez, Jr., 2010) that emerge because of pervasive proximity, the collective is in the process of assuming more humanistic qualities, specifically those that characterize the effects emergent from the pervasive proximity aspects of the UCAPP world—complex, direct and indirect *relationships*.

Indeed, they are relationships, connections, and emergent effects – far more than defined boundaries, production processes, functions, and responsibilities – that seem to be more apropos with respect to considering contemporary *organization*. Margaret Wheatley's 1992 book, *Leadership and the New Science*, provides an inspiration for a new metaphor from contemporary science that serves to capture the essential aspects of human relationships, and more important, their entanglement in the new *organization*-person hybrid:

Here we sit in the Information Age, besieged by more information than any mind can handle, trying to make sense of the complexity that continues to grow around us. ... If the universe *is* nothing more than the invisible workings of information, this could explain why quantum physicists observe connections between particles that transcend space and time, or why our acts of observation change what we see. Information doesn't need to obey the laws of matter and energy; it can assume form or communicate instantaneously anywhere in the information picture of the universe. In organizations, we aren't suffering from information overload just because of technology, and we won't get out from under our information dilemmas just by using more sophisticated information-sorting techniques. We are moving irrevocably into *a new relationship with the creative force of nature*. (Wheatley, 1992, p. 145; emphasis added)

The Creative Force of Nature

In the Niels Bohr model of the atom, electrons orbit around a nucleus in discrete levels or orbitals. There is a limit to the maximum number of electrons in each orbital, with the outermost orbital being incomplete – that is, having fewer than the maximum number – in most elements. Electrons in this outermost orbital can effect various types of chemical bonds with other atoms, and are known as *valence* electrons. In its most simplistic conception, valence bonding occurs when two or more atoms share valence electrons in their respective, uppermost orbitals, thereby creating mutual connections upon which all of the atoms depend for the creation of the resulting molecular compound.

In an analogous fashion, an individual can consider her- or himself connected to an organization – and vice versa – in a variety of ways. There are often *economic* ties through employment contracts; certainly, even without an explicit employment relationship, value is exchanged between an individual and an organization. In many cases, individuals construct part of their *identity* through self-identification with the organization. Indeed, in contemporary capitalism, some argue that both employees and customers construct identity

based on their relationships with organizations (Gee, Hull, Lankshear, 1996; see especially chapter 2). Especially among non-profit or volunteer organizations, there are *socio-psychological* connections that emerge; I argue that these (among other) factors that explain aspects of motivation in the Free/Libre Open Source Software (FLOSS) movement can be applied to general principles of management (Federman, 2006).

These various relationships create *valences*⁷⁷ – the capacity to connect, unite, react, or interact – between an individual and *organization*. Ordinary experience would suggest that valences have complex relationships among themselves – one’s interactions with an organization are rarely uncomplicated and unitary, save in the most instrumental and limited of circumstances. The strength of a given valence connection likely changes over time: for example, a person might be very active as a volunteer during a particular campaign (representing a strong Socio-psychological valence, perhaps) and then limit her involvement thereafter, thereby weakening the valence connection. A full-time employee might enjoy strong Economic- and Identity-valence connections; during a layoff, the Economic valence might weaken more than the Identity valence. Unionized workers would likely have dual Identity valences that sometimes form “double bonds” (reinforcing self-identification with both union and company), and sometimes work in opposite directions, as during labour negotiations or strikes when the union-Identity valence might work to negate the employer-Identity valence.

Since individual-to-*organization* valence bonds can shift in intensity, type, and pervasiveness among individuals and over time, *organization* conceived in terms of its relationships, or valence connections, with its members is consequently contingent. For example, consider a non-trivial organization like a university. At its core are full-time faculty and staff, and enrolled degree students, all of whom enjoy mutual Economic- and Identity-valence bonds with the institution—and likely others, but two will suffice for illustration. Part-time faculty and students have the same types of valence bonds with the university, but neither bond is as strong as that of the university’s core constituents. Alumni, too, have Economic and Identity bonds, but the quality and nature of their bonds with the university are different from those of both the core group and the part-timers.

In terms of relationships, then, what defines the university? The answer is interestingly and necessarily contingent, uncertain, and complex, consistent with much else in the contemporary world: it depends. It depends on the temporal, spatial, material, and other contexts in which the question makes sense; but, I contend that the university – indeed any organization – *can be precisely defined by the types, strengths, and extents of the valence bonds under consideration*. Like water that has three states – solid, liquid, and gas – the university analogously can exist in the same three states: solid (core constituency), liquid (core plus the more fluid part-timers), and gas (core, part-timers, plus the often evanescent alumni).

Unlike traditional contingency theories of organization that I discussed in an earlier chapter, the contingent construction of any organization when considered from the ground

⁷⁷ My use of valence should not be confused with Victor Vroom’s (1967) usage of the same word in his Expectation-Valence Theory of motivation. Vroom uses the word, valence, to be synonymous with relevance or value when explaining that employee rewards for particular tasks, to be motivating, must fill an employee need (value or “valence”), and be commensurate with the task that itself must be achievable (expectation).

of its valence connections considers the multiplicity of its relationships, and the nature, quality, and extent of those relationships' effects, to define what now becomes *organization* as an emergent and continually evolving form.

When one moves beyond individual-*organization* relationships, it is equally clear that the same sorts of relationship valences can exist among discrete organizations (if indeed the notion of a “discrete organization” retains a useful meaning), both directly and indirectly, as in the case of Castells's (1996) network enterprise. The same complex multiplicity of relationships and effects define inter- and intra-organizational forms, again, as emergent actants. This observation leads to a recursive, redefinition of *organization*:

Organization is that emergent entity resulting from two or more individuals, or two or more organizations, or both, that share multiple valence relationships at particular strengths, with particular pervasiveness, among its component elements at any point in time.

I propose five, distinct valence relationships that each involve a form of connection via exchange—tangible or intangible. These are: Economic, Knowledge, Identity, Socio-psychological, and Ecological. There may be additional valence relationships that are distinct, that is, cannot be derived from this set of five; additionally, there may be another set of valence relationships that are orthogonal to the set I propose. It is not my intention to claim enumeration of a uniquely exclusive and definitive set of inter-actant relationships that enable emergence of *organization*. Rather, I contend that this set is sufficient to account for organizational behaviours observed in the empirical findings of this study, and useful to provide guidance to organizational members beyond that afforded by conventional management discourses.

The Five Valence Relationships

Economic (Value Exchange) Valence

Clearly the most obvious and historically dominant connection among organization members, the Economic-valence relationship lies at the heart of both modern and ancient⁷⁸ organizational discourse. All participants speak to the value they individually contribute to their respective organizations, and each is explicitly cognizant of the economic ramifications of those contributions in the context of their specific organization. Interestingly, at the extreme ends of the BAH-UCaPP spectrum, the directional Economic-valence connection from organization to individual seems to be largely independent of the individual's contribution to the organization (that is, the connection from individual to organization). Stan, from Organization M, describes this as a dysfunction of the union's presence (Stan-1-67; also Frank-2-52 regarding Organization A); Inter Pares's Sam frames this as decoupling compensation from responsibility as part of their explicit “analysis of power” (Sam-1-97). Analogously, both Organization A and Unit 7 – each situated on either side, and more

⁷⁸ See, for example, Cummings and Brocklesby's (1993) description of the composition of ancient Athenian *phylei*, that were specifically designed to balance economic exchanges among rural, urban, and coastal *demes*.

towards the centre, of the spectrum – create an explicit reciprocity in the Economic-valence relationships between members and the organization—more along the lines of the iconic expression, receiving value for money.

It is important to note that, in general, the Economic valence is not defined in terms of an organization specifically providing money for services rendered by its members, or vice versa. Nonetheless, Economic valence expresses a tangibility, reification, or performativity on the part of members (individuals and component organizations) and *organization* itself. Thus, in addition to services or production exchanged for money, Economic valence could also be enacted by means of explicit demonstrations of *being valued*, as in the case of Unit 7’s inclusiveness of relatively junior members in key, strategic, organizational deliberations. I will expand on this idea later in this chapter.

Despite relatively recent approaches such as Balanced Scorecard (Kaplan & Norton, 1996; Maltz, Shenhar, & Reilly, 2003) and Triple Bottom Line (Elkington, 1997; Hacking & Guthrie, 2008), the Economic valence tends to dominate organizational considerations, particularly in modern-to-contemporary discourse⁷⁹. This discursive dominance often results in other valence connections being subordinated, conflated, and expressed in economic terms. Thus, one advantage of a Valence Theory analysis is that it can provide a fundamentally balanced approach to the foundational relationships that bind organizational members.

Knowledge Valence

Peter Drucker can be credited (if not blamed) for reframing knowledge as a production commodity through his popularization of the term, “knowledge economy.” He characterizes “knowledge industries⁸⁰” as those that “produce and distribute ideas and information rather than goods and services,” noting that America had “changed into a knowledge economy” since World War II (1969, p. 263). He goes on to describe how,

...knowledge has become the central “production factor” in an advanced, developed economy. ... Knowledge has actually become the “primary” [i.e., resource production akin to agriculture, mining, forestry, and farming] industry, the industry that supplies to the economy the essential and central resource of production. ... Knowledge is now the main cost, the main investment, and the main product of the advanced economy... (Drucker, 1969, p. 264)

It is therefore not surprising that, over the ensuing four decades, knowledge has acquired a connotation of “property” (as in, “intellectual property”), and is often considered as much an economic commodity as are iron, coal, or timber. Unlike those commodities, of course, knowledge is inherently non-rivalrous – unless artificially constructed as such, as in

⁷⁹ For an acknowledgement of this claim, and interesting responses to its perceived deleterious effects, see Unerman and O’Dwyer (2007), and Harvey (2007). In the former article, the authors identify the risks incurred when direct economic considerations dominate; in the latter, the author describes how the economic discursive dominance contributes to dismantling egalitarian societal institutions.

⁸⁰ Drucker attributes the term, “knowledge industries,” to Princeton economist, Fritz Machlup’s 1962 book, *Production and Distribution of Knowledge in the United States*.

the case of Organization A – and non-excludable—with a similar proviso. In fact, its action is quite the opposite: the more one shares the knowledge in one’s possession, the more new knowledge can be produced by others for the benefit of all⁸¹.

Nonetheless, individuals construct their connections to the organizations of which they are members, in part, by contributing and receiving skills, expertise, information, experiences, opportunities—all aspects of both tacit and explicit knowledge. Nonaka, together with numerous co-authors, describes the organization as the *place* – actually, various sites or locales – in which knowledge is socialized (converted from tacit to tacit among individuals), externalized (tacit to explicit), combined (explicit to more complex explicit), and internalized (explicit to tacit) (Nonaka & Konno, 1998; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Nonaka, Toyama, & Konno, 2000). I will return to the idea of the *place* of knowledge, shortly.

Identity Valence

Ashforth (2001) crosses two theories of role performance and argues that, “the salience of a role identity to an individual in an organizational context is determined by both ... subjective importance and situational relevance” (p. 29). Subjectively, “the greater importance one attaches to a given identity the more weight it carries in determining one’s global sense of self” (p. 30). That is, people become vested in their personally assessed, *subjective importance* of a role based on a feeling of obligation and normative values expectations associated with a sense of belonging or membership in the context of a particular social group or role category. For instance, a manager or director role tends to have a greater perceived importance ascribed to it than, say, the role of retail worker or clerical staff. As well, that subjective assessment is influenced by a variety of associated extrinsic motivating factors, such as reward, recognition, status, and reputation.

Additionally, Ashforth identifies that a particular role enactment becomes *situationally relevant* by virtue of the “degree to which a given identity is socially appropriate to a given situation (i.e., a specific context, setting, or encounter). By socially appropriate, I mean that the identity would be considered by others to be legitimately applicable to the situation” (2001, p. 32). Jean, at Inter Pares, explicitly recognizes the difference between speaking in role identity as opposed to expressing her personal opinion:

As a manager, I would say something different than I would say as Jean.
And, as a manager out there, I’m careful to remember that it’s not me that
I’m representing, although it’s also me because I’m part of this institution,
but it is the institution. (Jean-1-53)

When these distinctions remain sublimated – when the individual cannot clearly distinguish among the role, the organization, and the self – decisions, approaches, and consequential actions sometimes become problematic. This can occur when an individual tacitly accepts ascribed behaviours that may situationally accompany the assumed identity associated with a role. However, it is not necessarily the case that identity is passively

⁸¹ Consequently, a so-called knowledge economy should be, more or less, counter-capitalist in support of the traditional construct of the commons. There is considerable discourse concerning various approaches to a knowledge commons, with nodes in the FLOSS, Creative Commons, and Open Access movements, among others.

accepted and worn by those who enrobe themselves with a particular role. In many cases, according to Peter Callero (1994), roles are embodied as “tools in the establishment of social structure... and that human agency is facilitated and expressed through the use of roles as resources” (p. 229). Baker and Faulkner (1991) further argue that, rather than an individual’s role being the manifest consequence of a social position, roles are claimed and enacted *prior* to becoming located as a social position, and thereby serve to establish that position within a social network.

Collier and Callero go on to extend the constructive nature of role as cultural objects – meaningful and structuring with respect to interactions – suggesting that roles comprise cognitive schemata,

...that individuals use to understand and act in their culture... However, when roles are employed as resources for the construction of identity, the same cultural schemata serve to organize the self. ... These role-identities are then used to enable a wide range of individual and collective acts” (Collier & Callero, 2005, p. 55)

In other words, roles connect behaviours and individual construction of social position as important in the development of social identity within a particular social network. Thus, one’s Identity-valence connection to an organization often fulfils an additional capacity than merely to (passively) identify an individual’s social standing, status, and attributed capability—one’s bureaucratic fitness for office, so to speak. Identity valence can additionally bolster social capital, both for the individual and for the organization to which the individual is connected (Oh, Chung, & Labianca, 2004).

Socio-psychological Valence

In the context of understanding the motivation behind peer-production in large-scale, commons-based software endeavours⁸², Yochai Benkler identifies what he calls,

...*social-psychological rewards*, which are a function of the cultural meaning associated with the act [of contributing to an open source software project, for instance] and may take the form of actual effect on social associations and status perception by others, or on internal satisfaction from one’s social relations or the culturally determined meaning of one’s action. (Benkler, 2002, p. 426-427; emphasis in original)

In Benkler’s analysis, social-psychological rewards can both offset direct, economic remuneration and be mitigated by financial exchange⁸³. As a mode of connection with an organization, Socio-psychological valence creates one’s affective connection and comprises, if not the source of both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, then their manifestation and means of action in the individual (Federman, 2005b). Additionally, it enables people to

⁸² For example, those that produced the Linux operating system, the Firefox browser, and other, similar, FLOSS projects.

⁸³ For example, a person of a particular social class with a reasonable income may volunteer to serve at a soup kitchen, but may not choose to accept employment there. As a volunteer, SP reward is positive; as an employee, SP reward may be perceived as negative.

compensate, or at least self-justify or rationalize, otherwise unsavoury behaviours on the part of the (larger) organization. If there is a strong Socio-psychological-valence connection to a smaller, sub-organization like a department, workgroup, or team, individuals are able to compensate for more unpleasant or demotivating aspects of the general work environment. Organization A's Roxanne, for example, describes "creating an environment, and putting some value in the job connecting people together and get[ting] connected to people, and that is the part of that I enjoy and it's very pleasant for me" (Roxanne-2-58).

The importance of affective connection for group cohesiveness and effectiveness is the specific object of study for Oh, Chung, and Labianca (2004), mentioned earlier. Additionally, Casciaro and Lobo (2005) report on an extensive study of mostly ad-hoc, voluntary work relationships in which affective connections in the emergent workgroups prove to be more important than job competency in individual self-selection of work-mates. These results are consistent with those of Nardi, Whittaker, and Schwartz (2000, 2002) who demonstrate that, among other things, individuals will reconnect and reconstruct *organization* with those who have provided favourable experiences in the past.

It is clear that there is a complex entanglement among all of the aforementioned valences that is, perhaps, most easily demonstrated via the Socio-psychological valence. A person will likely feel a strong, positive, affective connection to her/his organization if s/he has a well-paying job (Economic), with a relatively high-status title (Identity), that both is challenging and provides great opportunities (Knowledge). Change the Knowledge-valence component, as in the case of Japanese *madogiwazoku* – literally, "the tribe (group) that is beside the window"⁸⁴ – and the individual's organizational connection is broken (Hideharu & Hideharu, 1999). Alternatively, alter the construction of status and rank (Identity), as happened in Unit 7, and again, the employee may choose to sever their organizational connection (e.g., Roger-1-189). And, assuming a reasonable fluidity in the employment market, it is not unknown for employees to change employers for a better income, especially if the individual links financial worth with self-worth.

Conversely, Rowena Barrett (2004) reports on how, in some circumstances, Knowledge connections trump more tangible, Economic connections among workers in Australia's software industry. And, it is very common for a prominent individual to assume a "\$1-per-year" position as the head of a charitable endeavour, creating their organizational connection through both Identity- and Socio-psychological-valence connections.

These examples are not meant to be definitive. Rather, they illustrate that Valence Theory considers *organization* to be an entity emergent from amidst complex interactions of the various valence relationships among its members; that unlike a more linear, deterministic model, valence relationships cannot be considered to be so-called independent variables.

⁸⁴ As a form of constructive dismissal, long-time organizational members in large, Japanese firms who are deemed past their prime, or are being organizationally punished, are given an office with a large window, but no responsibilities. They spend their days gazing out the window, hence the colloquial form, "window gazers." It is a sign of significant loss of respect, and represents tremendous shame for the employee and his – in the culture, *madogiwazoku* are almost always male – family.

Ecological Valence

In the late 1980s, the World Commission on Environment and Development framed a definition of sustainable development (WCED, 1987), one that became widely accepted within the ground of a scientifically and industrially dominated (neo-classical) economic paradigm. This model is predicated on an industrial process conception of organizations, and consequential production models of interaction, mutual dependence, supply and consumption, functional decomposition, and utility value of natural resources. For writers like Herman Daly (2002), the opportunity was lost to engage in discourse concerning the overall objectives of sustainable development; what emerged was merely an ongoing debate about the process of achieving industrial-economic goals. Fergus and Rowney lament,

The opportunities to achieve this type of discourse will only come about once our epistemological thought stance changes. ... we do believe that the processes of developing those changes need ... a foundational ethic of value, where the measure of value is in terms of social, environmental, and economic values, as opposed to a blinkered domination of economic values. (Fergus & Rowney, 2005, p. 200)

They conclude their argument by reiterating the prevalence of the economic-dominant paradigm within which businesses exist, and the near impossibility to change the nature of sustainable development discourse by those operating within that ground. They call for a fundamental change in the “cognitive reality” in which business managers exist, integrating “various values, ethics and perspectives during the process of decision making” (Fergus & Rowney, 2005, p. 205). To accomplish this, they suggest that business managers “will encourage employees to view the organization as embedded in a larger society and, in turn, *both these organizations and society are embedded within the natural environment*” (p. 205; emphasis added).

This final observation by Fergus and Rowney provides an important additional consideration for the proposed Valence Theory: the environment itself is an important actant in the *organization* collective. This is especially true – and in retrospect, perhaps even obvious – when one considers the particular instance of the UCaPP *organization*. After all, to what is humanity more ubiquitously connected and pervasively proximate than the natural environment?

Moreover, the natural environment can be considered to be a foundational, ground actant. When two individuals come together to form what one might consider to be a proto-organization by establishing various valence relationships between them, they do not do so in the void of outer space. The natural (and sometimes unnatural, as in an urban setting) environment is always present. Further, it continually and perpetually contextualizes the nature and scope of members’ interactions, regardless of how many additional members – be they individuals or other organizations – may join.

Under an industrial paradigm, and consistent with the instrumental ground that originally contextualized the BAH *organization*, the natural environment is rarely acknowledged except as an externality or, at best, as an adjunct consideration to the instrumental image-marketing operations of the business (Laufer, 2003; Ramus & Montiel, 2005). In a Valence Theory conception, considering the natural environment as a foundational actant suggests that the fundamental ground valence of any and all instances of

organization is an Ecological-valence relationship whose importance is no less than that of any other valence-relationship consideration.

The nature of Ecological valence⁸⁵

An organization's relationship to the natural environment can usefully be characterized as its sustainability—the net degree to which it utilizes natural capital. Daly (2002, 2004; also Daly & Cobb, 1994) describes two definitions of sustainability. Utility-based sustainability is consistent with that of the Brundtland Commission (WCED, 1987), namely, sustaining a level of resource usage that presumably meets the needs of the current population such that future generations will be able to meet their own needs. Daly points out two major limitations in the utility-based definition: first, utility to meet current needs is not measurable; second, the definition imposes today's conception of “needs” on future generations without acknowledging the socially contextualized, not to mention political, nature of need. What *is* clear is the industrial-context mentality that informs the Brundtland definition—a mentality that is consistent with the prior cultural epoch rather than the UCAPP nature of the contemporary world.

Instead, Daly favours a throughput-based construct of sustainability specifying that “the entropic physical flow from nature's sources through the economy and back to nature's sinks, is to be non-declining” (2002, p. 1). Throughput can be measured as the amount of energy consumed by all physical entities, both human and non-human, on earth. All energy originates in nature, is transformed multiple times through various industrial, agricultural and other processes, and then ultimately reverts to nature. Daly's definition specifies that the amount of energy actually “consumed” by entities on the planet – that is, not returned to nature via consumption of non-renewable resources or production of non-decomposable waste – should be limited so that all other energy flows are at least maintained, if not increased. Thus, one possibility is that Ecological valence could be measured in terms of net energy exchange between an organization and the natural environment via a complex network of interactions and transformations.

In general, ecological, environmental, and sustainability considerations represent a relatively recent set of concerns in the contexts of both modern and contemporary *organization*, compared to the concerns manifest in the other four valence relationships that are literally centuries old. Hence, there is yet considerable opportunity to problematize and frame the issues that may lead to an even more appropriate and useful specification of Ecological valence, associated empirical investigations, and models of praxis consistent with UCAPP *organization*.

⁸⁵ The empirical study upon which this thesis is based specifically investigated the nature of interpersonal relationships that are encompassed in the other four valence relationships. In that sense, Ecological valence is a “theoretical” construct, but one that, in my view, is critically important in a UCAPP world faced with contemporary realities of climate change, depletion of habitat, and over-consumption of natural resources. As the later discussion will include relatively little concerning Ecological valence, I am choosing to briefly explore its nature here, noting that there is considerable opportunity for future research in this area. This section acknowledges the inspiration of Prof. Laurent Leduc, whose course, *Corporate Ethics in the Global Economy*, informed my original conception of Ecological valence.

The Problem of Knowledge, and the Two Valence Forms

When framed as “the main cost, the main investment, the main product of the advanced economy” (Drucker, 1969, p. 264), it is quite understandable how knowledge became commodified—simultaneously a “natural” resource and a finished, economic good. In that sense, one could question whether, in the context of a so-called knowledge economy, the Knowledge valence should be distinct or included as a component of Economic valence, representing both a contemporary commodity and medium of value exchange. Individuals contribute their experience, education, skills, and capabilities to an organization, often in direct exchange for financial remuneration—your coin for what I know. For those framed as knowledge workers – including all of the participants in this research study – knowledge is their stock-in-trade, no different from the value provided by the bricklayer in constructing a wall, the lumberjack in felling trees, or the farmer in reaping the fruits of his/her harvest.

There is, of course, a fundamental *difference in kind* that the contemporary world, and especially the Drucker-inspired discourse of knowledge economy, has attempted to convert to a mere *difference in extent*. Reifying intangible, non-rivalrous, and intrinsically non-excludable knowledge into a near-tangible, tradable commodity is consistent with an industrially oriented mentality. In other words, Drucker’s original framing is problematic relative to a context that reads history as epochal transformations enabled by quantum innovations in the dominant mode of communication and interpersonal engagement. It attempts to characterize one of the dominant, transformative aspects of the contemporary world – the instantaneous, multi-way exchange of knowledge – in Industrial Age-cum-modernist terms. Knowledge as a commodified medium of value exchange is consistent with the prior epoch; Knowledge valence conflated with Economic valence is inherently a construct that reinforces the dominance of economic considerations over any other.

How *else* can we understand the nature of knowledge and the Knowledge valence? Nonaka Ikujiro, together with numerous collaborators, introduce Nishida’s concept of *basho* (expressed in its suffix form, *ba*) to describe the,

...shared context in motion in which knowledge is created, shared, and utilized (Nonaka, Toyama, and Konno, 2000). *Ba* is the context shared by those who interact with each other, a process through which the context itself evolves through a self-transcending process of knowledge creation. ... Knowledge emerges out of *ba*. (Nonaka, Toyama, & Scharmer, 2001)

According to Nonaka, the processes of knowledge socialization, externalization, combination, and internalization occur in the context created by *ba* (Nonaka & Konno, 1998; Nonaka, Toyama, and Konno, 2000; Nonaka, Toyama, & Scharmer, 2001) in a way that is neither transactional nor strictly instrumental. Rather, these processes represent a continual flow and transformation of knowledge through social, psychological, cognitive, and spiritual places in an organization. In his adaptation of Nishida’s philosophy, knowledge originates in, and mutually determines, *ba*, and the “firm is a constantly unfolding organic configuration of *ba*” (Nonaka, Toyama, & Scharmer, 2001, n.p.).

Although I do not agree that an organization is exclusively, or even primarily, determined by knowledge – a conceptual artefact of the knowledge economy discourse – Nonaka’s adaptation of Nishida’s philosophy provides useful guidance into the dual nature of knowledge, and specifically, the Knowledge-valence relationship. From Drucker, there is

an instrumental, transactional, and tradable aspect to knowledge. This is knowledge as both resource and good, with a clear, economic connotation. On the other hand, from Nonaka, there is “a physical, a relational, and a spiritual dimension” (Nonaka, Toyama, & Scharmer, 2001, n.p.) to knowledge. This is knowledge that creates a common sensibility, a common understanding of *place* and contextual circumstances, and a common volition to action among organizational members. The former I call “fungible”⁸⁶ Knowledge (*f*-Knowledge); the latter, Knowledge-*ba*.

Both forms can be seen among the empirical findings of this study. In Organization A, for example, Adam describes the importance of individuals’ Knowledge-valence connections to the organization in the aftermath of a merger: “What’s noticeable is that we have all sorts of folks that you weren’t aware of that they had particular association with certain things that suddenly claim to have that association” (Adam-1-48). This reaction among people whose jobs are suddenly placed in jeopardy can be understood as a survival response in the context of an organization that simultaneously claims to value *f*-Knowledge-valence relationships, and artificially imposes an arbitrary limit on the quantity of *f*-Knowledge-valence relationships that it will support, through its focus on “reducing redundancies.”

(Re-)creating knowledge as a rivalrous resource correspondingly creates a disruption in information flow that restricts the ability to get the job done, as Adam describes: “Information is not flowing, and for us that ... becomes an issue, because information that’s needed to make decisions and recommendations and plans becomes fragmented, and becomes twisted by the interests of the supplier of the information” (Adam-1-52). Irrespective of one of Fayol’s (1949) basic principles of BAH management, that business concerns should take precedence over individual concerns, when fungible valence relationships are recreated as rivalrous and limited, personal concerns (like survival) far outweigh concerns of the enterprise.

In the case of *f*-Knowledge in Organization A, for example, information stops flowing at times when people see opportunity to either advance, survive, or protect territory. Information possession and control becomes a very valuable commodity and asset to be hoarded in times of uncertainty. Knowledge is not only power; in an interesting reversal, it can also become the governor that limits that which powers the organization. In the discursive context of the knowledge economy – within a relatively more BAH environment – Knowledge- and Economic-valence relationships may become conflated: *f*-Knowledge becomes a rivalrous resource when organization members perceive that Economic dominance is equivalent to exclusivity of *f*-Knowledge.

In Inter Pares, the multiple venues in which knowledge is “socialized” are more than merely instrumental means through which information dissemination occurs. Regular program meetings and all-staff meetings – the two, primary governing bodies of the organization – create Knowledge-*ba* relationships among all members, and the organization itself. Instrumentally, “it makes the wheels turn easier, so you don’t have to come up with fifteen administrative checks and balances, and have somebody look over your shoulder as you’re trying to make every decision which, actually, is a waste of energy” (Jean-1-54). It also enables Inter Pares’s amazing ability to permit every member to commit the organization to

⁸⁶ The connotation of the word, fungible, is that it is tradable or negotiable in kind, or interchangeable for an equivalence of the same, or similar, commodity.

a course of action with external constituencies. Each person shares the common context, a common sensibility, and a common volition to action. Simply put, Knowledge-*ba* creates a circumstance in which everyone *just knows what to do*.

Loreen expresses some of her perceived distinction between *f*-Knowledge and Knowledge-*ba* in describing Unit 7's culture of inquiry, differentiating between checking-up and checking-in. She describes how an employee, hired for their expertise and knowledge may feel considerable discomfort in asking "content-related" questions. If one is paid to know – that is, compensated for their *f*-Knowledge – they had better know what they claim. If a senior member of the organization or a client questions that employee, it is often based in the employee being asked to either demonstrate their *f*-Knowledge (that is, their value to the organization), or justify the adequacy of their performance (checking-up). In a *f*-Knowledge organization, the space of inquiry is perceived as unsafe: "questions weren't a comfortable place to live ... it isn't a natural place to want to be in terms of feeling confident" (Loreen-2-102).

However, in a Knowledge-*ba* environment, inquiry is the mechanism used to create that Knowledge-*ba* in the first place. Opening space for an "expert's" own inquiry by inviting *place* for the not-yet-known is a path to creativity and innovation. Thus, the leader's role shifts from directing work to encouraging appropriate inquiry and discovery, a role that both requires and creates Knowledge-*ba*, quite consistent with the contention of Nonaka, Toyama, and Konno (2000).

The question now arises: if there are both fungible and *ba* forms of the Knowledge-valence relationship, is there an equivalent duality for each of the other valences? The answer, as one might now expect, is unequivocally, yes. For each valence relationship, the fungible form is more instrumental and transactional. In all cases, the fungible-form valence relationships can be conflated with economic considerations, be it with respect to extrinsic motivation⁸⁷ (*f*-Socio-psychological), job titles (*f*-Identity), direct compensation (*f*-Economic), or externalizing waste products in pollution (*f*-Ecological).

Conversely, the *ba*-form valence relationships are environmental—they permeate the organization creating the types of commonality among members that manifest in Inter Pares's collaborative management style, the tremendous success of Unit 7's B-Roll Diabetes Initiative, and my department's accomplishment of a remarkable number of projects for which no one supposedly had time. It is the source of intrinsic motivation (Socio-psychological-*ba*), constructing one's sense of organizational self in referent⁸⁸ terms (Identity-*ba*), having a demonstrable sense of how one is valued by the organization (Economic-*ba*), and reflecting the organization's collective engagement with public space and the physical environment (Ecological-*ba*).

As I will demonstrate in more detail in the next chapter, BAH organizations tend to emerge when fungible-form valence relationships predominate; UCAPP organizations emerge from *ba*-form relationships. As the *ba*-form relationships become more pervasive throughout an organization, and interact with more complexity among the members, a

⁸⁷ These specifications of the *f*- and *ba*-forms of the valence relationships are meant to be examples only, and not exclusive and definitive.

⁸⁸ For example, as a referent leader.

greater sense of collaborative community, with common sensibility, appreciation of context, and volition to action develops. This unity and coherence I describe as “organization-*ba*,” a pervasive, encompassing *basbo* that is a crucial, if not determining, emergent property of UCAPP organizations. The connection to Adler and Heckscher’s description of collaborative community becomes clear if organization-*ba* is construed as Weber’s suggested “value rationality.” In this, an environment of organization-*ba* becomes the enabling cause that yields “contribution to the collective purpose, and contributions to the success of others” (Adler & Heckscher, 2006, p. 39).

In an earlier chapter, I described how Inter Pares creates its form of coalition with partner organizations worldwide:

Follow the relationships. So follow the *place in the centre* where both we feel that we can engage and we can contribute, and the people with whom we are building the relationship also feel that they can *participate in this relationship, and they’ll get something out of it*, and it will be *useful in the context* in which they’re working. (Jean-1-3; emphasis added)

In Valence Theory terms, Jean’s formula describes participating in mutual exchange relationships that will connect Inter Pares with a potential coalition partner—in other words, creating various valence relationships. Additionally, she describes “the place in the centre” – *basbo* – in which both will engage and find common context. Juxtaposing and connecting Inter Pares’s organizational context with that of the potential partner create a relationship that will be “useful in the context in which *they’re* working,” rather than, say, forcing the partner to adopt Inter Pares’s worldview and approaches. The two organizations come together to forge new valence relationship bonds, thereby creating a new, emergent organization in what otherwise might be called a meeting of minds. The unity and coherence that are simultaneously created is organization-*ba*—literally, the *place (basbo)* of the new organization in the generative sense suggested in Nishida’s (1933/1970) original work.

The farther an organization is towards the UCAPP end of a hypothetical, BAH-UCAPP spectrum, the stronger is the corresponding sense of organization-*ba*. Members of UCAPP organizations are multiply interconnected and mutually engaged as a way of being. In contrast, we have seen that the more BAH an organization becomes, the more fragmented, separated, and instrumentally or transactionally connected are the members—even within themselves, as reported by all participants from Organization M. Drawing from this extreme, BAH case among the research participants, Organization M suggests that bureaucracy, administrative controls, and hierarchy may tend to ossify an organization by interfering with the complex interactions among valence relationships. Strong organization-*ba* indicates the degree to which valence relationships are able to interact with each other in complex ways within individuals, and how that complexity is expressed via the valence connections among organization members themselves⁸⁹.

⁸⁹ “Testing” this proposition among participants via my weblog (Federman, 2005-2010, post of June 11, 2008) resulted in responses suggesting the following: the siloed nature of one of the BAH organizations precluded interactions among *f*-Knowledge and other valences; Tayloristic specialization even within individuals, interfered with connections among *f*-Economic, *f*-Socio-psychological, and *f*-Knowledge; and that “this concept explains why I feel so brutalized by work and school—I am simply not allowed to be my whole self in a BAH organization.”

Effective Theory

In an earlier chapter, I describe how Inter Pares considers the issue of scaling and growth, and suggest this comparison between BAH and UCAPP organizations:

With BAH organizations, *effectiveness* is measured in terms of owned or controlled resources that are deployed in the pursuit of defined objectives and goals. UCAPP organizations, it seems, feel a lesser need to control or own the means – including people – that enable the creation and dissemination of its intended *effects* which are based in shared values and participation in common cause.

In a contemporary context, it is appropriate to question whether the traditional construction of organizational effectiveness – having to do with access and deployment of resources, or achievement of stated goals and objectives, or combinations of both – provides the most useful guidance for a UCAPP world. One could construct a cogent and legitimate argument that critiques striving for such effectiveness constructs, writ large in the context of organizations, economies, and nations; writ small in the context of individuals seeking what they – rightly or wrongly – consider to be their personal due.

An extreme focus on instrumentality and achieving unitary objectives, often to the exclusion of other – and others’ – considerations, has perennially been critiqued for sowing the seeds of near economic collapse (e.g., Bakan, 2004; McLean & Elkind, 2003) and seemingly inevitable ecological deterioration and catastrophe (e.g., Liotta & Shearer, 2007; Lovelock, 2006) that threaten order, stability, and perhaps civilization’s ability to sustain itself. Proposing Valence Theory – a contemporary reconception of the fundamental premise upon which organizations are constructed – necessitates proposing a corresponding change in our collective understanding of what it means to be effective.

Simply put, in a world that is ubiquitously connected and therefore pervasively proximate, to be truly, if not literally, *effective* is to be cognizant of the effects one intends to create, and actively aware of the multiple, complex effects that one actually brings about in both the social and material – natural and physically constructed – environments⁹⁰. As effects are substantially distinct from goals and outcomes, an organization concerned first and foremost with its effects must bring a heightened awareness amidst the social and material environments in which it participates among its various and varied constituencies. This logic brings an organization to having as its primary concern, the relationships it creates, out of which intended effects emerge, followed by the goals, objectives, and outcomes towards which it strives.

Such a progression of attention priorities – from a primary focus on relationships to secondarily on effects and only then to goals – is, for conventional organizations and their leaders, not only counter-intuitive, but backwards—completely reversed from the “normal” order of organizational causality. However, in the UCAPP world, causality framed as Newtonian “action-reaction” provides only a superficial model, describing the most

⁹⁰ I would happily include psychological and spiritual environments as well in an admonition to active, mindful awareness. However, this call for organizations to develop an active awareness of complex manifestations should be both a sufficient challenge, and a necessary restorative for the next generation (or two) of organizational philosophers and practitioners.

simplistic of human transactions. As I describe elsewhere, the UCaPP world is best understood in terms of connection, context, and complexity:

Connection matters, because it is precisely the ubiquitously connected world that has created the acceleration in communication that is driving contemporary society through this nexus period, bursting through the break boundary, and onto the other side that we now inhabit: once we have changed, we cannot unchange. Ubiquitous connectivity creates the effect of pervasive proximity, and that means context matters.

Context matters because in a UCaPP world, diverse contexts are brought into proximity and are able to interact in ways that were implausible one hundred years ago, and certainly were impossible before that. But many of these contexts often seem to be inconsistent with one another. They might appear to be paradoxical, antithetical or even contradictory when brought into immediate proximity with each other. This means, complexity matters.

Complexity matters because making sense of these multiple, overlapping contexts necessitates an analytical frame that is different from the traditional deterministic, sequentially causal, dialectical methods that have dominated the academy since the 17th century. Actions that occur in any context are far from isolated in their effects in a global system that is massively interconnected in networks that create multiple feedback and feedforward loops. Seemingly small interactions may have quite substantial effects throughout the entire system; what might appear to be substantial interactions may ultimately have quite insignificant system-wide effects. This non-linearity and non-proportionality of effect becomes especially relevant when considering interactions among social systems that are interpreted through the collective diverse histories, cultures, and experiences contributed by these multiple, pervasively proximate contexts. (Federman, 2008b)

As Frances Westley, Brenda Zimmerman, and Michael Quinn Patton observe, most people prefer the image of a leader in control, with a clear, intended objective in mind, striving against adversity to achieve the desired and intended outcome. But, the UCaPP world,

...is itself transforming, that is changing the innovator as he or she seeks to change the world. A complexity lens allows us to look at these interactions more closely. Control is replaced by a toleration of ambiguity and the “can-do” mentality of “making things happen” is modified by an attitude that is simultaneously visionary and responsive to the unpredictable unfolding of events...

These two perspectives – intentionality and complexity – meet in tension. If you intend to do something, you make a deliberate commitment to act to bring about change. Complexity science is about unpredictable emergence without regard for (indeed, even in spite of) human intentions. These two perspectives meet in the question ... to what extent and in what ways can we

be deliberate and intentional about those things that seem to emerge without our control, without our intention? (Westley, Zimmerman, and Patton, 2007)

Clearly, a new – or at least, augmented – vocabulary is needed to capture what has previously been thought of as “theories of action” (Argyris & Schön, 1974, 1978, 1996). Chris Argyris and Donald Schön provide what could be considered the iconic foundation of organizational learning—espoused and in-use theories. *Espoused theory* reflects actions that one would intend to take in a given situation if asked; *theory-in-use* reflects actions that one actually takes in that situation, relative to specific goals or objectives. Learning, according to Argyris and Schön, consists of incorporating changes to one’s theories of action in response to deviations in outcomes as perceived and interpreted by the individual.

Simply correcting the deviation represents what Argyris and Schön call *single-loop learning*. However, such learning often acquires aspects of defensiveness that compromise the overall effectiveness of both the learning itself, and the organization. Potential defensive corrections might include compartmentalizing theory-in-use from espoused theory when there are inconsistencies between them, or willingly remaining ignorant of salient data that would expose the incongruities. Many defensive responses involve suppressing “bad news” through intimidation or other power and control mechanisms. Some individuals might simply change their espoused theory to correspond to their theories-in-use and actual behaviours, or introduce marginal changes to theories-in-use so that they are technically consistent with espoused theories. The overall idea is to protect and preserve extant theories-in-use so as to avoid embarrassment or other disruptive consequences (Argyris & Schön, 1974, 30-34; see also Argyris, 1994).

Double-loop learning not only corrects behaviour relative to nominal objectives; it also encourages reflection on the pertinence and validity of the means employed to achieve the objectives, thereby informing and possibly modifying theory-in-use. Double-loop processes seek contextual information beyond direct behaviour-response data, and expand the domain of potential operational choices. These processes necessitate sometimes difficult reflection on an organization’s self-observed behaviours, and the ability to cope with incongruities, paradoxes, and tensions between competing polarities, in an effort to “walk the talk,” as it is popularly described (Argyris & Schön, 1996).

Both single- and double-loop learning presume the type of controlled and directed intentionality that is often effective when confronting either simple or relatively complicated situations on one’s path towards a specific objective or outcome. The context of Argyris and Schön’s theories of action approach is often a relatively focused and contained human system—a conventional, bounded organization, even considered in the context of a larger, structural “ecosystem” (Hinings, 2003). Whether considered in terms of Castells’s (1996) network enterprise or as a contingent, emergent, Valence Theory entity, a complexity view of *organization* becomes limited within the confines of the more deterministic grounding of Argyris and Schön’s otherwise useful model. Members’ own conception of the boundaries of their respective organizations limit their ability to negotiate the tension of organizational intentionality and environmental complexity.

The apparent inconsistencies inherent in that tension are perhaps best navigated by considering a third learning loop based on considering the effects perceivable within an

organization's purview as the organization's *strange attractor*⁹¹. An organization can act on a holistically anticipated set of intended effects through a process often called *feedforward*. Its actions can be monitored and combined with comprehensive environmental sensing that especially includes contexts that might otherwise exceed the assumptive domains of the organization's conventional, purposeful concerns. The sensing, fed back into future anticipations based on the emergent properties of the complex environment, creates new feedforward loops. The combination of holistic feedforward, and environmentally sensed feedback tracking the trajectory of effects in the organization's environment, creates the third learning loop.

Effective [sic] theory enables an organization to incorporate its own lived experiences, and both prior and ongoing learning, contextualized by its effects on other organizations and constituencies that are so touched. In valence terms, these effects are the measures of the valence relationships that connect one individual or organization to others. Just as a traditionally conceived organization measures its effectiveness through resource acquisition and deployment, or achievement of prescribed outcomes and objectives, a valence organization measures its *effectiveness* by how well it anticipates, perceives, and adapts to the complex, emergent changes resulting from the effects it creates through the interactions among its valence relationships.

Sensory Revision

One of the key descriptors I use for characterizing traditionally conceived organizations is *primary-purposeful*. In such a characterization, an organization's mission – its goals, objectives, and sought outcomes – become the idealized, overriding concerns of its members. There is a discourse (e.g., Bass, 1990) – and a corresponding discursive critique (Gee, Hull, & Lankshear, 1996) of such an organization – which maintains that members should be systematically encouraged to take on the organization's mission as their own. The

⁹¹ Complex systems are often described in mathematical terms using Henri Poincaré's topological approach. In mathematics, and particularly in topology, solutions to sets of nonlinear equations are often depicted as sets of curves drawn through an n-dimensional phase space, where n represents the number of variables in the equations. A point that "travels" along one of these curves defines the state of the system at any time; its movement over time is called its *trajectory*—a concept is most easily imagined as a point moving through physical space relative to reference axes of length, width, and breadth. At any time, the "state" of the physical system can be defined in terms of the point's position; its path through space is the trajectory. Similarly, in a complex system, there would be more dimensions, each dimension, or variable, referring to a parameter that uniquely defines an aspect of the system being described. The trajectory of the point is called an attractor, with three topologically distinct forms: *point* (a system that eventually reaches stable equilibrium, representing the end of change and growth; i.e., death), *periodic*, meaning a system that has regular oscillations between two states, and *strange* that applies to chaotic systems such as those characterized as exhibiting properties of complexity. Strange attractors tend to create distinct patterns of trajectories for a given system, although the precise location of a point in phase space at a particular time cannot be accurately determined. This means that the system is non-deterministic – its future state cannot be accurately predicted from its past state(s). Substantial changes in the type, shape or existence of an attractor, corresponding to substantive changes in the nature of the defining parameters (e.g., contextual ground of the system) is called a *bifurcation point*, and marks a state of instability from which a new order of greater complexity can emerge (Capra, 1996).

fragmentation of an organization's overall objectives, and the delegation of the component fragments, are characteristic aspects of the annual "objective-setting" exercise for this study's most-BAH organizations—Organizations M and A.

By "primary-purposeful," I mean that the organization's goals and objectives – and by extension, those of its subordinate members – are paramount, usually placed ahead of any other considerations. In other words, the purpose is primary. Thus, any secondary or tertiary effects that the primary-purposeful organization creates in its respective social and material environments tend to be more-or-less ignorable by its management – externalized with respect to fiscal responsibility, if possible, but almost always considered subordinate to the organization's primary purpose, that is, its mission. If, somehow, those effects might impinge on the attainment of said purpose, they quickly come into focus and become higher priorities.

The goals, objectives, and quantifiable outcomes expressed as mission come from the organization's vision, a statement of where and how it sees itself, often expressed as a sort of reflexive outcome. As with mission, organization members are strongly encouraged to adopt the organization's vision and values as their own. However, the encouragement can be regarded with some cynicism: Gee, Hull, and Lankshear observe, "fast capitalism requires total commitment on the part of workers/partners[;] this commitment is not necessarily reciprocated in many of the ways that might seem necessary for engendering that commitment in the first place" (1996, p. 35).

Among the consequences of my contention – that an *organization's* expression of its purpose shifts from outcomes to effects in a UCAPP context – is the necessity for a corresponding transition of an organization's dominant sensory metaphor as the source of its collective impetus. Vision – especially when conveyed by a charismatic and inspiring leader – drives purpose and transforms a statement of mission into impetus. Notwithstanding the power of a transformative vision, it is important to realize that, as a sensory metaphor, vision is inconsistent with UCAPP conditions and thus, with the reality of the contemporary world.

Vision is the only human sense that operates at a distance—indeed, distance and separation are required for vision to operate. There is a corresponding detachment that necessarily imposes itself on the vision creator and holder, as de Kerckhove (2002) originally describes in the detachment of context from text that occurred with the introduction of phonetic literacy, and I trace through the rise of visual culture throughout history (Federman, 2007). Thus, in a world that experiences pervasive *proximity*, a sensory metaphor that contradicts proximity is hardly appropriate, let alone useful. Rather, as our most proximate sense, *tactility* – the sense of touch – may well provide the most useful and appropriate guidance for contemporary *organization*.

Tactility is an expression of effects. It is, therefore, consistent with both *effective* theory as an extension of Argyris and Schön's theories of action, and with Valence Theory as a foundational theory of *organization*. Adopting tactility as the sensorial guiding ethos encourages the characteristically UCAPP culture of inquiry by replacing the obligatory and prescriptive vision *statement* – an imperative to unswerving action towards accomplishing a purpose – with a tactility *question*: whom are you going to touch, and how are you going to touch them, today?

A tactility question is at once both personal and corporate, individual and collective. It draws first from an individual's values, using those to inform a negotiated *place* from which the collective values of the organization emerge. In a sense, the organization aligns its values with those of its members, not the other way around. It is not that a primary-purposeful – most often BAH – organization has a well-defined, guiding purpose and a UCAPP organization does not. In fact, the respective purposes of successful UCAPP organizations, such as Unit 7 and Inter Pares, tend to be very clear and well-focused. They also tend to be emergent, and therefore, any given organization's purpose may take on a contingent nature. In other words, the UCAPP organization's purpose tends to evolve over time based on the complexities of the contextual circumstances, and their specific interactions with those constituencies that become enmeshed with them.

Described another way, a UCAPP organization's purpose continually emerges from the complex interactions among experienced and perceived effects that the organization enables throughout its environment, relative to those it intended. Those intentions are the answers to the organization's tactility question, the expressions of its members' collective values. *Effective* theory enables the Valence Theory-conceived organization to negotiate the polarity tension between intentionality and complexity.

A Conversation with Nishida: The Fruit

The master stands by the counter in his sparse kitchen, holding a fruit in each hand. He seems to be judging their weight, one with respect to the other, shifting each hand in turn up and then down again. Before I can ask the obvious question, he speaks, not moving, his back remaining towards me.

“As I know you cannot contain your childish curiosity – a trait that I fear I shall never train out of you – I seek to defy a cliché: I am attempting to compare apples and oranges.”

That would explain the fruit, I thought. “That is a very old, and rather unhelpful cliché,” I remark. “While it’s true that each is a distinct fruit, they are quite comparable, depending on the basis of comparison. The each share the quality of weight—that’s one way to compare them. They both have colour; that’s another way. Each can taste sweet or tart, so flavour is, again, a common attribute between them.” I count off on my fingers. “Both can be juiced, only one is typically made into a pie, apples tend to go to jellies, oranges to marmalade, smoothness or roughness of the peel, and the relative thickness of each. There are countless ways to compare apples and oranges.” I take a deep breath, completing the recitation.

“All true, and yet all irrelevant,” begins Nishida in his cryptic way. “The true comparison is found in observing the transformation of one into the other. What remains and what changes, how great is the apparent difference with how small an alteration in substance—from those come the revelation of the innate similarity between the two.”

“So you are going to wait until the apple changes into an orange – or vice versa – to discover the truth in this lesson?” I shake my head and turn to leave the room. “You’ll be left with a mess of rotten, decomposing fruit long before that happens.”

“Indeed.” Nishida turns to face me. “And then they will both have transformed, one into the other, and we shall have our answer. Yes, you are learning. You are learning, but sometimes, you do not realize the lesson.”

“You’re right about that. How do we understand the nature of the apple, or the orange, and how they compare to one another, by waiting for them to rot into mush?”

“It is not for us to understand their natures; their natures belong to them—“

“To the fruit,” I say flatly.

“Yes. The nature of each fruit belongs to the fruit and to the fruit alone. The fruit believes it is an apple or an orange and so it is. As

it decays, the outward appearance and the inward flavour transform so that the fruit can no longer recognize itself as the conception it previously held. But when it meets its counterpart – the other decaying fruit – they each see themselves in the other and a common place of recognition comes into existence.”

“*Basho*. Yes, I got that—well, at least for people. I don’t know that Nishida Kitaro particularly contemplated the fundamental problems of fruit philosophy.” I give the master a rather sardonic look.

“Fruit. People. Trees. Rivers. Rocks. It matters not. What matters is the recognition, and the subsequent transformation through *basho*. A completely new form is possible when there is an intrinsic sameness, a unity of fundamental being, and a willingness to release one’s conception of an old form.”

I think hard on this one—conception – *self*-conception – as it relates to one’s transformation. “Conception—or belief that the old *form* is, in fact, one’s fundamental nature...” My sentence trails off as I realize the difference between image and intrinsic nature. “A person’s identity is not determined by external appearances—”

“Unless...” Nishida interrupts.

“Unless?”

“Unless,” he repeats, matter-of-factly.

“Unless.” I pause, thrown deep into the Nishida’s well of philosophical unattachment. Of course! “Unless he is attached to the external appearance.” I grab the orange from my teacher’s hand and tear into its peel. “Strip away the external aspects to which the essence is attached, and you can begin to transform how the internal regards itself.”

“Precisely.” Nishida reaches for a knife and begins to slice the apple into a bowl. He takes the peeled orange and breaks it into segments, placing them in the bowl as well. “And when the external appearances and identity attachments are completely removed, and the orange and apple are placed in new relationship, the entire entity changes. Very simple, yet not always so obvious.”

I take two forks from the drawer, and hand one to Nishida. “I still say we can best compare them on the basis of flavour.”

“Yes, and you need your strength to complete your work. Which reminds me, how is that thesis of yours coming along?”

“By now? Almost done.”

Contextualizing Valence Theory

Valence Theory comprises: a new definition of *organization* founded on five fundamental relationships through which its members – be they individual members or other organizations – connect, unite, react, or interact; two forms each of the five valence relationships – fungible and *ba* – that account for the differences between BAH and UCAPP organizations; and a process that expresses *organization's* tactility by marrying intentionality and complexity among the reciprocal interactions of individual members via the valence relationships' effects. Through Valence Theory, I distinguish between a primary-purposeful organization and a valence-conceived organization in their relative ordering of priorities. The former begins with a vision, from which a mission is created, that defines the requisite objectives, goals, and outcomes for the organization as a whole. These are decomposed into tasks fragmented for its component units, from which individual tasks, and generally instrumental interactions and relationships are created. The latter – a valence-conceived organization – emerges from a common *place* of collective values, expressed as the intended effects the organization will create among those constituencies whom the organization will touch. These are enacted via complex combinations of relationships among the members, from which the organization's purpose and subsequent objectives emerge.

A UCAPP organization can be expressed only in Valence Theory terms. A BAH organization, because of its heritage, is usually a primary-purposeful organization; it could, hypothetically, be expressed in valence terms, especially if its members respect the importance of balancing the five valence concerns, rather than giving predominance to the Economic-valence relationship.

From this comparison, simple behavioural dichotomies are easily seen and explained. Milton Friedman's (in)famous exhortation, "the social responsibility of business is to increase its profits" (1970), clearly comes from the primary-purposeful camp. Interface Inc.'s founder and chairman, Ray Anderson's epiphany, that corporations are "blind to ... externalities, those costs that can be externalized and foisted off on someone else" (Anderson, in Bakan, 2004, p. 72) expresses his shift to a valence orientation. As reported in both Bakan's book, *The Corporation*, and the subsequent film documentary, Anderson's company transformed every aspect of its operations after his new realization, effecting balance among the five valences even though it retained certain BAH aspects (i.e., fungible-form valence relationships). Semco (Semler, 1989; 1993) is another organization whose transformation can be understood in terms of balancing and effecting *ba*-forms among the five valence relationships.

Grounding Valence Theory in the Research

The empirical study that forms the basis of this thesis discovered seven areas of distinction between BAH and UCAPP organizations: change, coordination, evaluation, impetus, power dynamics, sense-making, and view of people. Framing the distinctive behaviours in Valence Theory terms enables an understanding of each type of organization in a way that allows organization members to effect a transformation from one type to the other. Unlike more descriptive and prescriptive methods that essentially suggest emulating behaviours to effect change (e.g., Adler & Heckscher, 2006) – reminiscent of a cargo-cult approach – understanding the fundamental human dynamics bound up among complex interactions of interpersonal relationships, may enable situational approaches for individual circumstances.

Change

BAH organizations seek to maintain control—holding as much of a status quo as possible in the face of unforeseeable circumstances. In other words, BAH organizations seek equilibrium, not emergence, through what Castells’s describes as “the reproduction of their system of means” (1996, p. 171). Thus, there is an emphasis on successful precedent and well-honed, consistent, procedures. An organization can ensure such consistency by focusing its members’ activities according to their well-defined *f*-Economic and *f*-Knowledge valence contributions (especially if the two are conflated via the knowledge-economy discourse). This emphasis can be manifest in well-defined job descriptions and enforced functional boundaries as seen in Organizations M and A, created through isomorphic functional structures as in Organization F, and by imposing individual performance measures according to “counting widgets,” as Organization A’s Karen describes their work-production tracking system.

An environment enabled by Economic-*ba* and Knowledge-*ba* offers the possibility of individual members offering, and being exposed to, more and diverse opportunities. When members are demonstrably valued for, and given the opportunity to initiate significant change, they will do so enthusiastically, as Unit 7’s experience shows. Conversely, Stan’s experience in Organization M of being restricted in his potential contribution (limiting *f*-Economic) has the effect of limiting potential change to the entrenched system. Change and innovation, as I discussed previously, organically emerges from conditions of organization-*ba*. Changing circumstances and opportunities are managed – accommodated, as I describe it – in the context of an organizational culture that values inquiry: for example, Loreen’s signature question of, “for the sake of why?” in Unit 7. When directed at intended and emergent effects, systemic inquiry is the vehicle that provides an important aspect of *effective* theory’s environmental sensing and anticipatory feedforward.

Coordination

In the findings, I draw a discursive distinction between teamwork, specifically contextualized in a BAH organization as being based in explicitly coordinated, interdependent action, individual responsibility, and leader accountability; and collaboration in a UCAPP context. Collaboration in this sense is constructed in the context of organization-*ba*, enabling individual autonomy and agency, collective responsibility, and mutual accountability.

“As a manager, I would say something different than I would say as Jean” (Jean-1-53) expresses the granularity of one’s enactment of Identity-valence relationship, here in the case of Inter Pares. When she continues the thought – “I’m careful to remember that it’s not me that I’m representing, although it’s also me because I’m part of this institution” (Jean-1-53) – Jean describes the effect of a complete, integrated collaboration as organization-*ba* in the UCAPP context.

When a person’s Identity-valence relationship to the organization is predominantly fungible, there is, by definition, a tradable value associated with the status, class, and privilege that the Identity connection conveys. It becomes difficult for that individual to separate a personal view from that of the organizational role since it is nearly impossible for someone so constructed to publicly separate his or her self from that *f*-Identity-valence connection. Thus, it is not uncommon for an individual to feel compelled to assume either

an untenable, illogical, seemingly irrational, or unethical position with respect to a particular issue because s/he presumes – often incorrectly – that is the appropriate position for the Identity-role to assume. Because the person cannot separate him/herself from that *f*-Identity-valence connection, s/he (to paraphrase Marshall McLuhan) loves her/his label – Identity – as her/his *self*⁹². Amidst the dehumanizing influences that characterize BAH organizations, a strong, extrinsically created, *f*-Identity-valence connection helps to disconnect the individual from acting on personal judgements, feelings, and core values.

Where the Identity-*ba* valence connection is predominant in an organizational culture, morally, ethically, and tactically ambiguous decisions that an individual might face are considered in the context of *collective* morality, ethicality, tactics, and values. Rather than putting on a role and acting out in the way that the individual may conceive, or project such a character may act (Ashforth, 2001; Goffman, 1959), the person draws from his/her shared sense of what it means to belong to their particular group. S/he is then able to appropriately represent the will of the collaboratively constructed Identity(-*ba*) of the group. By virtue of the way in which organization-*ba* is created, individuals may hold diverse opinions on particular subject matters, but the underlying values, common sense of purpose, collective will to action, and shared tactility ensure that, more or less, the individual can, in good conscience, represent the will of the organization with individual autonomy and agency.

Put another way, a BAH manager will ask him/herself the *f*-Identity question: “What decision would a manager in my position take; how (that is, through what defensible process) would s/he come to that decision?” In contrast, a UCAPP manager would ask an Identity-*ba* question: “What decision accurately represents the collective values of this organization to create the intended effects – the *tactility* – to which this organization aspires?”

Considered in a slightly different way, understanding the action of *f*-Identity can help explain seemingly arbitrary, onerous, or self-righteous decisions that occasionally occur in BAH organizations. For example, Organization A’s insistence on the “right” credentials to be accepted on the technical pay plan (Karen-1-97), and requiring employees to report any run-ins with the law (Adam-2-38) are both expressions of *f*-Identity constructs; specifically, the connection from the organization’s perspective to the member contributing to the instrumental construction of the organization’s identity. Similarly, as I describe in a blog post of July 21, 2008 (Federman, 2005-2010), the firing of tenured professor, Colin Wightman, from Acadia University for an alleged sexual liaison with a woman not otherwise associated with the university (Vaisey & Wainwright, 2008), can be understood (but not necessarily justified) through a *f*-Identity analysis.

These cases clearly demonstrate the reciprocal nature of the valence relationships. An individual creates aspects of her/his own identity through the instrumental association with an organization via social capital cachet, or ascribed attribution of skills and capabilities, among other qualities. Similarly, organizations construct aspects of their identities through analogous *f*-Identity-valence relationships. One need look no further than University of Toronto’s own “Great Minds” advertising campaign to observe this in action.

The other major coordination theme identified in the empirical findings is the spectrum-defining duality of checking-up vs. checking-in. Checking-in originates in a *place* of

⁹² From McLuhan’s *Counterblast*: “Love thy label as thy self” (1969, p. 35).

authentic concern for mutual accountability and a sense of collective responsibility. Checking-in not only reveals and enables the instrumental aspects of *f*-Knowledge in its action. It is also driven by Socio-psychological-*ba*, manifest as intrinsic motivation and common concern for the entire group, as well as Knowledge-*ba* in creating an environment that actively encourages socializing information, experiences, opportunities, and expertise.

Almost diametrically opposite, checking-up – “the discipline of making sure,” as Loreen calls it – activates a *f*-Socio-psychological connection through (often tacit) extrinsic, coercive motivation, exclusively fungible Knowledge connections, and expressed *f*-Economic ties to the larger group (for example, in the case of a project manager doing the checking-up among project contributors). One could make an argument that an organization for which checking-up is part of the deeply embodied culture has, in effect, entrenched *f*-Knowledge and tied it almost exclusively to *f*-Economic. In such cases, Knowledge-*ba* – freely offering the benefit of one’s experience and expertise in the environment – is all but precluded other than as an exception. Both Karen and Adam from Organization A explicitly mention this phenomenon, as does Organization M’s Sean.

Evaluation

It is clear that BAH organizations base their evaluation criteria primarily, if not exclusively, on *f*-Economic considerations – the accomplishments of one’s nominal job requirements in exchange for financial remuneration. The presumed reciprocity between achievement and reward as extrinsic motivation (*f*-Socio-psychological) is not necessarily a direct connection – a Pavlovian response, if you will – as some of the early practitioners and theorists such as Taylor (1911), Herzberg (1964), and Vroom (1967) suggested. One’s income is often considered a proxy for other ascribed attributes, conveying as much social capital as financial capital; it plays to *f*-Socio-psychological, certainly, but often in close conjunction with *f*-Identity. When ascribed and enacted status is decoupled from income – that is, when those respective fungible connections are transformed to *ba*-form connections as in the case of Unit 7 – a person who relies exclusively on fungible connections will sever their association with the organization, irrespective of income or positive performance evaluations (Roger-1-189).

On the other hand, UCAPP organizations use a different aspect of Valence Theory on which to base their evaluations, both of individuals and of the organization as a whole. Rather than measuring performance strictly in terms of specific achievements relative to a list of outcomes and goals, an organization like Inter Pares takes an *effective* theory approach. The annual retreat extended check-ins, and the reference group established at six months and one year for new members, and after seven years for long-serving members, focus on the overall effects created by the member being assessed within their total context. Expressed another way, a UCAPP assessment does not judge a person according to their contribution to realizing the organization’s vision, but rather to achieving its tactility. At Unit 7, a stellar quantitative performance by a decisive, forceful, or even charismatic leader can be seriously diminished by an inability to enable organization-*ba* as a referent leader.

As a BAH organization attempts to become more humanistic, it may (nominally) place more emphasis on what Organization A’s Robert calls, “quality-of-life objectives” as part of its annual goal-setting and evaluation exercise. As Robert describes it, quality-of-life objectives include areas like morale, communications, diversity, technical growth, and for managers, developing their subordinates. Organization A frames morale in terms of

fostering professional growth of individuals through training and opportunities in assignments and leadership (Robert-1-65). These aspects seem to map mostly onto Knowledge-valence and the assumed relationship between Knowledge- and Identity-valences, and Knowledge- and Socio-psychological valences in the context of an organization of so-called knowledge workers. But, before achieving the tangible and explicit recognition of a promotion (thereby reinforcing *f*-Identity and *f*-Socio-psychological connections) an individual is still restricted by the necessity of the organization having an available opportunity based on a pre-designated business need. So, although the manager can set and facilitate these quality-of-life objectives, there must be an alignment of the business need to actualize the morale objectives' nominal intention (i.e., effect). The individual can accomplish the *f*-Knowledge component; it becomes the organization's onus to follow through on enabling the corresponding Identity and Socio-psychological components. Otherwise, quality-of-life and morale objectives have the potential to become an exercise in frustration for the otherwise high achiever working primarily in a fungible relationship space, as Stan recounts in Organization M. I would describe this particular dysfunction as an organizational discontinuity, representing a potential disconnect among espoused, in-use, and *effective* theories for the organization as a whole. It is important to note and contrast, however, the example of Karen, who often works in more of a self-created *ba*-space, for whom the instrumentality of extrinsic motivators dependant on a business need is not as strong⁹³.

Impetus

By now, it should be evident that primary-purposeful organizations (that would include most, if not all, BAH organizations) activate impetus through an appeal to nominal vision and mission, attempting to align employees' hearts and minds – not to mention active discourse – with the goals, objectives, and received culture of the organization (Fleming & Spicer, 2003; Gee, Hull, & Lankshear, 1996; Ogbor, 2001). The classic division-of-labour premise (Fayol, 1949) suggests that, in a BAH organization, only legitimate leaders – those typically higher in the hierarchy – possess sufficient information, vision, and scope of knowledge to provide appropriate impetus that is consistent with achieving the organization's overall purpose. That is, in fact, the leaders' purpose – the fungible, Economic commodity in which they, as leaders, individually trade – in a primary-purposeful organization. Because the individual relationships that create the organization are primarily or exclusively fungible, only legitimated leaders have the privilege of providing leadership; everyone else is busy providing their own unique, *f*-Economic valence commodities.

According to Valence Theory, a UCAPP organization enables common knowledge, appreciation of effects, and volition towards common action via the *ba*-form valence relationships that, enacted together, create the emergent phenomenon of organization-*ba*. Organizational impetus becomes an emergent property of the complex processes that create the UCAPP organization itself—impetus that does not flow from the top down, but emerges

⁹³ I have known Karen in the context of Organization A for over ten years and, although she is in the same business area as Robert, she has never once mentioned quality-of-life or morale objectives, despite numerous conversations about the organization's goal-setting, tracking, and evaluation regimes.

from, and is distributed among, all members. I shall reflect further on the nature of collaborative leadership in a UCAPP context, shortly.

Power Dynamics

In the discourse of the knowledge economy, knowledge is literally power. Aaron, from Organization F, for example, identifies that in an organization that values *f*-Knowledge – especially when it is reified via formal credentials – the knowledge authority that often accompanies it helps to establish a control hierarchy based in that knowledge authority (Aaron-1-61). Consequently, as a more traditional BAH organization may create status (and therefore, control) hierarchies based on role- or title-legitimation, or simple seniority (all of which are expressions of *f*-Economic and *f*-Identity), a more contemporary BAH organization may create an analogous status hierarchy based on *f*-Knowledge in a manner that appears to be a more equitable and supposedly merit-based. Just as there are subjective valuations assigned among certain *f*-Economic or *f*-Identity exchanges and constructions, there is often a tacit assumption that certain knowledge and experience is more valuable than others, and that there is an external designator that establishes that relative value, be it an academic degree or ascribed position in the status hierarchy or organization chart.

Sam, from Inter Pares, specifically speaks to the “conscious reflection on power” that occurs throughout the institution as a way to retain equity and non-hierarchical status among the membership. Although there are clearly individual hubs of very specialized expertise – *f*-Knowledge – the corresponding promotion and protection of Knowledge-*ba* as a vital aspect of the embodied culture among the members precludes expertise from becoming a source of structural power.

Where there is legitimated, structural power, for example, in the body of a personage like a CEO, whether that individual constructs his/her connections to the organization primarily in fungible- or *ba*-forms seems to reflect the differences in how they react to the exercise of power. Earlier, I referred to how each of Organization F’s Matt, and Unit 7’s Loreen, reflect on their respective uses of executive power. Matt’s more instrumental view arises from his own fungible-valence connections, and his projection of similar fungible connections on the part of others. Loreen, when faced with exercising a veto on content, or terminating a member’s employment, experiences a challenging polarity tension: having to exercise all of her fungible connections to the organization (*f*-Economic, *f*-Knowledge, *f*-Identity, and *f*-Socio-psychological) in order to promote, preserve, and protect the *ba*-connections that exist throughout the environment, including her own. This, perhaps, serves to illustrate that organizational circumstances understood from the ground of complexity are not necessarily consistent with respect to obvious action; ideally, they should be consistent with respect to *effect*.

Sense-Making

The findings analyses of Organizations M and A prompted me to raise the question, does a BAH organization have the ability to perceive quality? Certainly, among all of the fungible-valence relationships, specific instrumentation can be (and often is) constructed to quantify the extent to which particular criteria are, or are not met. These criteria, derived as a form of abstract empiricism (Daly & Cobb, 1989), purport to represent a quality standard against which the specific performance of both individuals, and the organization as a whole, are measured. It seems reasonable that in the context of (almost) exclusively *f*-form valence

relationships, little else can be accomplished: there is little space for subjectivity if the fungible transaction with respect to any of the valence relationships is, or is not, appropriately completed.

Jeff, from Organization F (which, as the reader might recall, was in transition from relatively more-UCaPP to more-BAH during the course of the study) relates a dilemma founded in the dissipating collaboration within his organization. He asks, “is that the way we should spend more time working on these [collaborations], or maybe spend less time and get it done faster and move faster?” (Jeff-1-69). Essentially, Jeff defines the polarity tensions of his organization’s collaborative, participatory, sense-making process (relative to developing product technical specifications)—quality vs. speed. As the organization gradually suppressed its *ba*-form relationships in favour of greater instrumentality via the *f*-form connections, speed won. The transaction-oriented code production exchanges, well-defined job specifications, and steady customer growth numbers all served to mask various subjective indications of a loss of quality—in the product itself, in enacted demonstrations of customer interest and engagement, and among staff (Aaron-1-49; -2-64; -2-68; -2-78; -2-80).

In stark contrast, Unit 7’s Frances refers to the meditation on quality that comprises Robert Pirsig’s classic book, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (1974):

It’s what we both perceive to be true. So quality is not innate in this coffee. The only quality it has rests between me and it. Or it’s like Buber: I-thou. The quality is not in the objectification. The quality is in the conversation and the interaction. ... So, even in this interview, you and I don’t know each other, but the quality that we experience in each other comes from the interaction we’re having right now. It lies between us on the table. And whatever we each bring to that or derive from that. (Frances-1-5)

As Frances describes Pirsig’s construction, quality is not a descriptive attribute but an active process: quality is the event that occurs in the relationship between subject and object, when one recognizes that attribute in the other. Quality, as she perceives it, (not surprisingly) seems to be an emergent property of Nishida’s *basho*, existing in the interaction of relationships. Presumably, quality in this sense would also manifest in the nature of the ensuing effects, metaphorically represented in the fuel/air ratio of Pirsig’s motorcycle engine at high altitude, or reified in the coordinating activities between Unit 7 and its Client R that Frances describes as, “fantastic ... one of the healthiest examples that I’ve seen” (Frances-1-172).

Thus, I would contend that indeed, a BAH organization has no ability to perceive quality because its fungible-valence construction has no means to perceive the necessary *ba*-form relationships that define it; the best BAH can do is assign procedural and empirical proxies to measure an abstraction of quality.

View of People

Earlier, I observed that,

What is clear above all else in an instrumental (BAH) versus relational (UCaPP) view of people is that in a UCaPP organization, someone disrupting collaborative relationships and the organization’s social fabric is equivalent to

not performing one's assigned job requirements in a function-oriented, primary-purposeful, BAH organization.

In a Valence Theory construction of *organization*, the rationale behind this observation becomes almost self-evident. BAH organizations emerge from individuals connecting primarily through fungible-valence relationships. These define *instrumentality*, not only with respect to job requirements (*f*-Economic), but also with respect to all the other constructs of the contemporary organization, including assumed sources of motivation, career development, contributions of intellectual property—even adjunctive performance of corporate social responsibility.

UCaPP organizations emerge from the *place* of organization-*ba*, created from a relatively more balanced set of *ba*-form valence relationships. Instrumental considerations themselves emerge from reflexive processes involving intended, actualized, and subsequently reconsidered *effects*. These represent the organization's *tactility*—the ways in which the organization socially and materially touches the various constituencies with which it is *in relation*. And, an organization's *tactility* is an expression of its members' collective values. A disruption of *basho*, quite simply, is pernicious to the UCaPP organization.

New Meanings: Praxis Guidance for Change

Bringing the Outside In

When *organization* is considered to be emergent from among a group of people who interact via valence relationships, the question of who is a member of a given organization has an interesting, provocative, and contingent answer. Membership in an organization is no longer a statement of fact based on who may be on the payroll, or who attends at particular buildings on particular days, or the state of the iconic organization chart. According to Valence Theory, organizational membership becomes a matter of sense-making among individuals and constituent organizations, sharing multiple valence relationships, relative to the particular context in which the notion of membership has meaning.

Roger from Unit 7 provides a view with which few would disagree:

Being able to *form a bond* with the client personally, is almost as important as professionally. Because if you have frank conversations with the client ... you'll probably get more inside [the assignment] than you normally might have gotten. ... Forming the *right relationships* with our clients is really important. (Roger-1-277; emphasis added)

Organizations clearly create Economic-valence relationships with their clients and customers—there is an exchange of value. There is almost always a Socio-psychological-valence relationship created between organizations and their customers – a brand loyalty, an affinity for sales or customer service representatives, an affective association – for all but the most instrumental of unitary transactions. Among contemporary organizations, it is not uncommon for a strong Identity-valence connection to be forged. Gee, Hull, and Lankshear assert that “new capitalism is based on ... selling newer and ever more perfect(ed) customized (individualized) goods and services ... to groups of people who come to define and change their identities by the sorts of goods and services they consume” (1996, p. 26). Through marketing, market research, and customer service and support initiatives,

Knowledge bonds form. And, the consuming public has become ever more aware of the energy exchanges among organizations, the natural environment, and itself, demonstrating the Ecological valence. According to Valence Theory, those individuals and organizations formerly considered “clients” and “customers” are, by definition, *members* of the organization.

A similar enumeration can be made for those who are considered “employees,” and euphemistically called “partners” (as in “partner organizations”). Therefore, in Valence Theory terms, *there are no substantive differences between internal and external constituencies*—a customer is equivalent to an employee. *Mi casa es tu casa*⁹⁴ takes on an interesting interpretation when the organizational *casa* (and surrounding yard and garden) are legitimately considered to be within all constituencies’ collective purview of responsibility. Traditionally, business has often tacitly or explicitly managed itself according to the cliché rubrics of, “the customer is king/queen” or, “the customer is always right.” This ingrained BAH notion of an implicit status hierarchy between purchaser and supplier has often been the source of considerable friction, and in some circumstances, abusive and exploitive behaviours by customers on their vendors or suppliers.

Understanding the (nominal) customer-supplier relationship in valence terms creates more efficient, effective, and *effective* engagements and outcomes. Considering what were formerly considered to be external constituencies in a manner consistent with one’s internal constituencies enables “more involvement in internal client meetings where they’re developing their strategies and business plans, and working really side by side with the client earlier in the process, versus, okay, here’s the marketing plan. You guys go and execute it” (Roger-2-40). Even in cases where the composite, valence organization includes nominal competitors, creating healthy, especially *ba*-form valence relationships yields better effects and outcomes, something that Roger has experienced in bringing some of Unit 7’s internal, UCAPP approaches to sometimes challenging and controversial, client/competitor circumstances (Roger-2-50).

Analogously, considering *and treating* employees as the organization would its customers and consumers may enable different sorts of conversations among many aspects of business operations. In a relatively rudimentary way, Organization A made this explicit, as Karen reports. In a town-hall style of employee meeting, a new executive exhorted, “you guys [use our products and services]. What do you want? You’re not only employees, you’re consumers. Think about, what do you want? What would make your life better?” (Karen-2-2). This, she considered to be “quite revolutionary for Organization A”—perhaps an unconscious harbinger on the part of the executive of a new sense of organizational reality permeating the business world.

When (formerly) internal and external constituencies are considered to be equivalent in a Valence Theory framing, issues comprising corporate social responsibility can be reconsidered in new terms. The critiques of Edward Freedman and Jeanne Liedtka with respect to corporate social responsibility, and their propositions for a renewed conversation are well-contextualized in a Valence Theory frame. Their proposal for reframing the discourse includes:

⁹⁴ “My home is your home.”

The Stakeholder Proposition—Corporations are connected networks of stakeholder interests;

The Caring Proposition—Corporations are places where both individual human beings and human communities engage in caring activities that are aimed at mutual support and unparalleled human achievement; and

The Pragmatist Proposition—Corporations are mere means through which human beings are able to create and recreate, describe and redescribe, their visions for self and community. (Freedman & Liedtka, 1991, p. 96)

Similarly, inherent class fragmentation that provides the ground of the primary-purposeful, BAH organization creates conditions of an “economic aristocracy,” according to Marjorie Kelly’s *The Divine Right of Capital* (2001). The effective elimination of the distinction between internal and external constituencies according to Valence Theory creates a more conducive environment to transform the discourse towards “economic democracy” based on the principles of enlightenment, equality, public good, democracy, justice, and “(r)evolution” (p. 10-11). Corporations as efficient externalizing machines (Bakan, 2004) no longer make sense when there is no longer an “external,” by definition.

The Nature of Leadership

As I mentioned earlier, the funnelling of information upwards through the hierarchy, and the privileged role of those occupying “thinker” offices in the bureaucracy, limit the possible scope and range of individual participation in organizational planning and decision-making. In such a context, administrative and bureaucratic procedures become necessary for information flow, and to provide necessary checks and balances ensuring requisite integrity and accountability throughout decision-making processes. In many cases, increasingly creative means of extrinsic motivation are *de rigueur* among organizational leaders to align the interests of often disaffected individuals with an imposed vision, mission, and seemingly arbitrary objectives meant to satisfy anonymous, so-called stakeholders.

In contrast, as I have described throughout this thesis, UCAPP organizations invest considerable time to socialize information and involve many more people than do BAH organizations in collaboratively creating the organization’s common – that is, *integrative* – sense and direction. In the context of organizational values that emerge from those deeply held by its members, and a common volition to action, extensive socializing of information means that each member can act relatively autonomously. All members can actively participate in assessing situations with a high degree of accuracy, enabling the organization to move quickly in actually accomplishing the task-at-hand. Leadership-embodied-as-process in the context of “true collaboration” (Loreen-1-108) does not have an explicit control function that creates the necessity for administrative controls; nor does it require the same gate-keeping discipline that necessitates leadership being embodied in an individual. In other words, the actual role of those considered *leader* significantly transforms as the organization becomes more UCAPP in nature.

Leadership embodied in an individual faces the risk of homogeneity: knowledge, context, insight, ability, and specific skills are necessarily limited in any one individual. Leader-solicited responses from whomever in the organization with respect to decisions to

be made can become routine exercises, especially if the leader regularly seeks guidance from the same group of trusted advisors, or from those who are too intimidated by power disparities to offer honest views. Leadership-as-process must equally guard against the routine and the homogeneous, lest it evolves into becoming yet another administrative bureaucracy. As Loreen reflects, “it wasn’t that we’re homogeneous people, we had gotten to a homogeneous way of working” (Loreen-1-108).

UCaPP leaders are referent leaders—those who naturally emerge from among the organization’s membership via consensus processes involving active engagement in both inquiry and advocacy, irrespective of whether they hold a legitimated office or title. They invite heterogeneous thinking, and practice diverse inclusiveness among all aspects of the organization’s development and evolution irrespective of rank or status. In the context of collaborative values, collective sense-making, and common volition to action – all characteristics of organization-*ba* – leaders within UCaPP organizations promote individual autonomy and agency, collective responsibility, and mutual accountability. All members not only feel valued for their contributions; they demonstrably *are* valued beyond their nominal rank or station—Economic-*ba*.

Thus, a UCaPP leader’s role is environmental rather than instrumental. They are concerned with enabling leadership-as-process, creating an organizational environment in which members can learn, prosper, achieve their personal aspirations, and individually contribute to enacting not the organization’s vision, but its tactility—the intentional and mindful sustained effects throughout the wider social, material, and natural environments.

Effecting Organizational Transformation

Fritjof Capra, on the challenges and paradox of organizational transformation:

Organizations need to undergo fundamental changes, both in order to adapt to the new business environment and to become ecologically sustainable. This double challenge is urgent and real, and the recent extensive discussions of organizational change are fully justified. However, ... the overall track record is very poor. In recent surveys, CEOs reported again and again that their efforts at organizational change did not yield the promised results. Instead of managing new organizations, they ended up managing the unwanted side effects of their efforts.

At first glance, this situation seems paradoxical. When we look around our natural environment, we see continuous change, adaptation, and creativity; and yet our business organizations seem to be incapable of dealing with change. Over the years, I have come to realize that the roots of this paradox lie in the dual nature of human organizations. On the one hand, they are social institutions designed for specific purposes, such as making money for their shareholders, managing the distribution of political power, transmitting knowledge, or spreading religious faith. At the same time, organizations are communities of people who interact with one another to build relationships, help each other, and make their daily activities meaningful at a personal level. (Capra, 2002, p. 99)

We have seen considerable evidence and examples of Capra's duality –the purposeful and relational natures of organizations – throughout the empirical findings of this study. I have suggested that a Valence Theory approach to conceiving the fundamental nature of organization is a way to reconcile this duality—to provide a vocabulary to organization members with which to make sense of the organization they have, and the organization to which they aspire.

The question remains: how does an organization – specifically, the constituent members of an organization – effect transformation from “what they have” to “what they desire”? Capra notes that,

...it is common to hear that people in organizations resist change. In reality, people do not resist change; they resist having change imposed on them. ... Their natural change processes are very different from the organizational changes designed by 'reengineering' experts and mandated from the top. (Capra, 2002, p. 100)

In effect, Capra suggests that a BAH approach to transforming an organization might be expected to meet with resistance from among the membership. However, as I report with respect to Organization F, transitioning a relatively more-UCaPP organization to become more BAH in its structure and processes seems to occur quite smoothly – “a necessary evil ... like changing diapers to using the potty,” according to Jeff (Jeff-1-253) – but without much resistance. Jeff explains this lack of resistance to change (aside from Aaron's reactions) as a matter of simply instituting a set of processes to conform to how things “should be” in an organization—BAH isomorphism based on normative, hierarchical and bureaucratic expectations, long socialized among those who work in organizations.

The transformation from BAH to UCaPP is not as easily accomplished without a considerable amount of organizational trauma. Unit 7 reports nearly 60% turnover (Maher & O'Brien, 2007) as it eliminated enacting nominal status differences, increased inclusive participation, and began enabling expanded autonomy among its members. Despite the ensuing disruptions, one can understand that framing such a change from BAH to UCaPP may seem to be relatively straight-forward: transition the various valence relationships from *f*-form to *ba*-form, and ensure appropriate balance among all the valences (effectively reducing the predominance of Economic valence), and you're done.

Certainly, effecting cultural change in an organization must necessarily be a discursive undertaking: literally changing the vocabulary of attitudes, behaviours, characteristics, determinants, and ethos that create individual identity with respect to the organization, and organizational identity with respect to its members. As I have described, the social and psychological location of this change manifests in the valence relationships, particularly with respect to enacting (or suppressing) their *ba*-forms. The *place* of that enactment – what I have called, the *culture change venue* – literally creates metaphysical *place* in the organization—*basbo*.

However, it seems to me that the propensity to cargo-cult dramatizations that often tend to accompany the latest organization-change elixirs may suggest an unexpected “Fight

Club-like⁹⁵” discursive polarity: to transition, an organization must create organization-*ba* (*basho*) without talking about organization-*ba*. In true Zen-like fashion, striving explicitly and specifically towards organization-*ba* by naming the *ba*-form valences recreate them as clichés, and thereby transform them into fungibility. Instead, organizational transformation from BAH to UCAPP might be better accomplished by hearkening to Jean’s suggestion, borrowing from Bourget (and inspired by Rilke): one must live *basho* the way one thinks *basho*, and eventually one will end up living into *basho*.

The role of identity

I have argued elsewhere (Federman, 2008b) that identity – the location of oneself relative to society’s epochal context – has not only been an important driving force for individuals, but for the nature and intent of the society’s structuring institutions, like education, for instance. My argument describing the nature of education over the past 3,000 years proposes the following logic:

Back in Ancient Greece, primary orality required that an educated man locate himself as part of the intergenerational chain of knowledge and wisdom that passed the history of the civilization from generation to generation by word of mouth. It took about twenty years to become educated, that is, to acquire the skills and capabilities to become a *rhapsode*, literally, a “sewer⁹⁶ of song” – roughly the same amount of time it takes someone to be considered educated today. In the manuscript culture of the medieval Church, an educated person located himself somewhere among the privileged and divinely ordained hierarchy of unitary Truth that conveyed the Word of God through proxy authority to the illiterate masses. However, in the mechanized and industrialized print culture that emerged after the Enlightenment, the identity-defining hierarchy split into multiple, mostly secular institutions that conferred proxy authority through such devices as educational degrees and business titles. Thus, the focus of the modern education system was content- and skills-based, in order to prepare an individual to be able to attach their identity to an institution that would, in turn, validate it through conferring the imprimatur of the institution’s proxy authority and location in society.

Developing specific skills was certainly necessary, but it was not sufficient, to become a modern, educated person. In order to be accepted by one of these institutions, an individual not only required the appropriate skills; s/he required the appropriate discipline to be able to comply with and conform to the social control structures of that institution. Thus, as the old song reminds us, school days were “good ol’ golden rule days: reading and ‘riting and ‘rithmetic, taught to the tune of the hickory stick.” In other words, the modern education system aimed to create a citizenry with the necessary complement of skills – represented by the so-called 3 Rs – built upon a foundation of compliance, order and discipline. This served the aim of

⁹⁵ “The first rule of Fight Club is, you do not talk about Fight Club”—spoken by the character, Tyler Durden, in both the 1999 movie adaptation, and the book, *Fight Club*, by Chuck Palahniuk.

⁹⁶ As in, one who sews songs together, the ancient version of a bard; see Parry, 1971.

creating individuals properly prepared to take their respective places in a mechanized, industrialized, BAH society. (Federman, 2008b)

I suggest that BAH-socialization of identity location continues to be exceptionally strong, even in the contemporary world. In this respect, the education system, let alone other institutions, have scarcely changed over more than a hundred years. Roger, reporting on his conversation with a departing Unit 7 employee who could not accede to the shift away from valuing hierarchical status, tacitly demonstrates the strength of *f*-Identity valence among individuals in an ordinary, everyday context. Those who were able to embrace the new organizational culture did so by negotiating the changed social and psychological context that frames the construction of identity in Unit 7. The new frame at Unit 7, for instance, no longer supports a “bureaucratic character type” (Merton, 1940) who,

...has a strongly individualist side—one that takes great pride in doing a defined job well, that seeks a sphere of autonomy and a clear objective, and wants to be held accountable as an individual for meeting that objective [where] success ... means that people leave you alone and do not challenge your competence in your sphere. (Adler & Heckscher, 2006, p. 27)

Negotiating the path to assuming a new identity is not limited to pro-UCaPP changes. As Ashforth (2001) argues, when faced with structural or cultural organization change, certain attributes of an individual’s personal identity may come into conflict with either categorical (via social group or rank category) or situational (via internalized values and attitudes projected by others) identity construction. This clearly poses a challenge for the individual, especially in the context of transitions from one circumstantial role/identity to another. Thus, preservation or enhancement (or both) of identity become a critical consideration in effecting organizational change, be it as simple as a rearrangement of an organization chart, or as complex as transitioning from being a BAH organization to enacting a UCaPP organization.

As was clearly demonstrated by Aaron in Organization F as it is transitioned to become more BAH, and by many departing individuals of various ranks in Unit 7 as it transitioned to become more UCaPP, a perceived threat to identity, a felt diminishment of Identity-valence relationship, is sufficient reason to seek employment elsewhere. As I suggested in an earlier chapter, the clichéd resistance-to-change is not a resistance to change *per se*, but rather likely a resistance to a change in identity. Conversely, it follows that the optimal strategy to effect organizational change of any sort is to first understand and account for the requisite change in Identity-valence, and then facilitate the changes among the other valence relationships.

In that earlier chapter, I discussed the importance of creating a *culture change venue* that I described as “a performative social location in an existing organization in which new cultural practices can be enacted.” Initially, at least, the culture change venue is likely to be a somewhat artificial construct, but one that is in-line with the organization’s operation, rather than a too-easily-dismissed adjunct. Unit 7’s game design metaphor that is used to deal with internal processes and infrastructure issues is one such example. The initial months of Inter Pares’s staff and program meetings, reference groups, and annual retreats may have equally served this role.

Under the rubric of Knowledge Management, Rivadávia C. Drummond de Alvarenga Neto (2007) describes creating a type of culture change venue, called the “Bank of Ideas” and “Cultural Moments” – the latter being a monthly open forum or symposium – specifically aimed at transforming (what I would describe as) fungible-Knowledge relationships into Knowledge-*ba* at Brazil’s *Centro de Tecnologia Canavieira*— Centre for Sugarcane Technology. In that case, the Cultural Moments symposia were particularly effective not only because they instrumentally enabled general sharing of technical knowledge. Alvarenga Neto described to me that the chief chemist had previously prevented knowledge sharing and dissemination because doing so would, in the chemist’s opinion, diminish his status and perceived value to the organization as the sole repository of this amassed wisdom. Cultural Moments was the venue that enabled him to transform his identity to that of enabler, effectively a convenor of a knowledge-sharing environment. His (and others’) Identity-valence attachment to the organization transitioned from fungible- to *ba*-form; the organization culture as a whole soon followed suit (Personal conversation, April 20, 2009).

The transformation of Founder’s-ba

Organization F’s transition provides one additional, interesting insight. All three of this organization’s participants relate the very special quality that the company possessed during its start-up phase. Jeff, for example, describes it as an “aura”; Matt as “more [than] a shared vision of things” (Matt-1-13). In parsing the various descriptions, and in Aaron’s identification of aspects that had been lost as the organization grew, it is clear that they were all characterizing Organization F’s experience of organization-*ba* during its start-up phase.

The energy, charisma, inspiration, passion, vision, and competitive zeal with which Matt infused his nascent organization cannot be denied. These are attributes of a successful, entrepreneurial leader (Bann, 2009; Fernald, Solomon & Tarabishy, 2005) that attract people to start-up companies—attributes that are often ascribed to referent and “transformational” leaders (Kent, Crotts, & Azziz, 2001; Shamir & Howell, 1999). As well, the limited resources that are a practical reality of small, start-up organizations necessitate granting considerable autonomy and agency among early members, creating a sense of collective responsibility, and mutual accountability. During the first few years, organizational responses to both growth and challenges are very adaptive rather than procedural—seemingly organic in nature. In short, these conditions that very accurately replicate organization-*ba* are likely situational, created by circumstance and a strong, entrepreneurial personality. They are not authentic and sustainable organization-*ba*, but founder’s-*ba*.

Founder’s-*ba* can transition to organization-*ba* if (and only if) the organization does not itself transition in the direction of becoming BAH as it grows. One of the virtues cited by Organization F’s participants was the degree to which individual members were “empowered” to act—at least during the first few years. However, true empowerment in the context of a UCAPP organization means that those nominally on top – the entrepreneur(s), his/her close advisors, and other organizational leaders – must begin to divest growing power and control, which runs contrary to the entrepreneur’s mindset of ownership privilege with respect to “their” organization.

When a start-up organization aspires to retain its founding UCAPP qualities, those who have acquired the mantle of referent leadership must resist the temptation to cement their position through adopting legitimated titles and formalized roles. As with both Unit 7

(in its relatively new Digital Division) and Inter Pares, power-connoting titles – respectively, Director and Co-Manager for all members equally – are primarily used to convey ascribed credibility for the benefit of external constituencies. The main consideration at critical nexus points in the organization's growth seems, once again, to centre on the quality of the Identity-valence connection of key personnel. The choice of *ba*- or fungible-form determines whether the organization's founding spirit transforms from *ba* to *ba*, or *ba* to BAH.

One Final Thought

The modern, BAH *organization* has focused strongly on controlling workers' behaviours and identities, and by extension, controlling the behaviours and identities of people throughout society. Decade by decade through the 20th century, this approach masqueraded as what might be considered more humanistic means of control, but always with the objective of first serving the predominantly economic aims of *organization*, and those in hierarchically superior classes, primarily defined in strictly economic terms. Valence Theory provides a framework that enables a reconsideration of *organization's* reversal: from a functional, instrumental, and purposeful focus to one that considers human interactions and interpersonal dynamics as paramount in a ubiquitously connected and pervasively proximate world that, as we have come to realize, is best understood in complexity terms. In such a revised context, every aspect of organizational practice can be probed, questioned, and potentially transformed to become more consistent with contemporary reality.

The research from which Valence Theory emerges suggests that the ensuing changes in practice can be accomplished without necessarily compromising acceptable and respectful economic performance. Rather than living in a world in which people are wittingly or unwittingly controlled by organizations, a Valence Theory conception of *organization* reverses this dysfunctional dynamic, enabling people to assume their responsibility for creating relationships and perceiving effects in the context of our contemporary UCAPP world.

A Conversation with Nishida: The Letter

Nishida is once again standing by the window, looking out.

“Waiting again for the future?” I jibe.

“No. The postman,” he responds dryly, apparently ignoring my tease.

“The postman, who always rings—”

“Twice.” Nishida stops me with his interjection. “No, he does not ring at all. Does not even knock to alert us to his delivery. And that is why I watch for him by the window.”

“Expecting something important, are you?” I ask.

“Important, yes,” he responds. “An acquaintance from many years ago sends me a question, and I respond with a question that illuminates his first query. He then responds with a further illuminating question, and so on it goes, over the years. Today is the appointed day for his next question to arrive, and I am anxious to receive it.”

“Well, how long has it been?” I ask.

“Five years.”

“You’ve been doing this back and forth for five years?! I can’t believe it,” I exclaim.

“If you cannot believe that we have been corresponding in questions for five years, then you will not believe what next I will tell you,” replies Nishida, calmly.

“Okay,” I begin. “I’ll bite. What won’t I believe?”

“That we have not yet answered the first question. We have explored its context, its ground, the figures that comprise its many aspects of what is noticeable about the question, and even the domains in which meaning can be made of the question. In fact, I am not quite sure whether I can recall the precise question without returning to the original letter.”

“Sensei, do you mean to tell me that you have spent five years exploring the many issues of a question with your friend, and cannot recall what brought you to the issue in the first place?”

“The discovery of knowledge is often that way,” explains Nishida. “How you arrive at a path of inquiry is important, I agree, but what you learn by following the path of inquiry, wherever it might lead you, is of far greater concern. So we continue to ask, to query, to seek, to invite more questions. The day we are unable to ask another

question is the end of knowledge, and I, for one, am too young to see that end.”

The doorbell rings. Then a knock. I look out the window and see the familiar uniform, and in the hand at the end of the blue sleeve, a letter. Nishida and I look at each other—he, more surprised than I at the announcement of the postman’s arrival.

“You see,” he says. “There is never an end to new experience and knowledge.”

The Road to Here, The Road From Here

On What Was Done, Not Done, and Yet to be Done

As I neared the completion of this thesis, a colleague asked what I wanted to accomplish with this work. It is an astute question, one to which I would reflexively apply Valence Theory itself, and particularly, the notions of *effective* theory and tactility: Who is to be touched by the findings and insights of this thesis, and in what substantive, transformative ways? From the first inspirations that ultimately led to my fully formed articulation of Valence Theory, I have always considered this work to be, first and foremost, the creation of a vocabulary and rudimentary grammar of contemporary *organization*.

There is the apocryphal cliché of a so-called Eskimo having an extraordinary number of variants of the word, “snow,” to precisely and accurately describe the nature and characteristics of her/his environment. Despite a remarkably rich literature of management, leadership, organization behaviour, theory and development, strategy, organizational learning, communities of practice, and a plethora of other, more specific aspects, I remain struck by one observation: The research conversations with diverse participants from a wide variety of organizations revealed a dearth of vocabulary that could accurately characterize their experiences. Everyone could more-or-less express their impressions, feelings, and perceptions using anecdotes, metaphors, and rich situational descriptions. There was not, however, a common vocabulary with which individuals could clearly explain organizational dynamics from one situation to another.

An interesting phenomenon began to emerge long after the research conversations, as the analysis work progressed and I began to share and discuss the ideas of Valence Theory with some of my participants. They started to explain other dynamics and incidents in their respective organizations in valence terms. My feeling during these casual conversations (some via email) was that they weren't using my language simply as a means of communicating with *me*. I had the distinct impression that they found Valence Theory language useful for themselves, to make sense of interactions and organizational dynamics that otherwise might have been easily dismissed as arbitrary, illogical, inconsistent, or simply a result of “the system.”

At one point, Loreen sought my advice on a challenging matter concerning a critical business negotiation. By reframing her inquiry using the five valence relationships, especially with her having an intuitive understanding of creating and sustaining organization-*ba*, she was readily able to make sense of a complex situation and decide on an appropriate – and ultimately successful – course of action.

My hope, that is, the effects I intend for Valence Theory, is that more CEOs, more executives, more managers, more workers – more *members* – will be able to engage one another in productive conversation about their personal and collective aspirations for *their* organizations. I expect that reframing the vocabulary will necessarily reframe the tenor of the conversation, that is, the meta-conversation about *organization* in its societal context. Just as the epochal changes in the dominant mode of communication enable fundamental structural changes in society throughout history, there is the possibility that a change in the dominant vocabulary and grammar of *organization* may (eventually) enable structural changes in the locales of organizational conversations—board rooms, seats of government, educational

institutions, business schools, community centres, union halls, the archetypal start-up garages and grassroots church basements.

Valence Theory is, of course, incomplete. Although the research sought to include organizations large and small, for-profit and not-for-profit, public and private, new and old, BAH and UCAPP, there were only five participating organizations. Additional conversations with many more organizations at various places in their respective organizational lives may enrich the vocabulary, adding more descriptive organizational adjectives and adverbs, and more nuanced understandings of the five valence relationships and two valence forms.

Additionally, the research participants were exclusively so-called knowledge workers, privileged and secure in their jobs⁹⁷. Given the overwhelming contemporary discourse concerning organizations in the “knowledge economy,” an organizational vocabulary that applies primarily to knowledge work may well be useful, despite this situational limitation. Nonetheless, there is considerable opportunity to expand the exploration of Valence Theory to include organizational environments that are contingent, involve itinerant workers or manual labourers, and are outside of what is generally considered as white-collar work in a North American context.

Within the domain of those who have already contributed to this knowledge, the respective organizational and functional roles played by the participants have been painted with a particularly broad brush. There are more focused questions that can be asked relative to a Valence Theory reconception of the basic premises of specific organizational practices, such as marketing and sales, finance and economics, human resources practices, strategic and tactical leadership, and other, similar management disciplines. Exploring concepts such as “valence marketing,” “valence-relationship human resources,” or the like may be a rich source of new praxis in these, and other, disciplines—despite the potential for cliché co-option and cargo-cultism.

As I mentioned in an earlier chapter, Ecological valence was scarcely touched on by the participants, and therefore played a minimal factor in the empirical results. Given the critical importance of ecological concerns, and the conflicted discourse in general, there is yet tremendous potential to explore the nature of *organization's* Ecological connections among their members and with other, diverse constituencies. As I suggested earlier with respect to organizational dynamics in general, introducing a reframed vocabulary of an organization's relationships and responsibilities to the discourse on environmental issues may prove to be both enlightening and useful.

Of necessity, this research was conducted from my social and cultural location as a privileged, white, male researcher in a Canadian university, with a long history of corporate business involvement as employee, manager with relatively senior responsibilities, and consultant. It is very likely – to the point of near certainty – that research conversations with members of organizations grounded in non-Western (specifically, non-dominant, North American) cultures would yield additional, illuminating results. Although business organizations throughout the world have adopted American-style management practices, they have been interpreted, implemented, and translated according to their own indigenous

⁹⁷ The two who were leaving their positions – Frances and Aaron – were voluntary departures. They were both unconcerned about their then-future prospects.

history and culture. Thus, I would expect that the constructs of Valence Theory may as well have interesting and potentially useful, alternative interpretations, implementations, and translations. This, too, presents an opportunity for future research, especially for researchers who have a first-hand knowledge of the respective diverse histories and cultures in question.

There is one additional discursive area that may prove fruitful for enriching the vocabulary of *organization*, to which I would like to direct some final attention: What does it mean for an organization to be organic?

The Organic Organization

Ever since Burns and Stalker introduced the concept in 1961, there has generally been a favourable association with the idea of an organization being *organic*, as opposed to mechanistic. An organic organization, in their view, responds better to dynamic situations and unforeseen circumstances, relying more on adaptable application of specialized knowledge. It tends towards a highly mutable application of control, authority, and responsibility derived contingently from the specific circumstances with which it must contend. Its communication structures and mechanisms are information-based, rather than being oriented towards establishing command-and-control structures (Burns & Stalker, 1961/1990). A recent test of Burns and Stalker's work finds that "organic, self-organising working structures are shown to enable creative commercial innovation more easily than hierarchical settings," (Cooper, 2005, p. 525), providing more motivating environments for innovators (in Cooper's case, development engineers) and a leadership style more conducive to new, creative work.

But, what does it mean for *any* organized system comprised of mostly independent elements – of which *organization* is but one instance – to be organic? Can an organization be alive? Fritjof Capra (1996) suggests that a system can be considered to be living if it possesses: (a) a *pattern of organization*—"the configuration of relationships among the system's components that determines the system's essential characteristics" (p. 158); and (b) *structure*—"the physical embodiment of its pattern of organization" (p. 158); linked by (c) *process* fully contained within the living system. Process, in other words, is the continual embodiment of pattern (the relationships) in a reified structure. A mechanical system, for instance, cannot be said to be alive according to this definition, as its process is external, existing in the mind of its designer. Capra maintains that,

...all three criteria are totally interdependent. The pattern of organization can be recognized only if it is embodied in a physical structure, and in living systems this embodiment is an ongoing process. Thus, structure and process are inextricably linked. One could say that the three criteria – pattern, structure, and process – are three different but inseparable perspectives on the phenomenon of life. (Capra, 1996, p. 160).

Capra identifies Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela's (1980) *autopoietic network*⁹⁸ as the pattern of relationships, Ilya Prigogine's *dissipative structures*⁹⁹ (Prigogine &

⁹⁸ An autopoietic system creates its own boundary that defines the resultant entity as distinct from its encompassing environment, yet remaining open to that environment to effect exchange (as, for example, in the case of a cell that exchanges nutrients, energy, and waste products). An autopoietic system is *self-organizing*, that is, the system itself determines its overall behaviour, and the

Nicolis, 1977; Prigogine & Stengers, 1984), as the embodied structure of that pattern, and *cognition*, drawing from Maturana and Varela's Santiago theory, as the linking process. The Santiago theory posits that mind (cognition) is a process that links perception, emotion, and action, and therefore applies equally to all living entities, irrespective of the presence of a brain or nervous system. It does not necessarily involve thinking in the human sense. Essentially, it recognizes that cognition, as distinct from thinking and abstraction, involves environmental perception, a resultant change in structure and behaviour ("emotion"), and a (non-deterministic, and therefore unpredictable) response, through which the system adapts to changes in its environment through autopoietic processes of self-generation and self-perpetuation. Cognition continually links pattern and structure.

A traditionally conceived, BAH organization is neither self-forming nor self-sustaining. The fact of hierarchical, bureaucratic structure and administrative procedures means that these organizations are formed and sustained according to external patterns and structures. Simply, from this perspective, a BAH organization is *dead*—that is, not alive.

On the other hand, patterns of interconnected relationships within a valence-conceived (and especially, UCaPP) organization result in a self-forming, self-bounding, self-sustaining emergent form. A valence organization can be understood as an autopoietic network. The mechanisms that are used to sustain organization-*ba* throughout the organization provide the "energy" that maintains it as a dissipative structure. *Effective* theory – environmental perception, feedback processing relative to intended effects, and feedforward anticipation through which the organization responds – provides the linking process of cognition. *Organization* conceived according to Valence Theory is *alive*—it is the contemporary realization of the early conception of a truly organic organization.

As a basis for a new vocabulary, and a fundamental reconsideration of our collective *place* in this world, the conception of *organic organization* may well provide inspiration for us all.

interconnecting relationships among its component elements, rather than having those imposed deterministically by the external environment (Capra, 1996).

⁹⁹ Dissipative structures are stable forms that characteristically exist far from equilibrium and maintain their stability by passing energy and matter through them. Without a constant flow, the structure collapses; with an increased flow of energy beyond a point of homeostasis, the structure becomes unstable and chaotic, until it reaches a bifurcation point, beyond which it regains stability at a higher degree of complexity—a phenomenon known as emergence (Capra, 1996).

A Conversation with Nishida: The Beginning

“So?” I ask, as impatiently as a child waiting to open presents on a birthday. “What do you think? Did you like it?”

“A worthy accomplishment, I think. Certainly, you have found the air,” he affirms. “I think your professors will be pleased with how you have spent your time.”

“Thank you, *sensei*. You have been an inspiring guide throughout this process.”

“Yes, well, enough of this foolishness. Now that you are finally done with your writing about organizations with letters and numbers instead of proper names, you can attend to more important matters.”

I could not help but hear the ‘harrumph’ in that last comment. But yet, he was sporting that wry smile of his as a counterpoint to his serious gaze. There was something else going on, something that he wasn’t saying.

“More important matters,” I repeat. “More important than discovering a new approach – potentially a useful approach – to understanding the nature of all of our organizations, no matter in which area of human endeavour they may be? That might not be an earth-shattering discovery, but it is no small thing in itself. So what might those more important matters be?” I ask.

“Becoming a *sensei* for others,” he responds without missing a beat. “There are many whom you can inspire with your passion for healing that-which-is-not-well in human interaction all around us.” He spreads his hands wide, palms facing upward. “The writing does not matter; nor do the letters you will acquire after your name. To inspire others to perceive, to question, to contemplate, to reflect, to respond—to *think new thoughts* about all they may have seen for years throughout their lives but too readily accept or ignore. Those are the important matters to which you must now turn your attention. This thesis is done. Now *you* must begin.”

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Appendix A: Organization Authorization Letter

The following is the text of the letter was sent to organizations that expressed a desire to participate in the research to seek permission to contact their members as potential individual participants:

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a doctoral candidate at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto in Canada, under the supervision of Dr. Marilyn Laiken. I am currently conducting research into the nature and characteristics of organizational relationships, both within and outside of organizational boundaries, as they are changing through the effects of instantaneous, multi-way communications. Specifically, I am seeking to develop a model and descriptive vocabulary of what one might call, “the organization of the future,” based on information coming from the lived experiences of people in organizations of various kinds and sizes. The ultimate product of this research may assist organizations to adapt to changing conditions throughout society, and better serve its employees, customers, suppliers, and the community at large.

If your organization agrees to participate in the research, I will plan to conduct one or two interviews with each of two to three people. Ideally, the people will come from different hierarchical levels in your organization, from relatively lower to relatively higher.

Of course, you are under no obligation to participate, or even respond to this correspondence. The name of your organization and all individual participants will be kept confidential, unless you (and they) explicitly give permission for identities to be revealed.

If you would like to see the detailed information about the research and the proposed interviews, I can send it to you either in hard-copy by post, or as a PDF file by email. If you would prefer to receive the information in hard-copy, please provide me with your mailing address in your response. Should you decide that your organization is willing to participate in the research, I ask that you complete and sign the attached authorization form. Please keep one copy for your files, and return one copy to me.

Thank you for your consideration.

Appendix B: Individual Informed Consent Letter

The following is the text of the letter sent to potential individual participants as part of the informed consent process. For certain organizations, it was tailored somewhat to conform to specific confidentiality terms to which I agreed as a condition of the organization's participation.

Thank you for considering participating in and contributing to my research project. As I noted in our first contact, I am currently undertaking research at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto that will contribute to my doctoral thesis.

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with information that you will need to understand what I am doing, and to decide whether or not you choose to participate. Participation is complete voluntary and, should you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time. Should you have any concerns about the research, you may at any time contact my supervisor, Dr. Marilyn Laiken at (416) 978-xxxx or me, at 416-978-xxxx (office) or 416-xxx-xxxx (mobile).

The name of this research project is, "A Valence Theory of Organization."

The purpose of this research is to investigate participants' lived experiences within their respective organization, and to encourage them to describe that experience in terms of interpersonal and intra-organizational relationships, rather than in functional, operational, hierarchical, or bureaucratic terms.

What, essentially, I am doing is conducting either telephone or face-to-face interviews with two or three individuals from each of four to six different organizations. Each selected individual will participate in at least one initial in-depth interview that is expected to last between one and two hours, and optionally, another in-depth interview or group conversation together with others from the same organization shortly thereafter. In certain circumstances, there may be both a second individual interview and a group conversation, depending on the information that emerges from the initial interviews. During these interviews, which will be much like a dialogue or conversation, we will be discussing your own organizational relationships and interactions with other individuals, workgroups, and organizational units. We will explore decision-making processes, anticipations of outcomes, attachments within and among workgroups, teams, departments and other organizations, and the nature of exchanges of value, knowledge, personal and workgroup identification, organizational culture, and ecological values.

I will be recording each interview, and then either fully or partially transcribing and analyzing the conversation. I will then check back with each participant, and you will have an opportunity to review the transcription. At any time during the interview, you may request that audio taping be suspended to discuss any particularly sensitive matters.

Your part in the research, if you agree, is to take part in the initial, informal interview that will last for approximately one to two hours, at a time that is convenient for both of us. A short time after the interview, I will send you a transcript of our conversation, and I will ask you to send me your feedback and comments. I may ask you to participate in a second interview to ask some follow-up questions, or a group conversation with other participants from your organization, or both, approximately four to six weeks after the initial interview.

I am taking specific steps to protect your anonymity, unless you specifically and explicitly give me permission to reveal your identity. For example, you may wish to be explicitly associated with the nature of the organizational relationships in your company or organization. The original or raw data will be stored under lock and key in my locked office, which is located in a University of Toronto building that has 24-hour security. Only I and my research supervisor, Dr. Marilyn Laiken will ever have access to this raw data. In the transcripts, names and other identifying information about you or your organization will be systematically disguised. Identifying codes that could connect you or your organization with the disguised names will also be kept under lock and key. Additionally, any transcripts or other identifying information that are stored on my personal computer will be encrypted, and only I will know the decrypting code. The timing for the destruction of the tapes and/or the raw data is five years after completion of the research or sooner.

Should you choose to remain anonymous, potential limitations in my ability to guarantee anonymity are that my supervisor, Dr. Marilyn Laiken, may need to know the source of certain information; and there is a very small chance that someone reading the research findings may be able to recognize you from some detail, even though I will make every attempt to make any identifying specifics mentioned in the interview anonymous. Your organization will remain anonymous in the research.

As an interviewee, you will receive a copy of the transcript of your interview(s). Any section which you request to have deleted from the transcript(s) of your interview(s) will be deleted. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and you may request that the entire transcript of your interview be destroyed. Additionally, you may choose not to answer any question. I will be sharing major aspects of my preliminary analysis with you by providing you with a two to five page summary of the analysis, either by post or email according to your preference, and asking you to provide your comments and feedback. I may provide you with several specific questions regarding the overall analysis, although you are under no obligation to answer them; you may provide feedback however you wish, or not at all. If you have given permission for your identity to be revealed, you may withdraw that permission up to thirty days after receiving the preliminary analysis for review.

Potential benefits which you might derive from participating include the possibility of gaining a new insight into your own organizational interactions that may assist you in your career, and the knowledge that you have contributed to research that may improve our future understanding of interpersonal workplace dynamics, thereby helping many employees. Additionally, the organization itself may gain a better overall understanding into its organizational behaviour and thereby become more effective.

Potential harm, if any, is that you may be disappointed in the findings, or that you may realize something unpleasant about your own work situation, of which you were previously unaware. Although this represents a very small risk of anxiety or mental stress – and certainly no more than might be experienced in typical forms of relatively minor organizational change – you may gain an insight to remedy what may have been a long-standing and troublesome problem.

Additionally, I should inform you that I plan to use the information discovered in this research as part of my doctoral thesis, and may include it in a future article or book. Regardless of my use of the information, your identity will be protected through the use of pseudonyms, and changing identifying details, unless you specifically and explicitly give me permission to reveal your identity on the enclosed permission form.

Thank you for your consideration.

Appendix C: Participant Organizations and Individuals

	Interview 1 Date	Length (mins)	Interview 2 Date	Length (mins)
Organization A				
Adam	03 Jan 2008	78	17 Sep 2008	54
Frank	12 Dec 2007	91	17 Sep 2008	55
Karen	04 Mar 2008	118	18 Aug 2008	92
Robert	11 Jan 2008	88	N/A	
Roxanne	22 Jan 2008	90	23 Sep 2008	54
Organization F				
Matt	17 Jan 2008	83	N/A	
Aaron	01 Nov 2007	118	14 Aug 2008	71
Jeff	01 Nov 2007	121	14 Aug 2008	52
Inter Pares				
Jean	30 Jan 2008	66	N/A	
Samantha ("Sam")	30 Jan 2008	104	N/A	
Organization M				
Mary	12 Jun 2008	152	N/A	
Mina	09 Jun 2008	77	N/A	
Sean	11 Jun 2008	90	N/A	
Stan	20 Jun 2008	108	N/A	
Unit 7				
Cindy	16 Jan 2008	78	08 Apr 2008	50
Frances	20 Dec 2007	85	31 Mar 2008	61
Loreen	20 Dec 2007	78	08 Apr 2008	53
Roger	26 Jan 2008	82	31 Mar 2008	51
Summary				
Organizations	5			
Male Participants	9			
Female Participants	9			
Interviews	28			
Shortest	50			
Longest	152			
Average	82			
Total (Hours)	38.3			

Appendix D: Summary of Keywords, Codes, and Themes

Belonging, Membership & Boundary

Ascribed identification

Assuming or inheriting status, class, or other attributes by virtue of one's membership in the organization. Creating the impression, either in one's own mind or in the minds of others, that s/he is endowed with unique or rare attributes because of that membership.

Collective benefit

Seeking benefit for "the greater good," or collectively for a larger group, especially in the circumstance where the individual him/herself may not directly benefit, from an event, circumstance, or change.

Creating social network

Activities, actions and processes that serve to create and strengthen social networks within the organization that are outside of the regular workflow or typical job expectations.

Effects of depersonalized environment

Effects that emerge from a workplace environment that is primarily instrumental, with minimal humanizing elements.

Emotional detachment

Becoming somewhat detached, or not vested in the outcome of one's work, to emotionally protect oneself from the work not being approved or proceeding to be implemented.

Emotional involvement

Becoming emotionally (affectively) attached to one's work, and especially the outcomes and the effects of one's contribution; feeling one's stake in those outcomes and effects.

Geographic location

Pertaining to geographic proximity or dispersion among people who are nominally either members of the same team or workgroup, or otherwise collaborating with each other.

Inner/outer orientation

Individual decision processes that indicate whether the person's standpoint is inside the organization (thinking first of the organization's needs) or outside the organization (thinking first of how the organization is perceived, or the effects the organization will have among those with which it is in relation).

Organizational boundary issues

Relating to feeling restricted or bounded in the scope of work an individual or group is able to assume, or being able to identify such boundaries.

Personal benefit

Seeking personal benefit from an event, circumstance or change.

Personal identification

How an individual constructs their sense of identity relative to the organization (workgroup, team, larger organization, or external organization).

Specialization

The degree to which an individual or organization focuses extensively or exclusively on one area of competence or expertise.

Turnover

Issues relating to individual members leaving the organization, either voluntarily or not.

Change***Changing organizational cultures***

Description of interactions and effects after a change in corporate culture, as a result of a merger or other major organizational change that results in a significant cultural change.

Comparison among precursor companies

Comparing behaviours, policies and cultures among precursor or predecessor organizations in a merged or transformed organization.

Creating hierarchy

Explicitly creating a new hierarchical structure, or reinforcing an existing structure, in response to a change, event, or circumstance.

Disrupting bureaucracy

Actions or decision processes that disrupt the existing or expected bureaucracy.

Eliminating hierarchy, class, status

Actions that tend to diminish the class/status associated with hierarchical position.

Eliminating organizational boundaries

Actions that minimize or eliminate traditional boundaries among organizational groups, or constituencies traditionally thought of as being outside the organization.

Encouraging continuous emergence

Actions, decisions, and processes that create conditions for continual emergence of new realizations and changes, through facilitating change in perspectives, contexts, and how meaning is made in the organization.

Reaction to change

Individual or group reaction to organizational change.

Scaling the organization

Issues relating to how the organization structures scale with significant growth.

Scaling to opposite

An action taken by an individual manager that is reflected as opposite to the official policy taken at a mass level throughout the large organization. e.g. an individual manager allows an employee to telecommute, despite the corporate policy forbidding telecommuting.

Coordination***Bureaucratic/administrative/hierarchical assumption***

The assumption that actions will “naturally” occur, or that procedures will be followed, by virtue of the consequences of bureaucratic and administrative theories, or the extant class/status hierarchy, or both.

Communicating within

Communicating within an organization, or among team or group members.

Communication with “the outside”

Processes and methods through which the organization communicates with its customers, clients, or other “outside” actors.

Creating engagement

Actions and processes that enable people to become completely engaged with their contribution to the organization and its total environment.

Efficiency and expediency

Actions that are justified through increasing efficiency or being expedient, especially with respect to accomplishing explicitly assigned or agreed-to objectives or achieving predetermined outcomes.

Encouraging collaboration

Circumstances or situations that encourage collaborating among people, irrespective of their individual or collective goals or objectives.

Following-up a decision

The process of verifying whether a given decision had the intended outcome or effect.

Functional decomposition

In which an overall task or process is decomposed into its functional component parts, without (much) regard for the human connection or relationships implications.

Involving people

Circumstances under which other people are involved or invited into a process, or not.

Knowing what to do

Based on a common understanding of the organization’s intentions, the individual (or small, relatively autonomous group) initiating a task or activity that supports those intentions, with or without the discovery of that task having been delegated from above. (In

a comparatively more *ba* space, there is less formal delegation of this discovery from above.) Also referred to more casually as “Giving-a-Damn.”

Legitimated delegation / workflow

Delegation of a task, usually through a formal procedure, that follows the legitimate hierarchical organizational structure, or a predetermined, legitimate workflow process.

New employee orientation

The activities in which a new member of the organization engages to become familiarized with the role, and acculturated to the environment.

Passing information

As the primary component of an individual’s role, the individual shepherds information from one part of an organization to another.

Structured procedures and processes

Descriptions of a highly structured, pre-defined, specified way of doing things in the organization that are generally immutable, even in cases where change or deviation might be appropriate.

Teamwork

Working together towards a common objective and/or sharing information among a group of individuals.

Evaluation

Credentialism

Similar to “ascribed identification,” but specific to official degrees or other credentials awarded by a legitimizing organization (e.g., university degree, standards body, etc.) Conferring legitimacy to one’s knowledge or skill by such an independent organization. (Note that the term “independent” in this context can be problematized in terms of conflict of (status) interest.)

Customer service, support, understanding and empathy

Approaches and attitudes used with respect to providing service and support to customers, and in some cases, creating an even stronger connection with customers beyond the simple transaction.

Employee evaluation

The process through which individual employees are evaluated.

Hiring process

Description of the process used to hire new staff.

Quantifying outcomes

Measuring attainment of objectives through quantitative measures, irrespective of whether the actual intent was accomplished.

General

Ecological issues

Issues related to ecological concerns, including “greening” initiatives, pollution and waste reduction, awareness campaigns, and similar.

Impetus

Conflict between individual and organizational values

Instances in which there is a conflict between one’s personal values and beliefs and those of the organization.

Consistent values

Explicit recognition of the alignment of personal and organizational values. (cf. alignment of personal and organizational goals/objectives in traditional organizations).

Creating opportunity

Creating a business or career opportunity for an organization, an individual, or both.

Decision process

Descriptions of aspects of the internal decision-making process.

Defining one’s role

The process through which an individual’s, or organization’s, role is determined.

Developing goals and objectives

The process of developing goals and objectives for the organization, either in part or as a whole.

Engaging outside advisors

The process of consulting with, and seeking advice from, trusted individuals who are not directly involved with managing the organization. This would be akin to role of a board of directors, but not necessarily formally constituted.

Leadership model

Examples of how an organizational leader enacts their leadership role, especially in decision-making.

Objective or instrumental choice

Making a choice among alternatives based on “objectively” determined merit.

Organizational isomorphism

Creating a model of organization that is structurally similar to, or matched with, another organization, irrespective of whether the analogue contextually fits.

Organizational structure

A description of the management structure of the organization.

Personal motivation

Expressions of what motivates the individual.

Planning for the future

Activities, interactions and processes that anticipate future needs and directions for the organization.

Realigning goals and objectives

Changing an organization's goals and objectives in reaction to circumstances, events, or other influences.

Metadata***Mark's reflections***

My on-the-spot reflections based on the conversation in progress.

Organization Identification

Organization A, Organization F, Organization I, Organization M, Organization U.

Power Dynamics***Autocratic non-collaboration***

A decision taken by a person with hierarchical or legitimate power, who appears to consult or collaborate, but is, at best, seeking to convince others of his/her point of view before making the preconceived decision.

Concertive control

Control usually delegated by more senior management to the workers, who exert mutual control via consensus values (which are typically more akin to objectives and outcomes, rather than values), those values usually imposed from above rather than from authentic shared value creation.

Convincing someone

Taking actions that will convince someone of one's point-of-view, without seriously reflecting on one's own. An action usually taken by someone with legitimate or coercive power (e.g. relatively higher in a hierarchy) without wanting to appear arbitrary, or explicitly exercising that power.

Creating status and class

Organizational methods and structures that create a social hierarchy of status and class, often (but not necessarily) related to income.

Defensive measure

An action taken by someone who perceives their position to be threatened by another person, or an event or circumstance.

Discouraging collaboration or teamwork

Actions, decisions or policies that discourage collaboration or teamwork by creating rivalrous situations, or other mechanisms that threaten an employee's livelihood.

Elites benefit

Benefits observed to be taken by an elite group within the larger organization, typically located relatively higher in a class/status hierarchy.

Encouraging autonomy and agency

Actions and processes that encourage individuals and organizations to take initiative and act with little direction or intervention by management. This presumes considerable trust, and relinquishing traditional managerial control.

Ignoring hierarchy

In an otherwise hierarchical organization, ignoring the relative hierarchical ranks in favour of other value. In an explicitly non-hierarchical organization, examples of how class and status hierarchy is eliminated or bypassed.

Imposed expectation

Tasks assigned in a somewhat passive-aggressive manner. The specific task is not explicitly assigned, but there is little actual choice about the expectation that more senior management holds about what should be done.

Justifying a decision

The process through which a decision to be taken is justified and given approval by the organization.

Power and empowerment

Issues and analysis related to nominal or actual empowerment of individuals, and relations of power within the organization.

Seeking authorization

Seeking legitimation from the hierarchical chain of command when an individual or small, relatively autonomous group discovers something that should be undertaken.

Systemic disempowerment

The ways in which a system or set of processes have been designed to disempower individuals, or otherwise discourage taking initiative for reviewing or questioning those processes.

Sense-making***Assimilating diverse thinking***

The processes used to encourage, solicit, hear, and incorporate diverse thinking among organization members, especially in circumstances affecting strategic or long-term decision-making.

Balancing between polarities

Issues and circumstances relating to finding an appropriate balance between polarity tensions, as opposed to giving exclusive preference to one or the other polarity.

Effects of diverse environment

Observations and experiences in an environment that is culturally diverse, referring either to ethnic or racial diversity, or corporate-culture diversity.

Espoused theory

Actions, decisions and processes that are described in response to a hypothetical situation or circumstance, imagining the course that would be taken in the particular situation.

Handling diverse opinions

The mechanisms for resolving diversity of opinions on direction, decisions and actions among organization members.

In-use theory

Actions, decisions and processes that are actually enacted in response to a situation or circumstance, sometimes differing from espoused theory.

Instrumental rationalization

Rationalizing an otherwise unpleasant realization, or objectionable situation based on instrumentality, or the fungible connection to an organization (e.g., "I'm getting paid to do it").

Interconnected effects

Indication of the complexity of organizations that are interconnected to one another, via indirect, feedback and feedforward effects.

Reaching consensus

Mechanisms used in an attempt to reach a consensus among people with diverse opinions on how to proceed with a particular decision or organizational direction.

Resolving conflict

Issues related to how conflict is resolved in the organization when agreement or consensus cannot reasonably be reached.

Shared or consensus vision

The process through which a "shared vision" or common understanding of direction is jointly created for the organization. This is different than developing specific goals or objectives, and different again from a vision or direction developed at the top of a hierarchy and disseminated throughout the organization.

Things more important than money

Individual or organizational decisions that are made for which economic considerations are either not predominant, or the decision appears to be counter to the direct economic interest of the organization.

Unexpected outcome

A non-deterministic outcome of a circumstance or situation, unpredictable from the situation itself.

Work/life balance

Personal reflection or expression of the relationship between one's life, and what one does for economic compensation.

Valence Forms***ba***

The form of a valence relationship that creates shared volition, common identification, tacit shared understanding, and a shared sense of belonging.

Fungible

The form of a valence relationship that involves a commodified or instrumental exchange.

Valences***Ecological***

Relationships involving exchanges of energy and engagement in physical space.

Economic

Relationships involving exchange of value.

Identity

Relationships involving construction of identity.

Knowledge

Relationships involving exchanges of information, experiences, expertise, or opportunity.

Socio-psychological

Relationships that create affective connections.

View of People***Humanizing the workplace***

Interactions among people that create a more personal and caring work environment. "Co-workers" are seen as individuals, with rich lives outside of work, and those lives are germane to the work environment.

I am part of the purpose of my group

The individual identifies him/herself with the purpose or objective of the group, department, or program of which they are collectively a part. This is in contrast with self-identification according to their specific function or specific knowledge.

I am what I do

The person identifies him/herself with the organization by what they do.

I am what I know

The person identifies him/herself with the organization by virtue of the knowledge or experience they contribute.

Instrumental view of people

Viewing people as functional commodities, or “assets” based almost exclusively on their fungible worth.

Relational view of people

Viewing people as in relation first and foremost, with their instrumental purpose secondary to their humanity and being in connection.