

**HUMOR AT WORK:
USING HUMOR TO STUDY ORGANIZATIONS AS A SOCIAL PROCESS**

A Dissertation

by

OWEN HANLEY LYNCH

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2005

Major Subject: Speech Communication

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May 2005

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ABSTRACT

Humor at Work:

Using Humor to Study Organizations as a Social Process. (May 2005)

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Humor is usually associated with trivial or non-serious banter; it is however a significant factor in the construction of organizational culture. This work provides an experience based organizational account of how organizations are produced and reproduced, as well as how organizational interaction is coupled with structure. This dissertation is based on two ethnographic studies: the first, a year-long study of a hotel kitchen, and the second, a three-year study of a private boarding school. This long term examination of an organization's interaction is used to illustrate how organizational interaction produces the duality of organizational structuration overtime. An ethnographic communication-focused approach provides methods for recognizing multiple sites and levels of the Structuration process. As a result, this approach provides a major contribution to understanding the process of Structuration through agents' actions in the context of their organizational culture.

DEDICATION

To the following (listed in order of appearance) if not for their support, encouragement, strength and friendship this work would have not been possible: the kitchen crew, Scott, Linda, Charlie, Yvonna and everyone at The Prep. I would also like to thank those who loved and supported me throughout this process - Jack and Mary, my Family, especially Mom, Dad, Catherine & Caelan....Oh yeah, Larkin, for her insistence on walks just when my inspiration grabbed me.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO WHY I STUDY HUMOR IN ORGANIZATIONS

*A jest's prosperity lies in the ear of him that hears it,
never in the tongue of him that makes it*
(Love's Labor's Lost. V. ii. Shakespeare 1977, p.851).

Why did the chicken cross the intersection?

Intersections are dangerous places whether you are a chicken, riding in a car or conducting social research. However, it is within the intersections of life that all the action happens: the break room where workers' social life intersects with organizational context as they discuss their experiences of their organization; a happy hour after work where colleagues may debate if they should invite the boss; the informal pre and post meeting conversations (where the real decisions may happen); as well as others.. In these intersections – the ambiguous regions of the road - one finds the best understanding and experiences the flow of traffic. To this end I study the intersection between the structure of an organization and its daily social actions - how they both create and maintain each other. To extend this metaphor further, the structure would represent the road, the traffic lights, the lines, and even the rules of road conduct. The drivers in their cars are the agents and the movement in their car represents their actions. Their movements on the road represent the structure in action and the drivers coordinate their action to avoid chaos. This is the process of forming a structure or Structuration. This coordinated activity also makes the creation and maintenance of road structure necessary. We drive all the time without thinking about the amount of effort it takes to maintain the coordinated action of independent vehicles. We do not notice this effort because it is a mundane activity. However, I believe that we should stand back and marvel at the mundane, because most of our lives are spent in ordinary daily actions that create and

This dissertation follows the style and format of *Communication Monographs*.

maintain structures. It is also important because every once in a while, just when you take it all for granted, an accident happens. The structure and the actions break down either because of an actor's (driver's) decision or indecision, or as a consequence of a structural "glitch" which made the crash inevitable. Once the crash is cleared away insurance policies go up and we move on. We forget about the effort it takes to coordinate individual action and structure until the next crash.

In social research we cannot afford to ignore the everyday, especially in the workplace where formal and tacit structure support everyday action and communications. I believe that organizational communication researchers should pay primary attention to the everyday actions and dialogue in organizations. To this end I focus on workplace humor as a key example of everyday experience. It is because humor in all its complexity is a basic part of human culture that it deserves our close attention. The simplest and most taken-for-granted aspects of our social interaction can often provide the most profound understanding of our experience. Wittgenstein observed:

The aspects of things that are most important for us are hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity. (One is unable to notice something – because it is always before one's eyes). The real foundation of his inquiry do not strike a man at all. Unless that fact has at some time struck him. – And this means: we fail to be struck by what, once seen, is most striking and most powerful (Wittgenstein 1968, p. 50).

Humor in the workplace provides a space in which to study the intersection of personal life and interpersonal communication with the formal context of work. I started my research in this area in 1996 and have been working to understand the importance of humor in the workplace daily. I have conducted two in-depth ethnographies during the course of this research, the first in a hotel kitchen for a year and a half, and the second at a boarding school as a teacher of eighth grade for two and a half years.

During my interview for the teaching job I informed my interviewer that I studied humor. He laughed and said "Well that's good, because if it is one thing you need to teach eighth grade it's a sense a humor." Johnny's response to my area of research is not uncommon. Almost everyone can instantly relate to humor as an

important part of his or her work experience. Whenever I mention my research interest I am furnished with narratives and jokes from people's workplace. Here is an example:

I was talking to a surgical resident who had just finished his residency in the intensive care unit. He listened to me describe my research interests over dinner and could relate to the use of humor in the work place. He explained that his own experience in the intensive care unit was challenging and that he was counting the days until he completed his residency. He explained that he had a hard time handling the stress where at times he felt more like a medieval torturer than a doctor. He shared that his fellow doctors had an important joke -called the Chi-Chi joke- that was shared with every new resident "to help them through the stress." I will recap the joke as closely as possible to his words:

There are three men marooned on an island. They are discovered by an indigenous cannibal tribe. Each man is bound up and a large cauldron is put on the fire. The chief comes to the men and tells the men you have two choices - Chi-Chi or death. He asks the first man to make a choice. He says, "Chi -Chi." The tribesmen howl in pleasure; pick the man up; drag him down to the beach and do unspeakable acts of violence to him. The second man who witnessed this brutal attack is then asked "Chi-chi or death?" He struggles with his decision but finally mutters "Chi-Chi." This is once again met with howls of pleasure and the tribesmen conduct what seem to be even worse acts of violence on this man. Finally, it is the third man's turn. The chief comes to him and says "Chi-Chi or death." The man surveys his blood soaked companions and begins to cry. "I can't handle it", he sobs, "I'll take death." The tribe is silenced by this response. They look at each other and shrug their shoulders. The chief looks to his bewildered tribe then turns back to the man and says "Ok death, but first Chi-Chi."

This joke is important to the doctors since it allowed them to joke about the pain (torture) that accompanies death. The Chi-Chi that accompanies death in an intensive care ward is inevitable, and the joke helps doctors release the stress that comes with their jobs.

The joke's place in the organization's daily communication, the everyday retelling of the joke, is even more important than the joke itself. When a family chose not to sign a D.N.R. (Do Not Resuscitate), the doctors would sometimes say to themselves "but first a little Chi-Chi." A tracking number was listed on the life support

machines that allowed the hospital to keep track of what machine was in what room. Sometime ago an unknown doctor (adding a mythical element to the event) wrote next to each number “Chi-Chi.” These references to the joke in work related communication and sanctioned graffiti illustrate that on some level the entire intensive care ward accepts the role and use of the joke. The joke is not only a humorous tale but a way for the doctors to make sense of their environment and the pressures placed upon them in this environment.

In addition to the contextual significance of the joke, the joke is also important because of its cultural reference and linguistic structure. The first line “there are three men marooned on an island” prepares the listener that it is a joke. We wait for the last line to resolve the conflict in the joke to form the humorous ending. The content of the joke also uses cultural stock images to create humor--the joke takes its form from a stereotypical encounter between the “civilized man” and “savages”. When being told the joke, I pictured the scene almost as a far-side cartoon. This cultural reference and communicative structure allows the audience to prepare and interpret the joke.

In the context of the hospital the doctors put this structure of the joke and the stock image into action. They position themselves in the role of the “savage” juxtaposing the clinical image of doctors—as savages they become the overbearing and powerful bullies while the patient becomes the victim. The form of the joke allows the joke to be passed down doctor to doctor. The doctors telling the joke had no idea when it started, or who first told the joke. The single word “Chi-Chi” was all that was needed for the joke’s meaning to be referenced. This explains why the phrase Chi-Chi has such longevity, why it was used before the doctor started his residency and after he left.

This exemplary joke represents the intersection discussed earlier. It is an intersection of how the doctors as actors deal with the stress and demands of the workplace structures. It is an intersection of past organizational communication being reused in the present to maintain and understand the present workplace. The joke’s use is an example of an informal mode of communication to deal with formal everyday pressure. In short, the doctor’s joke illustrates the use of organizational humor not for the

trivial means that ends in a laugh, but as an important part of personal and organizational sense making. This joke's importance and purpose demonstrates the intensive care unit ward's ability to coordinate their understanding and deal with their collective workplace process.

There is however a problem (or a limitation) with my use of the doctors' Chi-Chi joke. I am writing about a joke and more importantly an organizational process that I was not part of, thus missing part of the sense making process of this organizational joke. The doctor retold the joke and its use in the ward from his memory. I was never present to fully understand or be part of the joke's use. I argue that to truly understand the action you have to be part of it. You must first drive through the intersection many times before observing it. I have experienced and recorded hundreds of humorous episodes and jokes in organizations.

I believe in order to truly understand a social meaning or event you must experience it. In order to truly understand a social process or action you must be part of the social process or action. This is especially true when you study a social interaction because it is in concert with others in context where agents (and the researcher as agent) form meaning. I believe that experience of an event goes far beyond physical sensation; it should also incorporate an emotional sensing of the event, how an experience meaning is socially constructed. As a result, I rely on my experience to help interpret the Chi-Chi joke, but remain aware of the limitation that not being part of the social experience places upon my interpretation. The experience-based study of humor will be the foundation for the methodology of gathering organizational humor in this project.

Humor is difficult to study in context - far more difficult than reporting my personal experience of a joke. Because jokes in context have audiences, that give humor contextual and social meaning, as a researcher I have to become part of the informal social network and perform the organizational task under the similar pressures as other actors to understand the humor in each context. This is because humor is a *constituted* phenomenon, which means that it is dependent on the group who finds something humorous to have a common interpretation of the symbolic meaning of that

humor. Consubstantiation of humor reflects Burke's (1984, 1988) and Duncan's (1962, 1968) theory. This theory argues if a group finds "humor" in a symbol it is an indication of shared understanding and meaning attached to that symbol's interpretation. To participate in the consubstantiation of humor within a group, one has to achieve a shared understanding of the group's reason and meaning for finding a particular event or joke humorous. For example, six chefs may find it funny to see a trainee struggling to cut a pineapple the right way, because each of them reflects back to the time when they were training and went through the same learning process. Each chef in this example interpreted the action of the trainee as funny due to a common interpretation of the difficulties of starting in a kitchen.

Understanding humor through experiencing it allows for appreciating humor as a consubstantiated phenomenon. Experiencing humor also provides the necessary personal appreciation of humor as a response to the personal physiological motivations. Physiological motivations on an individual level are where individuals in a concert of others come to terms with the paradoxes of their environment. Humor is an interaction-based activity, typically in organizational contexts it is created and experienced based on individuals' desire to express or consubstantiate their common feeling and understanding. Humor is then a group activity engaged in by individuals to use humor as a method of psychologically resolving their environmental stresses, incongruity and/or dealing with the demands of their organizational role and power structure.

Reexamine the Chi-Chi joke and think of it not as just a shared joke but as a method for individuals, in concert with other individuals with similar feelings, to articulate their feelings in a safe manner. They can use humor to give voice to their desire to come to terms with the paradox of their difficult work environment. Examining the Chi-Chi joke on this psychological level stresses the importance for personal experience. As I am not an intensive care doctor I can only image the tension of having the power to keep someone alive but be powerless to save him or her. I can only imagine the helplessness they feel in complying to family desires and being constantly faced with the emotion and pain of death in others that for them has become commonplace, and in

many cases an obstacle to solving the problem logically. I can imagine how the joke provides the doctors absolution for what they do on the behest of others. In short, the use of the joke in the context of the intensive care unit provides a voice and method for individuals on a group level to address the common physiological forces of stress, the feeling of lack of control or subordination, and the incongruity they experience due to the complexity of their circumstances.

My contention is that humor cannot be understood only through analysis of the text, but also and more importantly through the analysis of the *context*. Humor often cannot be understood unless the context is experienced, as reflected in the saying: “I guess you had to be there.” Humor can therefore not be studied as an isolated set of words but must be understood within the social context (actors, time and space) and psychological motivations from which the humor arose and was interpreted as funny.

Humor is not trivial or inconsequential, but an important part of every culture. However, humor is believed to remain outside of rules and norms of societal discourse because it is considered informal and relegated to “non-seriousness”—demonstrated by the familiar phrases “I was only joking” or “they can’t take a joke” when a comment is offensive. This suggests that humor is allowed and expected to be offensive or breach taboo subjects. Humor remains constant within society yet beyond scrutiny from it. This obstacle in humor research became most clear to me when I attempted to observe humor in a London advertising firm, *Street Furniture*. I started ethnography in order to establish a white-collar culture to compare with the humor of the blue-collar kitchen setting (my first ethnographic case study). The first couple of days I was welcomed as an intern, which entailed grunt work and going to the pub with the office people. However, the manager of the advertising team let it slip that I was studying their humor. As a result I was not openly talked to or even asked to the pub anymore, where a majority of the team’s business and humor occurred.

The group became hostile to my study of their humor. Any instance that was remotely funny received open acknowledgment such as “Did you get that one, Owen?” This hostility became most apparent when a salesman was in the office with clients and

in the middle of a conversation turned to them and said “don’t say anything funny or that bloke will write it down.” The case study became almost useless for the observation of humor. However, the resistance of the sales team to my research demonstrates how humor is a cherished part of the workplace informal culture. The hostility I faced was clear and dramatic evidence that humor held an important role in the sales team’s culture. Humor may be considered “non serious,” but for the sales team, it was part of their expression of identity.

As this experience demonstrates, humor is a cherished part of informal interaction and identity. Studying humor can provide valuable insight into how groups form meaning systems and interpret their environment. However, humor research must be grounded in participant observation to elevate our understanding of humor from viewing it as a non-serious trivial discourse to seeing it as a fundamental way in which humans as social animals interpret and negotiate their environments.

The goal of this work is not to study humor for humor’s sake, but to understand organizations through action - how organizational communication and actions create and maintain their structures and how organizational structures create and maintain agent’s communication and actions. Humor is but a way of tapping into the traffic flow of the intersection. Imagine the everyday intersection, which is too busy to count all the passing cars. But by counting just the red cars, paying particular attention to how their actions form the intersection structure, one can make leaps to the relationship between all cars and the intersections coordinated process as a whole. I view humor as the red car. I pay attention to humor as a site for research because it is noticeable in the mundane; it is ubiquitous because it allows access not only to individual motivations but the contextual demands. Humor is by definition fun--each person has their own sense and style of humor. Yet, as Shakespeare stresses, humor needs others to make it happen. Humor is more than a personal or interpersonal even--it is a personal and interpersonal process.

Research as an Emergent Process

“The outcomes in any given research situation are to a large extent unpredictable and therefore unspecifiable prior to entry on a site” (Lincoln, 1985, p. 142). It is in the unpredictability and the emergent quality of research I find most exciting. This project particularly the second case study of a middle school has changed my life. Teaching in the middle school as part of my research has given me new and unforeseen direction. My experiences in the middle school have changed my research goals and intentions. I will outline the process here.

The meta-theory and models developed within this project emerged over several years in response to my everyday experience of humor in organizations. In 1995 to 1996 I worked in a kitchen, which became the bases of my first case study (Lynch, 1998). To help in the analysis of humor in the kitchen a humor theory was developed. This theory primarily focused on identifying the function of humor in organizations (rather than dualistic relationships between organizations on everyday humor). I began a second case study using Structuration as a meta-theory frame as I explored the dualistic relationship of everyday communication (in this case humor) and the overall organizational structures. Over the first year I became dissatisfied (see Chapter III) with Structuration Theory as a frame to help me interpret my experiences in the middle school ethnography. I looked for an alternative and I turned to Simmel for guidance.

Georg Simmel’s entire body of work was in response to the fundamental yet rarely asked question “How is society possible?” Simmel focused on society as a social process (*Wezelszuammenghörigkeit*) between interaction (*Wechselwirkung*) and socialization (*Vergesellschaftung*). Simmel held the idea of society as abstract necessary to categorical frame interaction. So to answer his question Simmel argued that society was a social process of interaction. Simmel’s social process focuses on the dualistic and permanently fluxual relationship between agents and their socializing forces. I believe that Simmel’s perspective can be reasonably extended to posit society and the organizations within it are social processes of communication. As a result, I believe that Simmel’s societal question can be converted to ask “How are organizations possible?”

Like Simmel, I use the social processes of interactions, however I focus specifically on humor to uncover how the social process of the everyday creates the organization arrangement that we live in.

Simmel's social process at its most basic focuses on the dualistic relationship between agents and their socializing forces, for this reason I see many parallels with Structuration Theory. In the beginning of this project, I planned on using a Structuration Theory to present a Simmel-based meta-theory in which to aid in the analysis of my case study experiences. This meta-theory was based on my previous work with Simmel (Lynch, 2002a).

As a qualitative researcher I have always found comfort in the flexibility within Simmel's theory, but also in his argument that all reality must be understood as interdependent. Social interaction is the basis of inter-dependency (therefore society). I have been "struck" as Frisby notes "The reader of Simmel's sociological and philosophical essays must be struck by his ability to draw connections between the most diverse phenomenon such that the patterns of social relationships in society always appear as an intricate web in his work" (1984, p.17). In short, Simmel presented an attractive frame as it allowed me to focus on the everyday interconnectedness of the organizing process and then draw connections.

Using Simmel as a frame helped me to avoid an unfortunate tendency when applying Structuration theory - pulling out of every interaction the perceived structural underpinning of daily action. Using Simmel as a frame became a process of emerging understanding during the middle school case study. It allowed me avoid narrowing or limiting my experience to either validate my first humor theory, or explain all actions as a consequence of structural influences. As a result, my experiences in the middle school case study remained a process of theory building (using my first case study as a working hypothesis rather than theory to be verified). This process required flexibility. Simmel's frame demanded flexibility as he argues social phenomenon has multiple and divergent social causes.

As I worked on this project, based on my case study experiences, I ended up modifying my plan. I have ended up using a tailored Structuration Theory to aid me in analyzing my experience - to help me in the inductive process of linking my everyday experiences with the structural influences and placing them in the context of organizational change. I found that integrating Simmel back into my tailored Structuration theory to be unnecessary.

However, during the three-year ethnography at the Prep, I experienced an unplanned change at the school. The Headmaster of ten years was asked to leave by the school's board of directors at the end of my first year. This was followed by a transition year when the old Headmaster, now looking for a job, still served as the Head of School. The third year brought a new Headmaster and a period of rapid change. As a result my project came to be a study of change, as much as it was about "how are organizations possible?" It became "how are organizations possible in the face of constant change?"

Simmel believed that change was an inevitable consequence of human nature. He argued that humans in their interactions vie for social control and the resulting systems of control acquire their own inertia. For the first time Simmel's theory of change was hard for me to connect with the everyday experiences at the school. Simmel in his discussion of human motivation used the broad brush of "human nature" and gave to my thinking too much power to the inertia of control systems. Even though I credit Simmel with giving me the freedom and the frame to better understand my case study's web of interconnections, I became dissatisfied with his explanation of why and how they existed and changed. The process of organizational change forced me to change my analysis frame after two years in the middle school. I began to turn back to Structuration for insight.

So here I am back to where I began, but with an entirely different understanding. I believe that emergent process described in this chapter was invaluable for me to develop a tailored structuration theory and model in which to study organizational change. I see this work as an additional research call to Simmel's answering a research call presented twenty years ago by Poole and McPhee in their Chapter in

Communication and Organization (1983). I wanted to provide an organizational account of how organizations are produced and reproduced, and how organizational interaction is coupled with structure. I also wanted to conduct a long-term examination of an organization's interaction in order to illustrate how it produces the duality of organizational Structuration over time. This focus on Structuration process at the organizational level as opposed to the level of society is because I believe the strength of Structuration as a meta-theory is not on the societal level, but rather that of the group and the organization. The larger the frame (i.e. society or all social life) the more obtuse and ineffectual the link between social action/interaction and structure becomes. I argue that Structuration Theory is not a positivist theory that lends itself to explain all social life by reducing it to key components, but a starting point to explore the messy way in which individuals, through their daily interaction within groups and organizations maintain and create their social structures. This rest of this chapter will situate the contribution that this study makes as a study to the field of organizational communication research.

Placing This Work within Organizational Communication Research

This work explores organizational culture through everyday interaction, chiefly humor. It places culture within the tradition of the interpretative turn (Putnam and Pacanowsky, 1983). One basis of this tradition is the recognition that culture and culture is essentially to be found within the interaction of its members. I wish to bring organizational humor within consideration for organizational culture research. Humor literature is split between the psychological (cognitive motivation for the use of humor use and cognitive explanations for why it is funny) and the sociological (the function of humor within society) explanation for humor's use and its effects. Similarly, climate research has maintained the same dichotomy. For example, Glick (1988) argues that climate is principally an organizational attribute while others argue that climate is occurrence/experience of individual perception (James, Joyce, and Slocome, 1988). Poole's (1985) Structural view, however, offers an alternative to this view of climates, not as either a product of cognitive motivation nor defined by function within

an organizational context, but based on interaction between agents and organizing routines. Hence Poole, with a focus on organization from a communication perspective, offers a perspective on organizational culture that recognizes everyday practices and interactions as the intersections of agent and organizational structure.

I envision organizational culture as a process of interaction, constrained and creating the structure and the structure's influence constraining and creating the interaction of members. Clearly, I wish this research to fall within tradition of integrative Structuration research on organizational cultures (Bastein, McPhee and Bolton 1995, DeSanctis and Poole 1994, McPhee 1985, Poole and DeSanctis 1989, 1992, Poole and McPhee 1983, Poole Seibold and McPhee 1985, 1986, 1996, Poole and Ven de Ven 1989, Laird-Brenton 1993). I will attempt to use experienced, everyday actions of the middle school case study (focusing on humor) to illustrate the following:

1. How humor is guided by structural constraints.
2. How humor reproduces these structural constraints.
3. How humor transforms or produces new structural constraints.
4. To illustrate the culture of the organization of the middle school change over time as a product of everyday relationship between agent actions and theory structural influences.

As stated earlier, I found Adaptive Structuration Theory difficult to recognize during my ethnographic research experience. This was in part due to the fact that my organizational experience was not organizational, but small group focused (middle school teachers). The middle school culture like many workplaces was experienced and negotiated within a small group setting. As a result in the everyday, the group develops a dialogue that helps the members make sense of their organization (both individually and collectively). I found my early attempts to focus or distill structural influences on this dialogue to create a detachment from the group's dialogue and processes (which was contradictory to my research goal). At first I attempted constantly to relate everyday group processes to organizational structural components of rules and resources (McPhee 1985, 1989; Poole 1988; Ransom, Hinings and Greenwood, 1980). This focus was unfruitful and distracting. It wasn't until I returned to focusing solely on the process of

the everyday group, becoming a full participant in conversations and humor, that my understanding of these structural influences began to emerge. In fact this emergent discernment of the structural influences that were always there was aided ironically by my abandoning of the Structuration frame altogether. It took even longer for me to conceptualize the social, everyday influence on the structural components.

Understanding organizational structure as an emerging process was an important and necessary part of the study, as I did not have the advantage of pre-established, clear-cut structures, as in Poole and DeSanctis' group decision support system (GDSS) studies (DeSanctis and Gallupe 1987, DeSanctis & Poole 1994, Huber 1990, Poole & DeSanctis 1990, 1991, Silver 1991). The working understanding of structure developed over time and different parts fell into place as my observations continued. As a result it took me about a year to get a grasp on the structural components of rules and resources and, more importantly, on their constraints on interaction (it took longer still to understand how they also enabled interaction). The process of how everyday interaction influenced the organizational structure, and created change in the organization, took the longest commitment of all - about two years of living and interacting in the organization.

However one aspect of adaptive Structuration process that I experienced richly and immediately was the process of Structuration as a group phenomenon. Poole et al. argue that the group interaction is an ideal social unit to study Structuration (1985, pp. 82-84). In many ways organizations are experienced within small groups; these groups and their interactions are couched within larger organization structures yet form their own adapted culture or ethos. The clearest example of that is how groups themselves identify themselves as separate from the organization as a whole or other groups - even creating a name for them themselves to aid in this distinction. Within both case studies conducted in this work group, identity was an important part of the everyday organizational experience. Experiencing the everyday as member of group was a commonly recognized understanding in both cases where both case study settings had informal but universally identifiable names; the "kitchen boys" in The Oaks and the "middle schoolers" at the Prep. The humor used reflects this group identity that

permeated every aspect of group interaction and humor. An example of this was during my faculty orientation when I was introduced to Sam, an upper school Spanish teacher, who asked me where I was teaching. When I told him the middle school, Sam laughed and said, “well I won’t see you again until the end of the year party.” I actually didn’t speak to him again until two years later, at a party held for some teachers leaving the school.

A communication-focused approach provides methods for recognizing multiple sites and levels of the Structuration process. As a result, this approach provides a major contribution to understanding the process of Structuration through agents’ actions in the context of their organizational cultures. An interpretative approach helps maintain focus that the culture derives from interaction. “Interpretivists treat structures as a set of complex, semi-autonomous relationships that originate from human interactions. Organizational members use their actions and interactions to create” (Putnam, 1983 p.35). This focus on interaction helps maintain the perspective that individual interaction has a direct influence on the group’s cultures and the group structure. Of equal importance is the application of structuration to study organizational climate (Poole and McPhee 1983), it helps maintain a focus that group cultures, identity and interaction are influenced by organizational structures such as organizational rules and resources. For example, the “middle schoolers” as a group were formed as a product of their social interaction and as a result of the organizational structure of the school. For example, Cathy, a middle school science teacher, commented multiple times in her interview that she felt “out of the group” because of her job as science teacher. She felt that her job requirements (having to stay in the science classroom with her many lab preparations) made it “physically [all structural elements] impossible to hang out” and socialize with other middle school teachers. She complained that even when she did get an opportunity to be part of the group, she said that she “didn’t fit into the conversation” and that she felt like an “upper school teacher.”

Group relationships and cultures are based on both everyday interaction and structure. When focusing on structuration at a group level it is important to remember

that agent's interactions are couched within group dynamics. These group dynamics are couched within organizational dynamics. These organizational dynamics are couched within economical, political and social environments on a macro level. It is exceedingly difficult to point out how micro-level interactions influence the macro-level. However, I believe that agent's interactions and actions are more directly influenced in the everyday with their immediate structures. Agents are chiefly influenced by their workplace groups, especially when members of the group have formal power over rules and resource. These groups and dynamics are in turn influenced by the structural influences of the organization as a whole.

Giddens, unlike Adaptive Structuration Theory, sees little point in focusing on group, or organizational Structuration, as the meso experience between micro and macro is ultimately governed by the micro and macro event. Even his recent work *Modernity and Self-Identity* (1991) suggests that self and societal concepts are directly connected. Though he argues he respects the meso-level or "intermediate" influences he dismisses the need to adapt structuration to gauge their effect on the personal identity and/or society.

Changes in intimate aspects of personal life, in other words, are directly tied to the establishment of the social connections on a very wide scope. I do not mean to deny the existence of many kinds of intermediate connections – between, for example localities and state organizations. But the level of time-space distinction introduced by high modernity is so extensive that for the first time in human history, 'self' and 'society' are interrelated in a global milieu (1991, p.32)

Giddens latter work on identity presents an argument that shows a focus on self-concept in high modernity is also a focus on the global. He very cleverly has gone full circle on his position of the *Constitution of Society* (1984) where he argued that the focus on the society is also a focus on the individual. This is why I believe Giddens work has a difficult time translating the theory of Structuration into real experience.

I feel the adaptation of Giddens to organizational communication is essential and why I focus on the work group as a group culture focus. One must also recognize that the concept of group and institution is fluid. Poole, Seibold and McPhee (1985, 1996) argue that the Structural focus on groups allows the breakdown of seeing groups as

either individual or institutional phenomena. They present the group as a dual reality of individual and institution within the flow of action. Individuals within the group experience this dual reality on a personal way. They are for the most part conscious of the constraints and opportunities that being an individual within a group presents. The preeminent element and advantage of ethnographic experience is that you experience this dual reality and identity not just as part of study (researcher versus participant tension), but also as a member of the culture you are studying, as it becomes part of who you are, and how you see yourself. A contribution that this study brings to the organizational communications studies of structuration culture is that I was not studying the groups through a process of change; I was part of the group undergoing and experiencing this change. My reality was the dual reality of the middle school group.

This personal nature of organizational group life was a substantial feature of understanding each of the case studies' cultures. It provided empathetic understanding of how individuals invested and incorporated group and organizational membership on a personal level. It provided empathy to the tension created when personal identity and organizational identities became intertwined and stretched thin by contradictory roles. The tension and contradiction in these multiple identities (self, group, organizational) have a profound effect on experience, particularly at The Prep where people not only worked, but many lived and raised families. For example, Jen would simultaneously "wear the hats" of faculty member, math department teacher, middle school teacher, 7th grade representative, resident boarding faculty, dorm leader, advisor, high school coach of two sports, tutor, and as a mother of a child in the prep's co-op day care. I can truly empathize with the personal toll this had on Jen and how to an extent it affected her view of self and reality. I like Jen have lived and helped maintain this dual reality of self and organization (the Prep) for the past three years. As a result I can see the links of everyday action to structural components as experienced by the members of the Prep. I was able to begin to tap into the elusive but mundane process of personalized Structuration.

On the organizational level, the work that provides the clearest springboard for this work is Bastien, McPhee, and Bolton's (1995) longitudinal case study of an organization going through the change to a new CEO. As outlined in chapter 1, The Prep was going through an intense organizational change similar to the case study presented by Bastien et al. (1995). The change process developed while this study was in progress. This experience of large unplanned change offered a serendipitous opportunity for me as a researcher. Being part of an unplanned change process provides valuable material for integrative Structuration studies, and for studies of organizational change. In Bastien et al.'s study, the "focus was action following the election of a new CEO" (and 1995, p.92). In this study of The Prep, instead of selecting an organization undergoing change, I was part of the process of change. I was studying an organization and an everyday interaction process that influenced the replacement of the old Headmaster and provided experiences and accounts of everyday interaction that influences the structural change, how the structural adjustment process was handled and interpreted by the members of the school. The Prep has undergone and continues to undergo a long process of change and, like all members of The Prep, I was deeply embedded within the process of organizational change. I therefore add to Bastien's study conceptually by providing longitudinal account of leading to the change, the process of change and the effects of the change. Methodologically, I add the valuable perspective of personal experience.

In adding personal experience within the process of organizational Structuration I hope to avoid criticisms such as those leveled against Poole et al.'s GDSS studies by Banks and Riley (1993). Banks and Riley argue that in the studies of GDSS the structure is conceived as external -principally the design and the technological aspects of the system- to the group members Therefore they claim that Poole's et al. studies are not ontologically¹ pure, as the structures do not emerge in human action but are external to group action. I do not think that this is an entirely fair criticism, as the individuals and groups make choices on how to appropriate the GDSS structures. Poole et. al. do not claim that the group members create the external structure (the computer code) but that

they make personal appropriation of the structure and therefore the groups are evolved in a process of forming a structure of their own through their interactions. Additionally, external structures beyond the control of the group constrained by them are not contradictory to organizational experience and therefore do not invalidate the GDSS studies. The force of external structures is part of organizational reality, as there are other sources of structure (not directly constructed by experiencing members). For example, organizational constraints such as budget, market conditions, tax codes, political party in power² are external realities that must be dealt with. On a grand level (the level Giddens is concerned with) individuals can affect these structures in a very limited fashion, but within organizational or group contexts these structures represent an external reality to be uniquely appropriated by the members.

What is unique to the GDSS studies is that the researchers' control and knowledge over GDSS structures provide clarity in the identification and study of structures not afforded to researchers studying daily interaction in organizations. This is probably the real basis for Banks and Riley's (1993) criticism of GDSS research. The GDSS provides computer structures and the method (which they see as distinct) of group interaction. They do not appreciate that the impact of the GDSS system (in fact I believe they think it invalidates it) with its advantage of clarity. GDSS system studies enable the researchers to clearly see the use and appropriation of the structure. This clarity is hard to achieve in everyday interaction and therefore the GDSS system use is a necessary limitation to gain the advantage of clarity. For example, it allows DeSanctis and Poole (1994) to link unique group appropriation of a structural component that is very difficult to observe/experience in studies of everyday organizational life. Though I believe that the similar process of appropriation of structures exists within my everyday experience, it is impossible for me to see them fully.

The integrative perspective offers an inductive process for Structuration research. This is even true of Bastien, McPhee and Bolton's longitudinal study of organizational change. They set criteria (repetition, and verifiable facts of organizational life) that they applied to their form of organizational observation and began "abducting" key structural

components, kernel themes.” Kernel themes were abducted³ by the researchers from transcripts and case narratives. The kernel themes we focused on met two requirements: a) They reoccurred extremely often in recorded accounts, across informants and data gathering waves; and b) They were expressed very definitely as unquestioned facts of organizational life” (1995, p. 92). The structures, as in the GDSS studies, are known and tested within contexts and the variations in appropriation of structures are noted (DeSanctis and Gallupe 1987, DeSanctis & Poole 1994, Huber 1990, Poole & DeSanctis 1990, 1991, Silver 1991).

I began my second case study with this inductive process as a working hypothesis to be tested. I found in the context of my research that it caused me to miss the structure and impeded my ability to fully experience everyday events, because searching for structure within immediate experience influenced the way I interacted with others and interpreted my experience. An example of this was during one of my first conversations with Tony, the first Headmaster, during my orientation/welcome dinner. He described himself as a C.E.O of the school. I made the mistake of assuming this to be an indication of a business model (as a structural component or rules and resource allocation) of the upper school administration. It wasn't until a year later and much reflection that I learned there was a visible fissure between Tony and the deep structure culture of the school. By attempting to place a business structure on my experience, I nearly missed a valuable research insight. Indeed, if I hadn't embedded myself within the organization for at least a year and half I would have missed it completely. Emerging understanding like this one over the course of my first year of casework encouraged me refocus I see this work as answering a research call presented twenty years ago by Poole and McPhee in their Chapter in *Communication and Organization* (1983). I wanted to provide an organizational account of how organizations are produced and reproduced, and how organizational interaction is coupled with structure. I also wanted to conduct a long-term examination of an organization's interaction in order to illustrate how it produces the duality of organizational Structuration over time. This focus on Structuration process on the organizational level as opposed to the level of society is

because I believe the strength of Structuration as a meta-theory is not on the societal level, but rather that of the group and the organization. The larger the frame (i.e. society or all social life) the more obtuse and ineffectual the link between social action and interaction and structure becomes. I argue that Structuration Theory is not a positivist theory that lends itself to explain all social life by reducing it to key components, but a starting point to explore the messy way in which individuals, through their daily interaction within groups and organizations, maintain and create their social structures. My research perspective from a deductive position (applying structural assumptions onto the Prep's interaction) to an inductive position, allowed myself to discover the Prep's structure over time as well as use the Prep's experience to rediscover or tailor fit Structuration Theory. At the end of this process I related the discovered structures to a meta-theory frame as a working hypothesis to understand interaction in context.

Conclusion

This work presents a theory of humor that goes beyond humor rework Structuration theory. It examines three years of experiences in an organization culture that underwent a massive unplanned change.

It also uses two case study experiences to reexamine and add to humor literature. The work offers a model that allows sociological humor theory to expand beyond its limited frame of viewing all humor as a form of control and embrace the paradox of humor of both control and resistance simultaneously. It uses Structuration theory to look beyond humor as an expression of control to understanding humor role (as an exemplar of interaction and action) in organizational change and stability. This work then presents a focus on humor experiences over three years. It offers a longitudinal experience of change. The process of understanding structure, and the constraints and opportunities the structure presents to everyday interaction, took time and personal commitment. I believe that a qualitative study of Structuration is a messy affair, but this imprecision reflects organizational experience and is a valuable contribution to the integrative literature. I add to this literature an account of experienced interaction and structure. I add to the

integrative Structuration perspective the experience of being within the process of Structuration.

Chapter II provides a literature base to establish a communication based understanding of humor in organizations. It argues that an interpretative organizational communication focus can address two major limitations in humor theory and its application to case studies. First, a communication perspective can bridge the split between psychological (why we use) humor and the sociological humor (its function). Second how it remedies the limitation of viewing humor only as a function of social control.

Chapter III introduces the methodological challenges in studying humor as a participant observer. It explains my Kantian based view of reality and ethical research as well as how this project is an extension of these. It discusses why I took the unusual step in qualitative research of living and writing in two case studies. To this end it provides a description of these case studies and contrasts the different cultures in each.

Chapter IV presents a summary of relevant findings from my first case study of humor in a hotel kitchen (Lynch, 1998). It familiarizes the reader with the work that led to this dissertation project and second case study. It overviews and provides examples of how the ethnographic experience of the first study led to a theory of five distinct types of humor functioning in an organization. Finally it addresses limitations of this study that informed an area of future research and served as the impetus for this research project.

Chapter V presents a revised or tailored Structuration theory that emerged over the process of my three-year ethnography of a middle school. It places this work in the context of the power debate that surrounds stucturation theory. It argues my experiences provided the basis for a model to aid in my analysis of organizational experiences. It presents this model prior to the ethnography from which it emerged to aid in the understanding of the middle school case study.

Chapter VI presents humor episodes over three years of experience in a middle school. This humor case study is presented in temporal order and provides a detailed account of unplanned organization structural change over the three years including the

effect that it had on daily interaction of the organizational agents. It also provides analysis of these interactions and actions using the model presented in Chapter V. Ultimately it presents this model in praxis and illustrates how humor as an action is in a dualistic relationship with structure and how organizational change and power can be understood as a product of this action-structure relationship.

Chapter VII concludes this project by revisiting the tailored Structuration Theory. It uses this research to expand upon the model and present an argument for the theory's contribution to organizational research. It explores the limitation of this project and the value of this study for other studies of humor, change, power and Structuration in organizational research.

Chapter I Notes

¹ Banks and Riley claim that the “externalized category of acting deforms the action-context relationships of structuration and fundamentally alters the relationship actions, structures, and social systems” (1993, p.179). They also criticize Poole (1983b) claiming he does not explain how he conceives or formulates structuration for his study. They suggest that Poole's use of Structuration therefore becomes a post hoc account of reasoning for reasoning established before. This latter criticism could perhaps be taken seriously if the article (1983b) by Poole was the only article he published on structuration. However, this article was the last article within a series of three articles (Poole, 1981, 1983a and 1983b) where Poole established just what they required earlier.

² I do not include job assignment (Poole Seibold and McPhee 1985) as an external structure because within the context of my case studies in the middle school your job description and task was vague and largely not external to members. See chapter six for full discussion.

³ The word “abduced”, meaning to take away, is typically used as an action as in “abduction” suggests a process of pocketing valued items (kernels) versus experience base deduction.

CHAPTER II

HUMOROUS LITERATURE:

FINDING A PLACE FOR HUMOR IN COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

“I have never sat with a group of professional comedy writers or comedians ...and had a discussion or even thought for five minutes of thinking why people laugh” Robert Orben, head of Gerald Ford’s presidential speechwriting team and comedy writer(Chapel, 1978, p.46)

Humor has no boundaries - it permeates every social context. Undoubtedly humor and laughter are essential parts of what it is to be human. Unraveling what is humor and why it is a central component of our social lives has engaged a wide variety of scholars. All humor is fundamentally a communicative activity. At its most basic level humor is an intended or unintended message that is interpreted as funny. Yet curiously the communication field has only skimmed the surface of the world of humor. It is time for the field to delve deeper to grapple with humor and establish a communication based understanding of humor, which is the ultimate goal of this research project. To this end, this chapter has two goals: (a) to provide a literature base to help facilitate this turn, and (b) to identify the space and need in humor theory that a communication-based understanding will fill and satisfy.

Humor literature can be split into two broad categories: the first is concerned with the individual level-- why individuals use humor--and the second focuses on the societal level--the function humor has within a social setting or society. The majority of humor literature falls within the individual category, focusing on individual motivations for the creation and interpretation of humor. Within the individual category of humor research there are three major humor theories: *superiority theory*, *relief theory* and *incongruity theory* (Berger, 1993; Berlyne, 1972; Burns & Burns, 1975; Chapman and Foot, 1976; Feinberg, 1978; Meyer, 1998, 2000; Monroe, 1951; Morreall, 1983; Raskin, 1985). The second category of humor research focuses on humor’s function or impact in a social setting and casts humor as dualistic in nature. As a result, if humor creates one

aspect in society, it is assumed to simultaneously create its opposite. This dualistic nature of contextual humor is termed the *paradox of humor*. The sociological study of humor notes two sets of paradoxical humor functions, *identification* and *differentiation*, as well as *control* and *resistance*.

The motivational theories of humor from psychology, as well as the dualistic function of humor research from sociology, both provide valuable insight into humor. However, two major limitations within this research can be identified. Communication theory can address both of these limitations. The first limitation is the lack of interaction between these levels of analysis; as a result, the relationship between them is unclear. Particularly distressing is the fact that the individual level research rarely integrates findings from sociological humor case studies. Traditionally, individual-level actions and societal level structures have been difficult to connect (Giddens, 1979). A communication-based study of humor can aid in connecting these two levels in humor research. Communication acts as the medium in humor between the structure of social settings and the motivations of individuals.

The second limitation can be found within sociological literature. There is a problematic trend within humor case studies of reducing the dualistic nature of humor to one end of a continuum. Case studies start with a dialectical frame for understanding the function of humor in a social setting but conclude that all social humor, particularly work humor, functions ultimately as control (Boland & Hoffman, 1986; Bradney, 1957, 1958; Chapman and Foot, 1976; Collinson, 1988, 1992, 1994; Coser, 1959, 1960; Davis, 1988; Dundes & Hauschild, 1988; Holdaway, 1988; Levine, 1976; Linstead, 1985; McGhee, 1976; Mulkay, 1988; Oldani 1988; Powell, 1988; Powell & Paton, 1988; Radcliffe-Brown, 1952; Roy, 1958; Sletta, Sobstad, & Valias, 1995; Sykes, 1966). As a result the sociological study of humor either ignores or disproves without mentioning humor as control and resistance. This is why I believe a communication-centered study of social humor can provide a better understanding of the dualistic nature of the paradoxes of humor.

This chapter illustrates how a communicative approach can be used as a medium or connection between the psychological and sociological studies of humor. The communication approach provides a deeper understanding of why people use humor and how it functions within a social setting. The first section reviews the psychological motivation theories of humor (superiority, relief, and incongruity), arguing for a more comprehensive approach to interpreting psychological humor by combining these conceptions into an interpretative frame. The second section is an overview of humor research within the communication discipline. It focuses on these texts separately from psychological and sociological texts (and is placed between them) because all of these communication texts provide the beginnings of an important medium between motivational humor and the function of humor in social settings. The third section reviews sociological studies of humor and provides a model that illustrates the general approach of humor's function in organizations. Finally, it is argued that future case studies from a communications perspective can contribute to the understanding of humor as it functions within organizations by examining the longitudinal effect of humor. The fourth section presents a direction for this research project and future research in organization communications, including the expansion on the sociological humor model.

Psychological Humor Theory: Why Do We Use Humor?

Jokes and humor, in general, play an important part in determining who we are and how we think of ourselves, and as a result how we interact with others. A sense of humor has been an essential part of humankind and society throughout the ages. Humor cannot be bracketed or seen as a unitary expression or function; this review maintains the same assertion of Chapman and Foot (1976) that the humor theory literature is not able to provide a "general theory." Yet, existing theories are still invaluable for framing our understanding of humor's use and effect on and within societal and personal dialogue.

Three competing theories explain why individuals are motivated to use humor: superiority, relief, and incongruity. This tripartite classification has been widely used in

several literature reviews. Unfortunately, it can be argued that, this “wide use” has the tendency to be a “misuse” that forsakes the complexity provided by the theories without weighing their collective benefits for the interpretation of individual motivations in humor. Feinberg (1978) and Morreall (1983) attempt to debunk these theories entirely and offer their perspectives on humor motivations as alternatives. Another misuse includes unnecessarily expanding these theories. For example Burns and Burns (1975) included the aggressive motivations and Monro (1951) includes the ambivalence motivation of humor, both of which can be considered adjunctive versus separate conceptions.

This chapter suggests that all three theories must be celebrated and that the dismissal of them or unnecessary addition of adjunct motivations confounds the conceptions unnecessarily. The following discussion will detail the three motivations in humor with the goal of integrating them into a more comprehensive framework. Each motivation can be used to understand the text of Woody Allen’s philosophy of life, a joke, “I wouldn’t want to join any club that would have me as a member.”¹

Humor as an Expression of Superiority

A person can be found comical and therefore inferior, if he or she is inadequate according to a set of agreed-upon group or societal criteria. Superiority humor is usually associated with laughing at others’ inadequacies, but can also take the form of self-derision. The aspect of superiority humor is one of the oldest themes in the analysis of humor. Both Plato and Aristotle wrote about humor as a form of mockery or disdain, usually self-directed, which should be kept at a minimum (Janco, 1984).

The conception of humor as an expression of superiority is usually traced to the writings of Thomas Hobbes. Hobbes’ statement on humor published in On Nature has become the primary touchstone of superiority humor. “The passion of laughter is nothing else but sudden glory arising from sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves by comparison with the infirmity of others, or with our own formerly” (As quoted in Berger, 1993, p. 2; Feinberg, 1978, p. 6; Gruner, 1978; pp. 29-30; Morreall, 1983, p.5;).

Hobbes' idea of the sudden glory where humor is at the expense of another had been expanded by Ludovici (1933) and Rapp (1951). Ludovici suggests that the motivation for superiority humor is a form of "superior adaptation," the realization and feeling of pleasure at having adapted better to societal norms than the person being ridiculed. Rapp's imagery and theory is more dramatic. He concludes that superiority humor ties back to the human's primitive self, a form of "trashing laughter" or joy taken in defeating an adversary, a modern adaptation of the "the roar of triumph in an ancient jungle duel" (1951, p. 21).

The superiority motivation of humor, as Rapp (1951) suggests, may take its origins in the hostile gloating of a vanquished foe, but in its modern form is usually analogous to the gentle criticism of a child as they unsuccessfully attempt an adult activity. Gruner (1978) suggests that superiority humor helps to avoid aggression. Feinberg (1978) suggests that it is aggression, but in a nonviolent and socially acceptable fashion.

In principle, humor as an expression of superiority can be either a mechanism of control and/or a form of resistance. This aspect of superiority theory can be seen by examining the Woody Allen joke: "I wouldn't join any club that would have me as a member." The joke is simultaneously using both the control and resistance aspects of superior humor. Allen is controlling another's laughter by allowing others to laugh at him for not being superior (while in effect he can achieve high status through making fun of himself). Conversely the superiority motivation of humor can provide an interpretation of the joke as Allen's response to anti-Semitic clubs with exclusion laws. This explanation of Allen's humor, using superiority humor to appear weak or to create a sense of strength, highlights the complexity of humor in that, even using only one theory the joke still does not provide a simple classification scheme.

Humor as Tension Relief

When a joke or laughter is used to reduce tension or stress, humor can be considered to provide a relief function. A good example can be seen in using humor as a face saving behavior in negotiation and mediation to reduce tension and increase trust

between parties (Goffman, 1955; Rogan & Hammer, 1994; Rubin, 1983; Wimmer, 1994).

The medical profession has utilized relief humor as a means to reduce physical and emotional stress. Laughter is a complex body movement that has been found to ease muscle tension, break spasm-pain cycles, clear ventilation and mucus plugs, and increase oxygen and nutrients into tissues, which helps fight infection (Fry, 1992). Haig (1988) in *The Anatomy of Humor* provides an extended look at humor and how it is applied in modern physiological therapy.

Spencer (1860) is credited with providing the first reference to relief humor when he suggested that laughter was a result of the physical energy which is built up to deal with disagreeable feelings. This nervous energy overflows into nerves supplying the mouth and respiration system, producing laughter (Haig, 1988). Spencer likened the relief effect to opening a safety valve on a steam pipe (Morreall, 1983; Zijderveld, 1983). Darwin (1965) vindicated Spencer's theory and suggested that laughter was similar to primate facial expressions which are used to ease tension.

Spencer's work has had considerable influence on the conception of humor as “relief of tension”, but the primary text in humor relief theory in modern analysis is Freud's (1905/1960) Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious. Freud viewed laughter as a response to jokes and considered it of secondary importance to the jokes themselves. Freud held that jokes were akin to dreams, because they allowed forbidden ideas from the unconscious to surface. Freud also discussed the effects of laughter in less detail as a response to social and comic influences in which he “modifies” Spencer's (1860) notion of nervous emotional discharge in humor with psychological emotional discharge through humor. “We should say that laughter arises if a quota of psychical energy which has earlier been used for the cathexis of particular psychical paths has become unusable, so it can find free discharge” (Freud, 1905/1960, p.180).

According to Freud, relief humor has two properties. First, it has a healing quality, allowing built-up tension and energy to be released: “Anyone who has allowed the truth to slip out in an unguarded moment is in fact glad to be free of the pretense”

(Freud, 1905/1960, p.126). Second, humor is an act of disguised aggression and sanctioned resistance. “The joke then represents a rebellion against that authority, a liberation from its pressure” (p.125).

Woody Allen’s joke can be considered a method of releasing tension. It suggests his anxiety could be reconciled deciding that his goals in life are unreachable. The club that Allen is referring to could be a gentile club into which Allen, as a self professed “paranoid Jew,” could never truly fit. Perhaps the joke is the reverse, however, suggesting that Allen and maybe Freud question their faith because they object to the strong indoctrination into their religion. The joke allows Allen to purge himself of the tensions of being a minority.

Humor as an Interpretation of Incongruity

Jokes and laughter may also stem from the recognition that something is inconsistent with the expected rational nature of the perceived environment. Something can be found to be funny if it is irrational, paradoxical, illogical, incoherent, fallacious and/or inappropriate. As Groucho Marx says, “Humor is reasoning gone mad” (1994, p. 83).

The conception of humor as incongruity does not exclude the superiority or relief motivations of humor, but suggests that laughter is based on intellectual activity rather than a drive to feel superior or to relieve tension. Hence incongruity humor is a psychologically-motivated humor based not on built-up physical need but rather on a psychological desire for consistency within internal frames and external environment. Humor is cognitively-based because it is dependent on the individual’s perception of an event, individual, or symbol in comparison to what is considered typical. If there is a discrepancy, the humorist registers the incongruity between the perceived event and the expected norm to find humor in the relationship.

The origin of humor as an interpretation of incongruity can be found in Kant's definition that “Laughter is an affectation arising from sudden transformation of a strained expectation into nothing” (Kant 1952, p. 223). We expect an answer to the question “How do you know an elephant is in the shower with you?” and our

expectations are strained until the joke provides the answer, “You can smell the peanuts on their breath.” If our expectations are addressed with nonsense, we are left with little response but to laugh. Similarly, Woody Allen, labels his joke his “life’s philosophy”. It prepares us for the incongruity which he provides by stating his desire to only want membership of a club that would not have him as a member. Perhaps more incongruity is derived from the audience’s ability to find insight in this nonsense for themselves.

Plessner (1970) argues that laughing (or crying) is a response to a situation which is so incongruous that we cannot interpret the humor in any other fashion. Plessner’s notions build on those of Henri Bergson (1956) who suggested that humor is found in situations which are not within the realm of usual interpretations: “A situation is invariably comic when it belongs simultaneously to two altogether independent series of events and is capable of being interpreted in two entirely different meanings at the same time” (p. 123).

Bergson’s (1956) essay “Laughter” was a landmark for humor theory because it urged researchers to study humor not only in the social context, but also to consider the individuals who created it. Bergson, on a simple level, calls for a comprehensive view which would combine the psychological, social, and (to some degree) the communicative understanding of humor to be combined. What can be taken from Bergson is that incongruity humor is situationally and relationally driven.

The incongruity conception of humor suggests that humor is a human reaction to ambiguity within their environment. Following Bergson, Douglas (1975) suggests that all humor is a juxtaposition of two unlike things within a situation. However, she expands upon Bergson’s frame to suggest that humor is the way in which we deal with and understand our complex environment. This idea that incongruity humor is a way in which to interpret ambiguity has important implications for understanding the use of humor in social organizations and as a communication phenomenon.

Considerations of the Three Humor Conceptions

A battle has raged in humor literature with different theorists advancing their one conception of humor at the expense of the other two. For example, a theorist proposing

the wisdom of superiority as the leading motivation of humor provides arguments to reject both relief and incongruity as motivations. Consequently this debate has uncovered limitations within each of these camps.

Humor, as an expression of superiority, can be dismissed as a humor theory because all expressions of superiority are not always interpreted as humorous. On the contrary, as in the case of hazing, it can be found to be despicable. This argument can be found in Feinberg's (1978) critique of superiority theory: "The obvious objection to the superiority theory has always been the fact that superiority alone is not funny." Morreall (1988) in his review supports Feinberg's arguments, "Our general conclusion about superiority theory, then, is that it could not serve as a comprehensive theory of laughter, for there are cases of both humorous and non-humorous laughter that do not involve feelings of superiority (Morreall 1983: 14).

Incongruity as a humor theory has been under attack from its inception. According to Morreall (1983), James Beattie, a contemporary of Kant's, was able to immediately recognize the limitations of incongruity. Beattie's argument was twofold. First, what he termed "animal laughter" (such as found in babies) is a response to stimuli rather than cognitive ability (Beattie 1779: 303-305). Second, not all incongruity will produce a humorous response. Feinberg almost two hundred years later reproduced Beattie's arguments suggesting: "An Obvious weakness of the incongruity theory is its failure to account for the numerous instances of disharmony which do not cause laughter. It is only certain kinds of incongruity that result in humor; other kinds cause fear, shock, or disgust" (1978: 3).

Conceiving humor and laughter as tension relief, can also be considered a failed attempt at providing an all encompassing humor theory when examined under the same argument employed against superiority and incongruity theory. It cannot provide a universal explanation of humor. For example, not all humor or what we laugh at is a release of tension and not all releases of tension are humorous. However, relief theory has been criticized (Feinberg 1978, Gruner 1978, Haig 1988, Morreall 1983) from the different perspective that its grounding assumptions are faulty. Spencer's (1860) theory

of humor as a release of surplus energy and Freud's (1960) theory of the discharge of psychic energy is not consistent with modern knowledge of the nervous system; therefore, the relief theory is obsolete.

This section briefly surveyed humor theory and how it has developed, as well as, providing the critique of the three main existing humor themes. The Woody Allen joke was used as an example of how each perspective can offer insights into the nature of humor, suggesting that each perspective yields valid and beneficial insights into understanding humor. However, it also demonstrates that none of the theories of humor hold the absolute answer or correct interpretation as to why the joke is funny. Each psychological theory provides a partial understanding but none can be said to be complete without integrating the contributions of each. Figure 1 illustrates how the three interpretations overlap with each other and fit within humor.

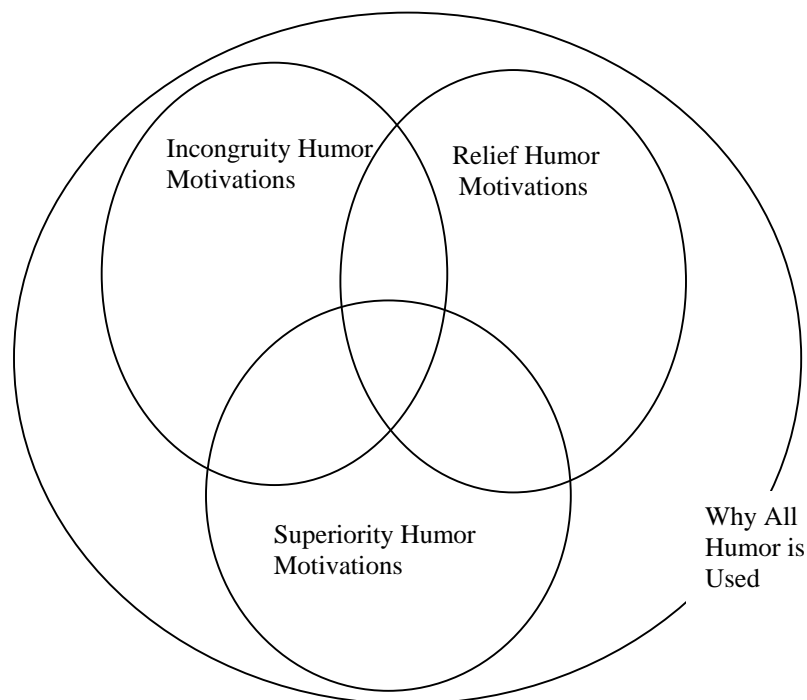


FIGURE 1
Humor as Overlapping Motivational Theories

As Figure 1 illustrates, none of the conceptions of humor offer a full and complete interpretation as to why a joke is funny or the motivation behind humor use. Only all three conceptions taken together can provide an understanding of why humor is used.

Communicating Humor: Humor as a Message

This chapter claims that focusing on the communication process of humor can provide a medium between the psychological motivations for humor use and the sociological case studies of humor. A unifying theme that distinguishes communication humor studies focuses on understanding humor as a communication process. Humor is a message sent by an individual or group with psychological motivations, but this humor message is also dependent on the interpretation by another individual or group which takes into account the social context and functional role of humor within that context.

Communication studies of humor focus on different parts of this communication process and as a result the communication research can be split into two major groups: (a) the rhetorical studies and (b) the examinations of social functions of messages. Both groups are sensitive to the message and the context, but place principal focus in one of these areas. Rhetorical studies focus on the text of the humor message, where as studies of the social role of humor focus on the context in which messages are delivered and the subsequent role the message has within that context

Rhetorical Studies of Humor

Rhetorical scholars are not concerned with why people laugh, but rather how humor can be used to motivate audiences to interpret and view a rhetorical situation or opponent in a certain way. This focus by is supported in an interview by Chapel (1978) with the head of Gerald Ford's presidential speechwriting team Robert Orben (also an accomplished comedy writer). Orben stated "I have never sat with a group of professional comedy writers or comedians . . . and had a discussion or even thought for five minutes of thinking why people laugh" (Chapel, 1978, p. 46).

Rhetorical studies of humor have chiefly examined humor's use as a strategy to increase persuasiveness. Dahlberg (1945) examines the witticism (defined as wit laughs at you, humor laughs with you) of Abe Lincoln used this "formidable weapon" to reduce opponents to buffoons. Another such gifted President at using humor to this end was Ronald Reagan whose humor was described as a "velvet weapon" by Meyer (1990). Volpe searches back even further to Cicero's use of humorous rhetoric to "command over the psychological needs of his audience" (1977, p. 311). Gruner's work (1965, 1967) suggests witty humor (wit is humor with a purpose) can be used to enhance a speaker's ethos where as clownish humor reduces ethos. These rhetorical studies of humor illustrate a sensitivity to the motivations behind humor's use and the importance of the audience's interpretation of that message.

The role of the audience's interpretation in creating humor's meaning is seen in rhetorical studies illustrating how humor did not produce desired results. For example Levasseur and Dean (1996) suggest that Dole's scathing wit in the 1976 Vice-Presidential debate, although considered humorous based on Grimes (1955) incongruity theory, was unsuccessful as a persuasive tactic because it required the unwilling audience to relinquish their "reality frame" and view the debate through a "play frame."

Though rhetorical studies tend to focus on the text of a humorous message and how it was designed to achieve a purpose, the studies also remain sensitive to the context in which the message was delivered. Rhetorical studies of humor can provide the bridge for humor researchers studying individual motivational humor begin to conceptualizing humor as a process.

Communication Research on the Social Function of Humor

Both communication and sociological research are concerned with how humor functions within a social context. However, sociological research focuses on the broad functions of humor, such as identification, differentiation, control, and resistance whereas communication humor research focuses more closely on specific types of humor producing communicative functions (to tease, release boredom, gain attraction, to persuade) in a smaller social context². Goodchilds (1959) conducted research on small

groups and discovered that if a person used clownish humor they were high in popularity but low in influence, while the opposite was true of the use of wit in the same group. The importance of the social context is seen in Goodchilds and Smith (1964), who found the same results in small temporary groups; however in permanent groups wit had no effect on influence (1963).

O'Donnell-Trujillo and Adams (1983) studied the social function of humor from a communication perspective, including the function laughter has in conversation. Their study suggests that laughter functions to coordinate everyday talk. They focused on the initial interaction of strangers and found that laughter played a significant role in activities such as turn-taking, inviting elaboration, instructing hearers, displaying hearership, and affiliation (1983, p. 191). Humor seems to be a key part of not only initial interaction but also dealing with new situations and adjusting to a new group or position in a workplace (Vinton, 1989). In this sense the humor process is a method for all parties to negotiate an understanding of their relationships and environment.

Booth-Butterfield and Booth-Butterfield (1991) suggest that individuals have predispositions to humorous behaviors they can enact in social contexts. Likewise, humor seems to be a key part of entertaining and promoting friendships (Civikly, 1986). However, Graham Papa and Brooks (1992) suggest humor is far more important than increasing likeability or making friends. They examine the relationship between humor and interpersonal competence and found an overall positive relationship. The better a person can use and interpret humor the more competent they are in social situations.

Humor is also used in situations of high stress. Civikly (1986) observes that humor is used to disclose difficult information. Humor helps ease tensions, allows for unmentionable topics to be discussed, and allows people to relax (Smith & Powell, 1988). Civikly (1986) also notes that humor can also be used for the opposite effect. Humor does not always reduce or ease tension and can instead be used to increase anxiety.

Communication studies of the humor function illustrate the complex role it plays in our daily conversations. The ability to use and recognize humor is not trivial but can

explain success in-group or social situations. These studies illustrate how communication research expands upon the motivation of superiority, relief, and incongruity resolution by illustrating the result of these motives as they are enacted in conversation.

This section has illustrated the different perspective that communication literature provides to the sociological and psychological understanding of humor. It illustrates how social functions stem from individual motivations for humor and how these motivations are enacted in everyday humor messages. Communication has benefited from providing a message driven research of interpersonal humor, as well as societal level humor as seen in rhetorical studies.

Sociological View of Humor: Applied Studies of How Humor Functions

The theme that resonates most strongly in these case studies is the dualistic nature of humor in social context. This is called the paradox of humor: as humor functions to create one aspect in the organizational culture, it is assumed to simultaneously create its opposite. The sociological studies in a limited way do incorporate the motivational theories of humor as superiority, incongruity, and relief.

The first major case study which examined the social function of humor in an observed culture was Radcliffe-Brown's (1952) chapter, *On Joking Relationships in Structure and Function in Primitive Society*. Radcliffe-Brown notes the duality of humor's use in African tribes, "The joking relationship is a peculiar combination of friendliness and antagonism . . . There is a pretense of hostility and real friendliness . . . the relationship seems to be one of permitted disrespect"(1952, p. 91). He argued that anthropologists should "make a wide comparative study of all those types of social relationships in which two persons are required to use speech behavior which in other relationships would be grievously offensive" (1952, p. 105). The case studies that follow have taken up Radcliffe-Brown's challenge.

Early humor case studies (Bradney, 1957, 1958; Coser, L., 1956; Coser, R. 1959, 1960; Radcliffe-Brown, 1952; Roy, 1958; Sykes, 1966) expanded the psychological

motivational understanding of humor to the social setting. This expansion of the classic conceptions still has heavy influences on recent humor case studies. For example, Collinson (1988, 1992, 1994) suggests humor functions as superiority and therefore influence's power relations in organizations. Mulkay (1988) suggests humor functions within incongruity and provides impetus for humor in context: "humor that occurs in formal structures is closely linked to their inherent contradictions" (p. 176). Weller and Zorn (1997) observed the use of humor to relieve tension in medical school students as they confront cadavers. Weller and Zorn's interpretation that humor acts in a relief function is consistent with a majority of case studies which observed humor's use in highly stressful situations.

To understand the complex role that humor performs in social contexts, social scientists have blended the three schools of thought on motivational humor into sociological dualism. Hence, the combination of these functions is important when taking into consideration the paradoxical role of humor in social settings. Incongruity as a motivational basis of humor forms the basis of recognizing humor as a method of understanding and seeing duality or the paradox of humor. Superiority as a motivation of humor forms the foundation of understanding how humor is used to identify and/or differentiate others as well as to control and/or resist others. Lastly, the relief motivation of humor has a heavy influence on the overall effect that control and/or resistance humor is believed to have within organizational structures. As a result sociological studies on humor are in almost complete consensus that humor in organizations serves the following dualistic functions: (a) *identification, and/or differentiation* and (b) *control and/or resistance*.

Identification and/or Differentiation Humor

Identification humor (also termed in-group bias, development of idioculture, esoteric) occurs when humor creates an internal perception which increases an in-group cohesiveness and validates commonly held perceptions. Simultaneously, this humor excludes individuals or groups who do not have the knowledge of the in-group's reference or structure; hence, the humor also has a differentiation (also termed division,

out group, exoteric) function. Differentiation humor can extend and express preexisting boundaries of divergence in social groups such as gender, nationality, race, religion, or occupational position. The identification and differentiation functions of humor have been observed in many case studies (Cantor, 1976; Chapman & Gadfield, 1976; Fine, 1976, 1979; Goldstein, 1976; La Fave & Mannell, 1976; Meyer, 1997, 1998; Oldani, 1988; Ullian, 1976; Zillmann & Stocking, 1976). At some level these studies highlight the implications that humor can be used as an expression of--and/or establish the power structure of--a culture. For example, all prejudice humor could be considered power laden. To understand identification and/or differentiation humor and its role within a culture and that culture's existing power structure, examining the following two case studies by Oldani (1988) and Meyer (1997).

Oldani's (1988) article presents a content analysis of Catholic clergy jokes using Jansen's (1959) theory of esoteric and exoteric effects of folklore.

Here, in this one new text ["does a bear s**t in the woods"], the whole esoteric-exoteric theory seems to be operating fully. The out-group can ask the question because of their long-held belief that the Catholics have an irrational bond to the absolute, pronouncements of a man Esoterically, the Catholics believe this is what the out-group thinks they believe and do, but in reality, may not . . . For the esoteric quality of the text can function to suggest that, indeed, the Pope is not infallible in all matters. Is this not an acceptable form of aggression, a proper safety valve, a permitting of what is not permissible? (Oldani 1988, pp. 81-82).

Meyer's (1997) *Humor in Member Narrative* explores how narratives reveal humor in a childcare setting. Meyer concludes that humor acts as a "uniting" or "dividing" mechanism which has an important control function.

Narratives told with humor were unique in that they clearly drew lines between accepted or inclusive behavior and undesirable or exterior behavior. In doing so, they stressed the normality of the unacceptable, or not part of the culture . . . they served to unify cultural members around a shared value and expectation of behavior. On the other hand, stories that stress the unusual, incongruous element which sparked humor suggested that "this behavior is unacceptable in our culture; it deserves ridicule and possible sanctions" (Meyer, 1997, p. 200).

Both Meyer (1997) and Oldani (1988) are good examples demonstrating the creation of identification and differentiation through humor. Meyer's study of humor was in a small

organization of twenty staff, Oldani's focused on the larger societal level, but both still concluded that identification and differentiation were humor's major effects. The in-group/out-group effect which was observed in these cases can be illuminated by considering the influence of superiority, incongruity, and relief theories for the motivations of humor use. This demonstrates that all three theories of humor establish a better understanding of humor.

Superiority theory would suggest that the in-group uses humor to separate themselves from the out-group and in this separation gain exclusive membership (a sense of superiority). Incongruity theory provides another reason for in-group humor: to establish a values set or ideology which can be interpreted and enforce in an incoherent environment. The "Pope joke" recounted by Oldani suggests a permanent state of contradiction. This contradiction creates tension for Catholics. Oldani suggests the "Pope joke" ultimately functions as relief by reducing this tension.

Control and/or Resistance Humor

It's a funny thing, humor, as we can see in the incongruity or contradiction of the above examples. Meyer (1997) suggests the identification/differentiation role of humor acts as control, while Oldani (1988) suggests it acts as resistance by releasing tension. Humor is often understood to be both control and resistance simultaneously, which could account for the discrepancy between the analysis conclusions of Meyer (1997) and Oldani (1988). As sociologists have begun to study humor's social significance they have turned considerable attention to the power related functions of humor. Humor case studies as a whole suggest humor acts as both control and resistance (Boland & Hoffman, 1986; Bradney, 1957, 1958; Chapman & Foot, 1976; Collinson, 1988, 1992, 1994; Coser, 1959, 1960; Davis, 1988; Dundes & Hauschild, 1988; Holdaway, 1988; Levine, 1976; Linstead, 1985; McGhee, 1976; Mulkay, 1988; Oldani, 1988; Powell, 1988; Powell & Paton, 1988; Radcliffe-Brown, 1952; Roy, 1958; Sletta et al., 1995; Sykes, 1966). It is important to note that every case study which observed control and/or resistance functions for humor also observed identification and differentiation functions.

Humor's informal nature suggests it can be used as control by the in-group for establishing collective norms by pointing out and laughing at deviates.

Holdaway (1988) presents a good example of humor as control and resistance in a case study of English police force humor in the article "Blue Joke: Humour in Police Work." Holdaway provides examples of policemen making fun (also using a cartoon) of a racist and brutal officer with a swastika on his forehead as well as an inspector who had arrived late at a crime scene. Holdaway concludes that this resistance aspect of humor works as a relief function for the police to release their tension from a stressful job. "The shift of constables, sergeants, and inspectors gathered together for a chat and a laugh are literally sustaining police work itself" (Holdaway, 1988, p. 121).

Holdaway's conclusion that humor act as a release of tension that maintains the status quo is not unusual. Resistance humor acting as a safety valve for tension is featured in many case studies. (Benton, 1988; Boland & Hoffman, 1986; Bradney, 1957, 1958; Collinson, 1988, 1992, 1994; Coser, 1959, 1960; Davis, 1988; Holdaway, 1988; Linstead, 1985; Powell, 1988; Radcliffe-Brown, 1952; Roy, 1958; Sykes, 1966). This type of resistance humor is akin to blowing off steam and exhibits what can be called *safety valve resistance*. The case studies that interpret all resistance humor as safety valve resistance are heavily influenced by Freud's (1905/60) relief motivation of humor. Table 1 illustrates a sampling of case studies that conclude resistance humor ultimately functions as control.

TABLE 1
Resistance as Safety Valve

Author & Citation	Resistance as Relief Humor Acting as “Safety Valve” Hostility and Tension
Benton, 1988 p, 54.	“The political joke will change nothing. It is the relentless enemy of greed, injustice, cruelty and oppression- but it could never do without them. It is not a form of active resistance”
Collinson, 1988 p, 185.	“Having a laff allowed men to resist their mundane circumstances providing the illusion of separation from an otherwise alienating situation”
Coser, 1960 p, 95	“Humor can...overcome the contradictions and ambiguities inherent in complex social structures, and thereby contribute to its maintenance” (1960, p. 95).
Powell, 1988 p, 103.	“In terms of such ‘resistance’ perhaps it could be argued that humor might have ‘consciousness raising’ potential in terms of social integration and division, but perhaps ultimately it is ‘resigned’ expression and ‘cheerful’ demonstration of the subordinate’s very weakness.”
Zijderveld, 1983 p, 42	“Humor and laughter in particular fail to function as truly revolutionary forces in society. On the contrary, a humorist who was out to destroy dominant values and traditional meanings of his society would be like a small child who destroys its toys”

Model of Humor in Context

This process of safety valve resistance functioning as control can be considered the *humor process* within a social context or a model of sociological humor. Figure 2 illustrates the general model of humor employed in these case studies and presents a summary view of the relationships between concepts in the case study literature. The concepts in the model are arranged so that as one moves from top to bottom one follows a logical order sequence. However, this is not meant to reflect a temporal order.

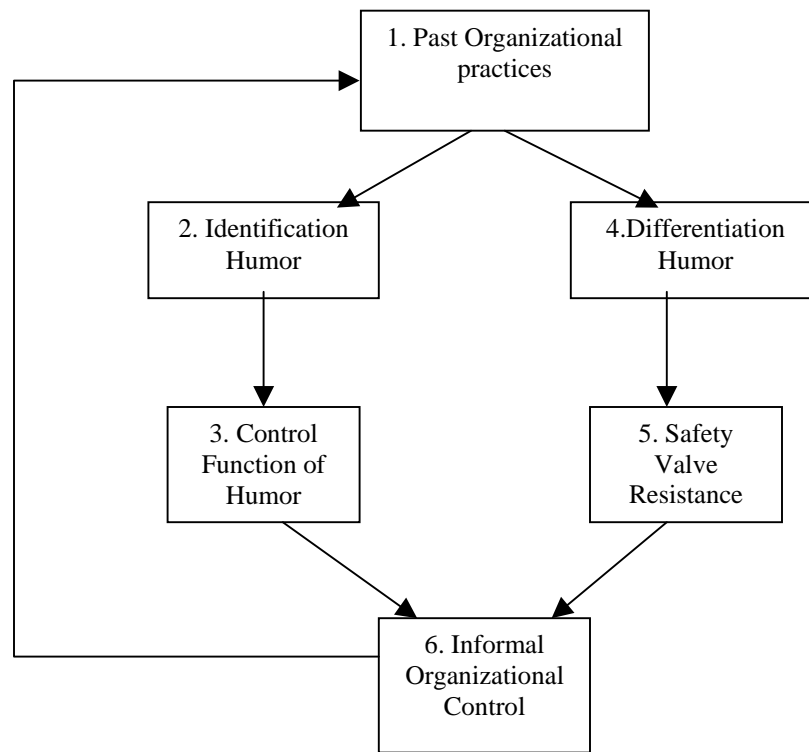


FIGURE 2
Sociological Model of the Function of
Humor in an Organization

Figure 2 illustrates an organizational humor model encompassing the humor functions detailed in previous case studies and their relationships. The following numbered paragraphs correspond to the numbers on the model. They will explain each part of the model and how they relate to each other as a whole.

1) Past organizational practices: The individual reacts to the current conditions based on his/her knowledge of the organization's past practices and structures, pressures, and incongruities. The past practices of the workplace influence the practices and social space which form the basis for work culture. Work culture influences the individual's perception and interaction within the work environment.

2) Identification: Identification represents the degree to which an individual believes that they fit into their role within the organization's structures and culture. Identification humor refers to the use of humor by employees to identify with the organization, to convey the belief that they are "workers", and to show they are production-orientated to the organization's goals.

3) Control function of humor: The control consequence of identification humor emerges when the group's humor is influenced by identification with organizational work structures and culture.

4) Differentiation: Differentiation reflects the belief that the individual feels at odds with the organization's work culture and their role in the organizational structure. Differentiation humor uses humor to illustrate distance and difference from the organization culture. Therefore, in differentiation humor the workers identify with each other through humor and unify in differentiation against their organizational production role.

5) Safety valve resistance humor: The resistance consequence of differentiation humor occurs when the group's identity clashes with organizational structure and work culture. However, it is assumed humor cannot function as true resistance. By using safety valve resistance humor workers are resisting without threatening or changing the status quo. Resistance humor is thus control humor disguised as resistance (both 4 and 5 have the same result as informal organizational control).

6) Informal organizational control: Informal organizational control is any form of humor that upholds the social structure and production goals of the organization. It is the outcome of both the control and safety valve resistance function of humor.

This process continuously repeats itself, as seen in the arrow, that returns to the organizational culture. This model represents the humor process as it functioned in the majority of case studies on organizational culture. As this humor process is cyclical, it can be entered at any point to reveal the entire process.

Directions for This Research Project

The organizational humor model illustrated in Figure 2 is based on the conclusion seen in many sociological case studies that humor ultimately functions as control. This reduction of the dualistic nature of humor to a single function is inconsistent with the overall motivational and socially contextual understanding of humor as a paradox. This inconsistency suggests that there may be a breach between our theoretical understanding of humor and the ability to observe and apply this branch of humor theory in context.

The question must be asked: Why have sociological case studies of humor in context reported very little or no true resistance? The answer does not seem to be that they are unable to study the dualistic nature of humor. Researchers have been able to observe this dualistic humor in context regarding the superiority function of humor. An example can be found in Collinson's (1988) observation of a machine floor where the men used nicknames such as "Fat Rat, Basterd Jack, and Big Lemon" (p. 185). Collinson notes that these humorous names give the men a sense of superiority, "these cultural identities contribute to shop floor cohesion by developing a sense of masculinity. For only real men would be able to laugh at themselves by accepting highly insulting nicknames" (p. 185). Collinson (1985, 1992) also noted, however, that with such nicknames and other masculine humor, the workers are unable to move up hierarchically beyond the machine shop. Therefore, crude superiority based humorous nicknames maintain their inferiority.

Many other case study observations (like Collinson's) also record a similar dualistic nature of humor. This dualistic nature is not limited to superiority but is also found in incongruity, relief, identification, and differentiation. Hatch and Sanford (1993) argue that humor stems from incongruity and functions to reveal and interpret organizational paradoxes, while simultaneously creating them. Roy (1958) suggests that workers use humor to relieve themselves of "the beast of monotony;" however, the humor becomes a routine itself. Though researchers have been able to recognize the dualistic nature of humor in context the question remains: Why have case studies of

humor in context reported very little or no true resistance? There are two possible answers: First, these case studies are not researched and interpreted from a communication framework. Second, the previous case studies have been concerned with placing humor within a larger hegemonic power structure.

A communication emphasis versus a functional emphasis should examine a humor as a message unfolds overtime, rather than attempting to form a generalized interpretation of humor. A communication perspective of humor could be used to interpret each humor expression as it occurs within a social setting. Close attention to the psychological motivations of the humorist, the text of the humor, the audience reaction, as well as the timeframe and the social environment the humor is delivered in, will increase the sensitivity of examining humor in social contexts. This would be especially useful in examining ritualistic humor over time. Roy's (1958) study of a textile factory is a good example of this type of ritual humor that becomes cyclical. Roy provides a detailed account of the general everyday repetitive humor rituals and concludes that humor functions to break up monotony and release tension. His analysis might have benefited from a communication perspective that could interpret slight variations of the ritualistic humor messages, and additionally catalogue these changes and shifts over time. The longitudinal focus of the everyday humor expression could indicate how these humor rituals, over time, indirectly cause the monotonous work conditions to be recognized as such and the organizational culture changed. As a result humor studies using the communication perspective is able to interpret and monitor humorous expressions and functions over time, for changes both in the humor use itself and how this humor has possibly changed the organizational culture.

Understanding humor research within the larger context of power research explains why humor case studies place such high importance on humor as an expression of the hegemonic power structure. As a result, when it comes to interpreting the function of humor within the power structure of an organization, it is reduced from its dualistic function to only a control function. Gramsci (1985) argued that hegemony has a dialectical nature of both control and resistance simultaneously. However, hegemony has come to be understood in critical research to indicate only one side of this dialectic relationship, control. Mumby (1997) draws our field's attention to this problem in critical research (and in particular to the critical work of organizational communication). Therefore the call for an understanding of humor as a dualistic function of both control and resistance enters into the debate at a crucial time when we the field itself is reevaluating the dialectical nature of both control and resistance. As all humor is assumed (like the modern critical use of hegemony) to maintain the status quo, as a result resistance humor functions to release tension but is ultimately relegated to control.

Contrary to this common interpretation of humor as control, the paradox of humor is the simultaneous expression of control and resistance. Hence, the control and resistance paradox of humor can be thought of as a dialectical tension, with each at opposite poles. Therefore dialectical tension of control and resistance in humor can be illustrated as:

Control-----Resistance

A humor episode or joke can be placed along this continuum according to the expression and the audience reaction within a social setting. A humorous episode or joke may be neither wholly control nor wholly resistance, but rather is interpreted through the degrees of control and resistance present in the expression. If a joke is interpreted as having a high degree of control, it may still maintain resistance but in a lesser degree. Using a dialectical frame in this way, future researchers can recognize the dialectical expression of humor as a simultaneous expression of both control and resistance.

With this goal in mind a new model that expands Figure 2 can be drawn to illustrate how organizational humor can be enhanced by remaining sensitive to the dialectical nature of the humor process. This new expanded model was not just gleaned from a conceptual gap in the literature. It is a simplified version of a model developed to evaluate and understand the kitchen humor (Lynch 1999, 2002b) and its' function within the organization.

This new model (Figure 3), like Figure 2, arranges the concepts so that as one moves from top to bottom one follows a logical order sequence. The dashed lines connect identification and differentiation humor as well as control and resistance humor. These dashed lines represent a continuum and help the model maintain sensitivity to the dialectic nature of the paradoxes of humor. An additional dialectical relationship represented in Figure 3 is the dialectical relationship of stability and change. This is dialectical because an organization is constantly maintaining its structures and changing them simultaneously. Arrows from each end of these continuums indicate a humor expression that is primarily of one side but not absolutely. Time (past and present) is also represented in the model to include the longitudinal understanding of the humor process.

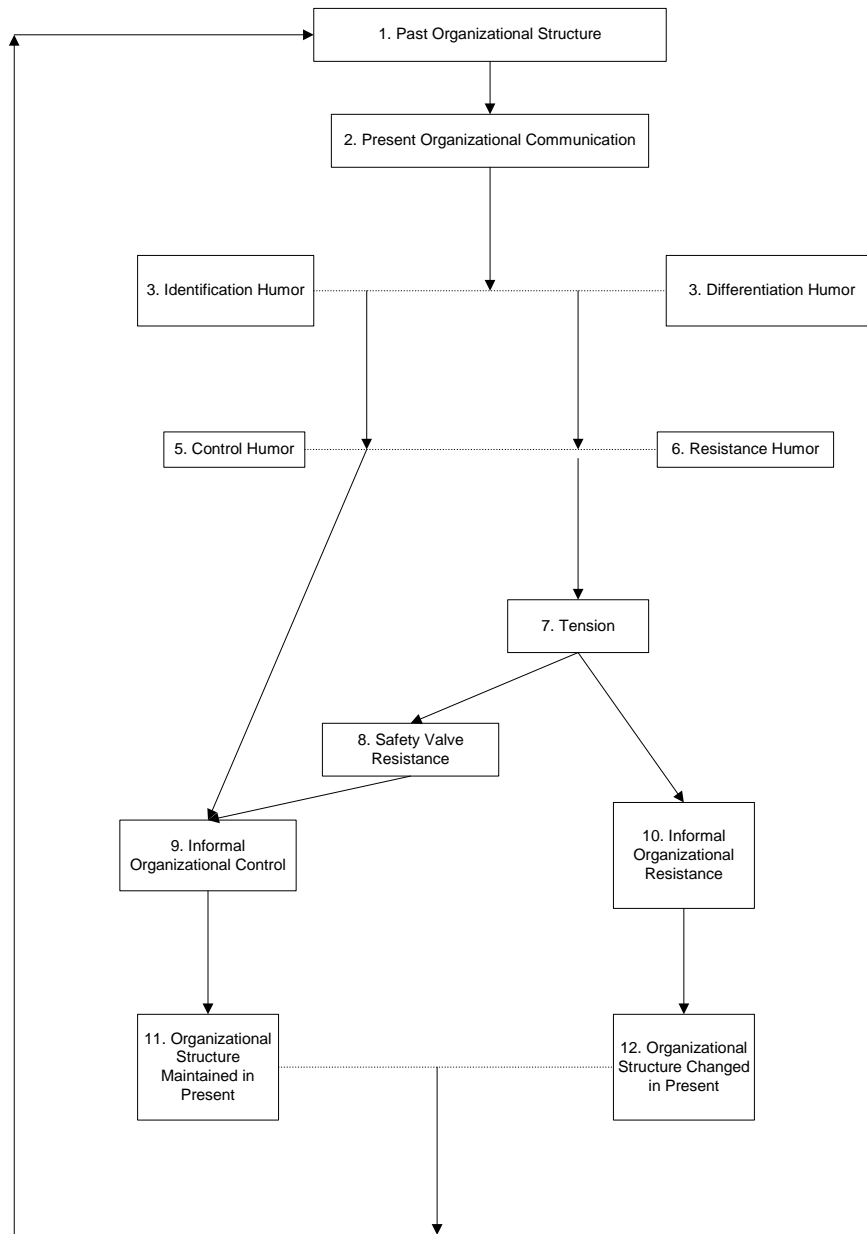


FIGURE 3
Humor as an Organizational Process

This humor model in Figure 3 attempts to integrate the two major directions for research identified in this section: how humor functions in an organization over time and remaining sensitive to the dialectical nature of the humor process.

The following numbered sentences review the process represented in figure 3. In every organization there are established organization structures (1) that create new organizational communication (2) daily. An important type of communication is humor, and this type of communication can be placed along the continuum of identification (3) and differentiation (4). Identification and differentiation humor is a central understanding of humor from sociological studies and every case study that observes the control and/or resistance functions for humor also observed identification and differentiation functions. Identification and differentiation have also been clearly linked in this chapter to psychological motivations from humor's use (superiority, incongruity and relief) and provide space to consider these three accepted inspirations for humor use.

Humor that primarily identifies with work structures acts as control humor (5). Humor that differentiates from organizational structures is primarily resistance humor (6). This resistance creates tension (7) but the humor can relieve this tension by creating a safety valve to blow off steam (8). This safety valve functions as an informal mechanism of control (9). This has the same effect as control humor (5), also functioning as an informal control (9). Informal organizational control provides support for past organizational structures, and therefore structure is maintained in the present (11). The resistance humor (6) and building of tension (7) can also act as real informal resistance to organization structures (10) forcing change of the present organizational structure (12). The organizational structure is constantly balancing between maintaining forces and changing forces. This process becomes the organization's structure of the past and is reacted to and the cycle repeats.

This model of humor as an organizational process between communication and structure borrows heavily from Giddens' theory of Structuration (1979, 1984). Understanding humor as part of the Structuration process (rather than as control and resistance) allows for the complexity of humor to be acknowledge and helps avoid the

tendency of other case studies (Figure 3) where you see the simplification of viewing all humor as ultimately resulting in control. Humor as part of the Structuration process acknowledges that it becomes an important part of the duality of action and structure. The same critique that Clegg (1989) and Conrad (1993) apply to Structuration research can also be applied to humor research in that the researcher is over-influenced by his/her predisposition of viewing power as either volunteeristic or deterministic. This critique of power and Structuration theory is discussed further in Chapter V. Humor researchers should maintain a frame of humor as both control and resistance but within the application of research they end up viewing all humor as ultimately functioning as control. Hence, the over focus on one outcome of the power positions by humor theorists (just as a Structuration theorist) impedes the explanation of the process of how agent's create/transform structure through humor.

Humor must be studied from its broad conception as a paradox. This project focuses on the expression of humor within two separate case study contexts as dialectical. It attempts to pay particular attention to the longitudinal effects of dialectical humor. This project therefore attempts to expand humor studies by providing a communication analysis of humor in social context. Past humor research has focused on the function of organizational humor as determined by structure or an example of how individuals volunteer to structural constraints. The process of humor as Structuration escapes the humor researcher (as it does most Structuration research). The challenge for humor research is to simultaneously reconcile both of these power positions as well as incorporate space for resistance. This reconciliation requires a procedural approach that can uphold the complexity needed to grasp the simultaneous nature of humor as an expression of the deterministic and volunteerism function of power. In addition this approach must also present means to acknowledge as that the organizational structure in and of itself is determined by the humor. These Structuration concerns for humor based organizational research will be examined further in the following chapter.

This project attempts to expand humor studies by providing a communication based analysis of humor in social context. Organizations and the people within them are

currently faced with a world moving at an unprecedented rate both technologically and ideologically. The incongruity of workplace and society must be constantly reinterpreted. Humor will be an important part of the communicative process that constructs new shared meaning out of this ambiguity (Hatch & Standford, 1993; Linstead, 1985; Lynch 1998, Mulkay, 1988). The nature of humor as a communicative phenomenon and the promise that a communication perspective can bring to humor research is the impetus for this study. I hope that this project forms an impetus for the field of organizational communication to pay more attention to humor in the workplace. As humor is ubiquitous, the field of communication is submerged in the realm in which the humor lives and breathes. Perhaps Stuart Hall's frame for cultural studies should be adopted for the communication field. People should be taken out of the water of human discourse to see the humor, because it would be impossible for the humor to be taken out of the discourse.

Chapter II Notes

¹ Woody Allen began his masterpiece comedy *Annie Hall*(1977), which parodies his life, by stating his philosophy of life, which naturally takes the form of a joke: “The important joke for me is usually attributed to Groucho Marx, but I think that it first appeared in Freud’s *Wit and Its Relation to the Unconscious* and I am paraphrasing: “I would want to join any club that would have me as a member.”” As it is not clear who first told this joke (and Allen gets the title of Freud’s book wrong) this chapter will reference the joke under Woody Allen.

²Based on this distinction between communication and sociological research of the social function of humor it is argued that Meyer’s work (1997, 1998) and particularly his *Humor as Double-Edge Sword* (2000) fits within the sociological field. Meyer focuses on broad social functions of humor as a unifier and divider (identification and differentiation).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Dissecting a joke is a complicated operation, one in which the patient usually dies. (Berger, 1976, p. 113).

“Understanding the form and the pressure of ...inner lives is more like grasping a proverb, catching an allusion, seeing a joke...than it is like achieving communion” (Geertz, 1983, p.70)

The previous chapter has argued for the idea which Berger’s quotation reflects: That humor is undefinable and thus if the ‘dissection’ involved in research is to be successful the complex communicative nature of humor must be fully respected. Humor is dependent upon the speaker as much as the audience. Humor is contextual and cannot be defined independent of its social context. This sets three methodological challenges in the study of humor:

- 1) To study humor and to attempt to understand it is a difficult process because the researcher has to be part of the group which experienced the joke, prank, or episode as funny. In order to ascertain how humor is really used in this environment, the researcher must become part of the process that he/she observes.
- 2) The researcher must not only be part of the group, but also a member of the group that consubstantiates the phenomenon as humorous. The researcher must be part of the group and experience to understand the physiological motivations for humor use within the group and context. In order to understand why humor is considered humorous the researcher must become part of the context in which it was formed, part of the interaction process that created and/or interpreted the humor as funny.

- 3) Only when the researcher is able to consubstantiate the humor can he/she attempt to interpret its significance within the workplace. The research must be designed to cater to this important property. In order to understand the function of humor in the workplace the research must be part of the workplace.

These three methodological challenges led to the failed qualitative study of the advertisement company (street furniture) discussed in Chapter I. However, my experience of the failed street furniture study solidified the importance humor plays within a group and the importance of being part of the group when studying humor. The research approach that developed over the course of this research project was strongly influenced by this requirement. When studying humor, it was clear that the researcher must gain full participation and as a result runs the risk of being accused of sacrificing “objectivity” for full participation. I did not view this as a sacrifice but as a strength of the case study experiences. However, due to the risks involved in becoming too close to my subject and the biases introduced by my active participation in humorous episodes, a rigorous research program was designed to authenticate the experience as natural and true to the kitchen and the school as possible.

This chapter will outline theoretical and methodological reasons why multiple ethnographies were conducted. It will also describe the methods used within the two case studies of the kitchen and the school to ensure a high standard of authenticity in the documented experiences. Two methods of inquiry were used, ethnographic observation and qualitative interviews. The ethnographic experience was used to gain in-depth knowledge of the social environment and the humor within it, in effect becoming part of the working and joking culture. The qualitative interviews were used to support and check the ethnographic observations. Analytical schemes were created to interpret these humorous episodes, which developed over the course of this research project. These will be highlighted in the subsequent chapter.

This chapter outlines the methods explored in this research in a systematic fashion. As with most qualitative research, the theory and methodology were developed in response to the needs of the study and uniqueness of case. Each section of this chapter builds on the previous section.

- The first section, Research Philosophy, places my Kantian-based view of reality within the landscape of qualitative research.
- The second section, Why Two Case Studies?, explains why multiple case studies are used from a methodological perspective. It explains the basis for and theoretical complications in using two case studies.
- The third section, Guiding Ethical Principles for Ethnographic Research, covers the philosophical foundation for the ethical use of qualitative methodology.
- The fourth section, Authenticity of Case Study Observation, provides a description of the steps taken to ensure the authenticity of my observations and the process in which humor episodes were selected. This section will also cover my role as a participant and observer, and a methodological account of how observations were recorded for each site.
- The fifth section, Interview Theory and Practice, explains how and why interviews are conducted to supplement the observations as well as to ensure accurate and reliable interview documentation.
- The sixth and final sections provide a description of the settings for the case studies: a professional hotel kitchen (titled for this project “The Oaks”) and a middle school of a boarding and day Prep school (titled for this project “The

Prep”). This section will also highlight the broad areas of difference between these two organizational environments.

Research Philosophy

I have stressed the importance of being part of a culture to understand its humor. I referred to this as the ability to “consubstantiate the humor with the group.” It is important to stress that to consubstantiate group humor does not mean that every one in the group interprets the humor in the exact same way but rather that every one in the group forms part of the humor’s creation and contributes to why it is funny. There is a general sense in which the interpretation of the humor is common enough for the episode or joke to be collectively interpreted as funny and result in laughter. In this sense, the quotation from Geertz above makes an important point in that it stresses the role of the ethnographer. The ethnographer should not seek the impossible goal of full communion, but rather to be part of the group to fully “see the joke” (and, I would argue, co-create it) and to appreciate the role of humor in the inner lives of the workers and its place in the organization.

I used Geertz’s (1973, 1983) advice on the goal of ethnographer voice to remain modest in my work and respect the uniqueness of fellow members in the case study environment. The researcher must be a humble but not self-effacing participant and observer. I recognize that as a researcher my own perspective will introduce some bias in the way the culture is interpreted. Hence, the authenticity (I do not use the word validity) of my accounts lies not in my objectivism (my removal from my subjects) or on my ability to deduct generalization, or in the ability to reproduce the accounts, but in the realization that my writings are interpretations once removed. They are the interpretations of my original experience of the events. Recognizing this limitation in my interpretations strengthens my conviction that the description of the culture and my participation within the culture is as sincere as possible.

As I stated in Chapter I, I am most comfortable in the intersections between positions. I also appreciate the historical position Geertz was caught in between the

rigorous qualitative research of Glaser and Strauss' grounded theory (1967) and the naturalistic paradigm of Guba and Lincoln (1985). I was attracted to the grounded theory with its goal of generalization, but wish to soften the rigorous requirements so as to not overstate the generalizability of case study research.

To soften the generalizations of grounded theories, or to look for alternatives to generalization, I turn to the idea of working hypothesis by Cronbach (1975). The use of a working hypothesis in place of the goal of generalization is highlighted in Guba and Lincoln's *Naturalist Inquiry* (1985). This is the idea that generalizations are constructs of the mind not found in experience and hence should not be the standard by which the project should be judged. The case studies and experiences are used to look for a unique aspect, individualized in all contexts and cultures, not generalizations. Hence the generalizations are working hypotheses--starting blocks, not the end goal.

It could be argued that I stray from the naturalistic paradigm in the ontological, and epistemological foundation of phenomena (how the noumenon helps shape the phenomena) and as a result my research goals are somewhat different (this point of digression stems largely from the Kantian frame). I do not hold that all realities are uniquely constructed by the individual, nor do I believe that the social construction of reality is uniquely personal. I do believe that there are multiple constructed realities, but that there are also universal forms used to construct these realities. As a result I do not hold that knower (or the constructors) and the known (or the reality) are inseparable. I believe that there are some widespread categories of sense making that can be distilled out of any experience. These categories should be recognized, as they form the location to connect different experiences. It also allows me as a researcher to recognize and focus on the uniqueness of the constructed reality of the experience and culture.

Art appreciation can be used as a useful metaphor to explain my position. I paint, and when I use oils I realize the strengths and the limitations of the medium. It is this familiarity with the medium that allows me to marvel at the difference and the uniqueness of the use of oil in a Rembrandt or a Van Gogh painting. It is the knowledge of the medium that allows me to truly recognize the artistic genius in bending the

material nature of the medium to his/her will. Even though the technique varies greatly I can find similarities of form. Before these similarities are generalized to be the “form” of all oil paintings, I need to realize that this creates a working hypothesis that may shape the view of other works of art.

In the same way, I believe that modern art can be studied under the working hypothesis of form. Modern art attempts to break the limitations of the medium or stretch it beyond its a priori structure. It relies on the negation of form for it to be recognized as art. Pollock is art because his work is the negation of art, proving that there is (or was) a generalized structure to the form of art. I can accomplish this by recognizing that even Pollock is not able to escape the similarities of his medium (oil paint) to that of Botticelli or the most primitive of cave paints (made from body fluids and fat). I believe that it is recognition of the similarities of the medium and the brilliance within the variation of its application/ interpretation that leads to better understanding.

My research has two goals. The first is to explore the uniqueness of each case to use generalizations as a starting point versus an ending point and as a result provide questions not answers. The second goal is to look for commonalities or categories of sense making that provide starting points through rigorous observation that can be used to examine other experiences. In both of these pursuits I do not seek validity or predictability, but authenticity and understanding.

Why Two Case Studies?

After a one-year ethnography in a hotel kitchen, interviews and several checks to ensure as authentic as possible an interpretation of the kitchen culture, I formulated a theory of humor’s role in the kitchen. I was forced to answer the “so what” question. So what did this theory tell me? Did it explain the role of humor in any organization or just the kitchen? In other words, what do I do with a theory of how humor functions in a kitchen organization?

To answer these questions I needed to find a methodological process of taking the theory of humor developed in one location and examining how it made sense within other organizational contexts. This process is not intended to be used for verification of the original theory but to deepen my understanding of humor's role in organizing and making sense of the workplace. I believe that this goal is still consistent with my philosophical understanding and method of inquiry. My inquiry did not proceed in the sense of reproducing the first case study and verifying it, but rather by making broad inferences based on patterns found in the first case study. Hence, the generalizations to be tested were replaced with a working hypothesis to be reworked in a new environment. My goal was to describe the uniqueness in other cultures while at the same time finding some broad categories of sense making (found in different organizations) that are used to form an organization's unique type of humor. Beyond humor as an interaction, a more general objective was to use Structuration Theory as a meta-theory frame or working hypothesis to understand the relationship between organizational interaction and structure.

Once I felt the use of another case study was appropriate, I was still stuck in a Heraclitean dilemma, knowing that I can never step into the same organization twice. I could change the organization of study but I could not fully change myself. My past humor theories (and meta-theoretical frame) would inevitably influence the way I interpreted and co-created humor in any organization. Hence I could never have the same "free" ethnographic experience again that I had in the kitchen, which I worked in before I thought of doing any study at all. I term this type of unfree ethnography *bounded ethnography* as it is bound to the theory or case study that preceded it. This bounded limitation would always be present. I had to remain conscious to the possible effect that it had on my description of another organization. Attempts to control out the limitation as if it was an extraneous variable are not only epistemologically inconsistent and but they also would only heighten the effect of limiting my participant experience.

In social science research, as an inductive process, it is natural to unconsciously exaggerate in your conclusion making or to over-generalize. That is why it is important

to be aware of this tendency and attempt to limit it. Retroduction is a process in which one tries to avoid the limitations of deductive and inductive thinking. It is a process of recognizing the dangers of over-generalizing which unconsciously happens in inductive qualitative research. To avoid this overgeneralization the retroduction process requires one to return to the observation. To avoid overconcretization within the deductive process of qualitative research the retroductive process requires focusing on the research goals of the study. This explains why I turned to another case study, the middle school, to reduce the tendency to over-generalize my findings from the first case study. I call this bounded ethnography. I hope to reveal how organizational members use humor to maintain and create their organization. This focus on the goal of my research will help me stay focused on why and how the everyday experiences can be tied to my theory.

I accepted and remained aware of my research influences, both my own research history and my meta-theory, conducted a bounded ethnography. I decided to record humor over three years but not attempt to systematically or formally analyze this humor until the end of the experience. The goal was to free the study as much as possible (to unbound it), but also to use the humor theory developed in the kitchen case study as a working hypothesis to gain a better understanding of humor's role in the new organization. My goal was to have a synthesis, the ability to have a bounded ethnography to expand the hypothesis formed in the first unbounded ethnography project.

After starting the school case study, I had a serendipitous moment where, I discovered by accident in a used bookstore the book entitled *Ethnography Unbound* (1991) by Burawoy. I found this book fascinating, not because of its conclusions but because of its research question: can ethnography be used to improve theory by turning anomalies into exemplars? Since it was asking the same question as my research, I was surprised (and a little anxious) that this book did not have a bigger impact in the qualitative field. I felt that the Burawoy's research question warranted a larger ripple than it had made. I also found it ironic that he termed a theory-framed ethnography to be unbound when I considered it to be bound to theory.

Central to Burawoy's calling ethnography unbound was his wish to provide an alternative to grounded theory and its binding tenets. Burawoy argues that grounded theory approaches the study of phenomena from a perspective that desires generality. He wishes to replace grounded theory with rigorous ethnography that seeks the uniqueness of the case versus affirmation of a generalized theory. Burawoy wishes to avoid the tendency in ethnography where uniqueness of the site itself becomes the only focus and purpose for the research.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) wisely council that using the literature or theory first can have a contaminating effect on the research process. To counter this effect this Burawoy suggests researchers start “with our own conjectures to highlight what is surprising, but there does come a time when we turn to some existing literature with the goal of improving it. We experiment with a number of different theories. . . Over time, if we are successful, we will hone in on one particular theory” (Burawoy, 1991, p.11). In the study the case experience is used to rethink and show the process of Structuration Theory in context.

Burawoy edits the collection of ten short ethnographies used to “improve” Habermas’ idea of colonization of the lifeworld by the system. All the studies examine how power and resistance “play themselves out in a social situation that are invaded by economic and political system[s]” (Burawoy, 1991, p.1). In all of the case studies presented in Burawoy’s book, the authors actively shift between different theories to find literature that best fits the unique case studies observations (and the Habermas meta-theory frame). As a result all ten case studies fully maintain the assumption of the critical paradigm as suggested by the meta-theory of Habermas’ colonization of the lifeworld. In this sense Burawoy's case studies become disappointing to me, because they seemed to center more on finding qualitative evidence to expand or undergird the meta-theory rather than using them to question or rework the assumptions of the critical paradigm and/or Habermas’ notion of colonization of the lifeworld.

This is strange, as Burawoy’s goal was to replace grounded theory with rigorous ethnography that seeks the uniqueness of the case. This seems inconsistent when the

meta-theory or critical paradigm level is verified through research, while the purpose of the observation is consistent with Popper's call for falsifiability over verification. Popper's *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (1959) and *Conjectures and Refutations* (1963) argue that the goal of science should be falsification of bold conjectures, not the verification of probable inductive postulates. In this sense Burawoy argues for ethnographic methods to be applied as well as or instead of traditional positivistic methods to falsify conjectures and therefore expand theory; however, he does not falsify or expand his paradigm assumptions .

This epistemological mixture in Burawoy's *Unbounded Ethnography* is consistent with his other research. I find his theoretical questions and assumptions are excellent, yet I find his qualitative research too conveniently tidy. I hold that natural inquiry, unlike positivist inquiry, should be untidy. Ultimately Burawoy's *Unbounded Ethnography* suggests that a researcher can maintain sensitive to the case study as well as maintain the observational theory's goal while at the same time uphold his criticalist paradigm. In this way Burawoy's unbounded ethnography reflects the type of research conducted in his heralded text *Manufacturing Consent: Changes in the Labor Process under Monopoly Capitalism*. (1979). Burawoy writes the book to provide qualitative evidence to explain how the shop floor workers' relationship to the work creates their collective worker identity.

As a result, the limitations of the *Manufacturing Consent* study illustrate the problems of using Burawoy's call for using ethnography to "improve" or provide case examples of theory in practice. First and foremost, I believe that to satisfy the demand of the theory Burawoy stretches his analysis too far beyond his experience as he attempts to illustrate the generalizability of the case to the external market (chapter 8 of *Manufacturing Consent*) and the ability for a production relationship to explain workers identity and experience despite individual differences across workers (chapter 9 of *Manufacturing Consent*). As a result, chapter 9 of *Manufacturing Consent* is the weakest section of the book where Burawoy discusses how black workers' experience work based solely on his observation of them. He never interviews them, or attempts to

reach their perspective. He recognizes that they have complaints to the union and that their concerns are not represented by the all white union. However, he dismisses their experience as not important when it comes to the “relationship to production.” He also dismisses women altogether from his study because there are only two on the floor. He felt that this number was too few to draw conclusions and perhaps he is right from the scientific perspective. However, he does not make an attempt to identify any of their concerns. Kanter in *Men & Women of the Corporation* (1993) argues the feminization of the production task has a huge effect on the workers’ relationship to their task and personal identity.

The fault of Burawoy’s *Manufacturing Consent* is that he divorces the social life and personal identity of the worker. He never discusses how the two overlap or the role of communication between workers in creating the culture of consent and “making out.” When he mentions communication phenomenon, it is the only time in the book that he switches to a functionalist frame (For example see Burawoy’s conclusions on race humor in chapter 9 where he posits that humor functions to pacify outside racial tension and help workers’ complete tasks). In fact the only time he uses quotes and personal narratives (from anyone but himself) is from Roy’s work and not his own notes. This suggests that he never even took notes of the dialogues or conversations; begging the question of thoroughness in ethnographic research for this book.

Marx suggests that workers’ consent as a rational choice is created by their relationship with production and this is exactly what Burawoy found and experienced. How much of Burawoy’s experience is consent to the tenets of Marx’s theory or was really part of the factory workshop? I believe that this question illustrates the overextension of Burawoy’s conclusions.

This section has spent considerable time critiquing Burawoy’s work for several reasons. First, I wish to distinguish my own work from Burawoy’s philosophic platform. I also believe that I have benefited from what I consider Burawoy’s inconsistencies and formed a clearer objective and method of study. I started with the same question as Burawoy, but was aware of what I see as the pitfalls of his work. I

wanted to expand upon my first ethnography to improve my theory by turning anomalies into exemplars, providing an alternative to grounded theory's goal of generality.

To achieve these goals I believe that it is important to stay focused on the natural and untidy process of qualitative research; realizing that a second case study is bound to the experiences and the conjectures of the first study (the kitchen study). I am attempting to expand upon my first theory while remaining true to the natural inquiry process. I am therefore not attempting a grounded rigorous search for generality, but rather I use the first study's theory as a working hypothesis to expand upon and refine further. I do this by using experience to form broad inferences based on patterns found in the Kitchen case study and the school case study. With the realization that these broad inferences may not be compatible or that categories of sense making employed in humor construction and understanding are not accessible based on these two unique workplaces; my goal is to avoid the pitfalls of taking my experience at the school and forcing them into a process of positivist verification. I cannot search for a niche to falsify my first case (the kitchen) experiences, or even dull my second case study (the school) experiences and description to fit a generalized idea.

Guiding Ethical Principles for Ethnography Research

This section is called ethical principles of ethnographic research, but could easily be titled "Ethical Foundations of My Use of Qualitative Methods." The foundation of my ethical system and subsequent use of qualitative methods is deeply interwoven with my Kantian epistemological and ontological understanding. As a result, I do not see the ethical issue to be a standard to ensure ethical research procedures, but that my ethical principles form the basis for the type of research I conduct and write.

Clifford Christians in *Handbook for Qualitative Research* (2000) traces the ethical principles governing qualitative research back to political system and philosophical positions which bore the formation of social science discipline. His focus on the historical formation of the liberal arts' goals and ideals makes a strong case for an ethical system in which to study human beings today.

The writings of John Stewart Mills *On Liberty* (1859/1978) and Rousseau's *Social Contract* (1762/1962) call for the respect of the natural purity and equality of humanity. Mills and Rousseau also championed the importance of individual autonomy and self-rule. Every individual is capable, more capable than the state, of forming an ethical system to govern self-behavior. As a result, the liberty and the respect for individual rights becomes the cornerstone of their ethical system and call for a just society.

The basic assumption governing research on human beings is to extend the liberal philosophy to people being studied: to offer them respect, autonomy, and liberty. This is why Mills' ethical principle of Utilitarianism provides the basis for much of human research as Mills calls for neutrality of the study of humans out of concern for the autonomy of the individual. As a result, individuals should choose to participate in a study (such as with informed consent); deceptions should be limited; and, privacy should be respected. These core principles are the basis of the institutional review board criteria. Each one of these guidelines is followed in this research. No deception is used. All interviews or private conversations are also not in the report unless consented to by the individual. All names have been changed. My students in the middle school are not discussed directly in this report. Though they could provide wonderful experiences, any direct observations and participations with students in private or public is not in this work out of respect to the privacy of the students. As young adolescents, I do not believe that they have the individual authority to consent to the use of their comments in this study, and so they are not included.

An important component to my ethical research is not required by the IRB board or found in Mill's philosophy of Utilitarianism. I rely on Kant for a foundation to my research both in theory and ethical conduct. Kant's ethical principles form an important check to the utilitarian research and as a result guide the research that I conduct as well as the experiences that I record in this project.

Before I discuss directly utilitarian ethics and research, I feel it important to discuss the reason I use ethnography (studying by experiences) versus observation (or

controlled manipulation of) people. My belief in ethnography stems from Kant's dismissal of external but not internal teleological goals and relationships found in *Critique of Judgment* (1790/1957). Artifacts or physical forms in nature can be understood in the context of blind cause and effect; however, anything with an internal force (all life) embodies a self-organizing purpose. This self-organization principal or internal purpose is reciprocal. Life's internal purpose is to be effected by nature by positioning itself in nature to be effected by it. According to Kant, we understand experience because we order the sensation of the outer world, in the same way the being orders the experienced effect and cause of the outside world. Kant stresses that cause and effect are not empirical but a necessary condition of experience.

Bertrand Russell (1972) argues that the entire premise of Kant's most famous work, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, is to argue that it is a fallacy to apply categories of understanding (time and space, cause and effect) that are not experienced. To reduce human actions as blindly caused by external factors is to reduce the full purposefulness of being. Research is ethically bound to search for reciprocal relationships between cause and effect as it is experienced. Observed cause (viewed only as independent of) and effect (viewed only as a dependent) in much of social science is at best limited and has been argued to be fallacious and unethical, as it denies the full internal purpose and experience of the individual.

In addition to my focus and respect for the internal purpose and important principal governing my research method, is Kant's ethical maxim, the categorical imperative. The categorical imperative is outlined in Kant's *Metaphysics of Morals* (1785/1964). Kant stresses that all actions must stem from duty, the necessity of acting out of reverence for moral law. This moral law is set out by the categorical imperative and can be considered in direct opposition to utilitarianism. Utilitarianism stresses the right action is one that furthers a greater degree of happiness than the alternative. As a result the morality is determined by the end or consequence versus the action. The categorical imperative in contrast stresses that one must only act on that maxim that could at the same time become universal law. Outcomes are either beyond

comprehension or post hoc justification and therefore cannot form the basis for ethical conduct. As a result intent or outcomes are not relevant, only that your actions themselves would become universal law.

In this way the categorical imperative forms respect for all people in that one should always act to treat humanity (yourself and others) always as an end. As a result any research that does not benefit the persons (not subjects) being researched during the study should not be conducted. Any research that mistreats, deceives or uses the persons being studied as a means is unethical. This is why I advocate research methods that benefit the group during the research process. It is my sincere hope that the ends also benefit the group but this cannot form justification for the study. This study is based on your experience not taking the experiences of others. I am in a sense cross checking meanings that they are willing to cross check, but my observations are my own experiences, rather than data taken from subjects.

Authenticity of Case Study Observation

This section does not provide a description of my case studies as the cases were already discussed in Chapter I. This section focuses on methodological concerns governing my ethnographic experiences and research. This section provides a discussion of my role as a participant and observer, a methodological account of how observations were recorded for each site.

Many of the kitchen and middle school humor episodes discussed in this project shifted from unique one-time humorous events or timely jokes to become incorporated in organizational/group humorous narratives within each of these cultures. Many of the humor episodes moved beyond their temporal context and were retold several times (slightly changing and growing every time) over the duration of my observation. I call these episodes dramatic episodes, as they are for organizational members distinctive and memorable. They form part of the script to understand and shape the everyday. The humor of the kitchen focuses more on these dramatic humorous episodes, whereas humor episodes of the middle school are more based on everyday processes within the

middle school. The jokes are not always less dramatic, but represent examples of the process of mundane humor. This shift has partly to do with different methods of gathering experience as well as the meta-theoretical frame I bring to the study. In the kitchen I was examining humor's use from a control and resistance perspective (similar to humor case study literature); hence, my episode selection or recall tended to focus on more dramatic shifts of power. While in the middle school, I attempted to use humor to understand the complex nature of organizational processes and change, which required a deeper focus on the mundane.

I use only episodes that I witnessed or participated in (unless the humor episode stems from an interview and the account is a personal tale of how the interviewee was part of the humorous episode). Many of the episodes I was part of were also discussed in reported interviews. The interviews were done during the last year of the ethnography. This retelling remains true of the kitchen interviews, which were conducted a year after the observation period. This further supported the importance that the dramatic humor episode had within the culture when the chefs themselves brought up the same episodes that I recorded as humorous. The references to specific episodes were less dramatic in the middle school interviews, partly because the episodes themselves were focused on everyday processes of workplace humor.

The retelling of dramatic humorous episodes in interviews allowed me to check myself for distortion as much as possible. Each episode also fulfilled the criteria for humorous idioculture that Fine describes in his article "Humor Group Culture" (Fine, 1983: 170).

- (a) For a remark to become part of an idioculture its content must be comprehensible to the group. While the remark need not have been heard in that form, it must, after the fact, make sense. A joke about a subject of which an audience is totally unaware will not provoke a smile, unless the subject matter is fully explained within the joke.

- (b) The remark must be usable in the group context--not taboo or otherwise offensive. Dropping one's trousers might, in some circumstances, be wildly amusing, but in others it might be shocking or sexually arousing.
- (c) The humorous remark must also be appropriate in light of the friendship and power relations in the group (as discussed above). Humor typically supports the status hierarchy of the group.
- (d) The humorous remark must be "triggered".

Satisfying Fine's criteria ensures that the episodes are part of the group culture and not read into it by the researcher. Only those episodes that were judged to have fulfilled Fine's criteria were used in this project.

In the middle school study the most important limitation or criteria I placed on myself; in regards to the study, was that I did not use any stories or observation that involved the students. No student is mentioned directly and no observation of student behavior is made within the entirety of the report. Though much of our humor revolved around the kids and The Prep had an environment where teachers would openly joke with their students, I felt it inappropriate to use these observations. Though I have left a major part of my research material out I felt it was the only ethical thing to do.

Interview Theory and Practice

It is our Primary reaction to evaluate what others may say from our point of view or our own frame of reference (Rogers 1961: 331).

The previous section outlined the research procedure used to reconstruct the episodes as close to the actual occurrence of as possible. In order to achieve a better understanding, interviews were also conducted. These interviews were used to gather additional information to help me understand the episodes and the case study better.

Humor is relationally and contextually bound and it cannot be elicited from a respondent by questioning. Interviews about humor cannot be conducted in the manner defined by Maccoby and Maccoby as an “interactional exchange, in which, one person, the interviewer, attempts to elicit information or expression of opinions or beliefs from another person or persons” (1954: 499). Humor can only be experienced by the researcher who must become part of that experience to understand it. The interviewer must establish a relationship with the respondent that empowers the respondent to actively use humor and to state his/her understanding humor with minimal influence from the interviewer.

The nature of humor places constraints on the type of interview that can be used. The interview method used in this project is built on the foundation of active interviewing (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995) with a reflective frame in which the interview process, not the interviewer, becomes a mirror for the interviewee. In this manner, the interview method provides the environment for the interviewer and interviewee to establish shared control of the interviewing process with as little influence from the interviewer as possible.

This interview procedure detailed in this report was designed to interview the kitchen staff in the first case study cited in *Kitchen Antics* (Lynch 1998) and was used in the Middle School Case Study. This text should be referenced for a detailed rationale why a qualitative method of interview methods is better suited for humor research. The 1998 case study *Kitchen Antics* also outlines how Holstein and Gubrium’s (1995) theory of active interviewing was adapted for this case study. It explores reflective interviewing, drawing on the Rogerian interviewing method, as it was incorporated into the active interview to decrease the level of influence of the interviewer.

Case Studies

A Sociologist without a sense of humor will never be able to understand the workings of the social world, for humor separates its seemingly seamless joints, making them visible (Davis 1979, p. 109).

This section will provide a description of the settings for the case studies: a professional hotel kitchen (titled for this project, The Oaks) and a middle school of a boarding and day Prep school (titled for this project The Prep). This section will also highlight the broad areas of difference between these two organizational environments. The Oaks case study focused on humor episodes directly and the case study of the kitchen was first experienced, then written about a year later. This first case study was conducted as a stand-alone study and was the basis of my master's thesis project on humor and organizations, *Kitchen Antics: Humor in Organizations* (Lynch 1998). The kitchen case study experiences were accessed through a selection of humor episodes that happened over the course of the year and a half that I worked in the kitchen. I worked and experienced the kitchen as a full participating member of the organization.

In contrast, the experience of The Prep was intended from the beginning to be a case study. Though over the course of working in the middle school for more than three years, I became a full member of the organizational culture, I was also conscious of my ethnographic purpose. One of the advantages that this participant observation approach afforded was the ability to focus on long-term culture Structuration (change and maintenance of the middle school organization via the interaction of everyday action and organizational structure). The following description of the middle school also provides a narrative of the changes over the three years of study. As a result not only was I able to observe the everyday humor episodes of the middle school I was also able over time to understand their significance with the long-term "doing" of middle school organization or organizing.

Case Description of a Large Hotel Kitchen

The Hotel (which will be called The Inn) was built in 1924 and, with only 184 rooms, is primarily a banquet and conference center. For some time the Inn was regarded as one of the best facilities in the Southeast for elegant weddings and balls. However, due to poor management and maintenance the hotel unfortunately lost charm and quality ratings. In 1994 a corporation (which will be called “Oaks”) bought the rights to manage The Inn. The Oaks conducted a fifteen million-dollar renovation program.

An important part of this renovation process was to regain the quality and reputation of the past restaurant and banquet kitchen. The corporation brought in a ‘master chef’ (who will be called Chef) whose job was to start and build up high-class kitchens. The kitchen produced three million dollars in sales in Chef’s first year. The restaurant and banquet (large scale catered events up to 1500 people for seated dinner) received a four-diamond classification by AAA, its second-highest rating. This has placed the Inn within the highest echelon of restaurants in the region.

The kitchen had a large staff composed of ten dishwashers, ten chefs, five cooks, two sous chefs and one executive chef. Sous chefs are second in command under the executive chef in the kitchen and their primary responsibility is to ensure the quality of food produced in the kitchen. Table 2 provides the roles for each position in the kitchen. Due to the demands of starting a kitchen and trying to rebuild the Inn’s reputation, the culture of the kitchen was fast-paced and stressful.

TABLE 2
Roles of Kitchen Members

Position	#	Informal title in Kitchen	Role in Kitchen
Executive Chef	1	Chef	In charge of food production and quality. A strange blend of artist and businessman. Outside the official hierarchy of the hotel but the most influential person in the kitchen. The Oaks set the official policy, but he set the standards. In charge of making sure the food looked and tasted to his standard. It was his name that went out with every plate.
Sous Chefs	2	Barry and Patrick	One of them was always in the kitchen. Barry would work 8am-5pm on a slow day and Patrick would work from 2pm-11pm. Took on role of both workers (chefs) and managers who had the duty of ensuring things went out on time and looked good. They would put kitchen cooks and trainees and sometimes chefs to work and assign jobs in an informal manner. They were viewed as fellow chefs with responsibilities by chefs and managers by rest of kitchen.
Chefs	10	John, Sam, Robert, Ryan, Jen, Sanders, Mikey, David, Ranger, Mike, Don and Me	The people in the kitchen who cooked all restaurant food were viewed as skilled professionals by the kitchen culture but as workers by other hotel management and members.
Cooks or trainees	5	Billy, Sandra, Mitchell, Cake boy, Shellie	Not overly experienced or educated in school, sous chefs told these staff members what to work on. They were not expected to be skilled. When they were not doing prep work, the chefs took considerable time teaching them how to cook specific things.
Dishwasher or Stewards	10	Vatos	This staff role was usually filled by Mexican workers with limited English. A large community worked in all the restaurants in town and tended to work in shifts. For example, one would work for a month and then a friend would come in his uniform and work the next month. They all knew each other and were very tight. Never once did someone not turn up for a shift. They were the hardest workers in the kitchen.

The chefs were experienced and several had attended culinary school and were brought into the kitchen from as far away as Ireland. This case study is based on the humorous interaction among the chefs and cooks, who will be referred to by pseudonyms. The dishwashers' humorous interaction would be impossible for me to discuss or analyze, because I do not speak Spanish. Moreover, this part of the work

force was not stable. The dishwashers were not part of the organizational culture and were considered transient workers by the staff.

The official goal in the kitchen was to achieve excellence as signified by four-diamond status. As a result, kitchen work received much attention from hotel management in addition to kitchen management. It is important to realize that the chefs regarded “Chef” as the true kitchen leader. The kitchen carried the Chef’s name and the standard was part of the Chef’s expression. This leadership had very little to do with official corporation hierarchy, and Chef won the respect of his subordinates through his skill. While The Inn and The Oaks held that all management had jurisdiction over every department, the kitchen staff primarily regarded the Chef as their real leader. I use the word leader rather than manager because the Chef was considered a mentor more than a manager.

Case Description of The Prep

The private school (which shall be called The Prep), founded over fifty years ago, has a mix of boarding and day students. It sits on a four hundred acre site within an affluent suburb of a southwestern town. The Prep is considered a premier college preparatory school for its geographical region, and well-regarded nationally. The Prep is a private school with a motto that is designed around developing the entire student spiritually, academically and as an athlete. The academics are highly regarded with students and this is seen through The Prep’s use of a non-traditional grade point average that does not translate to the typical A to F scale. This non-traditional scale does not hinder the placement of The Prep’s students in elite universities around the nation.

A large part of this academic environment stems from the close relationship between teachers and students. The classrooms are small, with an average student to teacher ratio of six to one. Teachers are expected to be involved in extra-curricular activities with students outside the classroom. Every teacher is also an advisor to a small group of students. Thirty percent of teachers live on campus and are involved in the boarding community. Boarding staff are never “off duty”. The teachers are expected to be available for students and parents, providing home phone numbers to facilitate ease of

contact. In my experience I received two to three calls a week from students (mostly regarding homework) and twice a month from parents. Parent calls typically lasted thirty minutes to an hour.

The Prep was one of the first boarding schools in the nation to be coed and was also one of the first interracial private prep schools (the first that offered boarding). The school has had a long history of integration and attempts to attract a diverse student body. The school was founded with the progressive mission of extending preparatory education and boarding life to all. The Prep's mission was extremely controversial when founded, and bucked the trend of private schools, particularly in the south, being formed as a response to the desegregation of public schools. It is this controversial origin that partly explains the lack of endowment enjoyed by other such high-ranking religious private preparatory schools. This early mission for diversity both economically and racially is still reflected in the school's commitment to financial aid, where currently more than fifteen percent of the budget is devoted to financial aid. Community service is also promoted as part of the schools' culture.

The Prep is split into two schools, the middle and the upper school. The middle school teaches sixth grade to eighth grade with students ranging in age from eleven to fourteen. The upper school teaches from ninth to twelve grade with student ages ranging from fourteen to eighteen. Due to this large age range and complications that can stem from it, the interaction between middle and upper schools is minimal. The middle school students are separated from the upper school students as much as possible. The middle school has two hundred students and is contained within a separate building (which shall be called Bunn Hall) on campus. The upper school has four hundred and fifty students and their facilities cover the entire campus, in this way resembling a college more than a typical high-school. Due to this physical separation and the age related demands of middle school students, adult supervision is required at all times. The middle school teachers are to a large degree separated from the upper school culture. The physical isolation and design of the middle school contributed to the culture and more importantly the "space" for teachers to talk freely.

My teaching position in the middle school was course director and teacher of an 8th grade history course (four sections of 18 kids). My additional faculty responsibilities included faculty Head of student government, student advisor to 6-8 students a year, eighth grade team member (teacher group who met weekly to discuss all issues of eighth grade ranging from students grades, emotions and health). I also co-organized and chaperoned 8th grade trips and events. In addition to these responsibilities, all middle school teachers proctored two study halls a week, monitored a lunch table with three students from each of the three middle school grades. After school duty consisted of proctoring detention (D hall) and providing teacher presence in the building from 3:30-5:30 pm.

Administratively the middle school was run as an independent division of the upper school. It is difficult to discuss and illustrate the structure of the administration hierarchy). For example, it was clear that the middle school fell under the jurisdiction of the board and the Head of school; however, the board had little contact or face to face interactions with teachers. The board was ceremonially headed by the bishop, who though officially in charge chose to take a more passive role limited to ratifying board decisions. The remaining members of the board are ten parents of past and current students with expertise in varying fields and typically a large degree of personal wealth. Ironically, though the board had a large degree of power at the school, teachers had little knowledge of board activities or even membership. An informal “experiment” at a middle school faculty meeting revealed that not one teacher, nor the teachers collectively, were able to name all the members of the board. In the years I was part of The Prep, the administrative structure dramatically changed. Each year the administration grew. This had been an informal trend for at least ten years where the administrator was paid for 12 months versus 9 months in a year. As a result, making someone an administrator was a tool used to justify pay increases. A large pay increase had to be justified by the board, to avoid this, the Headmaster would give a person of his choosing (a practice that led to deep frustration and humor) a raise and then switch them to an administration role (after the contract was approved by board). This would take

the salary rate paid for 9 months and continue paying the rate for the additional 3 months to reach a total raise. For example a person making \$30,000 over 9 months would get base raise of 5% and make a new 9 months salary of \$31,500. On the first day of the new contract this salary would convert into the 12 months rate ($31,500 + 3 \times 3,500$), therefore the real salary would be \$42,000. This practice continued until my second year, when a long ignored budget crisis started a downsizing effort (discussed in the next section).

The administrative structure was at best vague and at worst incoherent. No one was clear where administrative responsibilities began and ended. This led to significant tensions while allowing the teachers a high degree of flexibility. As far as the middle school teachers were concerned, they had little formal hierarchy. There was a middle management level of Deans, for example Dean of Male Athletics, Female Athletics, Counseling, Students, etc. However, this structure was for the students without direct relevance in terms of authority over the teachers. As a result the organization had a relatively flat hierarchy. The Headmaster was responsible for running the school, overseeing the board and the budget. The Head of the Middle School, Jane, was called the mother of the “middle” school by the Headmaster and referred to as “queen” by the middle school teachers. As the informal title suggests, Jane was viewed as a matriarch of the middle school. She oversaw and was ultimately responsible for every part of the middle school. The joke would be that as a middle school teacher you could have the Headmaster mad at you but if you “pissed Jane off you were toast”.

Academically the Head of the department was responsible for the curriculum and academic concerns in the classroom. The level of the Head of department’s authority within the classroom and curriculum varied based on the individual and the subject. As course director of an independent course, a course that had no high school graduation requirements, I was given 100% control of my curriculum. My Head of department represented very little formal control but existed more as a resource whom I could ask for assistance as needed. However the degree of formal control over the classroom varied greatly. For example in the Spanish department the Head of department had to

approve weekly lesson plans, determine class structure, and the course distribution on the final exam.

Organizational Change at The Prep During the Tenure of Study

During the three year ethnography at The Prep, I was fortunate to experience an unplanned change at the school. The Headmaster of ten years was asked to leave by the board at the end of my first year. This was followed by a transition year when the old master, now looking for a job, still served as Head of the school. The third year brought a new Headmaster and a period of rapid change. A short account of each of these years and the administration changes is provided. Included in this case study history is a discussion of the financial situation of the school because the organizational management change and economic situation of the school were highly intertwined.

Year one, my first year, saw the beginning and completion of a seven month long financial report performed by a consultant group (called the “Klein Report”) which was instigated as a heuristic device to study future growth opportunities. Ironically, this consulting firm was brought in by Tony the Headmaster and would ultimately lead to the request for his resignation. The Headmaster did not intend to reveal the economic crisis hidden in the books. This “scandal” fueled many humorous episodes (detail in Chapter VI over the end of my first year and beginning of the second) while the organizational members’ communication and understanding of the organizational reality changed. Though the report was hardly read and the results were never fully shared, the basic message of financial instability of The Prep was experienced by all. The way the report was internalized and experienced in the organizational culture went far beyond the report itself and formed the catalyst process of organizational change.

As a member of The Prep fallout from the Klein’ report was dreadful, but as a researcher I was fortunate to be part of the organization’s painful process of reconciliation that the report engendered. This process was not unique to The Prep, but fit the zeitgeist and economy of its time. The report came in a time of national awareness of an economy that had over extended and over valued the stock market. The culture of The Prep reflected the economic climate of the country and was in sync with the tales of

unwise-exuberance of the 90's economy and corporate excess. To make this connection even more heartfelt by the members' of The Prep was that the community (and a large part of its clientele) was a center for high tech industry and therefore extremely hard hit by the technology collapse.

My first year experiences were not wholly concerned with the Klein' report and the unplanned change that led to the forced resignation of the Headmaster. Another significant event within the school was a resulting process of a failed planned change. Upon request of the board a new position; Head of the upper school, a similar role to that of Jane (Head of Middle school) was created. This position was created partly due to the ambiguity of the leadership of the upper school, with the deputy Headmaster Drew assuming an administrative role as well as Head of upper school. As a result, Pearse was hired as the new Head of the upper school. However, Pearse's role was never clearly defined and his authority was never established. Attempts by Pearse to establish himself were undermined by existing upper school administration. Pearse's many attempts to create change were actively resisted (the term most used was sabotaged). This ultimately led to Pearse's resignation from his position and would not be coming back the following school year. This was completely unexpected by the faculty and was seen as confirmation of the informal power and resistance of the existing upper school administration team. However, another consequence was that Tony (the Headmaster) had egg on his face for letting the situation get out of control, and the whole Pearse incident was viewed widely as a large part of the board's subsequent decision to fire Tony and rebuke Alan.

The following year saw a strange transitional year where the Headmaster stayed on to run the school while a national search was conducted for his replacement. The Headmaster was also looking for his new position. In fact the same consulting firm was used to search for a new Headmaster for The Prep and a new job for the old Headmaster. This year brought a wealth of experience for a researcher. Tony was a lame duck Headmaster while the school maintained business as usual. This allowed me to see alliances shift from supporting Tony to not supporting Tony while many of Tony's

eccentricities came to the surface. During the end of Tony's tenure a strange appreciation emerged viewing Tony as a visionary and savior, which culminated at Tony's going away party and tribute.

The third year saw the hiring of a new Head master, Scott. Scott embodied a new personality as Head of the school. In fact it was constantly remarked how he was the exact opposite in every way from Tony. Scott's presence on campus in contrast to Tony was constantly felt. Scott came into the school in a time when the economic reality of the school came to a head and fully saturated the culture. Expansion of special programs, salary increases and new hires had stalled during Tony's transition year. Teachers were asked to make sacrifices to right sins they had not committed and this created tensions. Special programs, called Academies, had been streamlined and stripped of much of their power by the board and Scott. The Academies and their role and relation to the rest of the school culture over the course of the three-year study set up many fascinating dramas and tensions. This third year saw a restructuring of the upper school administration and the retirement of Drew as deputy Headmaster. Though Drew attempted to resist these changes they were clearly inevitable. Over the third year was a culture shift that reflected a desire to return to normal and hopes that Scott would ballast the ship to the direction. The end of the third year saw the beginning of the teacher split between those frustrated that things had not been fixed (or were not going to be fixed for a long time) and those still hopeful for the future.

Differences in Case Study Organizations

The difference between the two organizations is clear as the case studies are discussed. However it would be helpful to outline some of the major areas of difference. The Prep was selected because it would offer such a dramatic contrast to the kitchen. This drastic difference had two advantages. First, it forced me to rethink my previous grounded theory of humor, because the tensions and organizational culture are so different. Secondly, it provided an entirely different set of tensions, incongruities, and a communication environment in which humor can occur. This provided a space in which to examine any generalized themes in humor theory from the case study.

Differences included:

- Experienced hierarchy. The two organizations' hierarchy structure was completely different. Negotiating the effect of the individual control by The Oaks hierarchy heavily influenced the daily culture of the kitchen. A majority of the time power was regarded by members as deterministic versus volunteered, and thus resistance practices often clashed against structural hierarchy versus group- or self-imposed constraints. As a result the kitchen job requirements were clear and the power hierarchy was just as transparent. It was something resisted and accepted everyday as an individual and as a group. In contrast the clarity of the power hierarchy of The Prep was almost non-existent. A teacher's daily experience was one of personal autonomy with peer support, and yet in the background there was always a vague institutional boundary. Only at scheduled times was the power structure collectively recognized, in particular comment time and during contract negotiations (a yearly Spring event). The ambiguity of power at The Prep meant that it was something constantly being reinterpreted and formed. Teachers' experiences and frustrations of the power constraints waxed and waned in almost unperceivable fashion.
- Hard knocks versus sheepskin. The kitchen was a place where your most taxing labor was physical. The culture valued physical skill; even the art of cooking went beyond the art to the demands of cooking artistically in volume. Creating a fusion dish was not enough, it had to be able to be done in volume, in heat, and under pressure. Hard knocks and experience were given value over culinary education. Education was recognized only when coupled with the physical grit to back it up. At The Prep the opposite was true in that degree of education was highly valued. Not only the degree where the degree came from. The Prep's students were pushed towards the top undergrad universities, including the Ivy

League. As a result, the achieved level of education became a valued benchmark throughout every facet of the school. An important part of the culture was to be articulate (in some cases pedantic) in the classroom and particularly with peers. This pressure on academic achievement, rhetorical eloquence and valuing educational achievement (even over success in the classroom) is similar to the college level.

- Clientele. The clientele was a completely different experience in the Kitchen and The Prep. To the chef the order was the only contact with a client. As a result the client was an abstract concept that was the beginning of the process, the plate itself became the demand of the job. Only when there was a special order or an order that was returned did the client enter the chef's conscious as the person beyond the plate. The Prep was the opposite. Two clients were always present the student and his/her parents. The students had immediate time and space connection to the teacher. Teachers had more interaction with the kids than they did with each other. Students were the top concern and within the middle school environment the student centered curriculum and classroom approach took precedence over all other concerns. "Take care of the kids and the rest will take care of itself" was a phrase one teacher used and it summed up a common belief. However, the parent as a client tended to be at either of two extremes. When parents had concerns (sometimes serious issues) addressing, and diffusing or resolving these concerns became the top priority for a teacher above all other job requirements. As parents paid a sizable tuition, they received access to faculty uncommon to many schools. However, most of the time parents represented a vague force always considered part of the cultural practice yet not always present. The culture was to always be available for the parents. At structured times such as parent's day and graduation, the parents became the primary client focus.

- Gender. The social construction of the workplace culture is a gendered process. Masculinity studies (Brod and Kaufman 1994; Collinson & Collinson, 1989; Collinson and Hearn 1994, 1996; Hearn, 1992; Kerfoot & Knights 1998; Mumby, 1998) suggest that a majority of modern work places reflect a masculine frame. Collinson (1994) argues, when men manage they not only manage others (men and women) but masculinity. In the kitchen the culture was extremely masculine. As a result the masculine frame and demands dominated the workplace values and expectation of members. At The Prep the middle school was a feminine work environment. This feminine culture went beyond the male minority (only six middle school teachers were men) to permeate the expectations and cultural values. Discourse at the middle school also reflected the majority of female workers. Conversations shifted to women's health issues and childcare demands more frequently than any environment that I had ever experienced. Interestingly, I was more comfortable talking about issues such as my wife's pregnancy at the middle school than my wife who worked as an officer for a bank. My wife had to seek out female council, while at times I had to seek out male council at school. In the kitchen there was no feminine council to be found.
- Exhaustion. Exhaustion existed in both places and differed greatly. This fatigue illustrated the different demands of each workplace. The kitchen would exhaust your hands, back and, worst of all, your feet. Older chefs would complain about how the years on the job had damaged their feet. The daily physical exhaustion and the long-term physical injuries led to micro-resistances to maintain physical strength and prolong tenure on the job. The daily form of exhaustion after a day at The Prep was emotional exhaustion due to a full day of teaching, always being available to kids, the effort of maintaining composure and emotion in front of the children took its toll. This was incredibly challenging when a student was in a difficult situation or when the school suffered a tragedy (such as a death).

Every organization is unique. I picked The Prep as a second case study because it offered such a drastic difference in organizational demands and culture. These major differences between the two case studies benefited my research. It afforded me the ability to avoid slipping into generalization between the cultures and maintain focus on the uniqueness versus similarities of both organizational experiences. The disparity between the first and second case study also enrich the understanding of how humor is communicated and functions in such different organizational cultures.

On a personal level, the most rewarding aspect of choosing two drastically different environments was that it taught me how the workplaces affected my understanding of self. My self-realization goes beyond labor relations but how organization's informal culture not just labor can shape and develop understanding of self. In the kitchen I was valued for my physical strength and size. I found it easy to fit in with the male culture growing up in a male household and attending an all male boarding school. The middle school helped my experience by providing a gendered workplace where I was the minority gender. The middle school helped my experience by providing a gendered workplace where I was the minority gender. The unease I felt at times by being the "male" in the room or in the conversation was invaluable as part of my self development. Frequently my stature and sex inhibited some connections and nuances of the school's environment.

However, being one of the only males entailed special gendered responsibilities as a male role model. Many of the boys and girls at The Prep had very successful but distant fathers. As a result, I was viewed as a surrogate father to a handful of kids. The school councilor often remarked on how I was invaluable to her by providing the troubled boys with a role model of a "man's man" who was also sensitive. When I was teaching college, I never appreciated how my stature and my sex had advantages as teacher. Even as a minority in a feminine environment my masculinity had advantages that were recognized by my peers, students, parents and superiors. I suspect that in the masculine gendered workplace femininity as a diverse resource is not as valued. My wife and friends in masculine gendered environments have to hide their femininity at

work. My experience of the kitchen made it clear that for a woman to succeed in the kitchen, she had to become one of the “boys”.

CHAPTER IV

CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF HUMOR IN A HOTEL KITCHEN

To understand laughter, we must put it back into its natural environment, which is society, and above all must we determine the utility of its function, which is a social one (Henri Bergson, 1956, p.65).

As outlined in Chapter II, a common trend in sociological humor research is to identify humor as a coping mechanism for dealing with paradoxical situations. The trend is also to assert humor as a mechanism of control rather than both control and resistance simultaneously. This reduction of the dualistic nature of humor to a single function is inconsistent with the overall motivational and socially contextual understanding of humor as a paradox. Hence, a critique of this research was that it reduced the dual nature of humor (itself is a paradox) and therefore lost the complex role of humor within the process of organizing. This chapter argues that the trend should shift to capture the dual nature humor as it is used within the process of organizing (and in forming the workplace).

This chapter is based on an ethnographic study of a hotel kitchen where humor is examined from the perspective of how it functions within a social context (the case study report in my master's thesis) (Lynch, 1998). This Kitchen ethnography revealed five distinct types of humor. Using examples of humor episodes from this case study, this chapter presents the five functions of humor-- cooptative, conformity, cyclic, distance and insurgent to illustrate how this classification scheme can be used to understand humor and paradox organization. Rather than reproduce the entire ethnography this chapter is designed to familiarize the reader with the work that led to the middle school and study.

The selected episodes are presented with little post hoc analysis, and the complicated model and classification system used within the thesis to determine the functions of humor is dropped. It is dropped because when applied in real time and real space within the middle school it was impossible to use. I realized that a classification system that requires removal from the ongoing context is not appropriate for qualitative

research, nor does it provide a method in which to capture how humor functions in organization. In short, the verification process and reproduction of my first study was not what I set out to do and was impractical for my new case. At the end of this chapter, I discuss the limitations I found within this first case as applied to this research project and how it formed the basis for my current ethnography and organizational humor theory.

Definition of Dialectical Tension

Most organizational humor stems from incongruity, ambiguity and paradox, and it creates dialectical tensions within the work culture. “Dialectics is the mode of explanation that takes duality as its focus point” (Rawlins 1989). Kolb and Putnam expand this definition: “It [dialectics] entails identifying the bipolar opposites that are implicit in the way we study organizational conflict” (Kolb and Putnam 1992, p. 3). These dialectical tensions form the ambiguous and complex context in which the humor episodes arise. Taking a dialectical orientation on humor can provide an answer to Linstead’s question on the role of humor. “Is it, for example, a device utilized by individuals for coping with uncertainty, exploring ambiguous situations, releasing tension or distancing unpleasantness? Or does it owe its genesis to social structures, and contradictions and paradoxes within them?” (1985, p.741). The answer is both.

The ambiguity that dialectical tensions or paradoxes in the workplace create leads to the need for humor among workers. Humor is therefore a mechanism to cope with ambiguity. However, as the meaning of humor is further examined beyond providing mirth, it becomes evident that humor itself is incongruent and paradoxical. As a result humor is always bipolar in nature, juxtaposing opposites to create a humorous incongruity. As Pascal put it, “Nothing produces laughter more than a surprising disproportion between that which one expects and that which one sees” (Ludovici ,1933, p.:27).

In order to examine humor in the workplace it is necessary to analyze the incongruities or contradictions that stem from the dialectical tension of such organizations. This study of kitchen humor identifies four primary dialectical tensions in

the workplace: internal systems and external systems; identification and differentiation; change and stability; and, control and resistance. These dialectical tensions are not isolated. In the organizational environment they interplay, conflict, and combine to form the humor culture of the organization. This section will define dialectical tensions and demonstrate how these tensions can be used to understand and represent the conflicting strains on members of an organization.

Internal Systems & External Systems

In order to present a clear distinction between internal systems and external systems, this research adopted the distinction developed in Homans' classic systems study of the *Human Group* (1992). Homans defines external systems as "group behavior that enables the group to survive in its environment" and internal systems as "group behavior that is an expression of the sentiments towards one developed by members of the group in the course of their life together" (Homans, 1992, p. 110)¹. Homans frames his study of the *Human Group* through three "main elements of group behavior: activity, sentiment, and interaction" (1992, p.24). The distinction between internal systems and external systems is revealed in the internal systems' appropriation of how these three elements are defined and configured.

In describing the internal systems we shall find that these elements do not take quite the same form they do in the external systems. Instead of the motives for getting a job, we shall have to deal with sentiments developed on the job, such as liking or disliking for other persons, approval or disapproval of the things other person do. Instead of activities demanded by the job, we shall have to deal with activities spontaneously evolved that serve to express the attitudes of person towards one another. And instead of interaction required for coordination of practical activities, we shall have to deal with interaction elaborated socially – for fun, so to speak. (Homans, 1992, p.110).

If we adopt Homans' distinction, internal systems and external systems can be viewed as opposites that coexist simultaneously. In cultural terms the internal systems can be viewed as an idioculture differentiated from the external system and it can only be defined in reference to the external system. This relationship suggests that internal and external systems can be viewed on a continuum. For example, an "inside joke" is

clearly on the internal system's end of a continuum while a joke used by a speaker at a company's annual meeting is on the external end.

Identification & Differentiation

Identification is a process by which people come to believe that their values are the same as another's or a group's. It represents the ability to "identify" with the symbols or actions of others as similar to your own and value their importance for yourself. Differentiation, on the other hand, is the process by which people come to believe that their values are dissimilar to another's or to another group's. Differentiation represents the ability to differ and distance oneself from others. Identification and differentiation are related, in that, to identify with the values of one group is to differ with the values of another.

Humor can be a simultaneous process of identification and differentiation, in that it may be the expression that binds people together and also separates them. Individuals who laugh together are publicly demonstrating symbolic convergence. They are publicly displaying that the joke is funny for each individual and the group. Jokes can, therefore, lead individuals to believe that they have similar views of the world. Conversely, those who do not understand the joke or are not "in" the group are seen as outsiders. Humor as a mechanism of identification holds an important function within the group. Hughes (1971) comments on the importance of identification and differentiation: "among the most important subject matters of rules is setting up criteria for recognizing a true fellow-worker, for determining who is safe . . . who must be kept at some distance"(341).

Humor can, therefore, be the expression of this identification of a "safe" person by differentiation of others as threat. For example, racist or sexist jokes are used by the members of one group to identify with one another by differentiating themselves from the group that is the object of the joke. By framing the derided group with humor, this group's differences are accentuated. In the extreme example of a racist joke, the derided group can be made out to be less threatening by "de-powering" them through humor. Identification and differentiation of humor creates two groups. The "in" group is

identified with, and the “out” group is differentiated against. The inclusion and exclusion boundaries of the humor embody an in-group and out-group conflict. This reflects Coser’s (1959) theory that “in-group cohesion” is related to “out-group conflict”.

Identification/differentiation humor is not always as overtly power-related as in the dramatic example of racist humor. However, on some level all identification/differentiation humor creates an in-group versus out-group power tension. “The liking of friends within a group carries with it some dislike of outsiders. The greater the inward solidarity, the greater the outward hostility” (Homans, 1992, p.113). Homans expands on this observation:

Just as friendliness within a group tends to be accompanied by some degree of hostility towards outsiders, so similarity in the sentiments and activities of the member of a group tends to be accompanied by some dissimilarity between their sentiments and activities and those outsiders. A mode of standardization is always matched by a mode of differentiation . . . There are forces making for difference as well as forces making for uniformity. (1992, p.121).

These forces can be seen as opposites and identification/differentiation can be viewed on a continuum as dialectical pairs.

Change & Stability

This level of analysis is concerned with primarily action (the humor discourse), not how the member consubstantiated meaning through the humor of his/her culture. Therefore, levels of change and stability are examined as action because they affect the internal systems and external systems culture. The question arises though: “Did the humor episode as an action create change or stability on the internal systems or external systems level?”

In the past, theorists have tended to polarize or separate completely change and stability rather than concentrating on the reciprocal nature of change and stability. However Van de Ven and Poole (1988) suggest by adopting Hernes’ (1976) frame to “clarify levels of reference” of stability and instability, they may be seen as two sides of the same coin. Hernes suggests that the force of change and stability can be broken into four possibilities: 1) simple reproduction, 2) expanded reproduction, 3) transition, 4) transformation.

The following Table 3 demonstrates how humor can create the four possibilities Hernes (1976) defined for change and stability.

TABLE 3
Four Possibilities for Change and Stability at
an Interaction Level

Possible for Change and Stability	Humor speech action
1) Simple Reproduction	Humor incorporates existing process exactly.
2) Expanded Reproduction	Humor refines process but through different expression.
3) Transition	Humor maintains process but questions its validity and, at a value level, encourages alternatives.
4) Transformation	Humor creates an alteration of process.

These four possibilities for change and stability indicate the severity of change or stability an action can have within an organization. 1) *Simple reproduction* occurs when the system continues doing things the way they have always been done. The humorous episode, therefore, reproduces and reifies the existing system's practices. For example, a joke that makes fun of a chef's uncleanliness will force the chefs to continue to clean their station according to the system standard. 2) In *expanded reproduction*, the structure of the system is stable yet the output of the system is changed. This occurs, for example, when the chefs tease each other about who can fix the most plates in an hour. The 'race' between members maintains the existing system but the output of plates is increased. 3) *Transitions* occur when a process remains the same; but the parameters governing it change. For example, a trainee is traditionally assigned to make the salads for all of the hotel functions. This is a tedious job which entails, cleaning the lettuce, chopping the vegetables, and plating the salads which takes about four hours for one person to do. However, the trainee asks for help and five people carry out the same process in half an

hour. The parameters of the task stay the same that the trainee is responsible for the tedious job but that the chefs help because asked. The importance of asking help versus getting behind is considered a higher lesson but as the chefs help they remind the trainee of his responsibilities and that they should have to be called in to help. 4)

Transformation occurs when structure of the system changes, creating change in the output as well as the input process. For example, this occurs when a chef continually half preps [prepares their workplace with all of the ingredients needed for that shift] his station the night before so he can “coast” [not work hard the next day but be busy enough not to help others]. His colleagues don’t like this practice and he finds his work place and prep work sabotaged. The chef will learn from the “joke” that he should not half prep to avoid helping his colleagues.

The various possibilities described above and illustrated in Table 3 can be placed on the continuum of change/stability. By placing them on a continuum the four separate types can blend at the boundaries and the process can be seen to vary from change as severe transformation to stability as strict reproduction.

Change---4-----3-----2-----1----Stability

Dropping the separate classes and depicting change and stability on a continuum as dialectical pairs will enable us to capture Hernes’ four possibilities, but allow for the dialectical nature of the change and stability possibility to be displayed.

Control & Resistance

Control and resistance as a dialectical relationship has been the focus of countless social inquiries. Critical theorists would maintain that all social science inquiry and all social organization is grounded within this curious and ubiquitous dialectical relationship of control and resistance. They would posit that society itself can be explained (and possibly liberated) by uncovering the hegemonic forces that operate within it. Control is not a foreign force but a force that is upheld by every participating member of a social group both on a societal level (Weber 1958, 1978) as well as on the internal and informal level (Barker, 1993). Once societies or individuals become aware of control, they employ several methods of resistance, but curiously seldom do people

ever escape from the control of others or their own participation in upholding that control. This dialectical struggle can be seen in a majority of humor case studies (Reference Chapter II) which examine how the humor of the workers can be seen as an expression of both control and safety valve resistance.

The remainder of this chapter will demonstrate how understanding humor as an expression of interplay and conflicts of dialectical tensions within the hotel kitchen workplace (internal/external, identification/differentiation & change/stability) can uncover the five distinct control and resistance functions of humor.

Classification of Humor Functions in Kitchen Case Study

The paradoxical function of humor as control and/or resistance seems to be woven into every humorous workplace episode. This classification scheme maintains that this control/ resistance function of humor is the result of the interplay of dialectical tensions in the organization. This process can be analyzed on several different dimensions: 1) the object of the humor (reflected in the internal systems – external systems pair); 2) whether the humor unites or separates the joker from the object of the joke (reflected in the identification and differentiation pair); and 3) the effect the joke has on the object (change or stability within the internal systems and external systems realm).

The classification system for the functions of humor in organizations was created for the kitchen case study analysis (Lynch, 1998, pp.61-121). Though this classification system worked well theoretically to classify and measure humorous episodes after they were experienced, it was almost impossible to apply practically in the field. I attempted to apply this classification scheme to organizational humor episodes (from varied organizational contexts) as they were being experienced. I discovered that the strict classification process outlined previously was inconsistent with how humor was experienced in the everyday. Ironically, I found that the exactness that the classification system called for required a level of abstraction or removal from the humor episode and contexts. The classification system was able to be applied within the kitchen

case study because it was used a year after the experiences happened and the episodes benefited from a longitudinal understanding and distancing that added my conjectural stance. At best the classification system worked because of the tidiness of the first project methodology (to experience the organization as a full member and then write an ethnography on it), and at worst it could be accused of post hoc reasoning. However, despite my frustration with the classification system, I still found the classification of humor into five expressions in the general sense to be helpful. Based on two years of disappointment with the classification system in the middle school case study, I concluded that the process of forcing my experiences to fit the system was antithetical to my qualitative methodology.

As a result, the following report of the five functions of humor within the kitchen workplace maintains the result of the classification (categorizing humor episodes into humor functions), but drops description of the process. Instead, the shell of the classification system is maintained (see following three steps), and a straightforward and simplified process was used.

- Step one establishes how the humor episode can be roughly placed along the dialectical tensions described in this section. This first step involves three judgments: (a) where the humor occurred, and who was in the audience, (b) whether the humor was part of the internal system or part of the larger external system, and (c) whether the humor episode identified with internal or external system values.
- The second step determines how the humor affects each system separately, internally and externally. It involves two judgments: (a) how the humor episode affects identification/differentiation and change/stability in the internal system and (b) how the episode affects the identification/differentiation and change/stability of the external system.
- The final step involves judgments of how the humor episode affects the overall system: (a) how the interplay of identification/ differentiation and change/stability operates in the internal system as well as external system

and (b) the contrast in the role of humor in the internal system compared with the role of humor in the external system. Finally, we classify the episode as control and/or resistance based on its effect on the overall system.

Types of Humor

The classification system determined five distinct types of humor, cooptative humor, conformity humor, cyclic humor, distance humor and insurgent humor. These types range from direct control by management to uphold hotel policy and practice to direct employee resistance to change management policy. Under each type of humor example 'humor episodes' from the hotel kitchen are provided as contextual examples. Unfortunately due to length restriction it is not possible to provide the several example episodes resulting from the study that illustrates the many different nuances within each of these types of humor.

Cooptative Humor

At their best, managers are friendly strangers in the world of the kitchen; at their worst, they are hostile intruders (Fine, 1996, p.168).

Cooptative humor is when an external system person (for example, a manager or outsider) enters into the internal system's system by using his/her humor to force the internal members to adopt the external production value. The tenor of the humor is contrary to internal system values. However, the medium or vehicle which the external person utilizes, is somewhat consistent with the internal system culture but still maintains the values of the external system. Management, for example a person external to the system, can exert external system control over internal systems by the type of humor used. The humor therefore contributes to the maintenance of the external system production value and creates more Cooptative workers. For example, a chef is taking a long time slicing meat for a tray, so the manager goes to the next slicer and cuts it quickly. The other chefs start to cheer her on as she cuts the meat, making fun of the slow chef as if they were in a race. In the future the chef will be quicker in expediting the manager's requests so as not to be made fun of by a manager or the other chefs.

Cooptative Humor Episode: Fruit Chef. The following interview excerpt demonstrates how Ranger (a chef) interpreted, the humor of the head of his department (the executive chef called Chef in the hotel).

Ranger: He [Chef] would do stuff. Like, I remember we had a meeting one time, the first two months I worked here, when I was working grand mange [cold side]. You might have been gone by this time though. One of the subjects that came up at the meeting was that we had to comp a whole fruit display [let the client have a fruit display for free] because of, like, a couple of bad strawberries that were on it. They were, like, you know, look, with these things that you know can go bad, like grapes, strawberries, check, absolutely check before they go out. And I go back to the kitchen and I end up making a few amenities [Little fruit displays that go to special guest] that day and I didn't check the strawberries. Well, sure enough, Chef comes over, turns over a strawberry and to find that it was partly rotten. He made me eat it.

Interviewer: No way.

Ranger: He gave me a choice. He said, "You can eat this strawberry and I won't say another word to you about this or I can be on your ass all week and all month about this. I can just be over your shoulder with everything you do." And so I ate the strawberry. It was pretty nasty.

Interviewer: Did he frame it as a joke or what?

Ranger: He was smiling and I knew that, I remember he said eat this strawberry. He said, "I want you to eat it." And I said, "Get out." I was like, "No way." And then he told me basically what my options were. One time I remember I was messing up in line, quality was no good or whatever, and so he just came to the end of my line and took some blueberries and just kept throwing them at me. Just kinda tossing them at me, hit me in the head and stuff with these blueberries. Not very hard, but just, what could I do, I was in the weeds [several orders coming in at the same time], I had to keep working. I certainly wasn't going to say anything to him about it. But he gets his point across. I guarantee I check every strawberry thoroughly that I put out. I guarantee you.

Interviewer: Why do you think that Chef manages like that using jokes and stuff?

Ranger: I think it's kinda' his personal style. His style is pretty unique and I think there's a couple of different ways to manage effectively and he does it one way.

It is hard for people who have not worked in kitchens, or any blue-collar workplace, to understand the harsh humor and pranks. It is equally hard to understand that the workers cannot show any sign of these pranks getting the best of them. An underlying rule is that the worker takes no offence to the harsh and cruel humor. As a

result, it may seem strange, but it is understandable, that Ranger accepted Chef's harsh treatment so readily. It seems that Ranger thought it was for the best. Ranger was not submitting to Chef's external authority but to his control as an external member of the internal system. Ranger knew that the Chef would tease him and so he was willing to eat the strawberry. Ranger identified with the humor, "I guarantee I check every strawberry thoroughly that I put out. I guarantee you." Ranger told me that even after a month or so the other chefs made fun of his fruit displays in one way or another: "Make sure to check the strawberries, Ranger." Ranger and the other chefs did not internalize the humor or differentiate with the external system's standard enforced by the Chef. Ranger identifies Chef as being a good manager in his interview: "I think he [Chef] really shows he cares about his people, even though he's hard on us."

Chef's behavior was consistent with the internal system's culture, and the chefs identified with Chef as their leader and regarded him as an intricate part of the internal system. Because of his expertise in the kitchen and his comparable experience (done the same job as the chefs) Chef is able to be an internal member in conversation but an external system member in structure and production values. For example, Jen (a chef) in her interview discussed the way Chef uses humor with her and the rest of the kitchen based on his experience:

Interviewer: Do you think humor is used to make sure people keep doing what they're supposed to do or keep their job?

Jen: With me and the Chef, yeah, because he has never been, "Okay, Jen, this is what I want you to do," and if there's something that I am doing wrong, he knows me well enough that he'll make fun of it or he'll do it in a way that's not saying, "Look, that's completely against what I like to see and you need to be." It's more, "Well, what about if you do this, cause this looks really funny." [During this part of the interview Jen was making hand motions: "What about if you do this (hand motion of organizing a plate and mimicking Chef) cause this (hand motion referring to the original dish) looks really funny."] Yeah, for me but not for the other people. He more plays with you and it's kind of saying that's he's watching you, and he knows what's going on and I'll see him with some of the guys and he makes fun of them to say that yes, I'm the Chef and I know what you're doing.

Interviewer: It's funny because like the way kitchens are, which seems to me, the Chef really isn't like a manager in one way, 'cause he's in the back of the house, in the kitchen with the boys, but then ultimately he is.

Jen: Yeah, yeah. Because he has to know the full grasp of everything you have in here to do and all the rules and regulations.

The above excerpt and this entire section on cooptative humor illustrates how Chef and Fred both used their understanding of the kitchen workplace and the internal system to promote the external system's values through internally identified humor. It is because their humor can identify with internal and external systems simultaneously that it is able to uphold the external production culture that makes cooptative humor important to recognize as a controlling force in the organization culture.

Previous case literature concerning humor has not documented in detail the use of humor by external systems members to encourage internal priorities to change the external system rules. These two examples of Fred and Chef show that this is not a random phenomenon but a fundamental part of their management styles. More research should be invested in exploring the informal, internal system relationships of managers and how humor and other discourse can be used to control the internal system and reinforce external production values.

Conformity Humor

The men are the gaffers [foremen] now. They watch each other like hawks. The nature of the blokes is such that they turn on each other. Human nature plays against itself. You're more worried about what the men think than the gaffers . . . I'm just as bad if there's someone not working (Collinson, 1988, p.197).

Conformity humor occurs when internal system members use internal system humor to change behavior of internal system members. An example of this would be the teasing or ridicule of a worker who is considered lazy (a practice not condoned or encouraged in external system policy). The teasing is masked as internal humor, but it, still contains effective control measures, a humorous extension of Barker's (1993) "Iron Cage" idea. The humor therefore makes the internal system worker conform to the internal system perception of what a good chef is rather than allowing each chef to perform as an individual. The humor also increases the conformity of the chefs who are

using the conforming humor. This type of humor is similar to the control humor discussed in several other case studies.

Conformity Humor Episode: Always Keep an Eye Open. In the kitchen someone would come in hung-over occasionally. The chefs made sure that even if you were hung-over you were still paying attention. The classic way to do this was to put the handle of a pot in the flame when the user was not looking. Then the pot handle would be returned to its original position. The person not paying attention would burn his/her hand. This type of practical joke was very common.

Humorous pranks such as this were usually reserved for the chefs who were not on top of their game because they were hung over or distracted. As a result the chefs were always careful to pay attention and watch the other cooks. Pranks provided a way to beat the monotony (Roy 1958), but they also ensured that chefs paid keen observation to their environment. It was acceptable to come in hung over or tired but you could not show it or try and coast. If you did you would open yourself up for a long shift as the butt of the other chefs' pranks and jokes. While on the surface the pranks seemed like schoolyard antics, they insured that chefs paid attention and kept a level of professionalism, no matter how they were feeling.

Pranks were not always symmetrical, from chef to chef, a great deal of pranks were asymmetric, from chef to trainee. The pranks embodied a different effect than the chef-to-chef pranks; because they were a constant reminder to the trainee that (s)he had a lot to learn and were not full members of the internal system. Fine provides a good example of sending the trainee to the storeroom for a can of steam (Fine, 1996, p.123). In her study of department stores, Bradney (1957) suggests that understanding and being part of the humor culture was one of the most difficult part of the new member's job roles.

Joking is usually learned by a new comer after she has been in the store about three weeks and it takes about the same length of time for her to be accepted as a 'joker' by the rest of the department. It is a very uncomfortable period for her, and this may largely account for the fact that the biggest labor turnover in the store occurs during the first few weeks of employment (Bradney, 1957, p.185).

Pranks and conformity humor has a regulating effect on the trainee or new comer. The established internal system members teach the new trainees the social and production demands of the workplace. Humor as internal control has an important function in defining the workplace culture in terms of what is expectable and what is not (Seckman and Couch: 1989).

Humor, acting as education of a workplace culture, is not unique to the kitchen but occurs in many blue-collar workplaces (Haas, 1972). For example; the instigating period which Bradney discusses is important when considering the internal system because the humor used as part of their initiation into the culture has the explicit effect of teaching the new-comer the internal culture of that organization. Clearly conformity humor used on trainees is particularly important because it is used to shape the new-comer's perception of his/her new environment. While the humor is training the newcomer it is also reifying the culture for the internal system members who are doing the training.

Interview: Why do you use humor in the workplace?

John: I use it in a nice subtle way and to make them really think about what I'm saying. And once I do that, if I get them to laugh, I got them. And once they laugh, I got them so good, I can get them to do anything I want. I'll show them okay, you cut the pineapple, no you don't cut the pineapple like this, you cut it like this, a round shape, don't stab the knife into the pineapple, just cut it. So, once you do that to them, you can get them to do anything you want. You can get them to peel a potato off the wall. That's humor.

John's interview demonstrates the power of humor in the workplace. John is a veteran of the kitchen and is informally in charge of training. The trainee is not aware that Chef asked John to show each newcomer the "ropes." As you can see from the quotation above, John uses humor as an important part of the task. When asked an open question such as, "Why do you use humor in the workplace?" he automatically assumed that I meant as a trainer. John unconsciously uses humor all the time as a worker, but in his view he only 'uses' humor as a tool to train people. After his interview I explained to John that I was studying how people used humor in the workplace. He commented "Oh cool, I gave you good stuff on humor and training huh?" I explained, "Yeah you did, but

you don't always use humor just to train, you use to joke with me and you weren't training me." We both laughed as he said "Are you sure?"

Cyclic Humor

Humor can represent an implicit contradiction, paradox or 'joke in the social structure' made explicit (Linstead, 1985, p.762)

Cyclic humor reifies the tensions between the external and internal systems. It is a simultaneous expression of internal and external identification and maintains the culture of both systems. For example, a chef might say to a manager, "Oh! Thank you. I would love to stop doing this boring prep work and work on a more exciting and important task." That statement can be simultaneously interpreted both by an internal system member (chef) as sarcastic resistance and by an external system member (management) as invested compliance, or control over the worker according to external systems values. The worker and the manager have not changed perceptions through the humor but to the contrary both of their perceptions of the other are reified. The worker thinks the manager is stupid and pushy in that he/she does not understand the importance of the original task and thinks that (s)he can dictate what the chef should be doing. While the manager believes that the worker is there to do what should be done and does not acknowledge the value of the chef's experience to decide what should be done at what time. The humor then acts as a catalyst for both internal system and external system members to continue practices that create more interactions of this type and the pattern is continually repeated in a circular loop.

Cyclic humor is more complex than cooptative or conformity humor, in that, the humor is not simply a contradiction between the medium and the effect. The culture identification of humor is opposite to the culture it reifies as cooptative and conformity in expression are internal system based but in function maintain the external system production culture. In Cyclic humor, the humor as a medium identifies with the internal and external systems, and in each of these systems, it creates control of that system's values. As a result, both systems are independently reified by humor. Neither system adopts the other's cultural values, and the entire system's status quo is unaffected.

However, the tensions between the internal and external can be increased by this type of humor.

The best example of the daily rituals that perpetuated management and worker stereotypes of each other was the ritual of the daily soup.

Cyclic Humor Episode: Soup De Borg. One of the chefs would make the soups in the morning. A fellow chef would taste it and comment, “Oh that’s good” or “that’s bad,” “What did you use, etc., etc.?” A dialogue consisting of kitchen chat and recipe swapping would follow. The chefs would boast how they took leftovers and turned them into wonderful soups with their expertise. However, when a manager came over and tasted the soup, “Oh, that’s good.” The chef would reply, “Oh really, I just knocked it out from scraps.”

The soup ritual is similar to the previous episodes sharing the theme of the internal system worker’s belief that (s)he is superior to the management. The worker did not choose to educate the management regarding the skill and creativity it took to make a soup, and, as a result, the management was never able to understand or appreciate the worker as an artist. The ritual, though a joke for the internal members beyond surface superiority, did not gain them the status of highly skilled worker.

Organizational norms and rituals such as the Soup du Borg episode highlight the miscommunication and misunderstanding that divide the internal and external systems. Humor is one vehicle by which unity or division is created and maintained in the work place (Meyer, 1997, 1998). Mundane humor often indicates the dividing rituals of a work place that create circular patterns and increase tension within the work place.

Cyclic humor forms an important part of kitchen practices. This understanding can encourage researchers to focus on paradoxical humor within organization rituals and possibly provide insights into these workplaces so as to help diminish some of the workplace tensions and miscommunications. However, the values that these rituals uphold are an important part of the workplace and the cultural identity of all of the groups. Participants can take offense and even react in a hostile manner towards a researcher who attempts to recognize and question the fundamental belief structure as

was done in the episode of practical thought. Research on humor must remain sensitive to the personal nature of humor and values that it upholds.

Distance Humor

Man alone suffers so excruciatingly, in a world that he was compelled to invent laughter (Nietzsche in *The Will to Power*²).

Distancing humor is when the humor of the internal system is used to resist the external system by creating identification with internal system and differentiation of the external system. This distance allows the workers to feel superior from constraints imposed by the external system. Humor creates a means to resist organizational culture, but rather than acting as rebellion the humor performs the task of a coping device (Freud, 1960). This is the same type of humor termed *safety valve humor* in some case studies. An example of this type of humor would be when workers under a harsh or strict manager adopt a nickname such as “the drill sergeant” to distance themselves and cope with the manager’s style. This distancing humor is in its clearest form when examining the nicknames the chefs call each other.

Distance Humor Episode: Nicknames. Nicknames are used by the kitchen staff only when addressing each other, and not answered if used by a non-kitchen staff member. There was no greater offense than when a manager would “buddy up” by using a chef’s nickname. A manager made the mistake of calling one of the chefs by his nickname, Tinker. This name is also a derogatory one used in Ireland. Tinker went-off on the manager, “You have no right to call me that. How dare you insult my heritage? I have good mind to report you.” The manager apologized and walked away. “Jesus Christ!” Tinker said with a heavy Irish accent. “Tell me about it, Tinker,” I replied.

The humor in this incident clearly reifies the internal sense of distance from the external system. Tinker was quick to correct the manager, and this reaction went beyond simply correcting the mistake or blowing off steam. The humor was used, by all the chefs behind the scenes, to redraw the boundaries and empower every chef present. The story was retold for weeks, and Tinker’s reaction was more outrageous each time he retold it with the other chefs congratulating each other.

Ryan's interview highlighted the importance of nicknames. He provided a myriad of examples, and it is clear from Ryan's rhetoric that nicknames were an expression of the unity within the internal system and were grounded in the differentiation of the external members and their values.

Ryan: Identities are very important and like a family environment or like this work type environment because you have certain identities, and they all form into a cohesive unit. But, it takes each separate part to make one real cohesive unit. And I feel that if we kind of like to identify each person. Like Cake Boy got his name because he worked in pastries and bakery before he came into the kitchen, so we kinda' jive at him every now and then, like he got his start in pastries you know and we'll call him Cake Boy. But it also reflects that he's kinda' preppy, kinda' you know and always caring about what he looks like, and so we'll take those two together and we'll make it into one like culinary term. Same as Don, Don's nickname is Sea Bass because he's a fish man. He came from Florida. So we call him Sea Bass just because that's kinda' like the name. I mean it's just so important to have nicknames just like that because it ties in not only what you're doing on the house side but what you're doing right in the kitchen itself.

This excerpt clearly demonstrates the importance the nicknames held as a form of identification of the workers. The actual "nicknames," be it Sea Bass or Cake Boy, themselves are not as important as the fact they are arbitrarily assigned. This random process is later justified as Ryan is doing in the interview. For example, one chef was named Pork Chop because one day a chef said "Hey, Pork Chop" instead of "Hey, Mitchell, pass me a pork chop." However, symbols of the nicknames have an explicit meaning that is indicated by how Ryan links nicknames as a part of the "kitchen itself." To have and use others' nicknames signifies in-group membership.

The importance of identity is expressed through the humorous names that set the boundaries as in the episode above. The chefs take offence when the sanctity of the internal group is invaded.

Ryan's interview continued:

Interviewer: What if somebody who's not in the kitchen comes back and jokes?
Ryan: We take it with a grain of salt. At the same time, it's almost like they're invading our territory. Because they may make a joke to try and feel inclusive when it's almost making them more exclusive because they don't understand why we do what we do. They don't understand why we call Greg Cake Boy.

When someone else calls Greg Cake Boy, Greg gets offended. “Hey, you can’t call me Cake Boy or you can’t call me Sea Bass.”

The territorial images that Ryan uses is an indication of how the chefs want this type of humor to be only within their space and group. It sometimes takes on the overtones of a gang. Similar to a gang “handle,” the names have an important function of resisting the external system. For example, I asked Cake boy, whom I had not met before I visited to interview, why he allowed me to call him by his nickname. His answer demonstrates the significance that the nickname held within the internal system: “You’re one of us. I don’t know you, but Ryan and the boys do. It’s like a Mafia thing. You’re connected, you know, one of us, and once you’re in, you’re in for life.”

The Nicknames episode demonstrates the importance that the workers placed on maintaining their identity in workplace. As workers are alienated from their products and become dispensable commodities the need to resist this objectification is increased. Maintaining an internal system or informal name gives the members a sense of “connectedness” that Cake Boy describes above. This connectedness does not change the system but in the distance the names create can temporarily release them from the controlling forces.

Insurgent Humor

Every joke is a tiny revolution, and that you cannot be memorably funny without at some point raising topics which the rich, the powerful and the complacent would prefer to see left alone (George Orwell in Funny Not Vulgar³).

Humor is a medium in which the internal system voices objection and resists the perceived external system constraints. The external system’s constraints are changed due to humor resistance. The humor is not simply a safety valve as the previous humor case studies describe, but the humor acts as a significant changing moment in the organization. The humor provides a medium in which the low-power internal system worker can object to the external system practice. This informal rebellion as humor is “non serious” in form: it cannot be sanctioned (Radcliffe-Brown, 1952). This unsanctioned quality provides the internal system members the medium for resistance

without risking a formal complaint and consequences. However, this humor insurgence can create changes in the organization practice. An example of this type of humor would be when a worker makes fun of an incongruity in management practice in a public forum. This humorous public recognition necessitates modification of the incongruity.

Insurgent Humor Episode: Thwarted Crusade of the New Food and Beverage Manager. Many of the chefs had trained in the kitchen for many years and a majority had degrees in culinary arts. As a result Great offense was taken when management would tell one of the chefs how to do their job. One occasion where management attempted to tell the chefs how to do their jobs was when the new Food & Beverage Director deemed that there was too much talking in the work place. His proposal was to split prep lists among individuals; for example, only John was to work on beef Wellington. This contradicted the chefs' practices and training, as it was the chefs' custom to assign work by groups. For example: if there were fifty things to prep for that evening's parties, we would assign easy tasks such as cutting, peeling, etc. to the steward. The sauces and difficult items were a group effort. The chefs relied upon each other to make there work more enjoyable. There was also a practical purpose, since they helped each other with ideas and flavor. Chef resisted the individual prep lists by ignoring them. The Food and Beverage Director was a little perturbed. Thus, he assigned places in the kitchen. This made the chef's jobs impossible because they needed ovens and tools in each part of the kitchen. In the morning we would come and on the board: only John behind hot line one, Robert on back line one, etc. In each place would be a separate prep list. To combat this, the chefs went down to personnel and made up nametags with each other's names on them. On the hot line there were five chefs working, all with a nametag that said John. The new Food and Beverage Director laughed and dropped the crusade.

It seems the old maxim that too many chefs spoiled the broth does not ring true. The policy being implemented by the new Food and Beverage Director (F&B) was a serious constraint in the workplace environment. The insurgent humor used with this episode leaves little room for interpretation. The chefs considered the new policy

detrimental to their internal system of connection and as well as their methods of production. The need to rebel against this constraint was apparent after the chefs attempted to ignore the situation to test the F&B's resolve and the F&B was not willing to 'back down' in an attempt to establish a presence within the kitchen. With the first method of resistance thwarted, the second was established in insurgent humor.

A more detailed contextual account will clarify how this act of insurgent humor was a calculated and deliberate act by the chefs. When the chefs realized that the new F&B would attempt to have greater control over production quality and would not allow them to ignore his list, they opted for more drastic measures. The meeting took place in the cooler and started with one chef bitching to another; as more chefs came in, they all added their complaint. John joked "well I have two tags, just put my other one on." The chefs loved the idea, and one of them had the idea of multiple duplicates. The "prank" was put into action when the chefs chose a time to implement it--when the F&B would be in the kitchen before lunch. The F&B went straight to the line "look guys I told you..." John interrupted, "I John." The next chef said, "No I'm John" and so on each showing their new nametag. The scene had resemblance to the scene in *Spartacus*, which added to its mirth.

To the F&B's credit he responded accordingly and laughed; his interpersonal skills allowed him to realize that he could sanction the joke. The laughter was hearty, which eased the tension between the chefs and new F&B (quotes followed later such as "maybe he ain't that bad"). The humor alleviated the situation from a possible serious rift or official conflict. However, the humor also changed a policy, which prior to the humor seemed extremely deadlocked.

This episode suggests a rough sequential order to the practice of insurgent humor. This order was suggested in Patrick's interview, "You know, something bothering you deal with it, forget it or f***ing change it, I don't care which just don't bitch about it". The first step is to decide if you can deal with the constraint. If the answer is no, the second step is to ignore the constraint. If ignoring the constraint does not work, a course of action is decided usually as a result of a 'bitching session' which

acts as a resistance (Sotirin, 1997) and which results in production of a humorous anecdote. If the humor does not work official resistance is taken. That a sequence of events exists in the practice of insurgent humor, will remain uncertain until several more case studies are conducted.

Humor as Control and Resistance

The kitchen case study held as a premise that like organizational cultures humor culture is constituted by the internal and external system simultaneously. As a result it was argued that humor culture is formed from the interplay between the humor of control/resistance and external system /internal systems. In order to understand this interplay between cultural tensions, the humor types need to be placed into three categories: (a) control, (b) cyclic and (c) resistance.

Control humor has both external system (cooptative) and internal system (conformity) humor functions. Cooptative humor functions as external control, which maintains the status quo of the organization culture, as in the episode “Fruit Chef.” Control humor also can function within the internal system by creating conformity to workers’ norms, as illustrated in the example “always keep an eye open.”

Cyclic humor is found within everyday humorous rituals, as demonstrated in the episode “Soup de Borg”. Cyclic humor is the expression of internal and external system’s values and has the paradoxical effect of reifying both systems’ values simultaneously. Cyclic humor therefore functions as control and resistance within the internal and the external system.

Resistance humor, similar to control humor, functions within the external and internal systems. Within the external system humor acts as insurgent humor. Insurgent humor is used as external resistance against an organizational constraint, which results in change of the organization culture, as illustrated by the “Thwarted Crusade of the New Food and Beverage Manager” episode. Within the internal system humor also functions to enable the workers to associate in small internally focused groups and to distance themselves from the constraints of the external system. This relieves the tension it

causes. This internal system humor has traditionally been termed “safety valve humor” in the case study literature.

The traditional case study observation presents humor as having a single overall function as control, either direct or through safety valve, which does not adequately capture this complexity. Humor ultimately only functions as an internal system control. Humor could be easily defined as an internal system mechanism of deceiving incongruity used to enforce control by peer pressure of superiority or as a safety valve release of tension. Though this definition is consistent with the overwhelming majority of case studies of humor, it is at odds with the complexity and paradoxical nature of humor, whose definition has eluded humanity for centuries.

This kitchen study has raised questions of the accuracy of this definition. Humor in organizations is all the functions used within this study and cannot be reduced to one function. Humor in its nature is a paradox, which is why it has evaded our attempts to define it. Case studies framing, observing, and recording humor should attempt to reach the level of complexity that recognizes humor as a paradoxical form.

Conclusion

This section will consider how the kitchen study provided the basis for the case study in the middle school. My original goal with the middle school was to pick up where this kitchen case study left off, to observe how with a long term in depth study of humor in an organization could be used to reveal the organizational tensions, constraints, and incongruities that workers face. The original humor theory discussed in this chapter argued that organization change and stability were products of control and resistance that the humor culture is born in the context of overall organizational culture (upholding it or resisting against it). As a result, I began my research of the middle school with the goal of classifying humor as it develops. Then using this classified humor to establish an understanding of how the humor culture changed the organization over time through resistance (or maintained the organization through control humor).

I still believe that focusing on everyday humor provides an excellent frame in which to understand the organizational culture as a whole. But I realized that my belief that everyday humor could be classified and that the organization incongruity discussed in this chapter would be identifiable was wishful thinking. It is important to realize that the humor types generated from the kitchen study and discussed in this chapter were evaluated a year after they were experienced. The major focus of this evaluation was primarily on the humor types. This is why the episodes are presented in my thesis work not in longitudinal order but in their humor category. Humor in the organization was the focus of my first case study of the organization. My goal of using the humor theory generated from this research was appropriate to capture the complex process of organization change and stability. The theory discussed in this chapter (that humor was created in response to the incongruities of workplace tension-- identification/differentiation, change/stability, and internal/external) made it difficult in a second ethnography to study the everyday humor and maintain connection to the organizational process. These workplace tensions were very difficult to maintain focus on within the everyday and perhaps needed the distance of time and focus to be recognized. This difficulty caused me to rethink my humor driven theory. I needed an organizational theory that allowed for everyday humor over time.

The kitchen study was used to explore how humor functions within an organization (how organization paradoxes and incongruities create humor use) not how humor creates an organization or how organizations create humor. It was a study of humor in organization not an organization in humor. I originally set out to discover an answer using humor to how is an organization possible - a modification of Simmel's question "how is society possible?" Though I turned to Structuration theory to provide the frame to answer this question, my experience within the middle school guided my focus not on the humor produced, but on the relationship of organization culture and humor's use. Ultimately this is why I turned to Structuration in the study of the middle school. It allowed me to focus on the everyday humor and make links to the structural conditions that created the context that shaped the everyday humor.

Chapter IV Notes

¹ Homans' definition of the internal system is similar to Fine's idea 'Idioculture' which is cited regularly in humor case studies. "A system of knowledge, belief, behaviors, and custom shared by members of an interacting group to which members can refer and that serve as the basis of further interaction. Members recognize that they share experiences, and these experiences can be referred to with the expectation that they will be understood by other members, thus being used to construct reality for participants" (Fine 1987: 125).

² As Quoted in Gruner 1978 : 2.

³ Quoted by Benton 1988: 40.

CHAPTER V

EXPERIENCING STRUCTURATION: SEARCHING FOR A META-THEORY

A patient walks into a psychiatrist's office and says, "Doctor, you must help me my brother thinks he's a chicken." "A chicken?" the doctor replies. "Yes, he really thinks he's a chicken," the man says. "He clucks, bobs his head and everything." "Well, this sounds serious. Why don't you bring him in?" the psychiatrist asks. "I would," the man exclaims, "but I need the eggs". (Woody Allen).

Essentially, this joke represents my feelings towards Structuration Theory. At times, I find Structuration Theory uninviting due to its' theoretical complexity; at the same time I find it paradoxically limited and underdeveloped in terms of observational methodology. Yet I can't seem to "bring it in," because I need the eggs. I find Structuration Theory to be constraining, yet I voluntarily accept the constraints because it still provides a rich framework with which to understand the world I experience and research. This chapter is an attempt to remove these constraints to free my research experience while maintaining the theoretical framework that allows the paradox of action and structure to be simultaneously envisioned.

Even though I find problems with Structuration theory, time and time again I return to its frameworks. This is why I began my second case study of the middle school with a Structuration-based model in place as a working hypothesis for how humor functions in a workplace. This work is intended to expand the theory of how humor functions in an organization which was developed in my study of a hotel kitchen (Lynch, 1998) to form a theory of how humor creates and maintains an organization. In the first case study the theory of Structuration was an important undergirding for the analysis and formation of the organizational humor model. It was never, however, fully discussed in the text. This chapter expands on the earlier frame developed in the hotel kitchen to bring the discussion of Structuration Theory to the forefront while making the meta-theory influence of Structuration explicit. It reflects how my experience in the middle school led me to modify my humor theory and Structuration Theory in order to understand the middle school's organizing process. This chapter reflects on these

modifications to Structuration Theory based on my experience and analysis of the middle school. As a result it will present the modified theory upfront to aid the understanding of the three year case study that follows this chapter. The following chapter (Chapter VI) presents this model in praxis. The last chapter (Chapter VII) revisits the tailored Structuration theory presented here after case analysis has been analyzed. It uses it and expands upon it pointing to the model's contribution to organizational research and areas for future research.

Applying Structuration as a meta-theory to understand my experience was intended to be a flexible process in which Structuration Theory would bend to meet and help me understand my unique case study experience. When I attempted to remain true to Structuration precepts, I felt that they hindered my methodological aim of staying true to my experience. As I attempted during my experience to uncover the structural influences (especially, resources and power) with my conversation I realized, that by attempting to focus on the structural influence on my everyday experience and interaction, I lost focus on my immediate concern - full participation (therefore insight in case) of the everyday discourse. As a qualitative researcher, my first duty is to preserve the quality of the experience of my case study. As a result, I looked to revise my research approach and this led to modifying Structuration Theory to better appreciate experienced humor in action. This chapter presents this tailored Structuration Theory that is used as a meta-theory to inform the analysis of this ethnographic experience. In short, this chapter outlines my experience-based adaptation of Giddens' theory of Structuration. In refocusing my everyday humor analysis to be more sensitive to its organizational structural context, this adaptation presents a series of models of Giddens' theory for an organizational scope.

Before these models can be presented, it is important to have a clear conception of power in Structuration Theory. To aid this conception, I will examine the criticisms of Structuration research in order to match this criticism to my research experience and legitimize the basis for this adaptation of Structuration Theory.

Criticism of Structuration Theory: Focus on Power

The field of organizational communication is currently engaged in a re-examination of Structuration and its value as a meta-theory for organizational research, as evidenced by Conrad and Haynes' article in the *New Handbook of Organizational Communication* (2001) and Conrad's (1993) essay "Rhetoric/Communication as an Ontology for Structuration Research." In a later article Conrad uses Clegg (1989) to set up his critique of Giddens. In addition, Conrad expands Clegg's critique by suggesting that Giddens' linguistic ontology should be opened to a communication or rhetorical ontology. This addition to Clegg's critique facilitates a refocus of Structuration power studies from a communication research perspective. In the *New Handbook* essay Conrad and Hayes (2001) examine organizational communication field adoption of Giddens through the framework developed in Clegg (1989) and in Conrad's 1993 article. This section is attempt review the core ontological criticism of Structuration research in order to reassess the ontological criticism within the context of my research/experienced limitation of Structuration. It will link the limitations in the application of Structuration I discovered in my ethnographic experience to the ontological criticisms of the Structuration Theory. The following discussion will consider for ways to overcome the ontological inconsistencies that arise in the application of Structuration Theory.

Clegg (1989) argues that "[a] constant theme of the attempted synthesis [Giddens' Structuration] is to overcome the problem of adopting either too voluntaristic or too deterministic a position on social theory" (p. 138). As the purpose of Giddens' theory is to avoid this dualism, it seems like a strange critique of Structuration should allow for both of these frames simultaneously if it is to report accurately on the duality of action and structure. Ironically, Structuration research has had difficulty in achieving the balance or true synthesis between the opposing terms. Structural research, like Marxism, can slip into determinism, where individual actions are heavily constrained by their structures. Or the researcher can over-focus on the agent as a free actor, where individuals validate the structures that bind them, and, as a result, all constraint is self-

imposed. The vital action-structure duality is lost if one uses either a deterministic view or volunteeristic view too heavily.

If a Structuration theorist or researcher privileges either power position, volunteered based power system or structural, he/she also loses the most useful aspect of Structuration - the ability to explain the process of how agents create/transform structure, and how at the same time structural influences can create/transform change in interactions and actions. Hence maintaining the paradox of power in which both aspects of power frames must be balanced through incorporating both volunteered and deterministic aspects of both action and structure is at the core of good Structuration research. Clearly one of the central challenges to Giddens and those applying Theory of Structuration is to simultaneously reconcile both of these aspects of power.

As such, Giddens and other Structuration researchers seem to attempt to ride the fence, but never quite get it right (Clegg, 1989), because to achieve the look of balance they have to accept the contradictory baggage of each perspective. The power paradox of Structuration can be reconciled on a theory level, but this obstacle manifests itself when it is used to understand observed and experienced contexts. As Giddens does not apply his theory to any organized observational/experienced contexts, his theory can maintain itself in the face of this paradox. It should be noted that Clegg (1979, 1989) argues that even on a theoretical level Giddens doesn't resolve what he calls the "power problem" (that I have termed power paradox). Clegg argues that "Giddens' resolution to the problem in his conception of power is one in which the agency perspective is dominant" (1989, p. 140).

When applied or 'tested' the difficulty of maintaining the power paradox becomes evident. The principal consideration of Conrad (1993, 2001) and Clegg (1989), whose criticism of Giddens is essentially a power-focused criticism, is that determinism and volunteerism are constructs which implicate power. As researchers apply Giddens, they slip into a particular bias toward power that influences their adaptation of Giddens. Giddens unfortunately doesn't help in managing this paradox, because he does not offer a method with which to maintain the integration of both of these power systems

simultaneously. The problem starts with Giddens' theory, but is exaggerated when applied to observational contexts.

Conrad and Hayes (2001) cluster organizational communication research using this problematic tendency of organizational communication to privilege either action or agent-determined power (thus risking overemphasis on voluntarism) over structure and those privileging structure or resource power (thus risking overemphasis on determinism) over action. Theoretically adapting Structuration to organizational communication research should reduce this privileging tendency. However, as the early calls for Structuration in organizational communication were presented directly as an alternative to the functionalist perspective (Riley 1983), or took form within the interpretive research turn, for example Poole and McPhee's¹ article on climate in *Communication and Organizations: An Interpretative Approach* (Putnam & Pacanowsky 1983). Conrad (2001, p.58) argues that even though Poole and McPhee (1983) conceptually maintain the duality of Structuration in their application to method and analysis they demonstrate an actionist bias.

Conrad and Hayes, on the other hand, do not point out Poole and McPhee's 1983 implications for future research (discussed as impetus for this research), which clearly points to the desire for future application (expanding the 1983 work) to fully integrate the duality of structure and action into methodology and application of research. The 'Integrative school of Structuration' research followed this charge, and as Conrad and Hayes note (Folger and Poole, 1983; McPhee, 1985; Poole, 1983, 1985; Poole, Seibold and McPhee, 1985, 1996; Laird-Brenton, 1993; Bastien, McPhee and Bolton, 1995), has progressively developed and has begun to "examine the ways in which action is guided and constrained by the structural process and the ways in which action reproduces and/or transforms those guidelines and constraints" (Conrad and Hayes, 2001, p.58). However, they conclude that even though these steps of integration of action and structure in organizational research have been taken, the integrative perspective "might still slide into an actionist extreme" (p. 59). This is an important point to be mindful of, because it is a natural tendency for communication scholars to privilege agency.

As the section discusses, this research project uses the integrative perspective as a starting base for research and attempts to avoid sliding into either extreme. Though this extremism is unavoidable to some degree, being conscious of influences that push your work in one direction can hopefully limit the effect. In order to accomplish this I will revisit Conrad's power-related critique (1993) and the major criticisms of Structuration Theory. I will outline each of these criticisms and provide details where I experienced them throughout my research. I will borrow directly from Conrad (1993), who provides a good foundation in the literature for each criticism.

The first criticism of Giddens' work is that "the concept of the duality of structure does not resolve the conceptual problems inherent in perspectives that posit a dualism between human action and social structure" (Conrad, 1993 p.198). Giddens has been criticized for not providing an account of everyday action as a complex micro-process of how individual acts produce and reproduce and transform social structures. Though it has been suggested that this is a result of the scope of Giddens' theory, Conrad argues that it goes beyond scope and reflects a linguistically-grounded conception of human interaction versus a communicatively-grounded one. This observation by Conrad is important and is extended further in the next section, in which a communication ontology instead of a linguist structuralism is used as a starting point to reexamine Giddens action components role within the process of Structuration.

During my research, I attempted to link everyday action to structures I found when studying the everyday communication of the middle school. However, I found that focusing on structure as an outcome or influence (as in the example provided earlier of the CEO) became a distraction. As I attempted to pull out the structure within everyday action, I began to lose the distinctiveness of the action. Every time I reflected on actions within the context of structure, or tried to envision structure, I would become further and further removed from the raw experiences. Perhaps even more disturbing was that the more I looked for the structure in humor, the less social (not to mention less funny) the humor became. My application of Giddens made me realize that the search

for structure in action made the action structure duality collapse into the process of structural induction.

Ironically, this study, unlike other integrative research, is prone to slide to a deterministic extremism rather than the more common actionist one. This tendency is due to the process of emerging structural understanding that I utilized within The Prep case study. The emergent process of pulling out structure from organizational experience pushed me to overfocus on constraint. Also my position as a newcomer in the organization at first might have led me to overfocus on constraint because I did not possess the sufficient organizational know-how to enact my will. Upon entering and for my first year in The Prep, the structure was unclear to me and how the structure constrained my own actions and those of others was also unclear to me. I found that the very nature of this puzzle, and of attempting to pull out the features of these constraints, placed unusual pressure on me. This pressure was resolved immediately by turning to the most salient aspect of structural experience, the deterministic frame of authoritative power. Organizational power as consciously experienced is top-down rather than bottom-up, because people can focus on the power that restricts them more easily than the power they themselves (consciously or unconsciously) wield, accept or build. For example, when the Headmaster of The Prep laid off a few teachers, he explained his decision to the faculty not as an exercise of personal power, but as the product of constraint, in that his hands were tied by budgetary realities and the wishes of the School's Board; he claimed to have had no choice. The saliency of constraint can be seen as the Head frames his exercise of power as a constraint. It has been my experience that organizational agents at all levels can immediately point to an authoritative constraint (what limits are placed on them by hierarchical or resource demand), yet they find it more difficult to articulate how they as agents form and experience organizational constraints. Thus the deterministic model of power is more accessible in early stages of the emergent process, and if one is not careful, can dominate the emergent understanding of constraint.

My prior research experience and the social context of this project also made this research favor a deterministic frame of power. As noted earlier, this case study is an attempt to extend a previous case study of humor in a kitchen. Consequently, there is no way to avoid the influence of ‘structure’ as experienced within the first research context. This is problematic because within the first case study of the Kitchen, structure (as framed by Structuration Theory) was never consciously explored, nor articulated beyond the management’s attempt to control labor power of the kitchen staff. Organizational power was conceived as labor power. Therefore power was a personal resource, and was contested by two opposing forces - the chefs and the organization’s management. I myself was a chef in the kitchen and experienced organizational power as an external force attempting to constrain my own person and potential. Organizational power in the kitchen was therefore viewed by the members as an extension of hierarchical authority (formal authority). Like in the military the “chain of command” had direct influence over the process of work and the struggle of individuation (personal identity) in the work. For the chefs felt demeaned over “production of food” (versus artist cooking) and this dehumanization explained a large part of the perceived conflict of interests between personal contentment and management demands.

Equally difficult to ignore is the influence of the humor case study literature, which frames power from a deterministic perspective. Chapter II argued that in the existing case study literature humor is considered to ultimately function as an informal mechanism of control. The kitchen case study I conducted attempted to expand the view of humor to include resistance humor. However, even though the kitchen case study expanded understanding of the role of humor within the dialectics of control and resistance, power was still viewed on the organizational level (top down). Though humor was used to resist and change organizational power, it was not used (or not experienced) to create organizational power for the workers themselves. In short, the deterministic view of power had a strong influence on the first case study of the kitchen, and would unless I was careful influence my experience and understanding of structure at The Prep.

Conrad's second criticism is that Giddens theory is "excessively voluntaristic/subjective" (1993, p. 199). People are viewed as knowledgeable and active agents enacting structures, so in order to explain control (while avoiding determinism), the actors are assumed to volunteer to the structures that bind them extremely readily (it is part of being an actor). When volunteerism is taken too far, the result is that all structural constraints are seen as completely self-imposed and personal. Viewing structural constraints as voluntary constraints has two major problems. First, it negates the ability to explore why agents' access or possession of resource power is not equally distributed. Second, it does not provide a frame to understand how power is transformed, created and maintained beyond individual choice. The volunteerism, power-biased Structural approach in communication studies becomes untenable because it glosses over the labor struggles that are for many people an unwelcome necessary reality. If I suggested to my friend, a single mother who works over sixty hours week, that perhaps the constraints she feels are self-imposed I feel she would be justified ignoring my perception of her reality. Put this example and the control of economic forces on our own labor choices aside, a purely volunteeristic frame also limits the role of the group and organization (for the individual and for the society) because the production of power and personal identity in these intermediate climates is ignored.

Modeling Organizational Structuration

Adapting the complexity of Structuration Theory to frame my personal organizational experience required a sensitivity to the tendency of slipping into extremism, in my case that of determinism. To avoid this tendency, it was necessary to develop a method that afforded full focus on everyday interaction experiences, and then, at a later date, to be able to link these interactions to organizational structures as they emerged. I could allow structural understanding to emerge via the process of experiencing the organization, and this would reduce the unfortunate tendency to overstructure my experience of action. Overstructuring action occurred when a priori or incomplete comprehension of structure was used to interpret actions as they were being

experienced. The central challenge of this research process was to stay as open to the experience as possible, while being able to relate the experience to structural components of the organization.

I required a practical process that allowed me to experience openly then analyze the experience as Structuration. I needed to maintain the value of both action and structure, but not lose the action due to my desire to understand it in context of structural influences. I also could not lose sight of the structural influences due to my over focus on the everyday actions. The central challenge to Structuration theory research is the classic problem in social science research where a researcher is forced to choose between over-generalization (which to remedy requires a focus on the experiences of the middle school) and over-concretization (which to remedy requires a focus on the theory and goal of the study). My challenge was to adopt both of these remedies simultaneously.

To do this I decided to concentrate on my everyday experiences. Throughout this process, I paid particular attention to humor as interaction. This permitted direct attention to an everyday event without getting lost in the sheer force of the everyday. Based on the success of my first humor study (Lynch, 1998), I first focused on recognizing 'humor episodes', either specific actions that due to their hilarity or organizational significance distinguished themselves, or patterns of humor used routinely that over time formed humor rituals. At a later date I would place these episodes in an adapted model of Structuration, attempting to reflect on the role the action had within the organizational structure. To recapitulate the process, I would focus on humor as a communicative action and attempt to note the observed effect it had on the social environment and organizational structure over time. At a latter date I used a model (which also was adapted based on this process) to help interpret my understanding within a theoretical frame of Structuration.

The idea of modeling the structuring process of interaction came from Jonathan Turner's *A Theory of Social Interaction* (1988). Turner argues that the notion of "modeling" is ambiguous in social science. To avoid this problem he defines it as "the

visual representation in space of variables and their interrelationships . . . it is useful to construct a model delineating relevant classes of variables and their most relevant classes of variables and their most important casual relationships” (1988, p. 17). I will adopt a similar definition of modeling as the visual representation of variables and their interrelationships to construct a model of the organizational process within the context of space and time.

Turner (1988), as a “practical theory building” exercise, calls for temporarily ignoring the gap between micro and macro theory, or seeking ways to plug the apparent gap. Instead, he suggests that researchers turn their focus to social interaction. Turner argues, as Simmel does, that basic unit of sociology should be interaction, not action. He believes that Parson’s (1937) focus on action made this error, and Turner’s goal is to address this oversight in Parson’s theory of social action. Turner’s goal is to integrate individual motivations and interaction into the frame of social structure. He thus divides interactional study into three processes: motivational process, interactional process and structuring process. Turner then models early and contemporary theories within each of these properties, and searches for synthetic properties within each. Ultimately, Turner builds a model that is a theoretical synthesis of all three. Turner presents this model with the expressed goal of future testing and modification by theorist.

Though I found Turner’s text extremely valuable conceptually, I diverge from his research interest in two key areas: the motivation for research and the interaction process of research. Tuner’s ultimate motivation for forming a theory is to “formulate abstract laws about the basic properties of the universe, including the social universe. These laws articulate the relationship among variables processes in the universe; and while mathematical languages can specify relationships more precisely [also see Turner 1984] we will have to limp along with words, at least for the time being” (Turner, 1988, p. 17). Ultimately, Turner’s models and approach to modeling social interaction reflect his ontological basis in postivism, where social life is thought to reflect the supposed predictability and order of the natural universe. My goal is the opposite of Turner’s; I wish to model humor as an interaction and understand the roles of the Structuration

process of the organization. The model I present is not to be modified based on testing (in hope of gaining a systematic elimination of extraneous variables that do not contribute to theoretical explanation) but to be experienced and adapted to fit the unique social life of groups and organizations.

Turner's research process for forming a theory is clearly laid out in his strategy for research:

My strategy is simple. (1) I define a generic property of the social universe, which in the present case is social interaction; (2) Construct a broad synthesizing scheme to denote its fundamental elements; (3) develop an analytical model to delineate the operative process for each of these elements; and (4) articulate abstract laws that express the relations among these operative process (Turner, 1988, p. 13)

Turner does not base his positivist models on observation of the social world, but on the theoretical foundation of social theory. His models represent the first step of the scientific process, generating a hypothesis to be tested. His focus on interaction is abstract and "practical" and therefore he claims no experience-based input (in fact he argues that direct experience and observation are distractions). My modeling process, however, is based on the interactional process of research, the duality of experience and theory. Experience becomes the foundation of how I reexamine the relationship between variables. I present a Structuration-based model that can be used to help reflect on experience through a structuring frame. This model is then re-drawn to better reflect humor as organizational interaction and, most importantly, to understand humor and interactions as they are experienced.

In short, Turner believes that sociology should be studied as a natural science (also see Turner 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986). He believes that social interaction involves an "invariant process that always exists when people interact" (Turner 1988, p. 12). While I believe that social, organizational interaction exists when people interact (within context of structural resources), I believe that the process is never consistent or preset to a certain range of conditions, but is complex and varied. This complex interaction can be

framed (i.e. using a meta theory of Structuration) to understand better, but can never be fully captured.

Adapting Giddens' Structuration Theory to Organizational Experience

To study Structuration of a social system is to study the ways in which that system, via the application of generative rules and resources, and in the context of unintended outcomes, is produced and reproduced in interaction (Giddens 1979, p.66).

Giddens' Structuration Theory is theory of mutual influence of agency and structure. Giddens argues to understand the connection between human action and structural explanation for action requires a “ theory of human agent, or of subject; an account of conditions and consequences of action; and an interpretation of ‘structure’ as somehow embroiled in both those conditions and consequences” (1979, p.49). Giddens therefore sets up the pivotal idea of the agent acting within a structure, influenced by it and creating it simultaneously. Giddens adds two other considerations he claims are “vital” to the theorization of agent and structure, that of temporality (time and space) and power.

The inclusion of time and space as constructs that underpin every aspect and social interaction within the social process of Structuration is generally viewed as one of the main advantages of Structuration Theory as a meta-theory frame. Banks and Riley (1993), who argue the importance of focusing on action, argue that from a communication research perspective, time and space are the essential element to Giddens theory.

While we reiterate our belief that each of Giddens ideas is equally essential to an understanding of Structuration Theory as a whole, the entire project rests crucially on theorizing the realization between action in the here and now and the reproduction of institutional contexts, practices and expectations that stretch out across potentially (and increasingly) vast time spans (1993, p. 175).

Turner also argues that time and space are central components of structuring, in the notion of “rationalization, which stresses the significance of ordering actors in space for

the maintenance of interaction across time” (1988, p. 148). This is an important conceptual lead for developing a more comprehensive model of the structuring process.

Giddens’ understanding of power, as discussed earlier, has been universally less well received, though understood as a crucial element in his theory. To understand the structuration process one must also focus on power, particularly how power is manifested and influenced in the social process. Before Structuration can be modeled, a closer look at Giddens’ conception of power is therefore warranted. Giddens combines Weber’s and Parson’s definition of power; as a result, power fits into the daily discourse of actors as they negotiate their actions becoming structures. Weber argues that power is the agent’s capability to achieve his/her will², while Parson argues that power is property of the collective (Giddens 1979). Thus as actors we are capable of exercising free will, yet confined to the perceived power wielded by others. Giddens termed this the duality of structure. In other words, due to the importance of perceived dependencies (not lack of capabilities) on each other, people are not able to act as freely as their will may desire. As a result, the concept of purely free will is difficult for us as social animals. If power is realized via resources, as Giddens claims, “resources are the media through which power is exercised, and structures of domination are reproduced” (1979, p. 91). These resources (both physically resources, such as money, and/or social resources, such as friendship or acceptance) in praxis shape the individual’s perception of capability to exercise their will. As a result the power to exercise your will is based on your capability and the perceived will of the collective.

Individuals can contribute to this structure of power by direct compliance with the rules, or as unintended agents of power, restricting others’ actions by their unwillingness to disrupt routine and suffer possible recourse. It is important to note that it is because of this unintended web of dominance that even though we desire resources, Giddens’ system of power is not only agent motivated but also simultaneously collectively enforced (hence Giddens’ view is like Marx in that power is a collective system of mutual reinforced power). He balances collective power over individuals (determinism) with individual compliance to this power (volunteerism) and therefore he

makes the case that individuals are not determined but participate in their own domination by maintaining their imprisonment (Weber's iron cage) through their daily actions.

In order to model this duality of structure I will use my language and simplify Giddens with the hope of not losing the complex relationship that is the duality of action and structure. I will also adapt Giddens to fit the context of organizations, as this is the scope of my research concern. When diagramming a process I find it helpful to first imagine the process as a metaphor, because metaphors can capture the dynamic nature of a process better than an illustration. For example, the chef handled the puff pastry with the grace of a rodeo bull (though the chef's practices are not connected to a bull, the image allows the reader to play a scene in her head of a chef clumsily overworking and destroying the delicate pastry). Once a metaphor is attached to a process, and this process is illustrated, the metaphor's dynamic power can be transferred to the diagram.

I envision Structuration (experienced in the present) as a calm ocean. This calm sea is the product of two great energies crashing, like two great tidal waves meeting in the middle of immense space to form a vast body of water. Each wave gives and takes the energy of the other equally to instantly form a placid, calm, surface. What is remarkable about the image is not the energy of the waves or crash, but the amount of energy it takes to create a calm body of water. Imagine a boat placed on the sea just after this collision: it would experience the calm with little regard to the amount of energy that went into forming it. The boat's experience of the calm is maintained by the continuous forces of the tidal waves crashing into each other (this is illustrated in figure 4). If the force on either side were to abate, the calm sea would cease to exist. In Structuration, waves represent the separate but continuous energies, as structure and action collide to form a mutually sustainable fusion. They are a mutually sustaining fusion because each energy renews the other, and, without the other as counterforce, each of these energies would dissipate into nothing. If the tidal waves did not meet, each great wave would travel unhindered until its momentum dissipated into a trickle. In Structuration, the structure cannot be maintained if it is not acted out in the present and

the actions and interactions become meaningless unless structured by routine. Thus the two energies are the medium and outcome of each other; Giddens termed this relationship a duality.

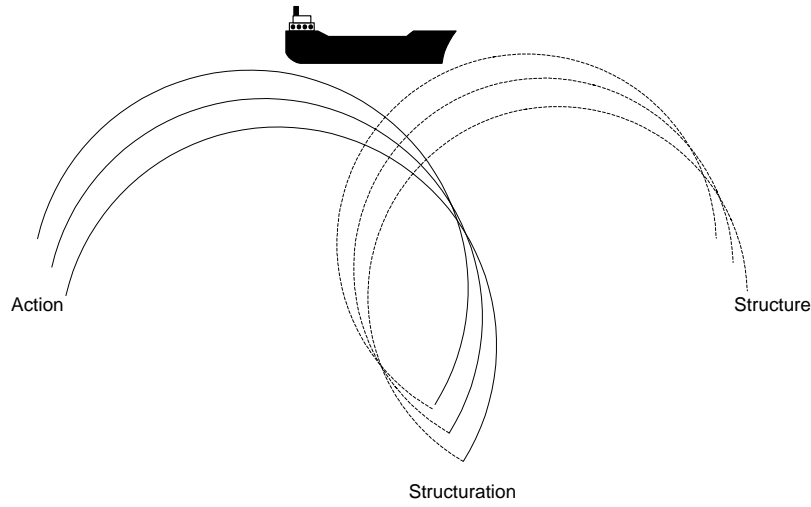


FIGURE 4
Structuration as Metaphor

Each one of these waves (action or structure) has two components. To extend the metaphor further, the waves' momentum is a function of mass and acceleration. When these two components (mass and acceleration) come together, the components become indistinguishable. For example, when you are hit by a wave, you are not affected by only the weight of the water or its speed but the combination of the two.

The following Structuration diagram (Figure 5) will display elements of both structure and action. Each of these will have two components: organization schemes and vehicles. *Organizing schemes* are organizational schemes of categorization. These schemes are based on routinely-used organizing categories. The schemes are based on a body of cultural and contextual stock knowledge. Culture is learned by being a member of a society, while contextual stock knowledge is the result of being part of an organization, each person having their own particular stock of knowledge and practice used to organize their structures and actions. *Vehicles* are organizational driving forces. They are the routinization of organization's apparatus (i.e. norms or resources) that connect the everyday interactions across time and provide a sense of predictability. Within the school, the timetable of the school year acted as a vehicle to give direction and momentum to the everyday interactions. The school year is in a constant seasonal cycle, from registration to graduation. The purpose of the school year as a vehicle is experienced differently for different agents, for students it is acquiring a set of skills to graduate a grade and move on to the next grade for the teachers it is completing the syllabus and goals of the year. The everyday performance of the school (the driving force of the calendar and goals with the everyday process of sense making) is what gives the school year (and school) purpose. To review, it is the vehicle (force) and schemes (organizing) of the components of action and structure, acting together, that form the dual process of Structuration (see Figure 5).

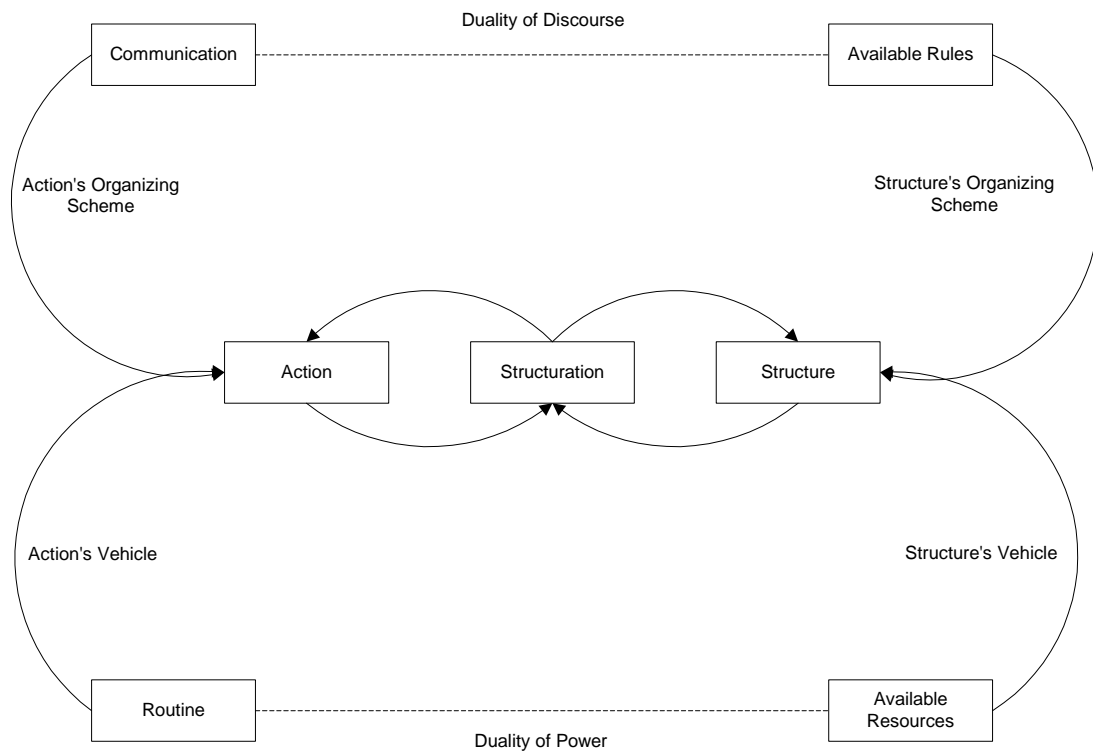


FIGURE 5
Giddens' Structuration Theory

The following paragraphs are to be read while referencing the diagram in Figure 5; the italicized words in the following text represent a labeled part of the Structuration diagram. This diagram of Structuration can be seen as the mutually sustaining fusion or duality of action and structure. Within this fusion, structure and action are both simultaneously maintained and created. *Structure* and *action* bring their components to the fusion (just like two waves crashing into each other would bring their respective mass and acceleration); *rules* and *resources* combine to form structure; while *communication* and *routines* (practices for obtaining resources and maintaining personal connections within organization) combine to form action.

Within a professional kitchen the structure would be the stock of organized available routines and rules for the members, for example the schedule, hierarchies, strict quality measures for job performance, and menu demand. As well as the available resources that are needed for job requirements for example tools, facilities, training and scheduled help from others.

Action within the kitchen is when the agents of the kitchen (the kitchen staff, wait staff and management), communicating and organizing within the present time and space of the organization. Within an organization (unlike Giddens' society level Structuration), communication ranged from formal communication (a patron's dinner order slip) to informal discourse between chefs. Organizing routines of the agents are actions taken in the present in pursuit of available resources, for example getting necessary ingredients, securing overtime, ensuring that the right amount of staff or help is available, or complying with management on special dishes, or, most important, organizing help from fellow workers to complete tasks (the informal processes of greasing each others pans; otherwise things would never get done). Once again, like communication within an organizational context, there are formal and informal organizing routines. As the agents work, they form mutual reliance and expectations upon each other to function effectively in the organization.

Modeling Giddens' Structuration Theory for Organizational Context.

When looking at the diagram of Giddens Structuration model (Figure 5) it is still difficult to get a sense of this Structuration in practice, that is to envision Giddens' Structuration as a process. Giddens intends his theory to be seen as a dynamic process theory, which is why he included and placed such high value on three factors governing structure, action and the process of Structuration; time and space, unintended consequences, and power. All three of these aspects need to be integrated to accurately model the process of Structuration.

For the purpose of this adaptation of Giddens to an organizational level, a fourth factor, that of the nature of organizations, also needs to be integrated. Focusing on organization components allows the Structuration process to be adapted to fit

organizational structures and communications, for example specific reference to organizational communication practices (formal and informal), resources, organizing routines and organizational rules.

Time and space situates the process of Structuration. Giddens would suggest that to reduce time and space to organizational scope is not only impractical but also overly simplistic. Time and space as part of the process of Structuration go far beyond the scope of the organization because they represent categories (Kant would argue *a priori* categories) of sense making for all humans. As a result, this adaptation of Structuration will have an organizational scope in terms of physical time and space, yet the epistemological function of time and space will also be assumed as an additional and principal component of time and space.

Ultimately, regardless of the scope in which Structuration Theory is being applied, it should be recognized that power is the medium and outcome of the Structuration process. Giddens uses the term '*duality of power*' to describe power as the integration of free will and the constraints surrounding actions for resources. However, it is important to recognize that power as part of the Structuration process goes far beyond acting for resources. It also reflects how the process of duality of power is a communication process. When we act within the context of resources, we also communicate with others. Every organizational communication is within the context of available resources and rules, and underscores access to resources and the ability to exercise free will. For example, within the case study of the school I could never talk to my fellow teachers in the school without recognizing on some level my consideration (conscious or unconscious) of his or her influence over valued resources. These resources included positive personal friendships at work, help in covering classes, expertise of the job, job load, or in my case, access for research. Apart from access for research, every teacher is dependent on me for similar resources. As a result, every communication has intended and unintended effects on resources accessibility. In organizations the more formal the position a person has over another, the more he or she becomes conscious of the resources available to the position.

As the above example illustrates, we limit and achieve our and others' capabilities through intended and unintended communication that surrounds resources, routines and rules. I will re-label this duality of power to be more sensitive to the communication process for the remainder of this work. Instead of duality of power, the new term that will be used is *organizational capabilities*. Capabilities are both individual and collective within an organization. They are the ability each member has of exercising his/her free will, and of achieving a desired resource. The degree that the latter constrains the former defines the agent's sense of capability; this is why even a C.E.O can legitimately feel as constrained as a shop floor worker.

To undertake this adaptation of Structuration requires not only integrated time and space, power, unintended consequences as well as organizational components, but also drawing out the relationship between the vehicles and organizational schemes with organizational context in mind. Doing this requires a three step process, each model building on the previous model in an attempt to clarify the Structuration process within an organization. Each of the individual following three models has numbered parts. Each model is followed by numbered paragraphs; these paragraphs correspond to the numbers on models and will explain each part of the model and how they relate to each other as a whole.

Model 1 Structuration in Organizational Context. The illustration of Structuration (Figure 6) shows the components of Structuration and their relation to each other in process; however, it is devoid of context. Context requires a time and space element and for the purpose of this work is adapted to the organizational level. Model 1 below takes the first step of understanding Structuration in context.

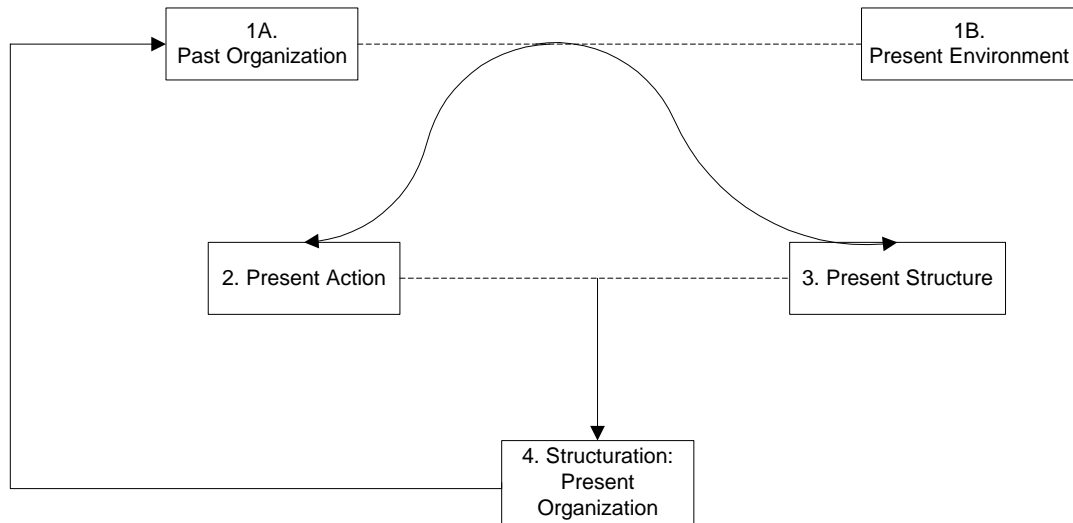


FIGURE 6
Model 1: Giddens' Structuration in Organizational Context

In Model 1 of Structuration in organizational context (Figure 6), the dotted line represents a continuum between past organization (1.a) and current market condition 1.b). As it is a continuum, either one of these ends (1.a or 1.b) can have the overriding influence on the present action (2) and present structure (3). The Structuration process (4) is the synthesis of the present action (2) and the present structure (3). This Structuration process (4) is the present organization. To clarify this process, each one of these parts (1.a, 1.b, 2, 3 and 4) will be elaborated on in the following text.

1.a. Past Organization. An existing organization is a cluster of routines, rules and expected resources that have been structured over time. Past organizational routines, practices, categories of sense making, dialogues and narratives form the basis for present members' actions, and for how the members experience the structure.

1.b. Market Condition. An organization is designed to satisfy market demand. The market demands place expectations upon ways in which the organization satisfies these demands. However, the organization also places expectations on the market for how it will supply its product or service. An organization with no market demand will not

longer exist. A market demand (either for a product or service) that is not met with a consistently organized supply will search for another organization to fill demands, or will find alternative, more reliable products or services. Ideally, both the organization and market want to find an equilibrium point at which an established supply of product and/or service has a consistent market demand.

Once the equilibrium is established, the past organizing routines become the basis for present structure and action. The market demand becomes consistent enough to become mundane, and as such is no longer considered, except in the context of the routine used to fill the demand. For example, I was sitting in a Starbucks typing this chapter, and at any time I could look up and see a customer's demands being supplied by the organization. Person X ordered a Venti (large) Carmel macchiato, the order taker shouts the drink to the coffee maker. The customer's order is shouted back to the order taker to confirm the order was received. The order taker charges customers, takes the form of payment and gives change if needed. Two minutes later, the maker shouts the name of the completed drink so person X picks it up and leaves. This illustrates that when the demand for the product is consistent enough, it becomes routine³. Starbucks' model and customers' demand rely on the reality that the product and service demand is met exactly the same way all over the world.

As the Starbucks example illustrates, past organization practices become the basis for which the present structure and action comply with the market demand. Though the energy or reason for the process of Structuration is the market demand, the organizational Structuration process is influenced more by past organization routines. In the extreme case, an organization can exist for years based on assumed market demand or organizations may be so over-influenced by past organization's practices that they lose an entire space with the current market. This is why in the Figure 6 the origination point for present structure and action is closer to past organizational than current market conditions. I maintain that it is only in very strange or extreme circumstances (that can not be sustained for long on an organizational level) that current market conditions influence Structuration more than past organizing routines.

2. *Present Action of Organization.* Giddens uses Heidegger's foundations time as his basis for framing present action where every existence is a 'be-ing' in time, in the present (without present there is no being). Heidegger and Giddens stress that the present is not succession of presents but an "interpolation of memory and anticipation in the present-as-Being. Neither time nor the experience of time are aggregates of 'instances.'" (Giddens, 1979, p.55). This is important because the concept of action is born in this concept of being. The present time forms a 'be-ing' that is not in the past or future acts but flow of acts. "Action and agency, as I use it, thus does not refer to a series of discrete acts combined together, but a continuous flow of conduct" (Giddens, 1979. p. 55).

3. *Present Structure of Organization.* The concept of "present" as an aspect of structure is essential to understand Giddens' full conception of structure. By suggesting that structure is in the present and has a past, Giddens adopts Levi-Strauss' notion of structure and expands upon the positivist structures of Comte and Spencer. Giddens and Strauss' structure exists in the "instance". It is alive and forming in the present; without the present instance there is no structure. However Giddens expands Strauss by suggesting that structure forming is transformational (not only production and reproduction but also change) and a constant part of structure, in that structures do not transform but are transforming, and as such power, as a medium of transforming, is introduced as a central part of the structure. Hence the present structure can be defined by its structuring properties, "I argue that these properties can be understood as the rules and resources recursively implicated in the reproduction of the social system" (Giddens 1979, 64).

4. *Structuration: Present Organization.* Present action is the continuous conduct of actors in the organizational contexts. As a result, these actions are situated in the process of organizing and influence intentionally and unintentionally the present structures of the organization.

The model of Structuration in organizational context (Model 1) is unfortunately too simple to illustrate the process of Structuration in an organization. This is primarily because the complex relationship between the components of action and structure are not

represented within the model's illustrated processes. The present organization (number 4 in Model 1) represents the Structuration process; it is formed by the interaction of structure and action. This Structuration process consists of the duality of structure (rules and resources) and the duality of action (communication and routines). Within the Structuration process, the components of action and structure interact with every other component. Both components of action (communication and routines) influence and are influenced by each other, as well as influence the structural component (resources and rules).

In addition to the duality of action and structure are the duality of power and the duality of discourse. The duality of power is the interactional process of the vehicle of structure (resources) and the vehicle of actions (routines). The duality of discourse is the interactional process of organizing schemes of structure (rules) and the organizational schemes of action (communication). Structuration is the simultaneous hermeneutic influence of these duality relationships within the recursive patterns of structure through the continuous flow of conduct. It is how the present action and present structure, by the flow of conduct, becomes the immediate, reproduced past for the present.

It is important to note here that Giddens spends considerable energy delineating the components of structure (rules and resources); however, the components of action (communication and routines) are not clearly delineated or developed. A critique⁴ of Giddens is that he appropriates or leans excessively on the analogy of language (through the structuralist view) to explain the totality of action, both as communication and routines. This presents a problem when attempting to form a fully integrated (action and structure) application of Structuration. Because of this strong focus on the structuring properties of action (and the lack of focus on action components themselves), it is natural to fall into simplifying the process by considering action as a component for maintaining current structures versus a component essential for change and transformation. The discussion is designed to help articulate the different components of action, and how each is an essential component of the Structuration process.

The following diagram of Giddens Structuration Theory (Figure 7) helps illustrate not only the fusion (Structuration) of action and structure, but also the relationship between the components of structure and action. Within the fusion (combination of energies within a time and space) of structure and action the *organizing schemes* and *vehicles* of both action and structure interact to form dualities. Hence the organizing categories (rules) of the organization structure are combined, and inform the communication schemes of the agents. The agent's discourse is shaped and shapes the rules of the organization. This hermeneutic relationship is called the *duality of discourse*. The *duality of power* in the process of Structuration is that the actors are capable of exercising their free will, yet their free will is simultaneously confined. As a result, agents are motivated to act based on their dependency on available resources, and the perceived power wielded by others in the organization.

Clearly the theory of Structuration is more complex than a relationship between structure and action. Structure and action have two components (vehicles and organizing schemes) within each that form the duality of structure or action. Each of these components also forms dualities with the corresponding component of the other; for example, structure's vehicle (resource) interacts with action's vehicle (routines). These

four dualities are all present in the process of Structuration. The following diagram (Figure 7) illustrates these four dualities will be pulled out of the complex process of Structuration to make their relationship to each other clearer. Note, that this duality diagram (Figure 7) is not meant to replace the original (Figure 5) but for clarity's sake to illustrate the relationship of the four dualities. These four dualities will be discussed further in the following text using the number system in this diagram. This diagram is designed to be a quick reference for their relationship and to be referenced as the text is read.

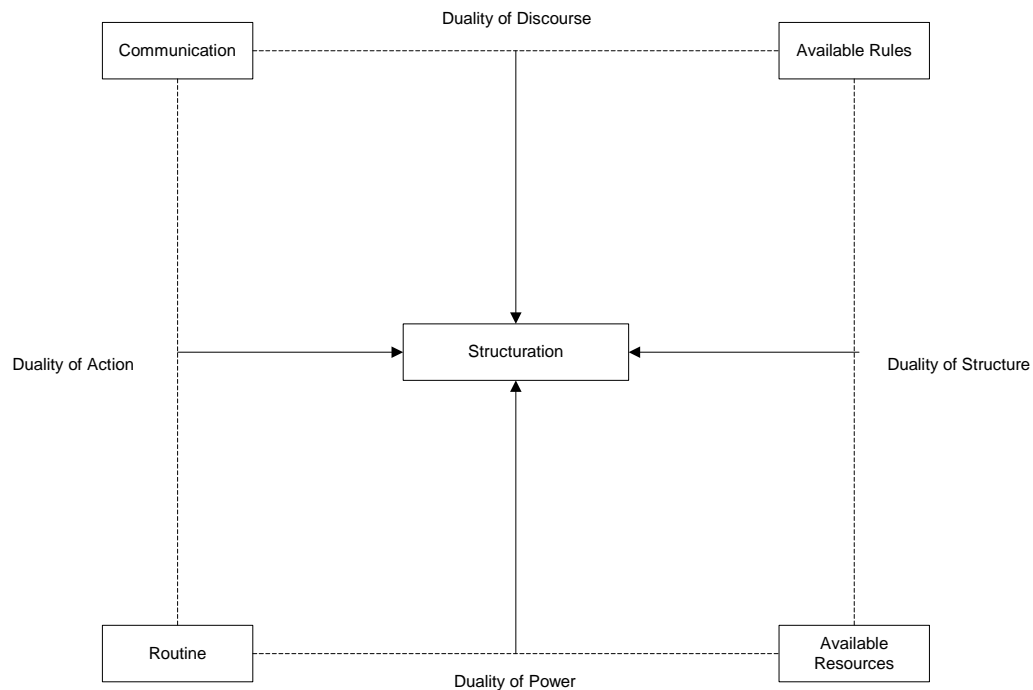


FIGURE 7
The Four Dualities in the Process of Structuration

Giddens goes to great lengths when writing on the components of structure (rules and resources) and/or action to focus on the opposite component force present in each. As a result, when he discusses structure it is as a structure in action, and when he

discusses action he focuses on the structuring properties of action. He does this to correct what he feels has been the oversight of past structural research (i.e. Parsons and his focus on structure) and action research (i.e. Goffman and his focus on the action process). As a result, Giddens wishes to convey that the structural and action relationship is present in all parts as well as the whole of the Structuration process. Before the Structuration process can be modeled, it is important to put particular focus on this aspect of each component. It is at the component level and the interrelationships within it that I believe the potential of adapting Giddens to an organizational level becomes evident. Within the discussion of each component, I will spell out these potentials as well as shortcomings to demonstrate how to better fit Giddens to the organizational scope and my organizational experiences.

Before beginning the discussion of each component of Structuration [6], it would be helpful to redraw model 1 of Structuration in an organizational context to include the four dualities of Structuration. Model 2 illustrates (Figure 8) Structuration as the synthesis of the four dualities within an organizational context. Action duality [2] is comprised of organizational scheme of communication [2a], and the action vehicle of routine [2b]. Structure duality [3] is comprised of organizational scheme of rules [3a], and the structural vehicles of resources [3b]. Duality of discourse [4] and the Duality of power [5] round out the four dualities in this model. It is important to note that all four dualities, action, structure, discourse and power are influenced by the current organizational context (the duality of the past organization [1a] and present market environment [1b]).

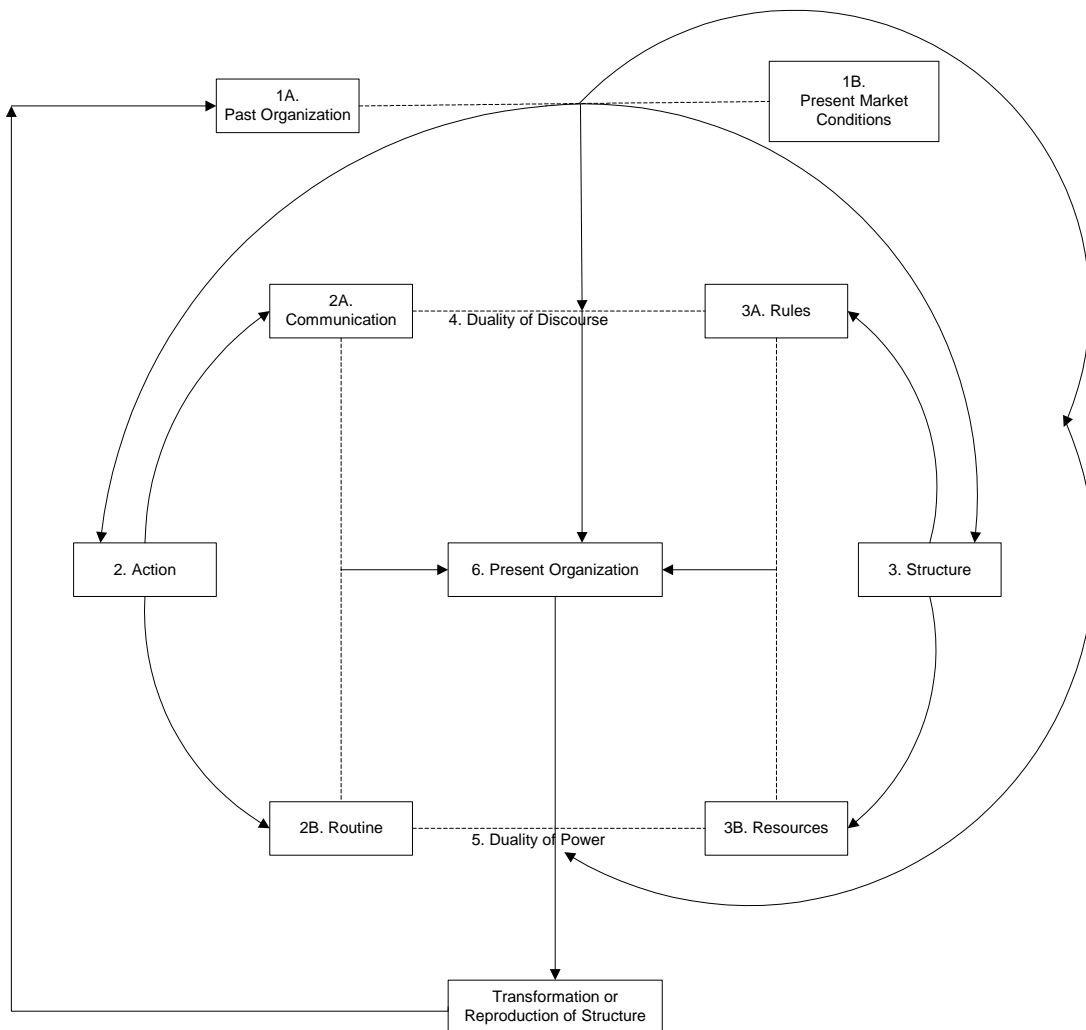


FIGURE 8
 Model 2: Structuration as the Synthesis of
 Four Dualities within Organizational Context¹

¹Please excuse the limitations of drawing models in two dimensions. It makes it impossible to connect Structuration [6] with its result transforming and/or reproduction of the organization [7] without unintentionally crossing one of the four dualities (in this cases duality of power [5]). The only connection between duality of power [5] and transforming and/or reproducing of the organization [7] is through process of Structuration [6] (in concert with all four dualities).

Action within the Structuration Process

Model 2 illustrates the Structuration process. From this model actions, as a component of Structuration, can be illustrated independently for the purposes of closer examination. The following Figure 9 represents the duality of action within the structuring process. All components of this model will be examined in the following sections; 2a will discuss action's organizing scheme--communication,--while section 2b will discuss Action's vehicle--routine.

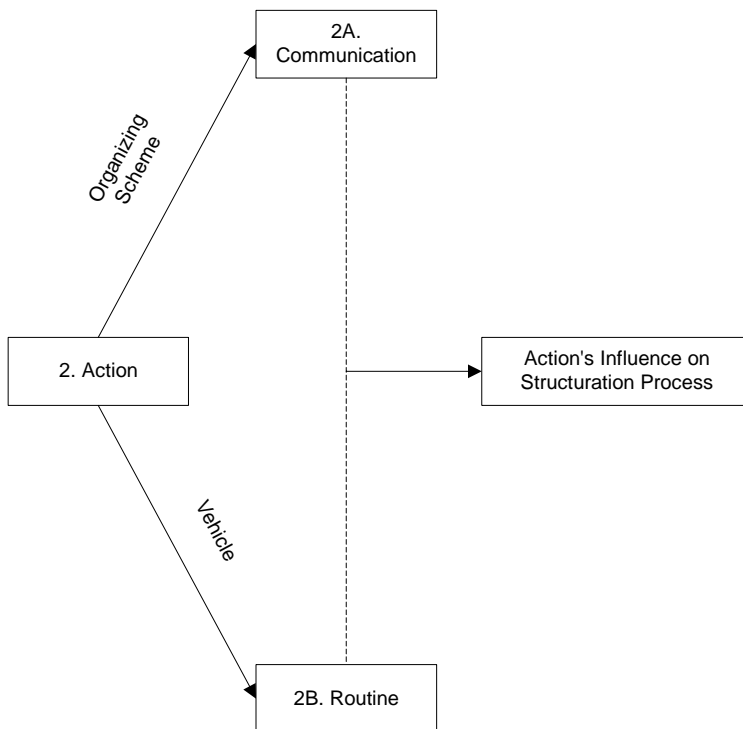


FIGURE 9
Action as a Duality in Organizational Structuration

2a. Action's Organizing Scheme: Communication. Giddens argues that meaning is a fundamental part of the process and form of sense making and communication; “as a medium of communication in interaction, language involves the use of interpretative schemes to make sense not only of what others say, but of what they mean: the constitution of ‘sense’ as an intersubjective accomplishment of mutual understanding in an ongoing exchange” (Giddens 1976, p.103). Through interaction and meaning making we also reproduce interpretative schemes. We maintain and rely on past-interpreted schemes to be understood and to understand.

Viewing communication as an interpretative scheme for providing the means of sense making, and the ability to communicate meaning explains the use and reproduction of interpretive schemes in interaction, but not how the stock knowledge⁵ that makes communication possible is produced or transformed. To explain this aspect of communication, Giddens stresses that communication is bounded by contexts, the structural components as well as space and time in which the structure and action are situated. It is the conditions and influences that the time, space and rules and resources put on communication that Giddens wishes to emphasize in his analysis of interaction. Communications are uttered with respect to what went before, and anticipation for what comes after, to have meaning. However, they are also bounded by structure and they are bounded by rules of what can and cannot be said (Giddens 1979, pp. 82-84). But rules of communication are not communication, and are not limited to prohibition and boundaries (what can and not be said). They also form, through the specialized language and discourse of the group, organization or society. This specialization of communication requires individual and group know how (see rules section following to understand significance of “know how”). The significance of know-how in communication is taken for granted and is only recognized when the nuance of “know how communication” is not conveyed and therefore requires explanation to understand (explanation that is tacit based and therefore frustrating to clarify). For example, on a general level when sarcasm is not picked up, or on a specialized level when a “private” joke is shared within “outsiders.”

Actors form meaning within social contexts as they communicate, but social contexts also limit and direct the way the actors communicate in forming this meaning. This is the structure-action dualism of communication. To explain this structure-action dualism Giddens (1976, 1979 1984) uses the allegory⁶ of language. For language to exist requires individuals to use it, yet the individuals, to be understood and to understand, need to employ the rules and structures of language. Giddens argues that language has interpretive schemes bonded to a structure, but to be understood this structure also requires everyday use to exist.

Giddens use of the language allegory has come under criticism (Bryant and Jary 1991, Clark 1980, Conrad 1993, Held and Thompson 1989) because in using language to explain how action is related to structure, Giddens seems to contradict himself. He consciously critiques and discards the structuralist linguistics of Chomsky and Strauss, but in explaining the process of action he adopts the grammatical relationships of the structuralists. The structuralist view of language provides an excellent account of how communication, action, and structure are related and dependent on each other. However, this view does not account for personal choice and the social construction of meaning - the choice of individuals to form meaning-making and agency. A structuralist view makes it difficult to acknowledge choice as a process of meaning. As a result, Giddens loses the transactional process necessary for the transformation to occur (Conrad 1993). This is why Conrad suggests that in order for Structuration Theory to be used as an ontology for communication research, it must first integrate within Structuration (or at least bring to the forefront) the ontology of communication and meaning-making over language and personal interaction.

The idea of structurally-bounded communication explains how communication is used within structures to make meaning, and also how communication in the everyday reproduces more of the like, communication. However, it does not explain how new communication meanings are produced, nor does it explain how communication forms maintain the schemes that place boundaries on current interaction. To answer the question of what binds current interaction, Giddens attempts to walk the line between

positivism and interpretivism⁷. Giddens simultaneously criticizes and praises both Durkheim and Goffman⁸. He criticizes Durkheim's understanding of suicide (1951) as lacking any mode of understanding suicidal behavior and the social interaction in which it is enmeshed. Giddens then argues that this is exactly what Goffman's institutional analysis is capable of doing. However, Giddens also criticizes Goffman's failure to understand the social conditions that form the behaviors of suicide. Thus, "Goffman's sociology, like Wittgensteinian philosophy, has not developed an account of institutions, of history or structural transformation" (1979, p. 81). As a result, Goffman is unable to provide an institutional theory of everyday life, and Durkheim is unable to provide the everyday life of members within the society.

To resolve this problem, Giddens leans on Garfinkle's ethnomethodology⁹ and actors' accountability to provide evidence of this process. Actors' accountable universe forms the basis of communication and Garfinkle's ethnomethodology provides the means with which to explain communication as structuring action. The collective interpretative schemes and stock knowledge needed to enact accountability is sustained in and through interaction. Giddens implies that Garfinkle's ethnomethodology research illustrates the process of how social order (thus structure) is created through communication. Giddens puts forward the link that just as social order is dependent on agents, so is structure, and therefore this dependency implies the duality of Structuration.

In organizational context or in small groups, the structural features that bind communication of members may be outside the organization itself, while simultaneously balanced by the idiosyncracies or individual discourse structures that are unique to the group. In the middle school study the board (a widely acknowledged outside entity) decided to restructure the school's administration. This change affected the discourse of the organization. These decisions were made by an outside entity; they had an effect on the group dialogue because of factors like mixed loyalties and personal acceptance of change. Hence within the group the study of daily group discourse requires deep understanding of the dynamics and influences of the group. As a result the theory of Structuration is only relevant to organization or group communication in so far as it can

be used in understanding both these realities, the strange blend of freedom and constraint in every interaction. Adopting the organization or group as level of analysis requires the recognition that these actions are embedded in a larger social order (society).

Organizational communication scholars are thus interested in understanding why and how people, through communication, form unique structures (interpersonal) within structures (groups) within structures (organizations) within structures (society). Here is the problem of adapting Structuration on the organization level, and moving beyond the neat dualism of interpersonal communication (action) and society (structure) of Giddens. Giddens would claim that this scope of research is irrelevant, as all interactions are encompassed within the in the duality of Structuration. However, as a result he loses the nuances of how individuals spend considerable effort (action) to create and maintain micro-structures and how these micro-structures, embedded in the macro-structure, create and maintain the unique communication forms of every organization.

Giddens' use of Garfinkle's ethnomethodology, though appropriate on the societal level, is difficult to translate to the organizational level. Turning to ethnomethodology as his explanation of how action is part of the duality of structure is a logical response for Giddens, but it should be noted that ethnomethodologies do not concern themselves with how the microstructure relates to the macrostructures, because regardless, it will be experienced by agents as practical activities, and thus the "why" is not important as the "how." As argued by Hilbert in his text *The Classical Roots to Ethnomethodologies*, "the size of structure is irrelevant to its capacity to regulate-indeed, to its very existence for empirical sociology" (1992 p 193).

Giddens' Structuration theory avoids this complexity of accounting for unique organizational communication patterns between individuals or within groups because in his theory, the two realities of communication and organizational structure are so distant that only broad connections are necessary. He illustrates this in his classic example of the relationship between language use and language structure. However, the process and nuances of these connections become difficult to explain. I believe the problem of Giddens' macro-micro scope, and his reliance on the ethnomethodological concept of

accountability, is an important consideration to be addressed in adapting his theory to organizations. For this reason (and to avoid confusion) I will use the term “organizational accountability,” rather than simply “accountability.” In adapting Giddens to organizational research concerns over his societal scope should be added to the language-ontological-based critique (Conrad 1993) as both provide credibility to the argument that communication is an essential part of Structuration process.

Another critique (that I sympathize with but am not ready to fully accept) that can be levied on Giddens Structuration Theory is that it neglects the action within his discussion of communication-action as a component of Structuration. Whether one focuses on Giddens’ use of language as an analogy (or ontology) or on his reliance on ethnomethodologies’ accountability to explain action as a structuring force, the result is still unfortunate and undesired. Action is an end, something resulting from structure, whose purpose is to provide energy and to maintain structure versus a process, something that is always creating, changing and maintaining structures. The result is that Giddens’ theory can illustrate how structure influences communication, but has difficulty illustrating the opposite relation of how action influences, forms, and transforms structure

Focusing on communication as a component of action brings to the forefront the process of meaning making as part of the Structuration process. Giddens discusses meaning making, and in his later works places more focus on individual identity (Giddens 1991), but he still subordinates his discussion of these to the process of action as structurally constrained. Giddens mainly focuses on the language in use within context of structural rules and resources versus structures of meaning (Mumby 1987). As a result, the process of meaning making, self-awareness and spaces for identifying personal agency within a system (spaces where individuals choose to follow routine or not) become lost. By bringing communication to the forefront as an essential component of the structuration process, it is my hope to bring to the forefront the transactional process of interaction (individual choosing how to react and enact structural demands),

organizational accountability and personal agency in meaning making within a Structuration process.

This duality of the communication-action relationship, organizational accountability and meaning assumes organizational context and desire to form understanding and is illustrated in the following diagram (Figure 10, in following paragraph numbers following key components of communication-action correspond to diagram). Communication as an organizing scheme of action represents a synthesis of coalescent opposites. Therefore each communication-action [2] episode falls along the scale between opposing poles or forces (communication is centered on personal meaning [3] and/or on maintaining past organizational accountability[4]). Hence communication-action illustrates why and how communication creates and maintains stock communication.

All communication is framed by the current context or present organizational contexts [1] in which it is embedded. It is important to remember that organizational context also forms the milieu for structure's influence on communication, in this case through the duality of discourse (everyday communication is influenced by organizational rules and know how). Within these organizational conditions and structural influences, the individual communicates based on his/her personal identification [5] within the organization (or group). In its simplest terms an agent chooses a combination between the two extremes of complete autonomy or as their official role within the organization. The choice of which "face" the person communicates with is determined by degree of personal anxiety and/or trust an individual has within the current organizational conditions. This trust and/or anxiety is the basis of individual psychological motivation that encourages the agent to lean to either extreme when interacting (personal meaning [3] and/or on maintaining past organizational accountability [4]). If an agent is, in their person, comfortable and lacks personal anxiety (or is within a group in which they feel low anxiety) then on an interpersonal, group or organizational level he/she will utilize speaking and interpreting discourse on an individual meaning level. He/she will spend the energy and time to

form individual meaning. If organizational or group anxiety is high (i.e. parents day at school when parents come to the class room), the individual will typically identify themselves through their labor role (organizational expectation) and stock expectations (organizational know how). The individual therefore typically¹⁰ volunteers (for the sake of simplicity and predictability) to lean on traditional patterns of organizational accountability within interaction. The heavy influence of the structural rules (structures organizing scheme) can be seen at play within the duality of discourse when the person volunteers to allow the organizational accountability to dictate the mode and/or tenor of personal interaction.

Regardless of which extreme one operates in individual meaning [3] and/or on maintaining past organizational accountability [4], every communication action on some level will be a blend of each. The outcome of the communication action process (see Figure 10) is the synthesis of communication (communication influence [6]). This is why communication influence [6] is an arrow that stems from the personal identification [5] with the organization continuum. However, the more extreme the agent's personal identification (based on level of personal anxiety within the duality of discourse), the more distinct the mode and tenor of the agents' communication. As a result, based on the personal identification, the influence that communication can have on the process of Structuration can range from volunteered action (lean toward organizational accountability) or agent-centered action (lean toward individual meaning).

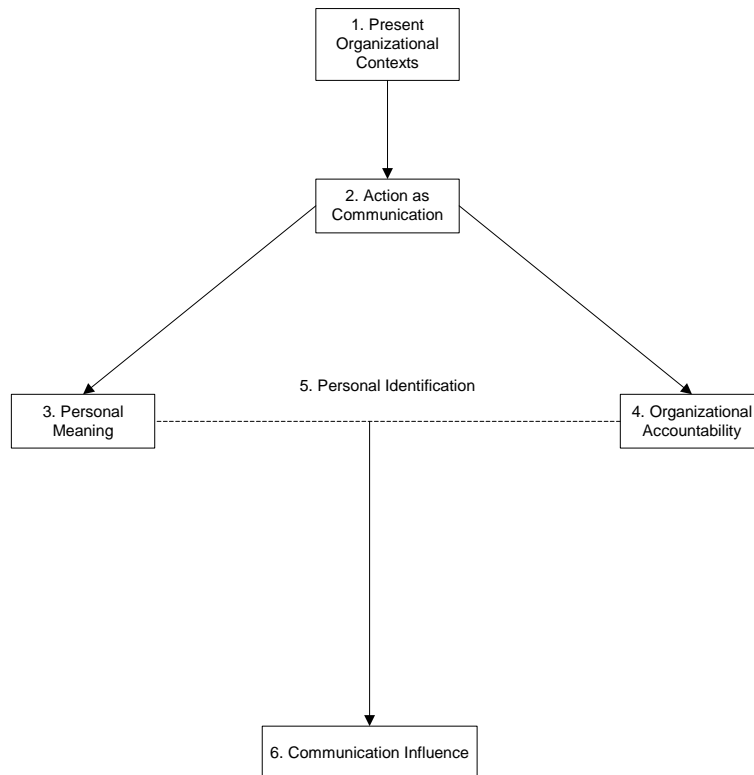


FIGURE 10
Action's Organizing Scheme: Communication as a Duality

2b. Action's Vehicle: Routines. Giddens claims that his Structuration Theory is at its very heart non-functional, in that there is no teleological force directing intended or unintended consequences of human discourse. Hence discourse is a free agent activity, but it can appear to or link to structures via the sedimentary forces of routines. These routines become traditional (with special contextual time and space components), and it is the traditional aspect of the routine that forms their organizational legitimacy and vehicle (energy). "Routines are strongest when they are sanctioned by or sanctified by tradition" (Giddens, 1979, p.219). The legitimacy sets up the basis for the established patterns of discourse within the routine necessary for recreation in present time and space. For example, the routine of starting/opening each day within the kitchen and

school case study had a traditional pattern of discourse that became routinely followed (therefore maintained) in the everyday. The restaurant opens at 5:00 PM for dinner everyday, and to meet this opening the chefs would come in at 2:00 PM and follow an elaborate procedure to prep and set up the line. The school started every morning at 8:00 AM with a chapel service. The students and teachers would start every school day with the exact same behavior and religious script. Routines of the organization are exercised by free agents acting within the contexts of present time and space, based on the sediment practices.

The action vehicle of routines suggests that routines endow everyday actions with energy. Therefore routines are not only practices or interactions in the present time and space, but enacting routines gives purpose or drive to the process of action within the Structuration process. Within the organizational context the organizational vehicle of routine provides the impetus or the reason why for the everyday doing and interaction. The routine of the organization may become so accepted it becomes an unrecognized categorical energy for energy sake. For example, I taught a yearlong Sociology course that had not one set criteria of information that needed to be covered, and I had sole responsibility for the material covered. However, when a student asked me, “Why do we have to completely cover the Durkheim and functionalism before Spring Break?” I answered, “So we can cover Marx and critical theory before the next test.” The routine of covering material for a test pushes and gives reason for the everyday conduct and in many cases the content of the class.

Giddens suggests that the chief function of routines is to provide the ability for interactions to span across time and space and to enable members of a group, or organization to predict the duality the social process. As a result, agents consciously and unconsciously identify with routines for the comfort of the predictability they afford. It is “the study of routine social interactions which allows us to connect together the two features of Structuration . . . Routinization implies ‘ethnomethodological continuity’ more than the reproduction of the empirical content of practices” (1979, p.128). Within his discussion of routines as a function of continuity, Giddens stresses that routines are

the ultimate force in social reproduction. However, in order to avoid having 'routine continuity' slip into determinism, Giddens integrates agent motivation as an essential part of routine.

Giddens' psychoanalytical theory of motivation is difficult to unravel; Turner argues it is a "creative mix" of Freud's theories and of a sociological interpretation of Freud's works, rather than a formal theory (Turner 1988, pp 46-49). However, what is important to note is that Giddens holds the unconscious motives of actors are as important to consider as are their rationalized conscious motivations. To complicate the discussion further, this complex mix of individual, conscious, and unconscious motivation is discussed by Giddens not in the process of the mundane, but in the context of what Giddens calls "critical situations," such as the Holocaust (1984) or mob behavior (1979). These critical situations are by definition times when routines break down, and as a result anxiety increases and trust elapses.

I wish to focus on the mundane routinization and the role of individual psychological motivation as a basis of continuity of the structure. The process of routinization derives from identification, and an actor identifies with an organizational role and consciously and unconsciously follows the traditional practices of that role (Goffman). Giddens links this identification to Freud's Oedipal stage of personality development, in that identification is our earliest expression of an emotional tie. In stages when anxiety is low and trust can be depended on, the individual, primarily unconsciously, identifies with a group of others. The individual volunteers via organizational routines his/her self, with the group or co-present for the benefit of predictability and comfort. Within the mundane activities of everyday group or organizational practices, interactions become routine and the unconscious motivations that give them energy go unnoticed by agents.

In critical situations anxiety and mistrust build, identification becomes tested, and the agent therefore becomes conscious of the risk to volunteer his/her self in trust. As one would expect, critical situations become times of fast-paced routine change and organizational transformation. Bastien et al. (1995) focus on an organizational

undergoing executive changes, and find trust to be a salient theme within members' consciousness. However, their examination of trust as part of the organizational climate stems from Giddens' later writing on trust and the link to modernity (1990, 1991) rather than as part of routine. Though this focus on trust is important, I believe, in that it leads Bastein et al. (1995) to limit their conclusion to a feeling of "lack of trust [that] corrodes experience and managerial work in the organization" (p.91) versus examining how ongoing concerns of trust over time create new organizational routines. Trust can be read into their discussion of emerging and transforming social climates, but it is never explicitly developed.

This work will illustrate how routines allow the connection between the two components of Structuration. It will focus on changes in the structure of routines as a reaction to low organizational trust and/or high anxiety over self capability within the organization. At The Prep, mistrust of the board and Headmaster was always part of the organizational culture. It built over time, until one day the straw broke the figurative "camel's back", and slowly building mistrust formed the context of organizational change. I argue that cultures of mistrust over time form critical situations which act as vehicles of change. Mistrust and its relationship to routine are premium sites to observe how everyday interactions transform organization structures over time.

The duality of routine as a vehicle of action within an organization is illustrated in the following diagram (Figure 11, in following paragraph numbers following key components of routine-action correspond to diagram). Routine, as with communication, represents a synthesis of coalescent opposites. All routine action is framed by the current organizational context (past organizational routines and current market conditions) [1] in which it is embedded. It is important to remember that organizational context also forms the milieu for structure's influence on routines, in this case through the duality of power (everyday agent choice to follow routines) as influenced by organizational resource authority and availability. Routine actions are also embedded within the current communicative interactions. The current communication climate that surrounds routinization of the everyday and the resource pressures of the current contexts affects

the level of agents' organizational anxiety. As discussed within this section, each routine action [2] is enacted under a degree of personal consciousness [5] that varies from directly conscious to unconscious; hence, routines are enacted under the purview of agent choice. When a routine is enacted in times of low organizational stress or low organizational anxiety the agent is more likely to unconsciously follow traditional routine [4]. When tradition is followed, an agent volunteers to the sedimented practice and the unconscious drive of past patterns of action directs current action. Ironically in these times of low resource stress (duality of power influence) the perception is that it is 'just another day' and communication climate is typically extremely free (leaning towards individual meaning). In the next chapter I outline the case study over three years beginning with the first faculty meeting of the year. Providing this meeting shows the routine context and how it was experienced. In the beginning of my first year, a time when the perceived culture of The Prep was under the least amount of stress both socially and economically, the beginning of the year meeting was "held for tradition's sake" but ostensibly became the Head talking about spending the summer in Spain with friends. Agents clearly interact freely in this time of low stress and attended the "pointless meeting", because that was the way the year always started. They followed routines (as if it was like going to lunch, because it is lunch time) without thinking of the vehicle of routine action. In my second year, this beginning of the year meeting was entirely different as it was the first of such meetings after the Head had been fired and the financial instability of The Prep was widely known. In my third year it was the first official meeting of the new Headmaster and with it brought a large degree of change to the routine itself. In these times when routines were enacted in times of high organizational stress, agents are conscious of the routine's vehicle. They follow routines by choice (conscious routine action [3]). For another example see episode, MBS Chapel in the next chapter that describes how a teacher's panic; when they realize that chapel is being said by the Headmaster has a consequence. The routine of chapel becomes conscious and attendance takes on a level of urgency. When agents are conscious of routines (like Wednesday chapel) agents are aware of their choice to follow routines.

This consciousness of routines or awareness of the vehicle can sometimes lead to the questioning of the routine legitimacy on a personal or group level. Agents, when stressed, may question why they are allowing this routine to push their daily action in this culture. As agents enact routines in extreme times of organizational stress (when organizational stress is widespread typically due to resource stress), they may challenge and change the force or vehicle of routinization (see episode “Bitching the Comments into Committee”). The outcome of the routine action process is the synthesis of routine influence [6], which will have an influence on the duality of action and on the duality of power within the Structuration process.

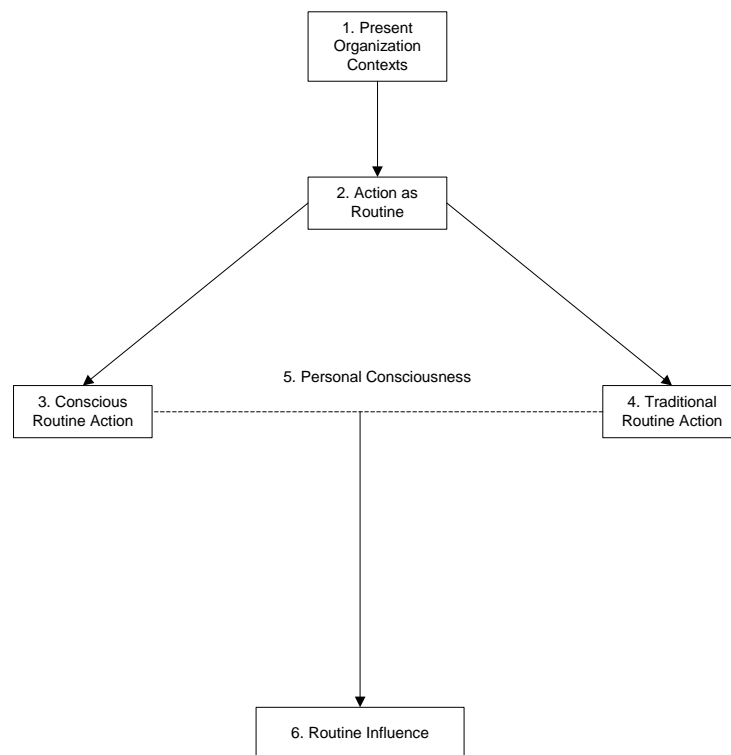


FIGURE 11
Action’s Vehicle: Routine Action as a Duality

Model 3. Action as an Influence of Organizational Structuration.

Reexamining model 2 of Structuration as the synthesis of four dualities within organizational context depiction of actions and its dual process in Structuration is clearly too simple. Communication (Figure 10) and routine action (Figure 11) illustrate that the process of action within Structuration is complex. Following is model 3 (Figure 12) which illustrates the process of action as duality within the organizational Structuration process. The present organizational contexts [1] in which action is embedded are featured as influences on action. Action [2] is featured in the model as a synthesis of both action as communication [3] and action as routine [4]. Action as communication is further delineated into its comprising dualism of individual meaning [3a] and organizational accountability [3b]. The synthesis of this communication dualism (actions organizing scheme influence [3c]) is based on the level of personal identification. Action as routine is further delineated into its comprising dualism of conscious routine action [4a] and tradition [4b]. The synthesis of this routine synthesis is based on personal consciousness (action as routine duality represented by an arrow) forming the influence of actions vehicle [4c]. The combined influence of action's organizing scheme [3c] and its vehicle [4c] form a dualism that represents the synthesis of both action as communication [3] and action as routine [4]. This ultimate synthesis of the synthesis is agency-centered action [5] and agent-volunteered action [6]. Ultimately the model presents action as a dualism of change and reification of structure. Action that leans towards agency-centered action [5] leads to action that influences transformation of structure [7]. While action that leans towards agent volunteered action [6] influences the reproduction of structure [8]. This is a complex process and is further discussed in the context of experienced organization actions in Chapter VI. Ultimately either the actions reproduction or transformation of the structure in the present becomes the past organization structure [9] and has influence on the current instant of organization as well as the present market condition of organization [1].

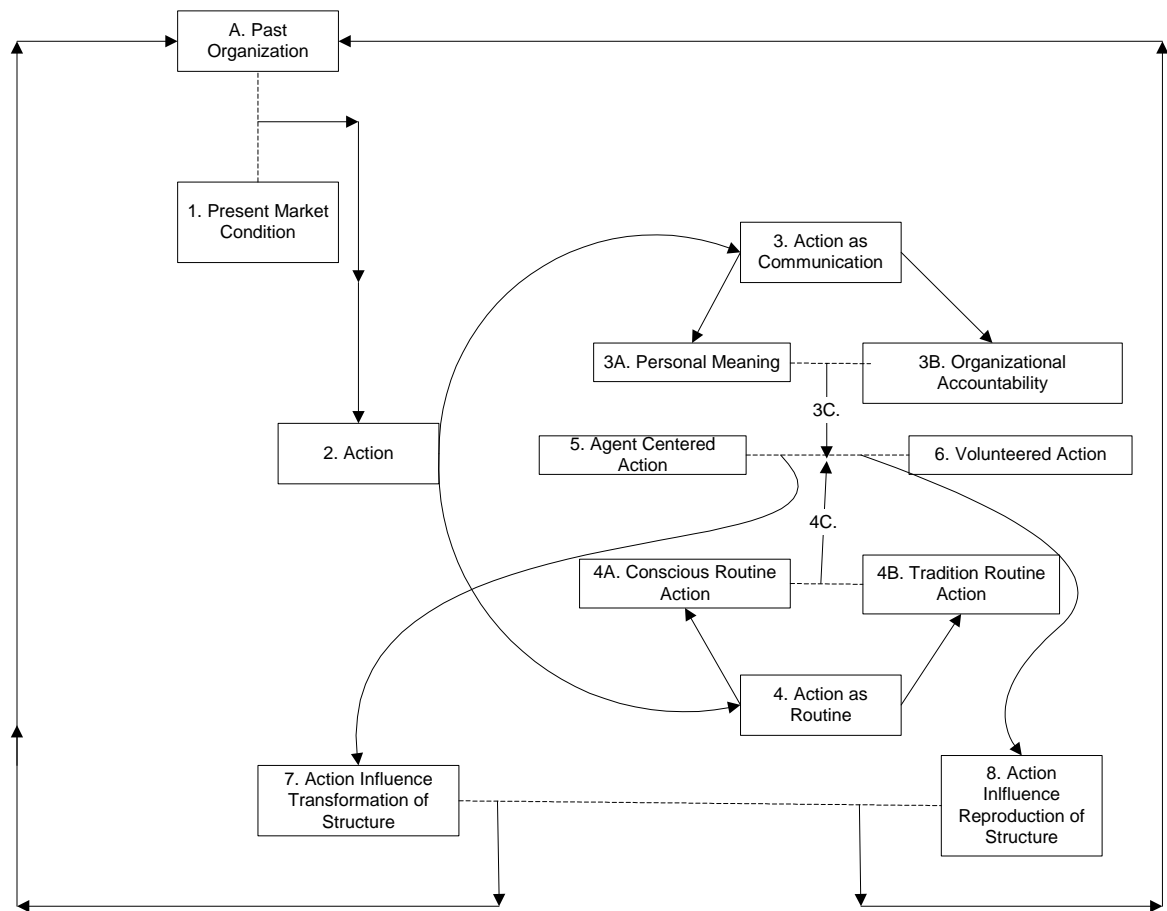


Figure 12

Model 3: Action as an Influence on Transformation or Reproduction of Structure in the Process of Organizational Structuration

Structure within the Structuration Process

Model 2 illustrates the Structuration process. In this model structure as a component of Structuration can be illustrated by itself. The following figure (Figure 13) represents the duality of structure within the structuring process. All components of this model will be examined in the following sections: 3a. Structure's organizing scheme: structure as rules; and 3b. Structure's vehicle: Structure as resources.

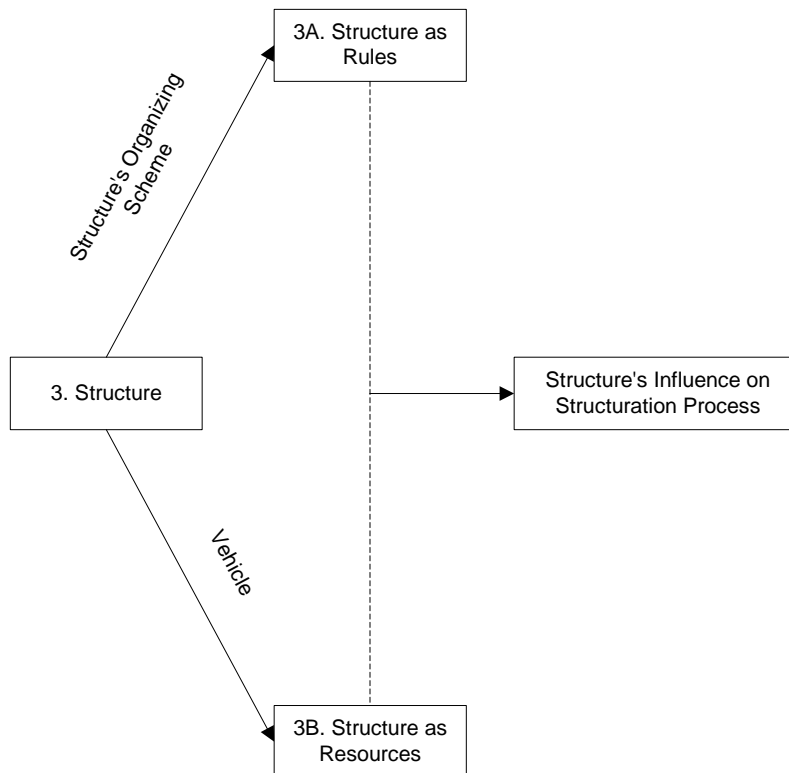


FIGURE 13
Structure's Duality in Organizational Structuration

3a. Structure's Organizing Scheme: Rules. Structural organizing occurs through the process of knowing *rules*. Giddens implies that rules are organized properties of social systems. "Rules generate or are the medium of production and reproduction of practices" (Giddens, 1979, p.67). To understand the complexity of rules is to understand the following questions: What are rules? How do we know to follow them? Why do we follow them? How do they relate to power? To put these questions in the context of the Structuration process: How do rules influence/form actions (both communication and practices) and how does this process translate into power and power translate to the production and reproduction of the organization?

To answer the first two questions, Giddens leans on Wittgenstein and argues that rules as structural, organizing schemes provide not just a regulative component to organizational life, but also (and most important) a constitutive function. Wittgenstein argues that to know rules is to “know how to go on” (Giddens 1979, p.67). The seeming simplicity of Wittgenstein’s statement should not be taken lightly as it forms the basis of Giddens understanding of rules as a process of organizing, and it therefore links rules to practice. Giddens clarifies this in his 1984 text “rules are procedures of action, aspects of praxis” (Giddens 1984, p. 21). As a result, rules inform not only how we must act (with risk of punitive measures), but also the process of how we fit into established practices and routines. Wittgenstein’s ‘know how’ does not require knowledge on the part of a member of how and/or why rules exist, or the process of how rules can be changed, but simply that rules outline the method for agents ‘going on’.

Giddens upholds Wittgenstein’s argument that a majority of rules are not formal and have no real definitions. Giddens links this aspect of rules with Garfinkle's ethnomethodologies to explain how rules form structural routines. As stated earlier, Garfinkle forms an important foundation for Giddens, as his theory of “methodologies” is used to explain how commonplace ideas are given meaning by commonplace actions. Rules are formed by group acceptance of a new rule or by maintenance of old rules. The instantiation of rules (the process of production and reproduction of rules in the present) is not separate from what the rules are. Garfinkle forms the link then to Wittgenstein’s notions of ideas from daily action to societal rules.

An organizational analysis of rules must step beyond Garfinkle and Wittgenstein and wonder why people follow certain rules (particularly unwritten rules), and not others. For example I had a professor who when asked why study organizational communication would cite the 1986 Challenger accident as caused by breakdown of communication and deficient cultural of safety; unfortunately he has another more recent example from N.A.S.A to draw on. According to the New York Times, N.A.S.A was told by the Columbia accident investigation board (August 26th 2003) that culturally (defined as practices followed when no organizational rule existed) “little had changed at

the agency since the '86 challenger disaster.” Intense pressure to stay on schedule, and the failure of managers to avail themselves of their wide range of expertise has been blamed for the accident. Sean O’Keefe vowed to change the culture of the space agency and that he would comply with the full range of recommendations. Clearly an understanding of rules beyond formal organizational rules was needed. Changing not just how people follow formal rules but informal rules - why what they do is needed to “change the culture” of N.A.S.A. In changing its culture, N.A.S.A. should recognize that rules are procedures for action, aspects of praxis, and that rules are part of the greater organizational action and structural process. The problems at N.A.S.A. will continue until the driving cultural organization schemes and vehicles, guiding everyday organization Structuration, value and expect caution over urgency (and perhaps budget). Until rules, as everyday occurrences are coupled with resource support (duality of structure) for those who halt launch dates due to safety concerns, and until managers routinely open themselves to others’ knowledgeable communications (duality of action), N.A.S.A. will always be more risky than it needs to be.

Until all members of N.A.S.A. feel confident in their organizational capabilities to enact rules and self navigate the know-how process between official rules and unofficial rules, N.A.S.A. will have problems transforming its organizational culture to utilize bottom up knowledge versus top down goals. This is because a key component of the everyday process by which rules are constituted lies within the agents’ confidence in their capabilities to utilize their know-how as a methodology of the instant. A methodology of the instant can be thought of as praxis and, when coupled with personal confidence, it reflects a level of individual empowerment.

In the process of following rules, the agent is required to constitute them to fit their organizational needs and purpose. The best example of this is institutional resistance (or “follow the rule to the letter” resistance) where workers, instead of striking, follow the organizational rules to the letter (assign no individual constitutive energy or praxis to rule structure) and neither the organization nor any individual can perform. The individual, even when he/she does not have organizational power as

expressed through control over resource or sanctioned organizational capability, still has power. Workers can resist by their personal know-how in how things really get done, or why things really get done the way they do. They can resist by their trust in their capability that it is their constitutive energy to the process of following rules (in the instant) that is what actually makes organizational rules structures work.

This type of institutional resistance is particularly dramatic because to create an equivalent of a strike (a shut down of the structuration process of a workplace) requires collective rule based resistance of members. It also illustrates the collective understanding of the importance of personal agency within the rule instantiation process. Though this example is dramatic and rare, far more frequently in organizations rule know-how and confidence is experienced and navigated in the group and personal level. It is with the ability to focus on personal confidence in organizational capabilities and the effect on the personal instantiation of the rules that this model provides the most benefit.

This model was created out of the need to understand and analyze everyday personal experiences and observation of individuals and small groups within a workplace. As a result, though it maintains focus on rules as a structural component, it also provides space to understand the individual agents' role with the process of rule instantiation. I argue that in an organizational context, when a person is comfortable and confident in his/her capabilities to achieve a task, he/she will use and reference rules more as a benchmark to begin to navigate, rather than a strict doctrine to follow. Conversely, if a person is not confident (or given power via resources [see next section]) in their capabilities of performing a task through know-how, they would adhere strictly to an established rule system for simplicity and security. An example of these different rules methodologies can be demonstrated by contrasting the choices of two different teachers (one being myself) of how to use the parent contact rule procedure at the middle school. The rules procedure states that all advisors (each teacher has a group of students to advocate and look after for a year called an advisee) were supposed to contact every advisee's parent and turn in the official form by the end of the second week of school.

The “contact form” had a number of appropriate questions drawn upon by the school counselor and Head of the middle school.

By midweek of the second week of school, I had not turned in the form, nor had I contacted all of my advisee parents. Instead, I took my time, confident in my own procedure where I called the parents and had long conversations with them regarding their concerns and goals for their child for the year. During these conversations, I would jot down notes, and would review them with parents at the end of the call. I never once used the form, nor turned in an official one in (except I did go through the joke of stapling a blank one to a photocopy of my telephone notes for my supervisor). My experience is in stark contrast with a teacher whose advisee parents complained about “approachability” a year previously. Though she would joke that as a result she always got the low risk, low maintenance kids, she clearly felt confined by the rules surrounding parent and advisor contact. She was always the first teacher every year to turn in the prescribed form but was sure to ask every question exactly as written and to fill out the form elaborately. She would joke the first week of school that she had “finished your C.Y.A. (cover your ass) forms.” I hope that the irony of this story is not lost; that the constitutive process of using the rule structure as a benchmark versus a strict code of conduct was not formally encouraged, but expected. Therefore formal rules represent very little of what goes on in the process of doing work in an organization, which is why exact rule following is an effective form of resistance.

Giddens recognizes, as does the N.A.S.A report, that written formal rules are common, particularly within bureaucratic organizations; however Giddens places less value on the role of written rules than on the compliance process of rules. Giddens, in his discussion of Weber, stresses, “rules do not follow or interpret themselves” (Giddens 1979, p.148). Giddens places less value than Weber on the importance of formal rules as the basis of bureaucratic forms. Giddens viewed as limiting and overly pessimistic Weber’s perspective on human nature (human nature was compliant with formal rules). Giddens’ criticism of the power (or overemphasis) Weber places on formal rules is important to consider when applying Giddens’ theory to organizations, as Weber’s belief

in the increasing growth of bureaucracy in society ultimately reduces the process of Structuration. Giddens therefore warns the reader that bureaucratic control is present in every organization, but to over-appraise it forces the agency out of the agent and so loses the sight of the process. “An agent who does not participate in the dialectic of control, in a minimal fashion, ceases to be an agent” (Giddens 1979, p.149).

The duality of rules represents a balance of “knows how” - the process of knowing how to go on (constitutive rule function) with the simultaneous existence of established rule practices. For an organizational system to work (particularly the highly bureaucratic form), the structural organizing system of ‘know-how’ must make them happen in the instant as well as the establish rules practices of the past. The established rule practices of the past act as the vehicle or structuring energy in facilitating this constitutive function of rules. The constitutive function of rules represents the organizing scheme of rules, and the establish rule function represents the vehicle of rule structure. Put simply, duality of rules is the agent’s knowledge and acceptance of the know-how process of the instant; how and why rules (especially tacit rules) reify and change the praxis of organizational life.

The process of forming rules within the Structuration process is illustrated in the following diagram (Figure 14, the following numbers correspond to components on the diagram). Rules, though an organizing scheme of structure, represent a synthesis of coalescent opposites. Therefore each rule as a structural process (rule as structure [2]) falls along the scale between opposing poles or forces (personal instantiation of rules [3] and/or personal reliance on established rules [4]). All rule structure is framed by the current organizational context [1] in which it is are embedded. Within the mundane process of rule forming and following is the individual methodology of the instant (praxis) or personal capability [5] as the psychological motivation (based on their confidence in personal capability) that pushes the agent to lean to either extreme when interacting within the context of rules. The communication climate of the agent influences the perceived capability the agent has within the organization. This influence of the communication climate forms the duality of discourse and has a significant role

forming the confidence to trust personal capability. It is perceived personal capability [5] in the instant that influences the agent to lean toward forming more personal instantiation of the rules or following traditional bureaucratic rule patterns. The outcome of the rule structure process is the synthesis of rules (rules influence [6]), which will have an influence on the duality of structure and the duality of discourse within the Structuration process.

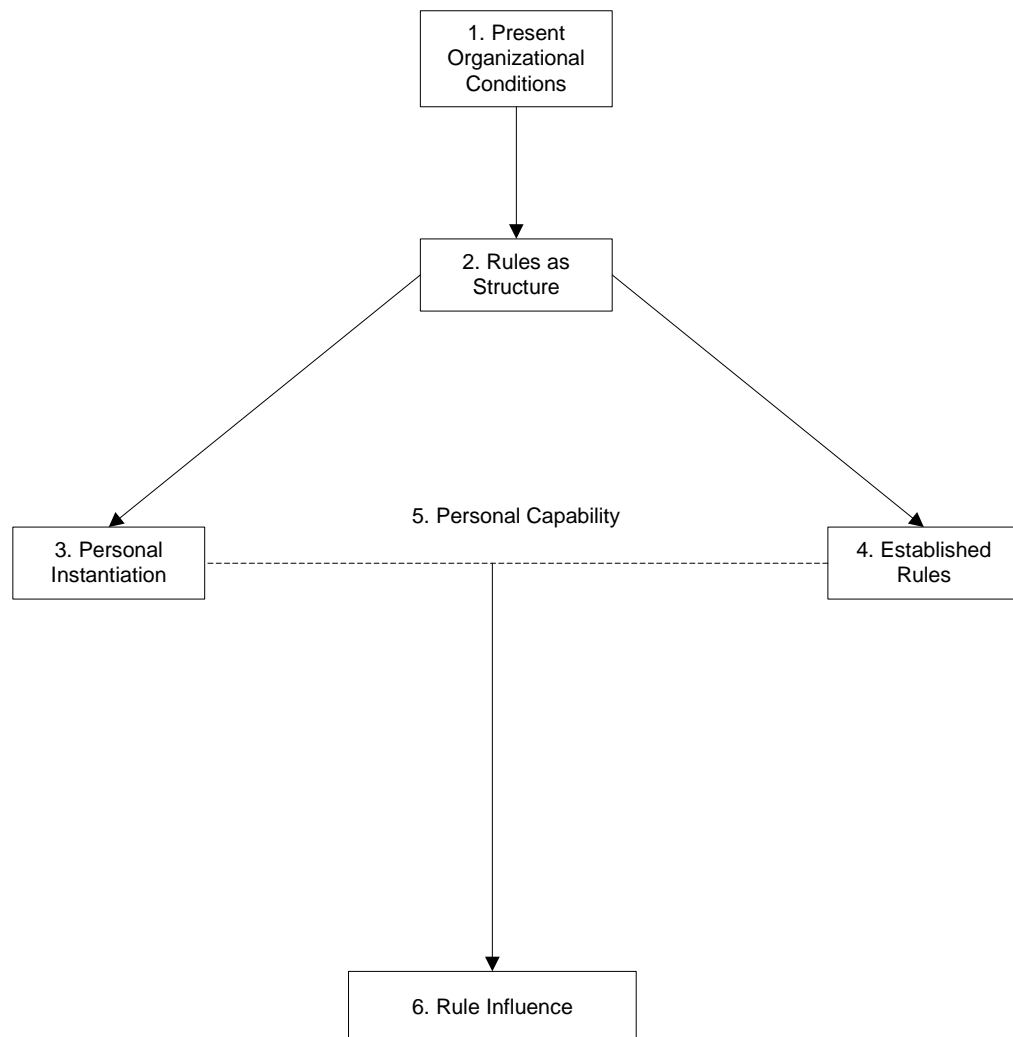


Figure 14
Structure's Organizing Scheme: Rules as a Duality

3b. Structure’s Vehicle: Resources. “Resources are the media through which power is exercised, and structures of domination are reproduced” (1979, p. 91). As this quotation indicates, resources have a very different role within organizations than the duality of action (communication and routines), or even the other component of structure, rules. Resources are the media through which power is formed and maintained. Resources can be separated from the other three Structuration components, as they are formed via praxis (the process of instantiation of agency and organizational routines). Resources, in contrast, do not have a clear praxis element, actions (communication and routines) are produced via resources and in turn these actions produce the need for more resources, but the relationship is one of a causal chain, not hermeneutical. Organizational action does not create the input resources, just the need and possibly (depending on scope of organization) the means for obtaining them. A hermeneutical relationship suggests not an independent dependent relationship but when both aspects of the relationship are mutually dependent (and therefore) implementing each other at the same time. Giddens presents a hermeneutic relationship for rules (the organizing scheme component of structure), as well as both components of action, routines and communication. If other components exist within the instant (only present in the present) and are dependent on interaction of agents, all other components are therefore empowered by the conscious or unconscious compliance by agents. Resources, on the other hand, create need for action, these actions in turn create the need for more resources, and so on.

Resource → action → resource → action → resource → action

This relationship is different than the hermeneutical one, because it is not only present in the instant; if resources are not introduced, dropped or not produced by action, the chain is broken. The reason why resource is different in an organization than the other components is that resource in its most basic form is a physical thing (it can not be created via a social process). For example, I can communicate the desire for a lobster, follow organizational practice for ordering a lobster, yet I cannot create one. If a kitchen orders a shipment of lobster (a resource), it can make lobster a “special,” a customer can

order it, and it can be cooked (action), but this chain will only last as long as the chef has the resource to cook. There comes the point when one unfortunate customer hears the awful words “Sorry sir, we are out of lobster. Would you like to try the chicken?”

The lobster is an allocative resource: the question is does it have an authoritative aspect to it (is it part of the kitchen's organizing process). “I treat the realm of the political as being usefully understood in a generic sense as concerning the mobilization of authorization as a resource; and that of the economic as concerning the mobilization of allocative resources. There are thus political and economic aspects of all social systems.” (Giddens 1979, p.108). In the lobster scenario, the lobster represents an allocative resource. The allocative aspect of resources is fixed, as in Giddens’ discussion of allocative resources in which he “equates the economic with struggles deriving from scarce resources” (1979, p.108).

Giddens discusses resources as political and social in nature (intersubjective). He also integrates resources as a physical commodity (allocative). In that, he argues that the allocative physical nature of resources is only one part of the resource. An additional component of the resource is more significance to the social process, the control (the praxis of convertibility) of the resource. Therefore resources have two dimensions of power through control of allocative resources and power through understanding and influence of the social process of resources (how allocative resources are converted into authority).

No matter how imbalanced they may be in terms of power, actors in subordinate positions are never wholly dependent, and are often very adept at converting whatever resources they possess into some degree of control over the conditions of reproduction of the system. In all social systems there is a dialectic of control, such that there are normally continually shifting balances of resources, altering the overall distribution of power. While it is always an empirical question just what power relations pertain within a social system, the agency/power connection, as a connection of logical entailment, means that an agent who does not participate in the dialectic of control *ipso facto* ceases to *be* an agent. [italics are author](Giddens 1982, p. 198).

Giddens' distinction between the allocative nature of resource and the authoritative process has some similarity to Adam Smith's valuation of resources, which does not lie in the resource but in the usability of the resource. Marx also defines the power of a resource via the process of labor value (the labor to obtain resource and/or transferring it into commodities). Giddens does not convert resources into useable commodities (nor labor); however, as a result, he is not as clear as Smith or Marx. Versus terming the resource power as a commodity, defined by use and/or value, he terms the power dimension of resource as authoritative power. However, the social process of converting a raw material into a valued resource should be still be acknowledged as a necessary function of the organization and the social process of work, and as a result (unlike other components in Giddens theory, which are largely virtual), there are two parts to a resource: its physical nature (the allocative), and its process nature (the authoritative).

In Giddens' *Central Problems in Social Theory* (1979), he acknowledges the allocative nature of resources very briefly (one sentence) but only as the starting point for convertibility of resources (convertibility of resources being a social process). However, he elaborates in greater detail in the 1984 text and refines the power connection. Giddens identifies three levels of allocative resources and their respective power dimensions. He claims that the power dimension of the resource is authoritative, and therefore social as the allocative resource through the process of Structuration is converted to a social authority's status. It is important to note that Giddens has not included the duality of power when discussing the allocative or authoritative nature of resources, because his theory requires that he prove that resources themselves (not in concert with resource activities) have a praxis element.

To make his case that resources have a social component stronger, Giddens provides an authoritative aspect to resources at every stage of the labor process, as a raw material, material in production, and as a produced good. He identifies these stages in the context of evolving society, which is appropriate for sociology (particularly in response to theories of Parsons, Marx, Durkheim and Weber). However, the historical

process of societal evolution is less relevant for an organization adaptation of Structuration. As a result I have added an organizational column of allocative and authoritative resources (Table 4).

TABLE 4
Two Types of Resources in Structuration Theory and Organizations

Allocative Resources	<i>Organizational allocative resources</i>	Authoritative Resources	<i>Organizational Authoritative Resources.</i>
1. Material features of the environment. (Raw materials, material power source)	<i>1a. Market as a feature of environment. Market demand and viable customer base.</i>	Organization of social time-space (Temporal-spatial constitution of paths and regions)	<i>Organization of Market. A viable organization must understand/adapt to (and possible shape) the market. It must have a sense of time and space within the market as well as competition and how all of these affect customer demands and attitudes.</i>
	<i>1b. Material features of the organization. Raw materials, power source, transportation, and physical facilities to meet product and service demands.</i>		<i>Organization of means of production. An organization of practices to reduce production cost and maximize product and service quality.</i>
2. Means of material production/reproduction. (Instruments of production)	<i>2. Means of material production. Labor Skills, Instruments of production, technology.</i>	Production/reproduction of the body (organization and relation of human beings in mutual association)*	<i>Organization of agents of production. The organization of labor to maximize output and maintain high quality of labors skill set</i>
3. Produced goods (artifacts created by interaction of 1&2.)	<i>3. Produced goods. (Product and/or service created by interaction of 1b &2 to and meet 1a.</i>	Organization of life chances (constitution of chances of self development and self expression). **	<i>3a. Organization of labor's potential. Providing time and space for workers to improve goods production process and quality. I.e. Total quality management. 3b. The organization of personal capability to gain access to resources and have compliance in degree of resource production activity.</i>

Un-italicized text from Giddens 1984, p. 258.

*Giddens uses body to mean the population or large group that pool their ability to maximize population and resource growth.

** Giddens claims artifacts improve individual's life chances, i.e. the printing press created possibilities for a learned population.

Giddens claims that the resource production process has increased society's life chances. Giddens then assumes in a roundabout way that those who produce the product will also benefit from the product's authoritative value. This process or benefit; however, is never explicitly discussed, beyond the vague concept of "organization of life chances" as an outcome of the allocative resources conversion. The process itself of how allocative resources are converted through the labor is ignored. This ignoring of the labor process (for "life chances") is perhaps acceptable in a co-op or egalitarian organization, but ignoring the process of labor in conversion of resources, industrial society overlooks or at oversimplifies an important part of social and organizational life. Giddens does not acknowledge the effect of modern scientific management and/or more globalization on resource production. Giddens has committed an oversight similar to Marx's (who did not predict that because of globalization that the labor source may not be the customer base), that the laborer is not guaranteed to benefit from the life chances the resource affords. Giddens assumes that any agent involved in a labor process has the opportunity to shift the balances of resources, altering the overall distribution of power (otherwise they are not agents). If we distance ourselves, this makes sense, but when focusing on the actual labor practices and lack of opportunity, alternative choices for many workers in the world today are not a practical reality. Several workers have difficulty expressing agency, for example child labor on plantations of the Ivory Coast. Giddens has focused on the resource itself and has underestimated the theoretical process. Marx focused on the labor and did not predict the transportation of resource goods.

For Giddens, the allocative nature of resources is the raw material and the means of production (notice Giddens makes no mention of individuals agents; instead he refers to means as "instrument"). Each of these parts of allocative resources is related to authoritative resources, in that raw material creates social contexts (organization of time and space to process raw material) and means of production create the organization of human relationships. The end results of each of these processes are also related in that allocative (produced good) and authoritative (human capability) resources are related.

This basic relationship is a duality in which means of production create organization of human relationships, and human relationships create and maintain the means of production. To simplify this process, Table 5 breaks the relationship down. Note that in the following table the rows indicate a process and the columns indicate a duality. I have also added Marx's positions to help contrast the difference.

TABLE 5
Allocative and Authoritative Resources According to Giddens and Marx

Giddens					
	<i>Physical</i>	+	<i>Action</i>	=	<i>Result</i>
Allocative Resource	Raw material**	+	Means	=	Produced Good
	<i>Structure</i>	+	<i>Action</i>	=	<i>Structuration</i>
Authoritative Resource	Social Contexts	+	Organization of Human Relationships	=	Human Capability
Marx					
	<i>Physical</i>	+	<i>Social Process</i>	=	
Allocative Resources	Raw material	+	Means	=	Produced Good
Authoritative Resources	Capital Control	+	Labor Control	=	Human Capability/Power

Note: Allocative resource starts with a physical variable and via the process of production produces an end (produced good). It is within this social process that authoritative nature of resource is formed. As the authoritative nature of resource is social it is not an end but a process (therefore Structuration).

To fully appreciate Giddens presentation of different, yet related types of resources, it is important to remember that Giddens' focus is on a societal level. Not every action can be rationally explained on the individual level: for example, why does the worker fix cars she/he cannot afford? But the rationale of authoritative power as a social process is based on the understanding that people in general volunteer their labor to the allocative process because they ultimately benefit on a societal level by indirectly increasing their social capability. For example, a dentist engages in specialized labor so

that she can pay for an equally specialized laborer to fix her car. However, Giddens still assumes that the produced good, as a product of the allocative process, will benefit society, and therefore the social actor is motivated to act. If individual labor ultimately does not benefit the human capabilities of their social system (for example sweat shop labor), they will ultimately either transform or destroy the system. What is unclear in Giddens' presentation of resources is how or why individuals can identify or make this choice. In short, Giddens does not link the authoritative resource of human capability (experienced on the general level) and the organization of human relations (experienced on the personal level).

It could be argued that this link is unnecessary for Giddens, because of his macro focus. For example, as a member of modern American society, my capability or life choices are increased by the resources and consumer goods available to me; hence, my motivation for acting within a structure are explained. However, this does not inform us about my individual experience within this system, or how my daily action (particularly my labor) affects the capabilities of my society or of myself.

A focus on organizational life, and the individual role as bounded within the organizational resources and the goal of production, can provide insight into the process of how allocative resources, through labor, take on the authoritative nature of resources. The business goal of an organization is an insight not provided by Giddens but can be essential for an adaptation of structuration to study organizations. To this end, the most important organizational adaptation of Giddens' societal concept of authoritative resource process can be found in the last column of Table 4, "Organizational Authoritative Resources". In this column the vague concept of "life chances" is adapted to the specific organizational practices; "organization of labor's potential, i.e. TQM and the "organization of personal capability" (see Table 4) are (3a and 3b). This focuses on actual practices within an organization, which allows for me to analyze how the everyday actions of individual and groups create opportunity to improve their capabilities. Through the labor process, an agent is able to gain access to resources (rules and communication—the duality of discourses), and how laborers give and form in the

everyday their compliance to the resource production activity (communication and routines –duality of action). As a result, an organizational adaptation to Structuration Theory provides a space to recognize, within the process of labor (conversion of allocative resource to authoritative resource) how resource capability is effected. This resource process therefore takes on an agent-centered perspective and can be linked with the concepts of self-identity and trust.

In both case studies, part of the work experience was creating/maintaining a self-identity through labor and a labor identity through self-capability (an aspect of the labor process not found in Giddens' Structuration Theory). In the kitchen, chefs had to produce food on demand, as if they were machines. They resisted this resource demand of the job by making fun of it. Chefs would slow down on purpose and demand to add an individual or personal touch to a dish. These reactions illustrate the individual response to the demands of labor. At The Prep teachers were confined by departmental requirements for their course and institutional requirements (i.e. test requirements), yet they also felt “they owed” the class. This blend of individual identity and labor roles forms an essential tension that undergirds organizational communication and actions. The integration of self within the process of work forms not only personal but also organizational capability.

The duality of authoritative resource as a vehicle of structure within an organization is illustrated in the following diagram (Figure 15). Allocative resources [2] and present organizational context (the combination of past organizational routines and current market conditions) [1] form the available resources within the organization. Available resources and the convertibility process of these resources create the authoritative [3] nature of resources. Organizations go through cycles, and operate under different resource stress levels. These cycles of resource stress are managed by agents depending on routine. Organizational agents “weather the storm’ using past successful (or at least predictable) labor and interpersonal practices. Therefore routinization allows individuals to feel reduced stress levels by providing predictability. This relationship between routines of the labor process and resources is the basis for the duality of power.

Routines become depended upon in either times of low resource availability stress (the beginning of year one at The Prep) or the opposite times of extreme consumer demand (in the kitchen this was called “being in the weeds,” when orders were flooding in faster then you could handle). Over time, these high consumer demand periods can be predicted and prepared for in an attempt to reduce the stress. At The Prep, the worst pressure times centered on Parents’ Day and comment time. This week represented something that teachers could attempt to prepare for, some more successfully than others (see episode “Who Wants to be a Robot”), but usually it was something the teachers collectively just got through.

Within the organizational experience of high resource stress periods (regardless of cause), it is important to bear in mind that organizations are experienced on the group level. Interactions within the groups and between agents are going to reflect the resource conditions they are couched in. Therefore, in times of high resources with foreseeable ends, stressed individuals “put their head down” and focus on the process of work. They reduce their individual empowerment concerns or personal authoritative capability [6] and adhere to structural requirements (resource determinism [5]). In times of everyday low resource stress, allocation of resources become unconscious, taken-for-granted, and interactions focus on developing and maintaining personal identity [4] within the everyday work process. Ultimately, (as illustrated in the 15) the outcome of the resource process is the synthesis of authoritative resources (resource influence [7]), which will have an influence on the duality of structure and the duality of power within the Structuration process

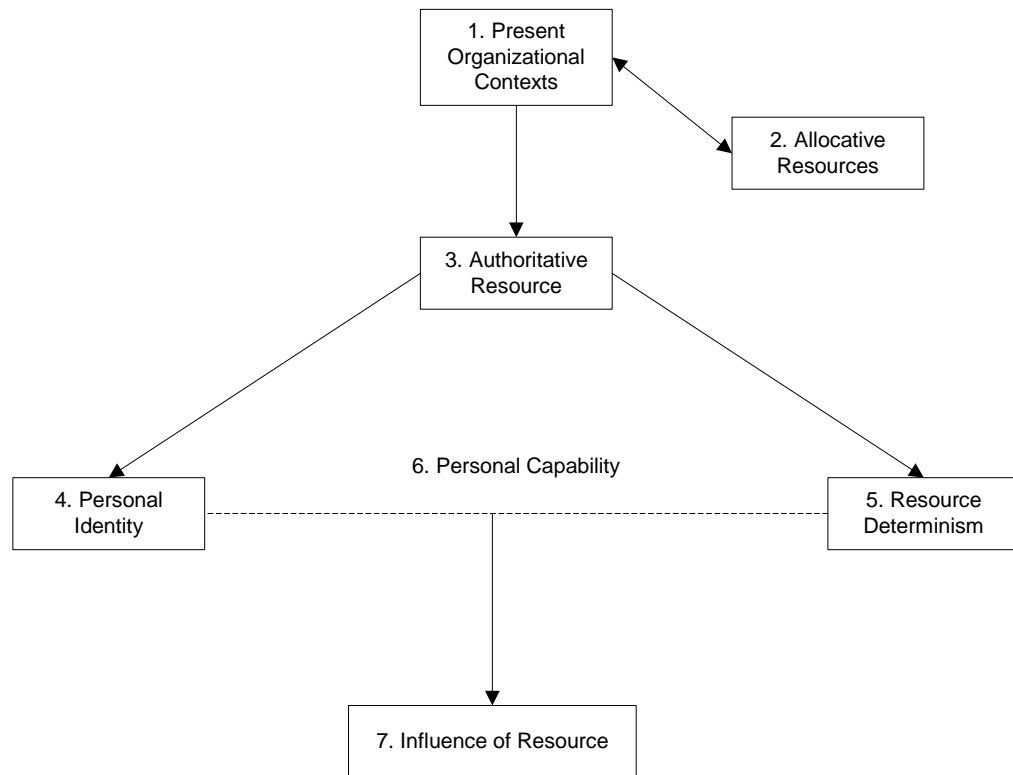


FIGURE 15
Structure's Vehicle: Authoritative Resource as a Duality

Taking an organizational perspective versus a grand theory perspective on Giddens has a third consequence. Times of prolonged resource stress without a foreseeable end can also produce the opposite effect in organizations (not because of lack of stress, but to the contrary because of extreme stress) as people start to separate from their work identity and focus on their individual identity [4] (Carrion Housing). Even though I have argued that organizational stress under perceived controllable/acceptable resource stress leads to determinism if allocative stress gets too extreme and the individual capability within the organization is crippled, the agent can volunteer out of the organization. However, if on a societal level the market conditions

do not support the option of volunteered removal (no alternative job availability), then the force of structural determinism is far greater.

The influence of low resources stability creates stress for the individual and for their immediate group in an organization. The duration of the perceived stress period has great effect on the everyday discourse within the group. Groups act very differently during short-lived resource stress versus prolonged and unpredictable resource stress. The effect of large and/or prolonged allocative resource stress lead to increased sense of unpredictability and lack of trust in the entire labor process which through the duality of structure and power has an influence on the entire Structuration process. Increased individual anxiety affects the duality of action (as a whole and within its components of communication and routines) and the duality of structure. Increased organization stress effects decrease the sense of individual capability and empowerment, and as a result deterministic clout of the structure pushes the increase of established rules and resource determinism. For example, middle school teachers joke about how they hate contract talk time, because it reminds them of how little money they get for all the stuff they do. Contract time every March would raise to their consciousness equity for work and the inequity of pay between staff causes a drastically different work and group climate experience. The culture surrounding contract issues is discussed in great detail in Chapter VI as its role in changing the organization culture is studied over time under the changing conditions of allocative resources. As the authoritative resource climate becomes stressful due to a budget crunch (visible reduction in allocative resources), the contract disunity (focus on individual identity and power over group commitment to the organizational structural goal) expands far beyond March. Teachers perceive that they are asked to do more for less without the optimism of increasing individual capability, and slowly individual interaction becomes more and more self-orientated in ways from collective and organization goals.

Model 4 Structure as an Influence of Organizational Structuration. Model 4 expands model 2 (Figure 8) by including the complexity of the figures and the discussion of structure as a duality of rules and resources (14 & 15). Model 4 (Figure

16) therefore illustrates the process of structure as duality within the organizational Structuration process. The current structure is a result of the present organizational conditions [1a] and the influence of available allocative resources [1b]. Structure [2] is featured in the model as a synthesis of structure as rules [3] and structure as a resource [4]. Structure as rules is further delineated into its comprising dualism of agent instantiation [3a] and established rules [3b]. The synthesis of this (the structure as rules duality is represented by an arrow) forms the organizing influence of structure [3c]. Structure as resource is further delineated into its comprising dualism of individual identity [4a] and resource determinism [4b]. The synthesis of this (structure as a resource duality is represented by an arrow) forms the influence of structure's vehicle [4c]. The combined influence of the structure's organizing scheme (or rules as structures influence on personal capability) [3c] and its vehicle (or resources as structures influence on personal authoritative capability) [4c] form a dualism that represents the synthesis of both structure as rules [3] and structure as resource [4]. The ultimate analysis of the synthesis is agency-centered structure termed "Individual empowerment" [5] and agent determined structure force termed "structure determinism" [6]. Ultimately, the model presents structure as a dualism of change and the reification of structure. Structure forces that lean towards individual empowerment or agency centered structural forces [5] lead to agent enactment that influences transformation of structure [7]. While structural forces that lean towards structural determinism [6] influence the reproduction of existing structure [8]. Ultimately (see Figure 16) either the structure's reproduction or transformation in the present becomes the past organization structure [9] and influences the current instance or present condition of organization [1].

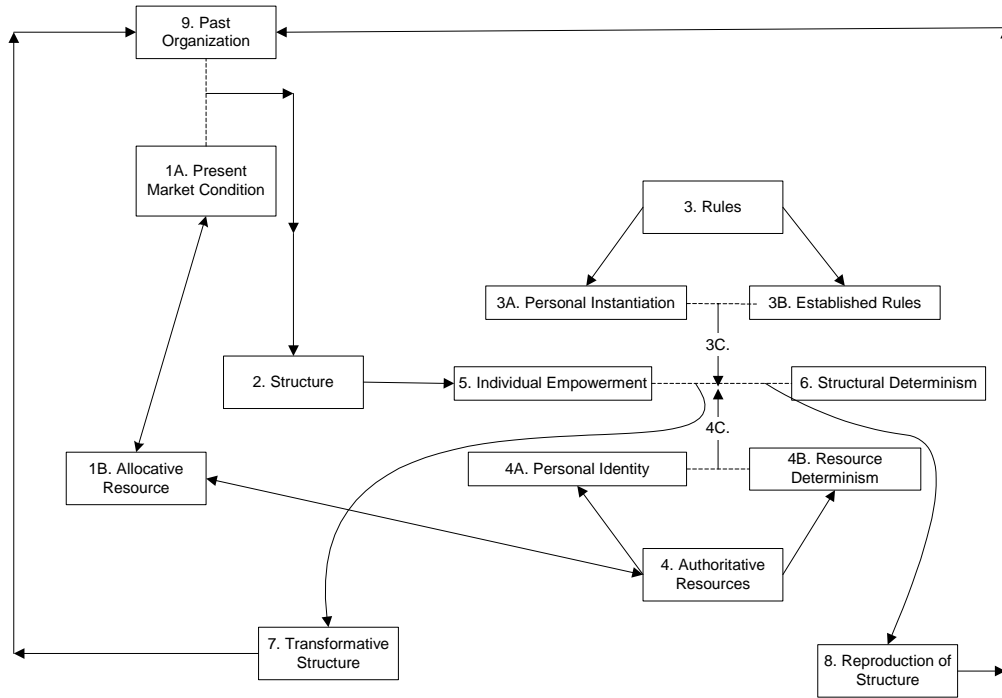


FIGURE 16
 Model 4 Structure as an Influence of Transformation or Reproduction of Structure in the
 Process Organizational Structuration

Conclusion: A Model of Action and Structure

This chapter's discussion has culminated to the point that a model of Giddens' Structuration Theory adapted to fit the organizational context can be presented. The model that follows model 5 (Figure 17), combines both action (model 3 see Figure 12) and structure (Model 4 see Figure 16) influence on the Structuration process of transformation or reproduction of organizational culture. This model then includes the four dualities of Structuration [5] presented in model 2; the duality of action [1], duality of structure [2], duality of discourse [3] and the duality of power [4]. Every other component relationship has been fully discussed in this chapter. The ultimate outcome of the Structuration process [5] is the dialectic of change and stability of the organization structure. This present forming of organizational structure is a product of the social process of Structuration and as a result is as much an expression of action as it is structure. It represents an expression of the instant, either as an expression of change [6] (transforming the organizational structure) or stability [7] (reproducing organizational structure). The following chapter uses this model to evaluate a three year case study of humor during a time of organizational change in a middle school setting.

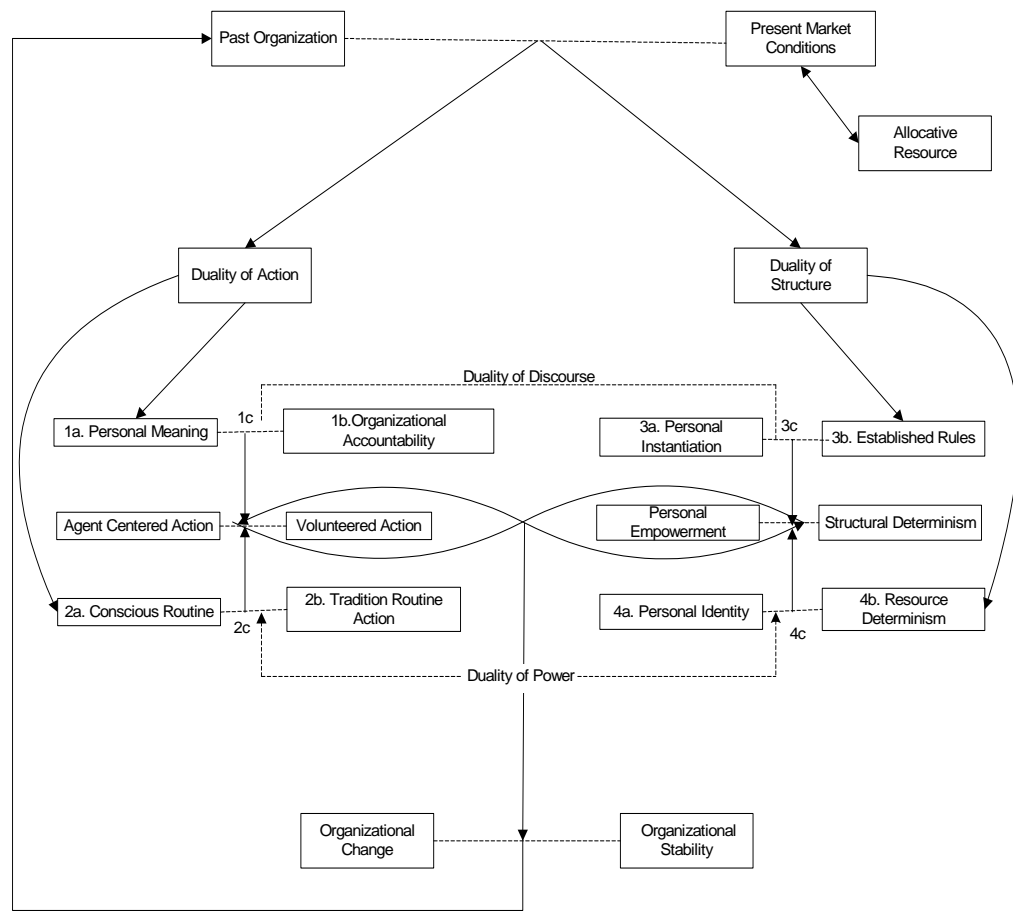


FIGURE 17
 Model 5: Structuration as a Process of Transformation and/or Reproduction of Organizational Structure

Chapter V Notes

¹ Though Poole and McPhee’s groundbreaking article is placed with an equally groundbreaking book I believe that the association of the article argument and the books \argument can be over pushed. Poole and McPhee do articulate a critique of Systems theory but I do not believe they purpose a rejection of it. This is clear in subsequent Structuration work of Poole and McPhee but also in Poole’s paper ten years later (Poole,

1994) that makes a case for the important roles that systems inquiry can play in Organizational communications.

² Weber's definition of power has been debated and if this conception of power truly originated with Weber. For the purposes of this argument it is only relevant that Giddens attributes and argues (Giddens 1979, p.269) that this definition of power is from Weber.

³ Over the process of writing this chapter I have logged many hours in my 4 local Starbucks. One day I had the privilege of overhearing the manager talking to a new staff member as they set up for the days shift. He went over times when they would be unusually busy (he called these cattle calls) and how to "keep the cattle moving" by preparing for them in advance of these rushes (all coffees, freshly brewed, pastries restocked etc). Not only have customers become faceless but customer patterns have been studied to the point that the demand flow is predicted and met. The individual as the source of the demand is irrelevant to the organizational routine.

⁴ Bryant and Jary 1991, Clark 1980, Conrad 1993, Held and Thompson 1989.

⁵ Giddens links stock knowledge and interpretative schemes and thus defines both—"By interpretative schemes, I mean standardized elements of stocks of knowledge, applied by actors in the production of interaction. Interpretative schemes form the core of the mutual knowledge where by accountable universe is sustained through and in the process of interaction" (1979, 83).

⁶ I believe that Giddens uses language as a "allegory" versus an analogy of the structure action dualism. To allegorize is to represent an abstract meaning through a concrete form. The power of an allegory is to convey deep and complex meaning easily but the weakness is that it can cause the over simplification and reduce the complexity of the original idea.

⁷ Giddens leans on the strengths of the interpretative paradigm but incorporates the strengths of functionalism. This theme is clear in his work: *New Rules of Sociological Method: A Positive Critique of Interpretative Sociologies* (1976).

⁸ Giddens discussion of Goffman is extremely important when considering communication and practice components of Structuration, as Goffman would seem to

offer the paradigm for understanding micro action and practices of everyday life. In addition Goffman argues that society and structure is first in everyway yet Giddens citizens Goffman because he choose not to study what was first (1974). This is the paradox of Goffman's work and one that Giddens would seem to accept and could correct by adapting Goffman and putting society into his model. However, as can be seen in Giddens text *Constitution of Society* where Giddens' criticism of Goffman is deeper claiming he provides no long-term process of institutional transformation and no account for the source of motivation of actors (1984, p 70). As a result Giddens does not fully reject Goffman as irrelevant beyond micro sociological issues but he does place little recognition to his contributions "Goffman has not been recognized as a social theories of considerable statute" (1984, 68).

⁹ The high regard that Giddens places Garfinkle's work in explaining the process of contextual (time, space and structure) bounded communication can be seen in the following quote: "Aspects of context, including temporal order of gestures and talk, are routinely drawn upon by actors in constituting communication. The importance of this for the formulation of meaning in gestures and in talk, as Garfinkel has done more than anyone else to elucidate, can scarcely be exaggerated. (Giddens 1984, 71).

¹⁰ In drastic times, drastic measures may prevail, this is when individual anxiety is high and trust or identification with group (and/or organizational) know how is low. In circumstances like this an individual may take steps to disassociate themselves from the group and/or organization. See episode "She Wouldn't Shut Up" in Chapter VI. Reading Clarke's book *Against All Enemies* (2004) I get the sense that this is exactly what happened in the White House on September 11th 2001, when Rice and Cheney switched crisis control to Clark and the staff signed a ledger to let rescuers know how many bodies to search for in the event (believed to be a certainty) of White House suicide attack. . However when the September 11th commission questioned these people three years later it is remarkable how scripted (political accountability) the same members are in their responses.

CHAPTER VI

CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF HUMOR IN A MIDDLE SCHOOL

A middle school teacher without a sense of humor won't last a week. Advice from the Dean of Students at the Prep's middle school, my first day on the job

The last chapter focused on humor within a hotel kitchen as an underlying mechanism of expressing and forming organizational culture. This chapter centers on humor experiences from a three-year ethnographic study of a middle school. During this case study the humor theory developed for the hotel kitchen was treated as a working hypothesis to be continually modified and rethought. The goal was to maintain sensitivity to the uniqueness of the case and the everyday humor of the middle school, as well as, to be willing to adapt or fit (and if necessary alter) the humor theory. The process of this second ethnography brought to the surface various strengths and weaknesses of the original humor theory developed for the kitchen. These areas of strengths and weaknesses will be briefly discussed.

Within the first year of the case study through my everyday experiences, I discovered a major limitation (or paradigm assumption) that had influenced the formation of the humor theory from the first case study. This assumption was that power as a relation to production was the most important feature of organizational life. For this reason the five functions of humor identified in the kitchen are expressed in terms of control and resistance: cooptative humor, conformity humor, cyclic humor, distance humor and insurgent humor. I believe, based on the case of a blue collar kitchen, that the criticalist frame was warranted for use. The humor theory resulting from this study is a valuable method of understanding humor's role in maintaining and forming labor relations and hegemony within the kitchen. I do not wish to imply that blue collar workplaces are the only places suitable to the criticalist frame, but that humor as a mechanism for resistance and control is much more salient in an environment where time is controlled (clocking in), space is controlled (you are responsible for a station), bodies are controlled (management standards and market demands require exact physical

response) and finally individual expression is controlled (artistry and creativity are sacrificed for product conformity and rate).

This kitchen workplace can be contrasted with the school workplace. When Jane (Head of middle school) was asked “What is your management style?” she replied “I don’t have one, I hire smart energetic people and I trust them to take care of the classroom through their passions for their subjects”. As this quote indicates, artistry and creativity were encouraged (teachers were expected to invent and create). The broad goals or visions of the school (which also created a large degree of personal ambiguity in implementation) clearly differed from the kitchen’s demands for consistent product conformity and fast rate of production. When Jane was asked, “How do you evaluate someone who is doing a good job?” she replied “You know, we all know, the kids tell us, I can tell from the kids who is doing a good job. Most importantly I can tell from the kids, and how the teacher interacts with the kids, which teachers really care about the kids, you know, put them first”. Within the middle school the value of production was replaced with the value of “putting the kids first” and it formed an emotional commitment to the labor that did not exist in the kitchen. One could never escape this bond and responsibility regardless of time and space. The Prep’s middle school established and encouraged a culture of individual professional autonomy coupled with a strong demand for personal commitment and service. I can attest that emotional labor is as exhausting as physical labor. However, the weight of physical labor is not lost in translation. One of the hardest parts of writing about The Prep was attempting to convey the emotional responsibility one carried to do one’s job well and the strain it had on you.

The dramatically different work environments and pressures of the middle school and the kitchen helped me rethink and reorganize my previous focus on control and resistance as the function of humor. I concluded that my previous thinking on humor’s role in the organization’s change and stability was limited. Based on my kitchen study, I concluded that workers’ resistance (through humor or other mechanisms) over time leads to change. Management control humor and/or workers identifying themselves and their

humor through their labor roles led to organizational stability. Change and stability of organizational culture were conceptualized as offshoots of controlling the labor process.

In short, I developed a new goal. I was interested in understanding how humor as a type of everyday interaction created and maintained organizational culture. I found that control and resistance as the ultimate function of humor as a mechanism of organizational change and/or stability was not adequate. The part that organizational humor plays in control and resistance is but one of the many dialectical forces at play within organizational humor. It became apparent through my experiences at the middle school that a far more complex theory of change and stability needed to be integrated into the humor theory to adequately capture the complexity of organizational humor's role in the formation and maintenance of organizational culture. This chapter will connect everyday experience and interactions to the structures that influence them and are influenced by them.

The ultimate outcome of structuration is the combined influence of both the action duality and structure duality (via the duality of power and discourse – see Chapter V). This chapter is going to use the organizational humor of a middle school to bring this process to life as it unfolds in context over time. To this end this chapter will illustrate how humor (like all organizational communication) ultimately plays a part in the transformation and stability of the organization as seen in the everyday experiences detailed here.

Unlike the Kitchen case study that considered individual humor episodes as separate cases, the case study report on humor in the middle school will take a chronological and biographical approach. It will examine humor and organizational culture as it evolved over time through my experience (psychological motivations) which was expressed within a small group of middle school teachers. In order to capture the unfolding of an organization over time as experienced through humor (as well as the humor's influence on the organization's structure over time), it is important to continually contextualize the humor by providing the organizational economic context and psychological motivations of the agents. The Prep's humor will be examined in context of the actions and structural components that influence (and are influenced by) the humor.

This chapter is filled with the everyday details of my experience, but it is essential to discuss these to gauge the feel of the environment and, where possible, the motivations of the agents. This detail becomes key to connect the organization's actions to the structure. At the end of the episodes, there is an italicized analysis of why the episodes are significant. Periodically within this chapter I will reference Figure 17, Model 5 from Chapter V (I included it again here (Figure 18) for your reference) and strategically summarize at critical points in the episode details to ground everyday experiences in a Structuration process for understanding how interactions create and maintain organizational culture.

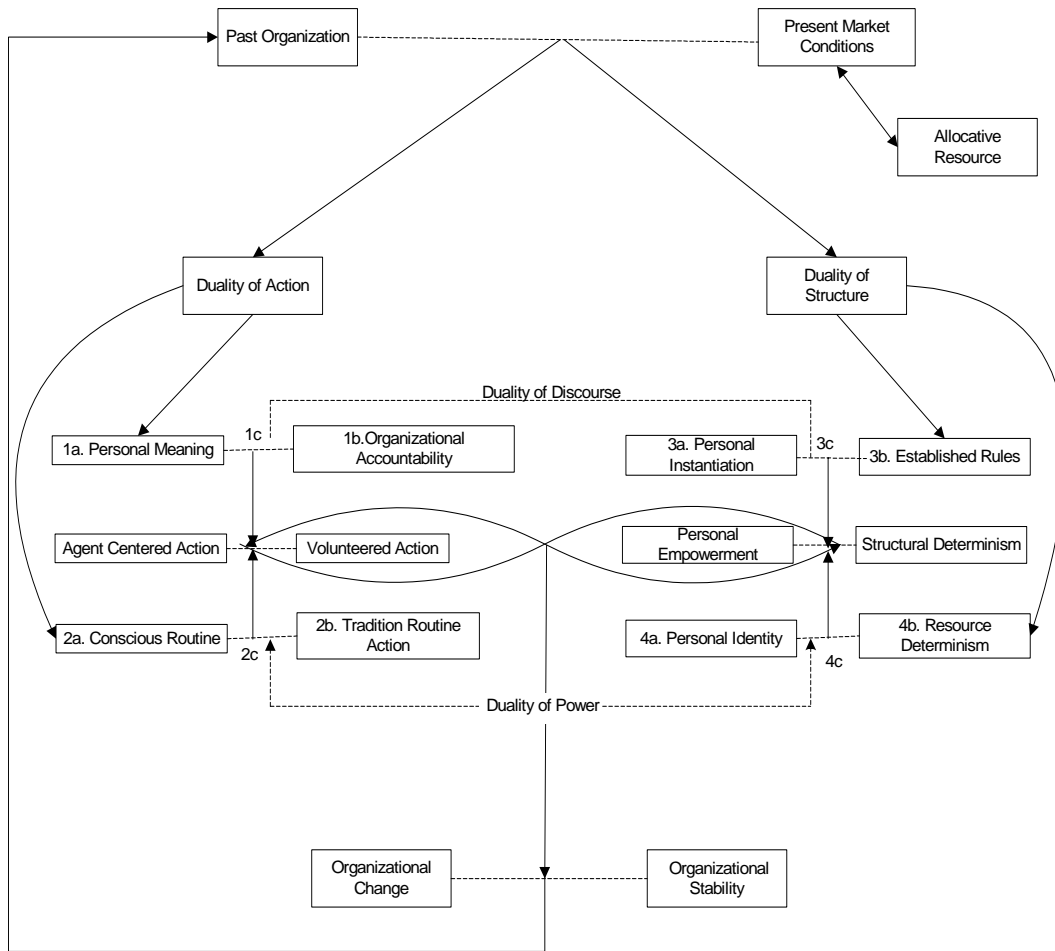


Figure 18
Structuration as a Process of Organizational Structure

In using this model humor will be examined as both an influence on action as well as a structural influence within the organization. Even though humor is communication and is therefore an action-based phenomenon within the process of structuration, it is never independent of the other components of structuration (routine, rules and structure). It is an expression (as an action) and an influence on (as well as influenced by) the structure. Action is never solely an action and structure is never solely a structure.

The ultimate outcome of structuration is the combined influence of both the action duality and structure duality (via the duality of power and discourse). The model includes all four of the dualities (action, structure, power and discourse) along with the component influences within them. Communication (1) consists of a mediation of personal meaning (1a) and communication centered on organizational accountability (1b) influenced by the duality of discourse. Routines (2) consist of a mediation of conscious choices about routines (2a) and mindless acceptance of routines (2b) influenced by the duality of power. Rules (3) consist of a mediation of the personal instantiation of rules (3a) [agents utilizing their own know-how to shape and form rules] and reliance on established rules (3b) influenced by the duality of discourse. The duality of discourse mediates both rules (3) and communication (1). Resources (4) consist of a mediation of personal identity (4a) and resource determinism (4b) influenced by duality of power.

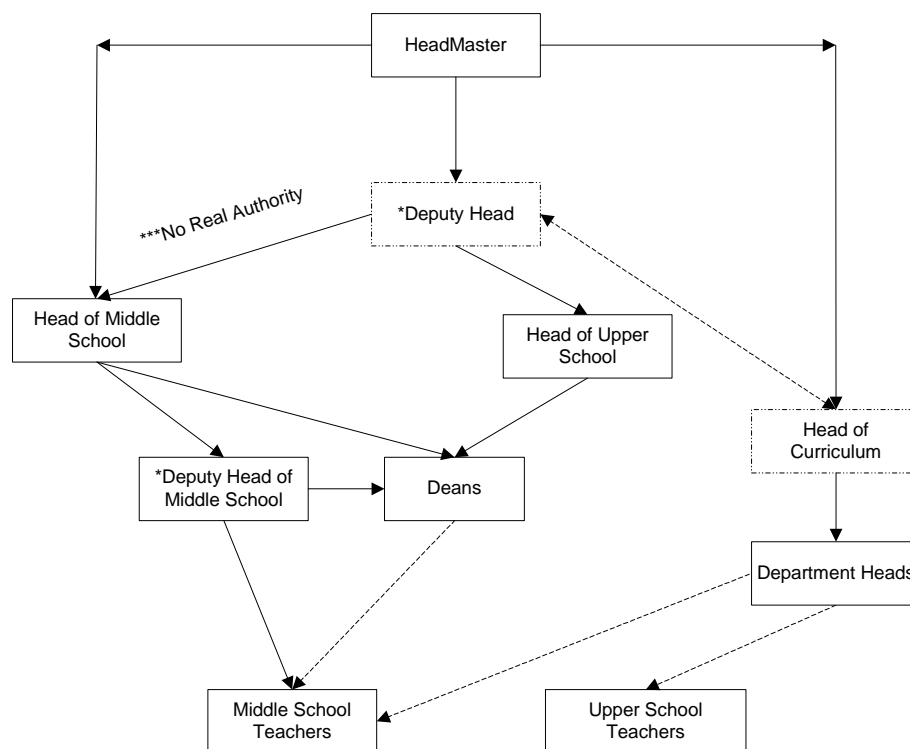
- Communication is an action that influences structuration process as a combination of personal meaning centered communication (1a) and/or organizational accountability communication (1b) as well as the influence from rules (3) via the duality of discourse. 1c represents the ultimate communication influence on the process of structuration. It is shaped by the degree of personal identification with organization process and mediates the combined impact of these three influences (1a, 1b, 3). Routines are actions that influence the structuration process as a combination of conscious routine action (2a) and/or traditional routine action (2b) mediating between these routine action extremes is the agent's degree of conscious choice that influences these routine behaviors.

- Routines are directly influenced by communication (1) as an action and resources (4) via the duality of power. 2c represents the ultimate routine influence on the process of structuration. It is shaped by personal consciousness and mediates the combined impact of these three influences (2a, 2b, 4).
- Rules are structural influences on the structuration process as a combination of personal meaning over rule instantiation (3a) and/or organizationally established meaning over rule enactment (3b) mediating between these extremes is the degree of perceived personal capability or trust in the rule forming/following process. 3c represents the ultimate influence of rules on the process of structuration. It is shaped by the degree of perceived capability and mediates the combined impact of these three influences (3a, 3b, 1).
- Resources are authoritative structural influences on the structuration process as a combination of personal identity (4a) and/or resource determinism (4b) mediating between these extremes is the degree of perceived personal capability in accessing resources. 4c represents the ultimate influence of resources on the process of structuration. It is shaped by the degree of personal capability accessing resources and mediates the combined impact of these three influences (4a, 4b, 2).

This chapter is going to use a study of the organizational humor of a middle school to bring this process to life as it unfolds over time in this context. To this end the chapter will illustrate how humor (like all organizational communication) ultimately plays a part in the transformation and stability of the organization.

Cast of Characters

The following is an organizational chart (Figure 19) of The Prep. It is followed by a table listing the background and roles of the people that shared my experiences at the Prep.



Legend and notes:

-----> Dotted line arrows indicate authority only translated to specific tasks of job responsibilities but not the entire employee.

Deputy Head and Head of Curriculum roles were filled by the same person. This is noted through dotted line boxes

* No longer a position during the third year of the ethnography

***Arrow from Deputy Head to Head of Middle School was a formal line on paper but in reality did not have any authority.

FIGURE 19
The Prep's Organizational Chart

The following table (6) details the cast of characters in the case. A majority--with the exception of upper school administrators who had authority over me--are from the middle school faculty which as a small group represented the bulk of the interaction I observed and participated in.

TABLE 6
Cast of Characters

Name	Job Titles	Background
Tony	Headmaster	Tony was fired at the end of my first year but served as the “acting head” my second year. Tony was a magnetic figure and used his charisma to run the school.
Scott	Headmaster	Scott was the Headmaster my third year. Scott was also a religious leader and quite a contemplative man.
Jane	Head of Middle School; English teacher	Jane was the Head of the middle school for 20 years. She was charismatic and her personality had helped shape the Middle School and culture over time. Jane was called by Tony “the mother of the Middle School” and was viewed by faculty as the heart of the program.
Drew	Assistant Head	Drew had worked at the Prep for 25 years and had been assistant Head for the last 20. He ostensibly ran the school while Tony was away on business.
Pearse	Head of Upper School	Pearse was a top prospect handpicked by the board to provide a youthful reshaping of the upper school culture. Pearse left after the first year.
Brenden	Assistant Head of Middle School.	In my first year Brenden was the assistant head as he had been for 15 years. In my second year he took a sabbatical from this role and moved to teaching upper school biology full time. In the third year Brenden decided to stay teaching.
Tim	Administrative Dean	Tim was a life long scholar holding two PhD’s and while teaching was completing a degree in economics from a local university. He was an ex-marine and stood in for Brenden as assistant Head. My third year the position became permanent.
Maureen	Head of Middle school Sports & PE teacher.	Maureen changed her job every year I was at the Prep. Maureen was also on the Admission Committee and Search Committee for the new Head once Tony left. Maureen’s dream was to start and run a Diversity Office at The Prep.
Hugh	Head of History Department	Hugh was an extremely intense person but also honest (sometimes frank). He ended up being on search committee for the new Headmaster and was made Head of the Upper School in my third year.

TABLE 6
Continued

Jill	Dean of Student Life, English & History Teacher	Jill was a teacher my first year. She became the Dean of Student Life and 8 th grade boarding (responsible for quality of boarding life for that student's grade) my second year. My third year she was no longer a Dean but full time teacher again.
Colleen	Middle School Counselor	Colleen was a counselor and was an important part of the Middle School community. She assigned and ran all advisee, health, and social programs and was the front line for any problems (from traumatic to peer issues). Due to the privacy needed for her job, Colleen's office was not within the common area of the middle school.
Maria	Administrative Assistant; Theology Teacher.	Maria was a strong assistant to Jane serving on every committee with her and acting as a sounding board. She co-wrote many of the policies for the Middle School.
Bill	6 th Grade Geography Teacher	Bill had been a successful businessman who quit 8 years ago to devote the rest of his life to "something worthwhile". Though Bill was well liked he was not very social with the teachers. He spent a majority of his time working with the students on projects.
Sam	7 th and 10 th Grade History Teacher; Varsity Soccer Coach.	Sam was the "history DH" (designated hitter). At one time or other he taught every history course at the school except senior social science. He also coached soccer and helped start the Soccer Academy.
Susan	Middle School Spanish Teacher	Susan was hired the same year I was and though she was competent in her job was a very negative personality particularly her recognition she received or didn't receive for her job.
George	Middle School Spanish Teacher	George replaced Susan as the Middle School Spanish teacher. George had previously taught in a public school. He took the job in the private school to "run his own show." He desired the freedom in the classroom that a school like the Prep afforded.
Hillary	Middle School Spanish Teacher; Student life	Hillary had started as a college student coach and when she graduated had move on campus and became the odd job person. She helped run student life. My second year she came on as a full time faculty member teaching Spanish. She was the youngest member of the staff throughout my time.
John	8 th Grade Science Teacher	John was also called 'Radical John'. He was a self-proclaimed disestablishmentarian. He was in constant disagreement of Tony and always assumed the Upper School Administration held a sinister agenda.
Mariah	7 th Grade Science Teacher	She joined The Prep the same year I did. She was a strong and respected science teacher. She enjoyed the latest gossip and was always a sympathetic ear to complaints. This trait put her at odds Jane a majority of the time. The joke was because she didn't gossip with Jane.

TABLE 6
Continued

Delaney	6 th Grade Science Teacher; Head of 6 th Grade Team	She was the classic science teacher and would often get frustrated when the world was not as predictable and controlled as her lab. She was at odds with much of the everyday running of the Prep though felt it was an empowering place. She often stressed that not enough clear direction was provided.
Megan	English Teacher; Head of 8 th Grade Team	Megan started with me and had once been a student at the Prep (her advisor was Jane). Megan was extremely close with Jane but also had loose lips. "If you want the school to know tell Joanne".
Joanne	English Teacher; Head of 7 th Grade Team.	Joanne lived on campus with her husband who was also a teacher in the Middle School. She had two kids in the school and was extremely well respected by the faculty. Joanne was a tireless champion for disadvantaged kids, particularly kids with learning issues and was often held up by the faculty as an example of good advisor.
Sue	French Teacher	Sue left after my second year to become a sex therapist. She was two people. She was a professional she was extremely organized and very gentle with the kids. She was the most openly sexual person I have ever met and on many occasions in the faculty lounge she took delight in embarrassing others and myself by sharing too much information.
Christy	8 th Grade Math Teacher; Head of Middle School Math Department	Diana was the Middle School Math Department Head. She was passionate about teaching math and she ran her own math company that wrote textbooks. Christy was the first in the school everyday, sometimes three hours early often tutoring or helping a kid with math.
James	Head of Middle School Athletics	James was a student at The Prep and like Megan was one of Jane's advisees when he was in school. James had worked in many areas of the school in maintenance, as a coach, as Head of summer programs, a math teacher, and Head of Middle School Athletics.
Joan	7 th Grade Math Teacher; High School Varsity Coach	Joan lived on campus, taught a full load and coached two sports. She was a person whose two passions were sports (she was an avid sports fan) and arts and crafts. She was also extremely crass as you may see in some of the episodes.
Lucy	6 th Grade Math Teacher.	Lucy was a math teacher and came my second year. She constantly complained about the extra work at The Prep beyond teaching.
Kate	History School Teacher	Kate was fresh out of college, a new teacher and lived on campus. She burned out at the end of my second year.
Billy	Drama Teacher	Billy was a man who on first examination you would expect to be the football coach but instead was an Opera singer, a PhD student and the drama teacher. He was loved by the kids and was able to put on amazing performances often keeping insane hours and overcoming an early stage cancer diagnosis and surgery.

My ethnographic study is written from a longitudinal perspective spanning three years. The episodes typically follow a chronological order with the exception of certain groupings to highlight necessary points. A regular font style is used for the descriptions of the experience. Italicized font is used to reflect my interpretations and theory related comments that tie the episodes back to the model.

Year One

I have included details here on my job interview and the first three days on the job. This will give you a sense of the culture as I first experienced it. At the end of this description, I will elaborate on how I see this time looking back. Finally, I will use the structuration process model to setup the organizational culture change over time.

Job Interview

I was hired in a whirlwind - one day at the campus to teach a class (with the potential Head of my department in the room), brief meetings with various administrators and teachers of the middle school - then on the same day I was all but offered the job. All that was required was approval from Tony, the Headmaster. I didn't know it at the time but Jane (Head of the Middle School) had already told Tony she wanted me hired, and for all intents and purposes that meant my meeting with Tony was a formality.

I prepared for my meeting with the Headmaster by going over my resume, thought about likely questions, and reviewed pertinent experience. However, Tony spent very little time (in fact no) time going over my credentials. He simply said his goal was to hire "smart, driven people". He showed me a map of the campus that indicated buildings that had been erected in the past few years. He discussed future opportunities for school expansion and discussed prep school metrics - test scores, numbers of kids going to Ivy League Schools, the number of students on financial aid, and the number of minority students. He never interviewed me for the job. He was selling the school and talking to me on a personal level. After about 45 minutes of talking he got up, shook my

hand, and said “This is great.” He asked me if I had any questions. I replied “Yes, am I right to assume you offering me the job?” He laughed and replied “of course and a letter would come in the mail”. He offered me a part-time position and salary for one year. I indicated that I would accept it if he increased the salary by 25%. He agreed and asked if I would mind doing a few extra small duties to make up the 25%. I agreed.

The level of casualness in what should have been a formal interview with the “CEO” of the school led me to believe from the start that this would be a relaxed working culture. As a potential employee, I had to ask about the job and initiate the compensation negotiations.

Faculty Meetings, Year One

The faculty’s school year would start on the Monday before classes. This day was devoted to a full faculty meeting, followed by a division faculty meeting (middle school and upper school faculty are split). On Tuesday there was another divisional faculty meeting and then after lunch we would break into team meetings. Wednesday was a teacher’s work day (some departments met on this day). On Thursday middle school orientation was held, during which kids and parents signed up for classes and extra circular activities and meet advisors. Friday was devoted to upper school orientation.

On that first Monday the teachers piled into the first full faculty meeting. The atmosphere was energized and the volume was extremely loud with people are hugging each other and recounting their summer’s adventures. People took very little notice of Tony and Drew entering the room. Drew assumed his position in one of the chairs and organized papers. Tony stood in the middle of the recital hall and talked casually to a few teachers in the front row.

Based on some unknown cue, the conversational volume in the room began to quiet and quickly the room fell into silence with Tony standing in the middle of the floor. Tony filled the room with his voice and welcomes everyone back. Tony then proceeded to talk about what some of the faculty members did over the summer, inviting some of them to add comments He asked Coach, a white-haired and extremely tanned

man, to share stories about his European trip. Coach was one of the school's great characters, and he heeded the call with an impromptu and hilarious (purposively ethnocentric) account of his trip to France. His mispronunciation of French cities, regions and food was met with laughter and people began yelling out for other holiday stories. Clearly coach had been entertaining the boarding faculty with his tales since he had been back. After a while Tony, told of his own trip to Spain and the people who had visited him out there. Tony went with a school trip every year to Spain, where it seemed he spent his time drinking wine and entertaining guests. Tony's retelling was not met with the same level of laughter as the coach's tale, but the atmosphere was still jovial.

After a while Tony said "Lets get down to business" and turned the floor over to Drew. Drew introduced the new faculty members (myself included), which apparently was the largest group of new faculty hired for some time. He then ran through the schedule for the next school year and some procedural changes in the infirmary. The meeting then adjourned for lunch and was followed by division meetings. I thought to myself that this could have taken ten minutes to cover the content that was shared. We went to lunch and the casual atmosphere and introductions continued.

The middle school faculty meetings made the full faculty meetings seem organized and rigid. Teachers sat around in a classroom with Jane and Brenden up front facing the teachers. There was no order to these meetings; people spoke out whenever they felt and openly joked around. Jane had sent out an email with topics of discussion, but very few people seemed to have a copy of the message with them, and Jane followed the agenda loosely in any case. She began by stating how excited she was with so many new faces this year. Jane stated that this was the most new teachers in any year she could remember.

Brenden then began his beginning-of-the-year speech. He reminded the new and old teachers of the importance of limiting the stress on our kids and the pressure that over-achieving kids put on themselves in trying to exceed the expectations of the faculty and their parents. In the midst of this passionate plea to the faculty, I noticed that my fellow teachers were attentive, but not overly engaged. Then, then to my amazement,

Brenden started to tear up. I became very uncomfortable (as I always am with public displays of emotion). I provided a sympathetic – trying to be reassuring- smile back. I noticed the other six new teachers in the room were just as uncomfortable. What was strange was that as I looked around the room and I didn't see the typical level of discomfort that surrounds crying in public. By the reactions of the other teachers, I realized that rather than displays of empathy (as you would expect in such close kit group) teachers were politely attentive, but still not overly engaged in Brenden's clearly heartfelt plea. I realized that Brenden crying must be common for such a close group of people to overlook it so effortlessly.

Over the years, Brenden's tearing up at middle school faculty meetings became expected. Frequently, a teacher would jibe Brenden saying "Brenden we have been here half an hour and you haven't cried". Once, James came into a faculty meeting late and said "apart from Brenden crying what have I missed?" Teachers often came in late to middle school meetings and their unapologetic and confident entrance made it was clear that it was an accepted practice. For example in this first meeting, Sam, a teacher of seventh grade history, waltzed in halfway through the middle school meeting and the meeting stopped to greet him. He said, "Sorry," as if he was just interrupting Jane versus coming in late for a meeting. Sam sat in the back and joked around for the remainder of the meeting. Jane went on to discuss jobs at middle school orientation. She asked Sam, Billy, and me to handout books. Sam informed her he was running the soccer sign up table, Hugh said he was doing the theater table. I apologized that I was going to be out of town. Some people began laughing and Jane responded with "well shit" and everyone burst out laughing.

The lack of information shared in the full faculty meeting and the lack of formal focus on tasks led me to believe that this meeting was more of a ceremonial or ritual function rather than a practical kick off meeting for the year. The middle school meeting was just as informal, yet all the participants in the meeting had a role in the conversations. There was also the passionate connection to the students, as seen in Brenden's dialogue where he" teared up." The ease and acceptance of this emotional

display showed a closeness among the group. In contrast to the full faculty meeting, the middle school meeting covered information directly related to the school year. However, the delivery of information occurred in a group discussion format that necessitated prior organizational knowledge and participation to understand the message. Many of the topics and messages discussed had to be reviewed with the new faculty over the following weeks.

The Salute

The next day we had our second middle school faculty meeting, which was devoted to less routine matters. Jane announced that the Jewish Women's Association was organizing a prejudice workshop for 8th graders this year and would like the middle school to participate, but that they would need a sponsor. I announced that I could work it into my syllabus. This evoked laughs from my fellow teachers. I looked around puzzled as to why this response evoked laughter. Jane looked at Brenden, "Brenden did you teach Owen about the Prep's salute?" This evoked even more laughter. I forgot about the joking exchange until the next day, when Brenden filled me in on the salute. Brenden leaned in real close, as if he was sharing an enormous secret. He started with "You know what? Owen, what is the most important thing to learn when working here? It is to say 'No.' I want you to go home and practice it." I laughed, and he responded "I am serious. You have to draw your boundaries yourself in terms of what you are willing to take on. Otherwise, you will burn out. I recommend that when you say 'No' put an exclamation point on it like this [Brenden sticks up his middle finger]." We both laughed. At the prep people would shoot the bird at each other constantly, typically, in response to be made fun of by other teachers.

These episodes relay an informality that was prevalent at The Prep. This indicates that agents used interaction as a basis to form personal meaning rather than focusing on organizational accountability.

A strange power dynamic existed because of the lack of perceived structure to the interview. Tony controlled all the resources and thus set the path for the interview. I

was unable to participate actively in sharing information about myself because of the informal nature of the dialogue. Since he was not on task, as rules for an interview typically dictate he should be, I had no ability to establish an interview routine and he controlled the duality of power (mutual influence of routine and resource).

Within the full faculty meeting, I saw a mix of traditional routine being followed, with little regard to the function of that routine. The beginning-of-the-year meeting had a feel of tradition for tradition's sake. It had no strategic organizational function. Similar to the episode "Job Interview", the Headmaster focused on his personal experiences, projecting his personal meaning of the organization. For Tony and his comrades, the meeting represented an agent-centered action and personal empowerment through structure. For other audience members, it was a volunteered action which attendees accepted because of the low degree of anxiety in organizational resources.

"The Salute" represents a structural force of personal empowerment and volunteer centered action. People were empowered by a high sense of organizational accountability due to low resource anxiety and a belief in individual know-how in forming and following rules. This combined with a sense of personal meaning in everyday conversation and a lack of consciousness due to the routine of not saying 'No'. A Due to this environment, as a staff member you are subject to take on more than you can possibly do. Brenden teaching me to say 'No' and emphasizing it with "The Salute" was the organization's way of using humor to make myself and other new teachers conscious of the pressures to volunteer for overwork without realizing it.

In analyzing all three of these episodes using my adaptive structuration theory (Model 5, Figure 18), I have made the assumption that there was a climate of empowerment via resources. The individual via the duality of structure (resources and rules) had a high perceived personal control of the labor process (but for obvious reasons not a large desire to challenge or transform it). This feeling is captured by Delaney as she recalls this time in her interview:

Delaney: Prior to the budget crunch I could pretty much go to Jane with ideas and she would say 'sure that's a great idea I want you to work on it next summer' and I would work on it and to some extent it would get adopted.

Interviewer: Which sounds pretty empowering as a teacher...

Delaney: Right, yeah and that's a huge part of the reason why I'm happy in a place like the Prep because I get to think and do things in my class and have the power to change things.

In an organizational context of high empowerment via structure the workers did not push for organizational change, but rather they pushed to do their job so it resonated with their individual meaning. They volunteered to improve their classes and their ability to do the job. This led to a climate of cheerful stability, and the group felt commitment to improving personal meaning in daily interactions. While in my new teacher orientation phase, I was encouraged to individualize my class and not be afraid to interject my personal opinion.

Middle School Daily Routine

These episodes outline the daily routine that formed the framework and predictability of the day at the prep's middle school. The routine as a key part of Structuration requires no analysis. It is important to note that even as the organization changed over the three years the routine varied little, BUT the way that the routine was experienced varied greatly. Everything included in the following routine are "set your clock by" events within the day. Some are scheduled events and others are informal events dispersed throughout the day, as actors make sense of and personalize their organizational routine. Like Roy's (1958) famous humor study, "Banana Time," the routines punctuated the day, relieved the monotony, but also added a sense of predictability and space for group sense making.

- 6:00 to 7:00 - Christy would get to school and prepare for her classes.
- 7:20 to 7:55 - Breakfast and King Owen's court. A majority of the middle school staff ate breakfast in the dining hall, usually always at the same couple of tables. Many teachers would eat with their kids before bringing them to day care. Even before I had my own child in the daycare I would sit with the families. The faculty kids on campus called me "King Owen" and within a few months I had become a great attraction. One teacher confessed it was the only way she could get her son to come to breakfast was tell him that King Owen would be there.
- 7:30 to 7:55 - Teachers would gather at Maria's desk (see episode "The Round Table") and talk.
- 7:55 to 8:00 - Teachers would remind the kids to go to chapel and walk up themselves.

- 8:00 to 8:15 - Chapel service.
- 8:15 to 8:17 – Teachers would cram into the mailbox room on their way down to chapel. In these close quarters, volume seemed to increase as teachers visited and shared camaraderie.
- 8:17 to 9:15 - 1st period.
- 9:20 to 10:15 - 2nd period.
- 10:20 to 11:10 - 3rd period.
- 11:15 to 11:45 - Lunch. Monday to Thursday teachers would Head a table of seven randomly placed students (at least 2 from each grade 6th, 7th and 8th); Table rosters were changed every two weeks. Friday was free seating, when kids and teachers choose their own tables.
- 11:45 to 12:15 - (free time). This was an important time for the kids, the only time in the day that they were scheduled to have “free time”. The kids could run wild (the noise was incredible, but not discouraged, because it was healthy for the kids to blow off steam) mostly in the middle school, but some went down to gym. The duty administrator would walk around the building to maintain order. Teachers would call this duty “riot control.” The majority of teachers, unless helping a student, would retreat to the faculty lounge where it was typically standing room only. The faculty break room consisted of two rooms, both 10 by 12. The computer room had a desk that spanned the entire far wall with three computers and there was a small desk for the phone. The lounge room had two couches and a small coffee table. These close quarters and large numbers meant that no one pretended to work. The teachers themselves used the 20 minutes to relax and joke around with each other.
- 12:20 to 1:05 - 5th period
- 1:10 to 1:55 - 6th period
- 2:00 to 2:45 - 7th period
- 2:50 to 3:35 - 8th period
- 3:35 to 4:15 - unofficial wrap up time. Teachers were expected to stay after school for half an hour or so to be accessible to parents or kids. Many teachers used the after school period to tutor kids who needed help. If you were not tutoring or coaching you would find your way to the roundtable to catch up on the gossip of the day. On “recovery days” (middle school faculty meeting days) all of the middle school teachers would meet from 3.40- 5.00 in a classroom.
- 4:00 to 4:30 - detention hall in classroom G. Duty teacher would take roll and run the study hall as punishment. Duty administrator would stay in middle school till 5.30 when the middle school building was locked up. This duty was jokingly called “liability patrol” as it was necessary to have an adult present on campus until the building was locked.
- 4:00- 9:00 - (after school activities). Many students would stay on campus for art or sport activities (practice games or performances).

And now for something completely different...to go from daily routine to routine workload.

No Such Thing as Part Time Work

It was only later that I found out the joke was on me. As the saying goes, “There was no part time job at The Prep, only part time pay.” On the first day when I was introduced as a part-time employee the other teachers started making fun of me for falling for that one. Even though I had less of a class load and no duties (three sections instead of four) I would still have to work a full workweek. Because of the rotating schedule it was impossible to leave early or arrive late most days, as my classes were at different times everyday. I also went beyond my expected duties, partly due to my motivation, but also because of the cultural influences of the prep. I completely redesigned the 8th grade anthropology course, tutored numerous kids, and chaperoned 8th grade activities and the class trips. I soon discovered time at The Prep was a vacuum. The more free time you had, the more the intellectually curious and friendly kids would seek a way to fill it.

As the previous episodes indicated, the past few years were ones of massive growth and secure financial stability. The feeling of personal security and resource capability due to the perceived stable economic support was high. I was told by Jane (Head of middle school) and Hugh (department Head) that if I had a good idea for your course or classroom I should run with it. There was an organizational- wide perception that if you champion an idea resources were there to support it. There was at this time financial support for teachers to work on special projects or course enhancements over the summer, increasing a teachers overall salary.

In an interview Mariah, three years after we started together at The Prep, captures the feeling at this time and how this had changed over the years.

Mariah: *I don't feel cheated but I am [long pause] frustrated that we are not supported as much as when we started. Now I feel like I am being told to relax the demands on the kids that I can't do all the projects I want.*

Interviewer: *Do you feel limited from a management or economic standpoint?"*

Mariah: “Both I guess, but Jane has changed. The whole place has changed. We all know the money situation sucks but it’s more. We are not as open as we used to be.” **Interviewer:** Why does that frustrate you personally?

Mariah: I came here because I believed Brenden and John: that I could expand the course in any direction I wanted.

Interviewer: Do you feel they lied, or exaggerated.

Mariah: No I just wish I got here a few years earlier.

Mariah’s frustration in her interview reflects how her confidence to enact personal change in her class and job had changed since this first year. Her perceptions of change are not unusual, but it reflects the level of personal confidence and ownership people perceived that they have in my first year. This personal confidence influences the enactment of the entire organizational process. This study will show this change over time.

During the first year the rules of conduct were relaxed. People felt very little need to follow organizational expectations to the letter. People would also carry out necessary routines in ways that reflected a high level of trust in the organization, even if this meant that one would over commit oneself (as in the next episode “ Six Parts Myth”).

Six Parts Myth

The prep distributed its teachers’ workload around six (unequal) parts. A majority of teachers taught at least 4 sections, each counting as a part, and the remaining two parts involved other responsibilities. What made up “a part” beyond teaching a section varied. The warning that veteran teachers gave every year was be careful because they will try to add more to a part without taking anything else away. In addition to the six-part load, all teachers had basic expectations. These expectations were over and above your six parts. For middle school teachers these duties entailed: study hall duty (proctor 3 study hall periods a week), one day of after lunch duty, and plan and operate an activity period once a week.

The following outlines some of my additional duties. I volunteered to be the co-coordinator for the 8th grade desert camping trip (which also involved organizing, ordering, cooking and ensuring supplies for 90 people for a week), after school duty

once a week (meant staying at a school a running a study hall till 5:30), organizing and facilitating an 8th grade prejudice workshop (a duty I volunteered for), and help run and organize (running and training workshop leaders) in our special Martin Luther King Day tribute (as a school came to school on MLK say and marched in the morning followed by student led workshop in the afternoon). The third year nothing was dropped and another section of a twelve-grade social science course (which I volunteered for due to student request) was added, so I taught 5 sections in total. Also, half way through the first term of year three, I was asked to run the student government and all activities that entailed. I ended up redesigning the student government elections and responsibilities. I was also asked to serve on the admission committee, which entailed reading about 200 applications, essays, recommendation letters and writing opinions on ranking students.

Writing this last paragraph detailing my parts made me angry, because it made me realize how much “extra” work I do at the Prep. Yet I also realized that I have mostly myself to blame. I also felt lucky next to some of the other faculty who also coached. Coaching entails after-school practices, traveling, booking, and the responsibility of athletes’ homework completion. Yet, one cannot help compare oneself to others. I felt annoyed at Lucy who taught four sections, dropped student government, refused after-school duty, and went on (but did not run, or organize) the 6th grade trip, which was involved two chauffeured buses and a hotel stay versus the 8th grade trip which was a week of camping and hiking in the desert.

I contrast the extreme of Joan and Lucy (knowing my load was somewhere in the middle) as it gives a sense of wide disparity between six part loads at The Prep. This disparity led to social costs for those not seen as pulling their weight. This “cost” was largely exacted in humor. Those not pulling their weight were made fun of , whereas those who pulled their weight who were made fun with.

Joan: *I work hard because I love the kids and I’ll do everything I can for them. I also work hard because I work with my best friends. If I don’t do it that means someone else will. Plus I’m gone a lot because I coach and I never have a problem getting help to cover my classes.”*

Interviewer: *What about the teachers who don’t pull their weight?*

***Joan:** I don't want to talk about them. There isn't many of them, I mean I can count them on my hand. I would still cover their classes if they asked but I wouldn't offer unless they asked. I guess I'm a sucker, but I can't change it, that's the way I am.*

Unlike other workplaces, I have worked people in the middle school did not blame their boss for these uneven workloads. In the middle school at least the managers (Jane, Tim and Brenden) were clearly working harder than all of us. To add to this they were working every crisis and every irrational parent which was exhausting work. As John said "you couldn't pay me to do Jane's job. I go home at 4:00 and I am done." The overwork load was viewed as an organizational eventuality not as a management coercion. To the contrary it was one's own motivations or drive that was to blame for adding on to one's responsibilities. Once again this points to a large degree of organizational stability, volunteerism of agency via empowerment of structure. On a personal level I also empowered myself to work harder by shaping routine duties (consciously following them but in the process individualizing them) to fit my personalized goals/needs.

In an environment that is personally empowering, lack of rules requiring workload metrics, no routines around workload metrics, if a person is not a self-starter or motivated by "a calling" to the students he or she will not be forced to do more work. This is especially true because the economic drivers are not correlated to workloads. In fact the reverse phenomenon is true for teachers who took on more, served as "team players", "went the extra mile." They often performed more work with less economic reward.

The Round Table

The significance of the space called "outside Jane's office" did not initially occur to me. I just saw the other teachers sitting there talking, so I sat down in my free periods and joined in. The area's focal point was a round 48" table and bunch of chairs outside Jane and Brenden's office. This area overlooked the study hall room and the main kids common room. The location of the round table meant it was in the middle of the majority of traffic in the middle school. Along with this central location, the area was

also home to Maria's desk (middle school secretary) which was the access point for all information: visitors, every parent, incoming call, visiting upper school student, student, tours and deliveries. Jane's office was also the sight where any unusual drama would take place, e.g., an irate parent coming to complain. The Heads of the upper school would pop down to fill her in on some problem in the upper school. A student who was sent out of class was sent to Brenden's office, but would first have to pass the gauntlet of questions from the teachers at the round table. In short it was the center of information, traffic and social talk time during the day.

The routine was the same at the round table everyday, 7:30am -8:00 a.m. teachers would meet (after many had grabbed breakfast) and talk, typically about a story in the news or on NPR, then walk up to chapel. From 8:15- 11:10am many teachers with a free period would work in the teacher's common room or at their desks. However, in the afternoon from 12:15 to 4:30 (periods 5-8) the round table was fully in session. The teachers would sit around and joke with each other and gossip.

The majority of the talk circled around three very good friends: Jane, Maureen and Maria. Due to the nature of their jobs and their close friendship, they had the flexibility in their day to sit around and talk. Maria was working at her desk near the table. Jane was sitting outside her office and Maureen, who didn't have an office and had few classes, would actually call the roundtable itself her office as a joke. The rest of the staff, would pop by regularly and join in the conversation. Unbelievably, kids felt comfortable popping by the round table for a brief conversation. It was always the first place the upper schoolers came to when they visited. These visits were called "returning to the womb" in the middle school.

Typically you would see all three of the regulars (along with whoever else was sitting there) all helping Maria collate papers, folding a mass mailing, sticking addresses on envelopes or other such duties. When anyone had a monotonous task to complete, they would often bring it to the round table and get help from others as they sat around and talked. Lots of little things and grand conversations took shape at the round table

without much planning or forethought. I always felt the space brought the community together.

The best way to explain the dynamics of the “round table” is an analogy provided by a conversation between Maureen and Maria one day at the round table. Maria asked Maureen if she had seen the movie *Barbershop*. Maureen made fun of her saying that she only asked her that question because she was black. Maria should have known that Maureen was joking, but Maria (who was one of the most kind and earnest people I have ever met) was not very good at picking up sarcasms and apologized profusely. Maureen looked at me and smiled as she shook her head in jest. I explained to Maria that Maureen was only teasing her. (In fact Maureen being the only African-American teacher in the school, would often use her race or the Prep’s lack of diversity as a joke when she was with her close friends. Maria asked Maureen if places like the Barbershop still existed in the African-American community. She explained how she saw the movie as bittersweet as the Barbershop community spaces were lost in modern suburban white America. Maureen laughed and said “what do you call this?” and gestured to the space around her. She went on to explain “why do you think we all ‘hangs out’ here everyday?” Maureen drew the analogy between the barbershop and “the round table” by commenting on the importance the roundtable space had for the school community.

The roundtable represented a dependable (routine place) for non-routine conversation that centered on sharing personal meaning. The Prep had no formal rules that governed the style or type of conversation. A majority of conversations surrounded topics related to the kids or parents (which will not be included in this study) or included faculty gossip. There was a magic line that students knew not to cross without permission. They also knew that the conversations between the teachers were private.

The round table was a space for informal and friendly conversation, yet at the same time the cornerstone of these conversations was Jane’s presence. The conversations had no rules or routines but it still represented the context in which Jane evaluated The Prep holistically. This evaluation ranged from student well being, conversations about classes, and teacher anxiety. It was through her perceptions and

observations gathered at these discussions that she formed her opinion of the staff's capabilities.

Jane: You can see that light go on in a child. It's a child learning how to develop relationships, how to have self-respect, self-esteem, learn about give and take. Learn that they can live independently of their parents and that all in the class and outside the class. Probably more of this is done outside the class.

Interviewer: As a manager how do you foster the right environment outside the class to accomplish this?

Jane: Yes, you have to foster it and how do you do that - hire the right people. You know quickly if you haven't. Watching the interaction between faculty members and a child, you can tell if a faculty member is genuinely interested in the child and genuinely cares about that child. I think we are pretty good about achieving success there. Its clear I could name the people right now who don't fit that mold, I hope they leave pretty soon.

Interviewer: So when I was hired what I was really being evaluated on was how I walked around the corridors.

Jane: Absolutely, I know what goes on in the class. All I have to do is ask a kid in your class. I don't need to sit in a class to know if it's successful. What interests me more is what you do in your free time. Are you accessible? If a person wants to sit in their classroom or desk and grade so they can go home immediately at the end of school? You know that this is a job for them. We want people who want to interact with the kids and the rest of the teachers. We want a community and that starts with the teachers modeling friendship with each other and then moves to how they treat the kids. Do you treat a child gently, with respect and with affection? If those things happen I know we have hired the right person.

As this interview shows, informal communication and friendship took on extra weight in an organization like The Prep. Jane, along with Drew (assistant Head) were the most powerful people in the school, because they controlled resources for advancement. They wrote staff evaluations, they were the gatekeepers for faculty training, and they controlled who was on which committee (which in the private school world was key for career advancement). To be in favor with Jane meant an informal power that translated into important resource and career advancement. As a result the daily discourse at "the Round Table," informal as it was, could have important consequences for resource security. Being a full member of these discussions and a friend of Jane led to a higher perceived capability in the organization.

To make matters more complicated and put more focus on personal friendship as a resource, Jane and Drew did not care for each other and had been engaged in political fights for at least the last twenty years. Who you became friendly with ended up having important repercussion for your future career. This dynamic is seen in the following episode “You Can’t Serve Two Masters.” You can also see this in “March Madness,” where I found myself in the disastrous position of being caught in between Drew and Jane.

You Can’t Serve Two Masters

Kate, a young teacher right out of college, taught one class in the middle school and three in the upper school. As a new teacher she was asking a group of teachers what division meeting she should attend (division meetings were when the high school and the middle school had separate faculty meetings at the same time). Three teachers in a row told her the same thing—that she should attend where she felt it most important for her to attend. This advice was no help but typical of The Prep, where no one wanted to tell anyone else to do. After Kate pushed for someone to tell her what to do, Vicki advised her to follow her class breakdown, upper school class attend the upper-school meeting. Sam had a different take, and he told her a humorous story that I have heard him repeat at least five times over the past three years to new teachers. The story follows:

When I was first starting, Sam had some conflict with his upper school coaching obligations and attending middle school lunch. He chose to fulfill his upper school obligations. At this point Steve (Head of soccer program) passed onto him some sage advice. If it is a choice between Tony (Headmaster of whole school and de-facto Head of upper school) and Jane (Head of middle school) go with Jane every time. You can survive just fine with Tony being mad at you, look at Radical John, he and Tony hate each other. But you make Jane mad at you, you’re toast.

The reuse of this narrative by Sam over the years and the humorous response that it received from the middle school faculty meant that it was seen as holding some underlying cultural truth. However, several teachers were able to survive (remain un-toasted) even when Jane became annoyed with them. When Jane became annoyed with you, she would show her disapproval of you in subtle ways. Other teachers also realized

that their close association with that person could also have unpleasant consequences. These consequence were not direct use of power as in sanctions or punishment, but more in the way that Jane held higher expectations (or perhaps her level of patience was thin) for those who were not in her favor. She would disagree with them socially, and often Maureen and/or Maria would tell people informally to let the person and the rest of us know that she disapproved of them. Jane, as the center of the middle school social culture, had such charm and charisma that to be on her bad side meant that you lost access to an important resource of the middle school, social approval.

In structurational terms the previous two episodes (You Can't Serve Two Masters and The Round Table) reflected a direct connection between everyday interactions on a personal level and access to organizational resources. In some ways formal routines and established rules are almost imperceptible in the process of forming and maintaining power. For some people this was an action-centered environment, particularly those with a lower anxiety due to their connection to either Jane or Allen. However, it increased anxiety to those caught between the two. Faculty who did not participate in these discussions would diminish their perception of agent centered action and their ability to act.

First Class Tony

After reading the employee announcements, a female teacher said “I can’t believe that Tony is going to be in Japan for two weeks.” “Hey, you got to go to Houston this weekend,” I replied back. (She had just gotten back from a weekend field hockey torment in which she had to drive, coach, and chaperone 20 girls). She shot me The Preps salute (the middle finger). A few other teachers who joined the discussion agreed with her and began to joke about Tony’s extensive travels. “But, did you hear that Tony is flying first class to Japan.” One of the male teachers exclaimed incredulously. Dialogue began about Tony’s various perceived outrageous travel perks. Joking comments ranged from phrases like, “I heard he stays in the best hotels.” “I heard he has a budget, just for entertaining, that he uses to eat out.” Teachers joked about the reason for the junket. “How many students do we get from Japan? One or two a year? Does it

seem strange to spend a month touring with no expenses paid for that many students?” Finally, the female teacher who started the discussion said, “I wasn’t complaining about expenses. Who gives a s*** about expenses. I just wanna go. Besides I don’t know what you are all complaining about—in first class the drinks are free.” Teachers roared with laughter each making more and more exaggerated estimates on how much alcohol would be consumed. All in all it was agreed first class with free drinks was actually a thrifty budget decision.

In this episode I was a witness to the first open mocking of Tony. Though Tony’s bravado made him an easy target for lampooning, this joking about his largess and spending habits reflected a deeper feeling. As soon as the joking started I made a note to myself to watch different people frame Tony’s expenditures. Clearly, the female teacher who started the joke and another colleague saw Tony’s expenditures as “it must be nice [having the opportunity and access to the expenditures].” The male teacher saw them as misconduct and taking advantage of his position. I noticed The teacher who started the discussion averted this line of discussion by criticizing Tony along the familiar humor script of making fun of “party boy” Tony.

This episode is important because it reflects two different perspectives of the organizational culture and of Tony’s leadership. Making fun of Tony’s perks reflected a common feeling of low allocative resource control and resource authority at The Prep. Those close to Tony perceived that they had economic security and had less concern about his expenditures. This affected one’s personal identification with Tony and the administration, which varied. John and some other faculty had a low sense of trust in the organization (I certainly didn’t base this conclusion only on this episode, but Radical John’s distrust of authority at the school in general). Some saw Tony’s expenditures as threatening to the organizational security and their own perceived capability. Others simply criticized the disparity between perks.

Hired Help

Like many teachers at The Prep, I have enjoyed close relationships with many of my student’s parents. I have been invited to their homes for dinner and at times been

sought for counsel. I have received gratitude and appreciation for my influence on the kids in countless ways. However, also like many of the teachers, I have also been subject to an entirely opposite perspective where we are treated as “hired help”. Teachers would use the phrase “we are nothing but hired help” as it emphasized the class distinction sometimes keenly felt between teacher and many of our wealthy clientele.

One example of this stands out. We had returned from the 8th grade trip, a week long camping trip with 72 students. It is impossible to convey the exhaustion that is felt upon returning from the trip. Upon return, one parent approached the organizer of that year’s trip asking where her son was. The trip leader explained he didn’t know at that moment but he had checked the student in when we got back to school. The student was actually supposed to be helping clean out the van. After asking some of the other students, the trip leader found out from others that this student had left when they got to the School. He communicated this to the parent and mentioned, “he should be cleaning his van.” The parent turned to the faculty present and said, “It is not my son’s job to clean your van. I want someone to find my son.” Shortly after, the student in question turned up after leaving to go to the store for soda and candy.

Approximately a week later the same parent demanded that we pay for Bobby’s shoes that he had lost on the trip. The trip leader was furious as he played the message from his voicemail back for me to hear. Even though we joked about what a*****s the parents were Brenden was clearly angry (which was far more disturbing then seeing him cry like he usually did). “I know that most parents appreciate what we do on the trip, but it’s the parents who treat you like f*****g hired help you remember.” I remember my reaction when he said this. I knew there would come a time if I keep teaching that the bad feeling could outweigh the good. The next year Brenden decided to quit organizing and attending the trip that he founded 15 years earlier. There was not a direct correlation between the two events, but he said the trip took too much out of him. He just needed a break. He also stepped down as assistant Head of the middle school that same year to return to full time teaching. His formal explanation was “I just want to get back in the classroom with the kids. I am sick of dealing with parents.”

It wasn't often that the "hired help" phrase was used, because in invoking it in some ways one was devaluing our purpose as teachers. If we believed that parents thought of us only as nannies or as nothing but purveyors of information, this undermined all the extra effort and focus we expend to establish close bonds with the kids. It was a phrase often used when a personal identification with work was at rock bottom, resulting in lack of personal willingness to invest their own meaning in our jobs (specifically rule instantiation or routine following). In these conditions faculty, particularly with every interaction that surrounded the kid and his/her parents, would consciously follow organizational rules in conduct and discourse without investing emotional commitment to the parent.

Enigma Job & Cronyism

Megan was complaining that it was twice the work for her to hand everything into Gabrielle. Megan, a new teacher who in her old school had organized a trip to England and wanted to keep the same tradition at the Prep, was furious with all the extra paper work the same trip required at The Prep. The reason for this extra work was that Gabrielle, the Headmaster's wife, was Head of all trips abroad. She delegated to the teacher sponsor the responsibility to plan, book, coordinate, recruit, collect money and take care of all other trip-related activities. However, Gabrielle required (on her time table) paper work showing everything was done. Joanne told Megan "I wouldn't make too much of it and just get it done." Megan agreed with Joanne and said she was "bitching" to get it off her chest.

The other teachers sitting at the round table started joking about how little actual work Gabrielle must do. It was pretty common knowledge that Tony created the "job" for his wife. Though people were joking about it when Jane stopped by, all joking stopped on the matter when she joined the conversation. Clearly, the humor was considered sensitive enough to not continue when Jane was there. However as soon as Jane left, the bag of worms that came out on Gabrielle pretty harsh. The irony was one of the teachers leading the charge on Gabrielle was Jill, who would also take an 'Enigma job' the following year. Jill began to joke that the only reason Gabrielle supervised trips

was to justify Gabrielle and Tony's house in Salamanca. The Spain trip was a full credited course that counted towards a foreign language requirement for graduation. This full academic accreditation for a trip was very rare and typically required the curriculum community to agree the trip was academically demanding enough to qualify as a course. Joanne joked about how the Salamanca trip accreditation was a little dubious.

The conversation turned to Carlos, who was Head of the Spanish department, and the faculty representative to the board (both jobs appointed by Tony). It was Carlos's job to be the spokesman for the faculty and, if needed, to argue for the faculty against Tony in the board and faculty meeting. As a colleague said "they spend all summer drinking wine together." Clearly, as the jokes reveal, it was widely known that Carlos did very little to rock Tony's boat. Joanne added in her dry humorous way, "I have nothing against Carlos, it just seems unwise that our representative was not elected, but appointed by the person he is suppose to be representing us to".

At this point I was looking amazed at all the largess and favoritism Tony was being accused of and the level of knowledge the faculty had. Maureen made fun of me and said, "Welcome to private school." Other teachers talked about how everyone knew everything in this tiny universe. I asked for clarification, "So let me get this straight, you're saying Tony has created a bullshit job for his wife and friends so they can have an expense free holiday in Spain every year." They all laughed. I was even further amazed when they told me that Tony only had a contract to work at The Prep three days a week. There was a widely known joke that the reason why Tony was never on campus was that he was running his other business (consulting business), though I never was able to verify if this was a rumor or true.

Tony's cronyism was beginning to affect people's confidence in their own agency to direct their labor process. This translated into doing busy work (structural determinism) for no reason but to justify another person's position and perks. Nothing was resisted more than busy work, defined in this setting as any menial or paperwork task that got in the way of teaching, i.e., written budget requests. The faculty were overworked due to their commitment to the kids. This loss of personal agency in this

example amounted to no more than just busy work. It challenged the empowerment of agency she had in the task. The enjoyment of designing and running the trip for the kids became an organizational undertaking with prescribed routines and established rules. Following these established rules (for no reason other than to simply follow them) was a drain on the energy that accompanies the praxis of the labor process. This drain was being surfaced in the interactions (the duality of discourse rule and communication) bringing Tony's questionable decision, his wife's organizational position, into conversation. This new position for his wife opened up the door for critique and review of his decisions.

This episode reflects a shift in the attitude towards Tony and resources issues at The Prep. The attitude shift had started earlier. I can't pinpoint how much influence the high tech bubble bursting and the stockmarket problems affected the tenor of the conversations. Certainly the weakening economy was surfacing in school as many middle class families were beginning to discuss the issue of being able to afford the school for the next year. The numbers of announcements of students not coming back had an effect on the teachers. It was a shame that we were losing some of our best kids because of the cost. In one case a junior was leaving because his father lost his job, the teachers pooled together (and solicited parents help) to keep the kid in school to graduate. Events like this brought a consciousness of the economic climate we were living in. The concerns had not translated to people discussing salary decreases or benefits, but it meant that conspicuous consumption or waste by management was discussed. The slow culture transition from "well it must be nice", with its implication that you can't blame Tony because those are the perks, to "that's just not right" was starting to gather momentum.

I wondered why it took half a year for people to talk so openly about Tony's cronyism and special treatment of friends. Clearly this had been felt by some time by certain teachers. One female teacher chalked it up to "business as usual" in a private school. However, the tenor of the conversation had shifted to being more openly critical of Tony. Gabrielle's new job was not a wise decision, because it brought constraint on

teachers and made her lack of real work evident to the faculty in a time of economic uncertainty.

I knew that Tony's position from an organizational perspective was tenuous because I saw interactions and dialogue that supported this (see "First Class Tony"). The question was how deep this conversation went. Had it reached the parents and therefore the ears of the Prep's board? People's reluctance to talk about the critique of Gabrielle's position in front of Jane was a strong indication that a shift in the group's perception of the Headmaster and the economic climate had developed because we openly joked about "First Class Tony". It was a serious complaint, and people were attempting to make sense of the organizational practices though joking and further disassociating themselves with Tony.

Here we see people's sense of personal empowerment through a high sense of resource capability diminish. This, coupled with a forced compliance in established rules and traditional routines, caused people to switch from agent-centered action to volunteered action. The result of this is people felt a loss of trust and perceived capability in the organization. This sowed the seeds for a shift in organizational attitude and forecast organizational change.

The Headless Head

"Hey be careful of getting crumbs on the sofa—Pearse has to sleep there." Megan said to me as I was diving into a pastry from a tray a parent had delivered to the faculty lounge. I asked why he would do that and if he was on the outs with his wife. Pearse was sleeping in the middle school on his duty nights because as the Head of the upper school he had to run duty night (check dorms for attendance and make sure curfews and study halls are observed) but as he didn't live on campus he had to sleep in the middle school faculty lounge. I thought it was strange and asked why can't he go home after rounds and if there is an emergency he could drive back in. A female teacher who lived on campus said "because he is duty master and he has to be on call all night." Another female teacher dorm parent chimed in "he chose not to live on campus." I remember

thinking that there was a sense of bitterness in their tone. It was as if they felt that Pearse's decision not to live on campus was a comment against those who did.

The conversation shifted more into talking about how Pearse has no real job. Delaney questioned in her frank way the logic behind having Pearse employed at all. As Drew who is duty Head master and Jane Head of middle school, what exactly was Pearse's job since Drew ran the upper school? The teachers laughed, as no one could answer what Pearse did all day. Delaney remarked that it was a pure example of The Prep's decision to bring in a Head of the upper school while that was Drew's job and had been for twenty-five years.

Part of the confusion was that Drew was supposed to have jurisdiction over the middle school, which would make Pearse, as Head of upper school, the equivalent of Jane, with Drew acting as Head over both. But Jane and Drew did not get along at all and, as a result, apart from brief visits to the middle school, Drew kept to the upper school. However, there was some overlap in authority which caused friction. For example, in my first year Drew evaluated the new teachers and negotiated my salary for my first year. This was uncomfortable because Jane, my supervisor, was at such odds with Drew she could not champion me to him. When Drew reneged on an agreement I made with him in contract talks, she went over Drew's head directly to Tony. As an employee, I was caught in the middle and not sure how to play my hand to ensure my career advancement and fair compensation.

In The Prep, then, you had an unusual hierarchy with one too many players at the top. I found out later that the board insisted on hiring Pearse (who despite his young age had an impressive pedigree) as Head of the upper school. On paper, having a deputy Head of school (Drew) and having a Head of the middle school (Jane) but no Head of the upper school made little sense. If Drew was needed to be deputy Head and Jane was needed as Head of middle school, why did the Prep not have a Head of the upper school? In reality, the board had insisted that Pearse be hired to bring a sense of community to the upper school similar to the way Jane had built a community in the middle school. The upper school had long been criticized by parents as being run like a university with

independent excellent teachers and experiences but no core identity. Many parents and board members complained that there was little sense of community in the upper school. Another factor that affected the board's decision was a lack of knowledge of Jane's and Drew's working style. Unless their relationship was known it was unclear by the hierarchical structure that in reality (organizational action) Drew ran the upper school and Jane ran the upper school.

Once I learned the context of the conversation I was part of, the women's comments made more sense. Pearse was Head of the upper school but had no real job responsibilities, because Drew for all intents and purposes did not provide any space for him (see following episode). What I initially perceived as teachers just joking about the administration having no "real job", as in the case of Gabrielle, was really a joke about the power struggle that Pearse was caught up in and losing. Pearse had the difficult job of carving out space for himself. He was battling against the twenty yearlong status quo of Drew's leadership, and the tension between Jane and Drew. Pearse, by not living on campus, had made a huge mistake because clearly the boarding faculty felt Pearse had snubbed them. The boarding faculty was such a tight community that he unintentionally lost them as allies and lessened his personal viability significantly.

Pearse had a difficult job. He was hired to create a point of unity and mirror the culture of the middle school for the upper school. He had no buy in or perceived resource value from the upper school faculty to help him. Drew had significant power in the upper school. The Board and Tony left Pearse no official ability to determine organizational routine and resources, which only solidified Drew's position further. Pearse was involved in the small daily tasks of the school, and yet anything that required an authoritative decision went over his Head to Drew. Pearse was never given control of the process in which these rules were established. For example, one Dean never met with Pearse over academic issues, but went straight to Drew. In structuration terms Pearse was not given, nor did he demand as a condition of being hired, control of resources in praxis. Resources in praxis, the authoritative function of resources via routines, are a requirement for organizational legitimacy.

This could have been accomplished if Pearse had control of any of the following: funding for special programs, faculty development, committee placement, creating teacher schedules, overview of evaluation process or even assigning extra curriculum duties. Without organizational power to create change in the organization, a strong personality is required to develop allies. If one does not have legitimacy through structure, his/her only alternative is to build it through agent-centered action. This is why not living on campus was such a poor decision. If he lived with the boarding school faculty, the social bonds that developed would begin to form organizational legitimacy via communication. Pearse's input into daily conversations would have given him a role within instantiation of rules and over time would legitimize his organizational place. Because he was without a place in the process of the organization both in action and structure, he was a Head in title only.

In the next episode we see how Drew put a nail in Pearse's coffin. It is important to note that this episode happened at the end of March of the first year. It is placed here because it flows nicely from the previous episode that happened in late October. This episode represents the first time that Pearse officially tried to assert his position within the organization. I remember thinking while this episode unfolded that this was not the best choice of areas in which to assert his authority. First of all he was asserting himself over both key power leaders in public and second he was attempting to transform an established routine practice. In order to carry out an organizational change of both routine and the rules of discipline, Pearse needed to secure a large percentage of faculty buy in.

Not Playing Nice in the Sandbox

A faculty meeting was called after school for the DC (disciplinary committee) to explain their recent decision on a discipline case. Teachers were laughing that this was going to be a hot one. The upcoming debate was going to be sparked again by the Prep's ambiguous policy on drugs and alcohol. This ambiguity (the school reserves judgment to treat any misuse of alcohol and or drugs on a case by case basis) provided a large amount of leeway in punishment. However, this advantage of flexibility also created

ambiguity for the student body and the teachers who had to defend the DC decision to the kids. Students who committed an offense of school rules must meet before the DC consisting of a panel of students (2 seniors and one representative from each of the classes) the deans of each grade, the Head of the upper school and the Deputy Head. A student would go up and present their case in front of the DC, and his/her advisor and at times his/her grade's dean would advocate for the student. The DC students who ran the meeting made their recommendation for punishment. In serious cases (one that may result in expulsion and/or suspension of the upper school students) the upper school Heads (Drew, Pearse and sometimes Tony) would have the final decision, but typically they followed the DC'S recommendations.

It is not ethical to write about the conduct of the students in question; suffice it to say that severe disciplinary action was required. However, the teachers (who at The Prep are uncommonly attached to the kids) were split over the severity of this punishment. The faculty as a whole would hear the DC's decision and justification for the decision and then as a majority would ratify the DC decision. Though the faculty was expected to discuss the matter, they were also expected to trust and follow the recommendation of the DC and/or Heads. This process was informally communicated to new faculty. In a school like The Prep, many of the teachers would be questioned on the DC's decision by their students and were expected to support the DC's process, even if they disagreed with the decision.

This particular DC session came back with a significant and severe punishment. You could feel the tension in the room that was a mix of disbelief and sadness. The first person to put his hand up was the husband of the dean of students (a member of the DC committee). Clearly he was knowledgeable of the DC's decision and discussion when he asked his question. "I am sorry but why did you feel you had to break tradition and be more severe to these kids than the DC's punishment?" This set the tenor of the faculty discussion afterwards and legitimized a space for the teachers who felt the punishment was too harsh to openly criticize the decision. As a new teacher, who had little contact with the upper school faculty, I felt Trey had set this tone on purpose. The Upper School

Head took a formal position in front of the faculty and was on the defensive. He inadvertently was criticizing the liberal drug and alcohol policy--taking it on a case-by-case basis--as being ambiguous. After about half an hour of discussion, Drew stood up and said that clearly faculty emotions had been raised on this issue, and perhaps “the punishment decision was too quickly thought up without regard to precedent,” and the faculty on the DC would reconvene and get back to the remainder of the faculty on their final decision. Before Pearse could say anything, people started to get up to leave. I remember looking at Pearse, who had a vacant look on his face, and his wife’s (a librarian at the school) expression was, clearly furious.

At the end of the heated faculty meeting, the middle school faculty would congregate haphazardly and walk back to the middle school together, trying to make sense of the meeting. This was definitely one of those moments when teachers walked slowly back to the middle school. Someone said, “What the hell just happened?” Jane was clearly upset, but didn’t say much as she walked ahead with the assistant Head of the middle school and the counselor. Someone commented that Jane was pissed because Pearse just got steam rolled. Another teacher commented that the student was lucky that Drew and his “buds” had bigger fish to fry. Though the middle school teachers were joking about it, I could tell that what happened was very unusual. *For all intents and purposes this was the end of Pearse in the eyes of the faculty. He floated for the next few months with very little impact. He came down to the middle school a few times to conference with Jane, but no one took him seriously after that.*

Gender Jokes

Female teachers outnumbered males in the middle school. This is typical of most middle school environments (the upper school had a much larger percentage of male teachers). As a consequence, the middle school was often framed in conversation as a feminine gendered environment. The middle school was discussed by both parents and teachers as nurturing and the upper school as rigorous. Though everyday interactions and behaviors did not always follow a stereotypical gendered pattern, the feminine identity was deeply entrenched within the culture of the school. Things were constantly

interpreted through a feminine frame. In contrast to the kitchen, which was an organization doing masculinity in many ways, the Prep's middle school could be considered as an organization "doing femininity".

What helped maintain this stereotype was the job requirements of each place. In the middle school the teacher-to-student contact was much more constant. This was partly due to space--the teachers and students spent all day in the same building--and partly due to schedule--middle school students did not have electives or specialized schedules. Regardless of origin, be it gender breakdown of faculty, age of kids, space limitation, or more structured schedules, there was more personal contact and emphasis on character development in the middle school. For example, weekly team meetings started with a "kid check;" teachers would bring up any kids (those they taught or advisee) whom they had a concern for or worry about. Kid check could take an hour and was taken very seriously by the middle school faculty as part of its charge to look after the whole child.

The feminine advantage in terms of numbers was frequently a large influence on daily interactions in the Prep. This was an interesting experience in many ways, but it basically meant the middle school was a place that focused on friendship and caring for each other openly. This is highlighted by Joan in an interview,

Joan: My colleagues help out with the stress level. We joke around a lot, there's a bunch of people you can go to, to tell them that this sucks and there is always an ear to listen or a shoulder to cry on.

Interviewer: For instance?

Joan: When Scott [Headmaster year three] called me into his office this year, and he would like me to move out of my house. I told one of my best girlfriends, and (Joan snapped her fingers), "conference, we need to have a girl conference." And they meant immediately. They dropped their stuff right there, and we chatted about it. We made fun about it, but it made me feel good - that I could go to someone and get their opinion about it. But more importantly that they were there for me above all else. That's why I love this place.

I have experienced this caring community, especially when my wife was pregnant, the middle school faculty were an incredibly supportive group. Through the whole pregnancy they would often talk to me about what to expect and how to prepare.

My work culture was far more open to baby discussions and child rearing than my wife's employer, the corporate offices of a regional bank. When my child was born she went to the faculty onsite daycare. This meant in my free periods I would get to spend time with my daughter. I would also have lunch and breakfast with her everyday. My colleagues would often hold her for me while I got food, burping her, and stopping her from crying. They offered me a nurturing environment to raise my child and Jane was very good at making sure you felt comfortable insisting that we knew "our family should come first". One time my child developed a sudden ear infection (which as any parent knows is traumatic in an infant) and my colleagues took the screaming baby while I set up lesson plans so I could go home with her. Another time she had diarrhea but was otherwise happy. Rather than go home, my daughter spent the periods when I was teaching in the faculty lounge being entertained and changed by whoever had an off period. I came back after my 6th period to find Sam sleeping on the floor with my daughter sleeping on his chest. Several of the women faculty were whispering how cute it was, and someone took pictures.

Another place where the feminine environment dominated conversation was the women's favorite topic--sex. In the faculty lounge apart from discussion of kids, it was by far the most popular topic of conversation. It seemed this was especially true if myself or one of the few males were there. The women would start talking about sex or lack of it (particularly the group of divorced teachers). Sam and I started to suspect this was planned because it happened so consistently. If not, then this must have been all they talked about regardless if we were in the room. The women claimed this is how women always talk when men are not around, but my wife could not support this assertion in relation to her female colleagues at work. The discussion of sex or bodily functions was extremely graphic in nature. I learned more than I wanted to know about a lot of female things such as the pains of child birth, breast feeding, menstrual cramps, hot flashes and menopause. The most unforgettable of all was hearing about either the ineptness or successes of certain husband's sexual practices and equipment (as I knew or

had at least met most of these men, it was hard to hear, let alone laugh as the women did).

Leading the charge was Sue, though her students would never know she was the most sexually explicit person I had ever met (she later left teaching to pursue studies in becoming a sex therapist). She was not only overtly sexual but would talk about sex so candidly that it made Sam and I very uncomfortable (one could argue that she was creating a hostile work environment). Sue along with the other ladies would tease me so that I cringed. I would typically complain, jokingly (but somewhat seriously) pleading for them to remember I was in the room and stop, but this only encouraged them further.

Sam was their preferred victim because he just got bright red and pretended to ignore them. The women constantly laughed and would joke about how embarrassed they could get the two of us. Sam and myself certainly joked we were better informed than we ever wanted to be about the female body and sex drive. Even though the 'privilege' of this conversation was primarily left for Sam and myself if any of the other male teachers were present (which was rare) the sex conversation would not change. James would try and beat them at their game. Sam would plead with him to stop, "You can't beat them James. They just get worse." I did notice however if Bill (a older male teacher) was present the topic hardly ever turned to sex or the female body.

In defense of the female teachers, this episode makes the place seem like a discrimination suit waiting to happen, but even though Sam and myself were both uncomfortable and at times embarrassed, neither of us felt threatened. Nor were we offended because the intent of the jokes and conversation were never to harass. To an outsider the conversation would constitute harassment, but being part of the group and having clear understanding of the motivations that drove the humor allowed Sam and myself to grin and bear it. Though Sam and I would jokingly threaten to sue for sexual harassment with statements like "do you realize how quickly I could sue for harassment?" this would elicit even more laughs, partly because they knew we didn't mean it and partly because the teachers and the school had no money. Not all the women

in the middle school would contribute to these conversations and in fact if some were present the conversation would not occur.

The contrast between the graphic nature of the sexual conversations and the care that the faculty had for each other illustrates the unique environment of the middle school. As colleagues had very little effect on each other's organizational position (advancements or salary), they represented more of a social resource. To be able to utilize the social network required one to be enmeshed in the group's interactions. As men, this left us with the option of participating in these conversations or being left out of the group. The currency of the middle school was friendship and the bond between faculty members. It became natural to join the dialogue that occurred.

Hell Week, Comment Time

Around the end of September of my first year, people started talking about student evaluation comments (called "comments"). "How are your comments coming?" The conversation started half to complain and the other half was a warning to the new teachers to get ready. Experienced faculty recounted to the new person the hell that was comment week that ended with parents' day. The week was nicknamed "Hell Week" and it was an appropriate name. Comment time is when teachers write personal progress reports on every student they teach. They are expected to cover objectives of their course, student orientation to material, a student evaluation, suggestions for improvement, if necessary, and also to write something personal about each child.

Over three years I went through a personal transformation in my commitment and therefore my approach to comments. I went from using the letter as a pedagogical tool with personalized correspondence to writing a glorified form letter. After three years, all I do now is break the student into one of four categories then select a form letter accordingly. And at the end I go in and type the obligatory personal comment (reminding the parent - I know your kid). I learned that comments are simply a task to complete in the most predictable and efficient manner possible. I have in the space of three years rationalized my own devaluing of the comment letter as "just something that has to get done". My reward is the simplicity and the welcome my new comments

receive from organizational members and parents. The possibility of maximizing a teaching opportunity is put a distant second to minimizing my Headache.

In my first year the Head of my department asked me to refrain from including in my comments how student needed to work on certain skill to avoid the difficulties of the transition to high school. Hugh said, “I want to avoid the message that the transition from middle school history to upper school history is a problem.” I asked what if the message was accurate since it is my impression that History 9 (unlike any other course at the prep did not stress critical thinking skills) was too expansive in scope (a survey history course) and limited in its assessment (the course was evaluated on a strict bi-weekly accumulation of knowledge test). Hugh laughed, “I am not denying your point. I just can’t fight that battle with parents right now”. That same year Brenden (assistant Head of middle school) invited me into his office and said that a student of mine was one of his advisees and his parents were upset at my comment letters. He brushed it off saying that he felt I should know they wrote a letter to Tony and Jane, but it was no big deal. I said I didn’t think the comment was harsh but rather soft considering the child. We joked about the truth in comments, the disparity of what teachers should have to write and what we do write for parents. Brenden never told me to change my comment nor did he chastise me, but clearly I understood through joking about parents expectations for their children how should I alter the tenor of my comments. From that point on I decided to send a real comment to the advisor and a friendly “parent comment” home.

Though this episode focuses on my struggle with the comment process, my experience sheds light on the individual experiences in “comment time”. The following episode discusses how teachers as a group experienced comments. It describes an attempt by teachers to change the comment process in my third year. I place this third year experience here in my first year account because grouping the comment episodes together provides a better understanding of the significance that comments held for the individual and the organization’s culture. A structural assessment of both episodes follows the next episode, “Bitching the Comments into Committee.”

Bitching the Comments into Committee

Considering that the school had been requiring teachers to write comment letters for thirty years, I was surprised about how much complaining accompanied the process of comment time. The veterans would explain how the expectation for these letters had become more formalized and the number of students a teacher was responsible for had increased. However, the administration had reduced their teaching responsibilities and administrative duties over the years as the school grew. It seemed ironic that the administration responsible for enforcing the standards and deadlines for the comments had far fewer to write. For example, Jane (Head of the middle school) only had 17 to write versus the 75 or so that myself and many other teachers had to write. The main complaint was that the comments came too soon in the year when we as teachers didn't have enough experience in the classroom with the students to write a truly informative assessment. Teachers would complain about how stupid the process was and the fact they were making stuff up because they didn't have enough to write on the kids.

The teachers were not complaining about the workload, unless it was in context of why the administration didn't perceive the problem of the workload required by the comment commitment. The complaints were grounded in an earnest wish to expend energy in a more productive way to benefit the student.

I highlight some additional comment related experience that occurred in year two and three. At times it is hard to keep all pieces of the episodes isolated to one calendar year to highlight the change over time.

At one point the middle school team met to gather and devise a new comment system. The new plan was to postpone the comment writing process and replace it with an advisee letter (an internal report) for October's parents day with full teacher comments due after Christmas which would be half-way through the school year. Another advisor letter would be added in at the end of the year. The proposal called for more work from the teachers but one they felt would truly help the student's progress. The proposal was drawn up and sent to Scott and Hugh (the Headmaster and Head of upper school in my third year of study). In the one of the first faculty meetings Scott

thanked the middle school team for their proposal and said it was very promising, but parents have come to expect the early personal feedback of the current comment system. He said for this year it was too late to change, so we would continue with the traditional comments. However, a committee would be formed to look into modification to the process for the following year. This committee was never formed and wasn't really expected to be.

After the meeting several of the original middle school team were joking that "that was the end of that change." Committees at the Prep were the black holes of ideas. A female teacher commented, "We are masters of creating committees and then doing nothing with them." The issue of how to change the comment system or the middle school team's plan was never discussed or addressed. One teacher said, "Comments were always more to do with PR than education." The more the teachers become conscious that comments were written to make parents happy rather than as a helpful teaching tool, the more their indignation at the personal investment that accompanied the process. One teacher and I joked that next year we would send the same comment but just change out anthropology with science.

I am not sure that I have done justice to the personal pain that I find writing comments. To write over 70 comment letters and put hours upon hours of work into nothing more than a public relations project was depressing. Like my colleagues, I was overworked and underpaid but I loved my job because I believed in it. The personal anguish I felt towards comments was shared to some degree by my colleagues as demonstrated in the proposal by the middle school teachers.

During comment time The Prep shifts from a culture of high perceived capability and trust (in one's use of personal know how to navigate rules) to a culture of adherence to established rules. Comment time was difficult because it came so early in the year. At the point when teachers were establishing the rhythm of their classes, comments required teachers to remove themselves and devote their energy into completing an organizational task with no teaching value. This required teachers to fulfill an obligation to the clients paying for the education.

The only grace of the process was that it ended in two weeks. Instead of resisting it members completed the task and complained about it on a personal level. So comment time presents a culture of organizational acquiescence or volunteerism of agency (hence organizational stability). The force that created acceptance of the comment process was volunteered agency and not structural determinism because people completed the task above the bare minimum required. The goal was for the teachers to strike a balance between a lengthy personalized letter and a form letter that could be individualized and kept the process manageable. Several teachers developed a typology of letters that could be used for categories of students. A teacher would add in personalized comments on each student to complete the process. A few teachers had one form letter for all students with no personalized anecdotes, and though this complied with the rule, it was criticized by the faculty. Even though faculty disagreed with the task, teachers still volunteered to do more than the bare minimum expected.

Even when contextual opportunities were perceived as advantageous for change of the comment process (as in the case of a new Head master in the last episode) the teachers accepted (volunteered) his decision to continue and the practice was met with little resistance.

This episode provides a good space to discuss that The Prep's culture never shifts to a point of structural determinism, when resource procedure and established rules as well as the communication that surrounds them follows an exact procedure. The major reason for this is the agents have enough power to actively resist any attempts of authoritative control. The Prep provides significant leniency and teacher centered control of all aspects both curriculum and classroom procedures. This leniency extends beyond the profession of teaching but of personal expression. Part of the reason for worker empowerment was the possible alternatives for the teachers to leave for other employment. As one male teacher says, "If I wanted a job in which someone would tell me what to do, I'd go back to teaching public school."

In an organization such as the Prep, where perceived capability in regards to resources (most important is compensation) is low there must be something to balance

this out and maintain motivation and contentment in the workforce. For the teachers of the Prep this balance came in their commitment to the kids and their vocation. People went beyond the structural determined minimum out of a sense of duty to the student, even though they resented the comment process. Teachers resented being made to complete a task that (if they gave it their all) would detract from the primary obligation to teach. They volunteered to do the bare minimum while satisfying their own motivation to fulfill their duty to their students. .

Being required to complete a task that requires you to compromise your teaching was deeply resented. This answers the question, why are comments so painful? My wife would get frustrated with my personal, anguish over comments every year. Why not just write them as a form letter and be done with them? Her question was not just addressed to me but to my colleagues as a whole. In its simplest terms the answer lies in satisfaction with the praxis of labor (enacting ritual and rule instantiation). People are motivated by desire to maximize their own utility. For the most part organizational members want to expend energy in a way that insures benefit. People will continue to expend energy in ways that they perceive renews their energy return. In an organization where perceived capability with regard to acquiring resources is low, people will attempt to expend energy in ways that uplift them in other ways. In an organization where perceived capability with regards to acquiring resources is high (i.e. Enron workers who for years shuffle paper looking busy) workers will put up with incredible levels of unpleasant, senseless and even illegal tasks.

To maintain personal buy-in (confidence and identification) with the organization's mission requires a degree of personal freedom and empowerment from the structure. This is why the intuitive management style of the Prep was to provide when possible (comment and parent week begging the exception) space for individual style and creativity. This is reflected in the following quotes from my interviews with middle school administration.

Jane: *My Management style, I'm pretty hands-off. I think that is what most people would say. That's the style I want to convey. I want to give teachers a lot of room and time, especially in the classroom. I think that the worst thing in the*

world is to try and micro-manage adults, especially teachers. It would be insane to try and do that.

Tim: *I believe managers should create the conditions so their people can do their best work. I want to make it easier for people to do and want to do the best they can in and out of the classroom.*

Brenden: *I don't think of myself as a manager of teachers. I just want to make your life easier to do what you love.*

Even though this management style is switched off for the weeks of comment time and parents day, it was tolerated and forgiven by the faculty. It is however one of the few times people will complain about Jane being out of touch (i.e. she doesn't understand what it means to write 70 plus comments). However, it reflects the frustration of comment time by reflecting the value teachers place in a "hands-off" style and freedom they enjoy in their job (calling). The episode that follows, "Who Wants to be a Robot," provides insight into an organizational script that shows this idea of freedom by making fun of a person who seems to abuse the privilege of "The Prep" as a space for personal input and spontaneity.

Who Wants to be a Robot?

This organizational script is a routine joke that accompanies comment time every year. It reflects how teacher's interactions ritualize their frustration with comments.

Every year about the third week of school someone says "Matthew is half way through his comments already." Indeed comment time would start at the end of September with a statement alluding to "Matthew is already finished his comments." Matthew was the perfect character for this ritualistic joke, as he himself was an extremely habitual person. He had worked at the school for over twenty years and ran the test calendar and national test (SAT) with incredible precision. Matthew was featured in the joke because he was the exemplar of a rigid teacher. It was speculated that his were done first and as he had a basic form letter (without even a personalized anecdote) his task was considerably easier.

Matthew was the epitome of a rigid, schedule-driven teacher. For example, if a teacher had a legitimate activity or idea that required switching around the yearly schedule, another teacher would invariably say, “You can’t do that. Matthew will explode. This wasn’t just an exaggerated joke. At one full faculty meeting a teacher asked for a service day to be added to the upper school schedule and suggested a date a year away. Carly (history teacher) said she had already scheduled to teach slavery that day. Maureen leaned over to me and said, “I don’t know what is worse, that she has her schedule a year ahead of time or that she only spends one day on slavery.” The teachers said okay but what about the following week? Matthew put up his hand. He had a conflict with the proposed service day dates and cited the SAT testing calendar from memory.

During my third year at the Prep, Matthew bought a new red sporty car which did not seem to suit his character. A couple of teachers joked about how strange he looked in his new car. Jill enlightened us, “He bought the car because the SAT testing official suggested having a reliable car (to transport sensitive material around).” We all laughed and accused Jill of exaggerating but she stuck to her story. Another female teacher asked Jill “What if the SAT board told him it is important to have sex?” The teachers present laughed. Then Joan and Jill (two single mothers) joked maybe it would not be such a bad thing. Sam and I left the room and the ladies laughed, successful in driving us out of the room again.

I will not address the sexual explicitness of this joke because that topic is covered in a prior episode and not relevant to my point here. I believe that the script of making fun of rigid teachers played an important function in the culture of the middle school. It was also essential that the teacher we made fun of was an upper school teacher. The upper school culture and teachers were removed from us both in time and space. This allowed room to criticize and not feel guilty. It was easy to dehumanize someone you had less daily contact with. I also believe that is significant that the robot jokes increased in frequency during my tenure at the prep. To a degree one female teacher and a member of the middle school could easily have filled the role of Matthew in this

joking narrative. The question is not who was made fun of as a robot, but why this joke was necessary or repeated so regularly in the middle school?

To answer the repetition question I think it is important to revisit the importance placed on personal freedom and empowerment as well as the support it received structurally. Individual control or know-how in the process of following rules and flexibility within the enactment of routines (from school calendars to class syllabi) was a highly valued resource. When we made fun of the “robots” we confused lack of personal flexibility with structural determinism. Teachers did not want to be determined by outside forces such as having their syllabus requirements constrain them or be like Matthew and have the “examination board” control their decision process. This perceived lack of spontaneity and agency scared the teachers. It reminded us of being trapped in a structurally-determined organization. We might as well be evaluated via the rigid testing of the No Child Left Behind Act, which we jokingly referred to as “no child left untested act.” To be fair--which we weren’t-- to Matthew and other rigid teachers, they were habitual people by choice. I believe that middle school teachers used Matthew and teachers like him as a matter of convenience to exorcise the demon (lack of autonomy and personal empowerment remaining in teaching) that was plaguing the public sector of our profession.

The humor was similar to the safety valve humor seen in the Kitchen case study. The humor allowed the teachers to make fun of rigidity and thus to resist it. The reason why this level of humor increased over time was because more pressure was being placed on personal empowerment and agent-centered action. People used the antithesis of personal meaning, identity, and free choice, the robot. As the economic situation became worse, the structure became less empowering and faculty resisted losing the personal freedom in their work. As it developed, it went beyond safety valve resistance and became an active way for people using the duality of discourse and the duality of power to maintain personal meaning as an important part of the work process.

Parent’s Day: The Mutual Lie

Parent's day was billed as a regular day, but parents would attend class with their children. This inherently changed the day and made it irregular. Teachers would joke about the stress of the day weeks before getting ready for it. Different teachers had different approaches. Sam would joke that anything that made a parent's own kid look smart was a good thing. So in Sam's class, his students presented their political cartoons and discussed the historical events that corresponded to the cartoons, which they had spent the weeks before reading about. Sam would joke that the kids would come up with great stuff and he could sit back of the class and look good. Megan's approach was to reassign a reading the kids have already gone over in class. As if it was a great joke, the kids would go through the class again, pretending that their rehearsed insights were genuine. What was so funny about Megan's class was the mutual level deception by the entire class - all in the name of impressing the parents.

Radical John would ask questions. If the kids knew the answer they would raise their right hand; if they didn't know they raised their left. This way the kids looked like they knew everything and were only sure to be called on when they actually knew something. However, Radical John would joke about the time when he had a kid who was so dim that he never knew the answer to anything, but still enthusiastically put up his left hand to every question. The kid's parents chastised Radical John after class for never calling on their child. When this student did poorly, the parents blamed John for not responding to their child's questions.

Someone would tell this story every year to reinforce the classic tension between parent and teacher. The story frames the frustration of the day and the script allowed teachers to reconcile the frustration with certain parents. It characterized the parent as having expectations that are unfair and impossible to achieve for the teachers and, most importantly, the student. It situates parent's day as a "parent intrusion" in the classroom. This intrusion culturally was viewed as an inconvenient necessity. However, it also hints at the fear that this inconvenience could lead to a nightmare parent, when a parent (based on the limited experience of one period) would think they understand your class, your teaching style, and therefore make demands on the children or teacher. In

reality the regulars of the classroom (the teachers and the students) didn't take the class day seriously.

The day was designed for teachers to showcase the flexibility of their teaching strategies, and we all knew that a majority of the parents would be happy no matter what went on in the class. The "2-90" was the problem-the 2 percent of the parents that have a problem with your class or teaching style will be 90 percent of your parent interaction (and in some cases take up hours of your time a week). People wanted to get through the day without embarrassing or pressuring the kids and make all the parents happy. The sense was the "2 percenters" come out of the woodwork anyway, you just didn't want to create anymore than you would already have. Teaching was invigorating and fulfilling but tiring. As much as possible faculty tried to minimize parent intervention so they could maintain the needed focus and energy for the students. This sense is captured in the following interview.

Jane: *Dealing with neurotic people all day is pretty exhausting.*

Interviewer: *And not the kids?*

Jane: *No not the kids, no the kids are like an oasis. And a lot of faculty, 98 percent, are wonderful. It's the 2 percent that take an enormous amount of time. The Parents are the same--98 percent are wonderful.*

I used Parent's day to teach the kids the difficulty of studying human behavior without having those being studied change their behaviors. I used the class to illustrate how researcher bias influences the way they interpret their observations. As a result the parents watching my class were reminded by the students actively discussing how different the parent's day was from business as usual. The kids would catalogue the differences - teachers were dressed up and the kids were more polite. This underscored the message for parents not to take their observations of my class (or any that day) too seriously. One would think that Jane (and other administration) might be upset at me using the class to teach the flaw of the event. However, Jane laughed when I told her my first year what I was teaching in my parents day class. She said that I was in danger of breaking the tradition of actually using parents day class constructively.

Parents Day Prank

The parent's day prank that was told with the most laughter was the practical joke played on Steve. Steve, who was a middle school teacher a few years before I got to the school, had shared an embarrassing personal story. He first told this story to compete with the women's sex stories in the faculty lounge. He told a story about accidentally swallowing and passing a marble. On parents day the teachers had removed his papers and white board pens but filled his desk and the chalk holder with marbles. Marbles went everywhere. Teachers would cry from laughter when recounting how Steve (a meticulous person) fumbled around looking for his teaching materials and pens. They laughed as they talked about him opening the cupboard and marbles falling out. Every time the story was told the number of marbles and Steve's fitful reaction became greater.

What makes this story so unbelievable and why, even years after Steve left the middle school, it is retold every year does not depend on the marble prank itself, but that it was done on parent's day. Parents day was a day when we all were on best behavior and presented a united front. This gave the prank that much more significance-- not only was it "funny," it was outrageous. It illustrates by its "outrageousness" that parents day was a conscious routine on which teachers followed prescribed rules and routine expectations. In many ways the narrative of the classroom prank is told to reinforce the expectations for parent's day. Many of the teacher's reactions (particularly new teachers) that more keenly felt the anxiety of their upcoming first parent's day could not imagine how they would handle a prank like this with parents in the room. This empathic agony felt on the retelling of the prank reinforced the importance of structural expectations of the event.

In structuration terms, like comment time, parents became the primary client. Resources came to the forefront – parents paying tuition is the resource. The entire ritual of the comments led up to and set the stage for the anxiety of parent's day. As a result teachers conform to established rule patterns. Communication (especially with the kids) focuses heavily on organizational accountability. Teachers and students thus follow the structurally determined culture. The long weekend that followed parent's day every year would be the rest to relax and return to a less determined culture - a high

level of traditional routine, established rules, and organizational accountability controlling choice, trust, and individual communication. This is why the prank episode is so important and unthinkable, because the teachers performing the prank broke with routine and established rule process. Every teacher can immediately relate to how awful it would have been to be Steve in this scenario. As a result, it made teachers conscious of preparing for this day to make sure their class and classroom are set up for perfect reproduction of expectations.

The prank episode and “Parents Day--the Mutual Lie” derive its humorous energy from the basic tension between parent and teacher. The parent represented the base of our resources (especially the extraordinary wealthy ones who promised future donations to the endowment) and in a private school such a resource should be treated so it is well contented. Parent wealth as a resource for the school was NEVER spoken of directly. In fact any discussion of preferential treatment to a student or parent because of their money was frowned upon extremely. However, the knowledge of the importance of keeping parents happy as a possible resource was always present, even if unspoken.

Mariah: *Only one time have I helped the school with asking a parent for an endowment gift? S***, it was uncomfortable but I became close to the family so that it was okay I guess. Let’s face it, it was the XXXXX and you know how difficult they can be, so if they needed me to help, I’m okay with it I guess. It is one of those strange things, that the real wealthy parents demand more.*

Interviewer: *More?*

Mariah: *I don’t know, access I guess or (pause)*

Interviewer: *Accountability?*

Mariah: *Sure, I guess, they are so used to people giving them what they want.*

Interviewer: *Do they get special treatment?*

Mariah: *Oh no, well they do, but not because they have big bucks, but because they are demanding. They are just so used to getting everything they want. They are not used to rules applying to them. Let’s face it--they don’t.*

Strangely for the teacher, the parent was not our primary concern, the student their child was. The teacher’s goal was to do such a good job with the student that the parent would only talk to you once or twice a year, regardless of who they were. Most parents appreciated what we did, and parent’s day was seen as a day to get through and keep

them happy. No teacher wanted to be the cause of a headache for Jane or the Head to get involved.

Faculty Bingo

I was fortunate enough to catch the last few games of faculty bingo. Faculty bingo was quietly played by a group of teachers. The rules were the same as regular bingo, but it actually occurred during a faculty meeting. Cards were circulated among a small tightly knit group of faculty with names and behaviors in the squares instead of numbers. For example, you might have a grid where along the top it said in the first square Tony talks about himself, the second square John complains about Tony, the third square Delaney asks a procedure question, etc. These would all be organized differently on the cards. When the people performed these behaviors, you checked it off on your sheet. The goal, as in bingo, was to get a row first and the teacher would stand up and say bingo out loud in front of everyone at the meeting – even the teachers and Head administration not participating in the bingo game. All faculty knew of this game as someone would say bingo out loud and interrupt the meeting, but it wasn't a point of concern or criticism.

Faculty Bingo is a beautiful example of employees personalizing the monotony of their labor process. What I think is most intriguing about this humor activity is that unlike Roy's (1958) Banana Time, it is not the people enacting a sequence of events that forms a strange humorous cuckoo clock, it is the people's predictable personalities that form the cuckoo clock. In other words it was not the rules and routines that were predictable, but the people and their personalities. This illustrates personal meaning over organizational accountability within the communication part of the duality of discourse.

When the faculty meetings became more serious, with dire financial reports, termination of the Head, etc. the bingo game was dropped. In such cases the faculty meetings became less centers for personal meaning and more centers for routine business. People stopped attempting to use the routine and rule enactment of the meeting as an opportunity to salvage personal meaning and simply complied with

expectations. It would be fascinating to see if the tradition ever revives itself as resource capability improves.

Another tradition that disappeared during this year of change was the “lamprooning letter”. In previous years, one faculty member would write a letter that parodied the official end of the year letter from the Headmaster. This parody letter would make fun of different faculty antics or stories that occurred. My first year was also the first year this parody stopped.

Weakest Link: Klein Report Fears

Tony once called himself “CEO of the school” during a conversation. At first I assumed this to be an indication of a business model of the upper school administration. Under the same misperception, I understood Tony’s call for a team of accountants to do a heuristic analysis of the current school’s situation and its growth opportunities to be an indication of this business culture in the upper school administration. Indeed, in the height of the high tech boom (2000-2001) hiring consulting companies to form internal analyses or enact strategies was a very popular business model. In fact, I had assumed wrong. It later came to my attention that a board member had paid for the consultants (I will call them Klein) to come in and conduct their financial study. Tony still welcomed them. When Tony introduced the lead consultant who would be conducting the study, he was optimistic and presented the study as a positive and necessary tool to strategize for the future. He explained how at the end of the year the Klein Group would come in and make a presentation to us and the full report would be available for us all to read.

Five months later in January the rumor mill started. People joked that the Klein report was going to find The Prep in serious trouble financially. Jokes started by people exaggerated possible dire consequences such as The Prep shutting down tomorrow. A teacher would typically follow this with “I hope, so I’ll go out and make real money.” One day while sitting at the round table, a group of teachers were talking and comparing the consultant group with the movie *Office Space*. Specifically in this film the two Bob’s (consultants) call each employee into an office and make him/her justify their job. Hillary joked to Joan that we all would have to go in and justify our six parts (six parts

constituted a full time load – approximately one class equaled one part, refer to “Six Parts Myth” for more detail). Joan went off as she always did on this topic and said “I hope they call me in first.”

James walked over midway through the conversation and got the heel of the joke. As a result of James’ late entrance Megan explained to James that we have to justify our six part to the consultancy group. Megan had known James since they were in middle school (at the Prep) together and consequently would tease him the most of any faculty. She said “James, you have to justify what you do all day.” James taking the bait told Megan to shut up using sign language (the finger) and asked why we have to justify our parts to strangers. Hillary added they were looking for the “weakest link” and Megan turned to James and said “good bye” (based on the Weakest Link television show). James and everyone couldn’t stop laughing.

This episode points to a very different Prep then when I first started. The tension felt over the consultancy group report reflected an uneasiness on the part of the teachers. This uneasiness illustrates a new level of awareness of resource instability in the organization. In this episode I recalled how a few months earlier I felt the hiring of the consultant group was a reflection of the business model. At the time when this humor episode occurs the hiring of the consultant had changed in our perspectives. Teachers were joking about the movie Office Space and the role of efficiency experts but in their dialogue they focus on what will happen to them versus looking at the consultant’s effect on the administration level. Some of the middle school faculty was becoming aware that Tony’s excesses were going to have a personal effect. They would have to pay the cost for the past year’s price tags. It is important to note that in the middle school the teachers had no factual knowledge of the economic strength or weakness of the school. A shift in perception occurred on a group level that was based on a collective uneasy feeling that fed on itself. A slow group reframing of school spending and a consciousness of the drag that Tony’s favoritism and projects had on the school emerged.

For the first few months of my ethnography, teachers devoted little concern to the economic health on an organizational level, if a teacher or administrators bargained his or her way into extra money or perk the attitude was “good for them”. Teachers felt underpaid and underappreciated from an economic perspective and regardless of the economic squeeze they felt they couldn’t be expected to work harder for less. With the recognition of low allocative resources, the agents had low perceived personal capability. Teachers came in and did their jobs because they were passionate about it, and money seemed on the surface have little role in their organizational behavior.

However, the perception of resource stability did affect the perception of support for one’s future growth and current effort. A climate of low perceived economic stability also affected the way people viewed routines and rules enactment via the duality of power and structure which, in turn, had an effect on daily communications. This episode illustrates how the consciousness of the group was shifting; it coincided with the economic news of the time. Bush was stressing that he had inherited a weak economy, economic scandal made the papers everyday. Locally the high-tech growth had dwindled and the middle class job market had tightened.

Careful What You Define

In February we had an after school faculty meeting where Tony reintroduced the Head of the Klein’s team. The consultant got up and started telling us that after interviewing many of the staff members what an incredible place we have and how he planned to send his kids here when they were older. Bill leaned over to James and I and said, “this is going to be all bad news.” He laughed, “you think” (he said sarcastically). The consultant then went into the fiscal situation .The consultant explained how the school had been overzealous in its expansion and would have to seriously cut back in every area to remain economically viable. He said that the future strategy was to align The Prep’s expenditures more closely with its revenue base. After the meeting one of the male teachers repeated this line to me and remarked what a “novel idea”. We would repeat (sarcastically) joking about the insightfulness of this line as a solution to all our problems.

Some reasons the consultant gave for our economic predicament was “overexpansion and generous collective raises.” Most importantly the largest reason was a lack of a substantial endowment to absorb the cost of these measures. Private schools that are able to educate students (to the level of the Prep) on appearance of less or equal tuition accomplish this due to subsidies on the tuition income with endowment money. The truth is that if it was not for their endowments, a majority of top private schools would lose money on every child they enroll. The consultant then produced an overhead that graphed the location of twenty of the top private schools along the axis of income (tuition and subsidies from an endowment) over expenditures. The graph was met with silence. It showed a cluster of schools all in balance between total income and expenditures. The next graph placed the Prep on this graph as an outlier leaning way over to the expenditures side. People started laughing (I was not sure out of nervousness or shock) as he explained why the prep was out of balance with other schools. The only thing that kept us from going under was the annual gifts from current parents.

Colby put his hand up and asked if the only thing that keeps us in the “zone of viability” (and everyone laughed at this title) is that we keep getting donations for the endowment (as annual fund checks) that we have to spend immediately. The answer was “basically yes,” and the consultant went on to explain that the school was living hand to mouth and losing its ability to keep up with the costs (of course he used more complicated terms). One teacher chimed in “basically the school budgets like I do, we overspend on our credit cards and can only make the monthly payments.” People laughed and Tony interrupted by saying that was a poor analogy and the teacher showed poor judgment using it. The room went silent and Tony added that this problem was both serious and unforeseeable until the school had done this long term cost analysis. This was another line Tim and I would reference over the next year. Tony went on to thank the Klein study group for their work and said that this report gave the school and him a positive direction for the future.

After this faculty meeting, there were two reasons for the middle school faculty to congregate: first to discuss the troubling news and secondly to console the teacher

who had been firmly rebuked by Tony. She was upset and said “I was just trying to put it into perspective.” People told her not to worry about it. One teacher said she finally understood why they make such a big deal about the annual fund (the fund that teachers give back every year that goes into the endowment). People parodied the consultant and said things like “The school is wonderful. It’s falling apart, and is unviable but it’s a wonderful place.” One teacher added that when the consultant said he wanted to send his children here one day he forgot to add “if it is still here.” In the middle of the joking the teacher who made the credit card comment asked, “Did my analogy go to far?” Another teacher said, “It didn’t go far enough.” We all discussed the matter using her credit card analogy. We concluded that the school had been borrowing from our credit cards in the hope that bonus checks from donors could pay them off, and as a result slowly slipping further and further into debt. The joking allowed us to discuss the matter and support the teacher.

One teacher said to me as we walked away together, “I don’t think she should be the one that should worry about her job.” Jane caught up to us and said “just the two people I want to see. You have a minute?” We went into Jane’s office and she asked us our impression of the meetings. I could tell Jane was upset. She even joked about what a shock it was when she first got the report in a meeting last week. Tim summed up his impressions of the report, that it was long over due and should mean serious changes in the school in the year to come. Jane agreed and said “we all knew it was coming I guess.” I remember telling (because I felt guilty for a long time about it) Jane “What scares me out of the report is how dependent we are on annual donations just to stay afloat. What is going to happen when the report gets out and the community loses faith that their money is not being wisely spent?” Jane replied with “Thanks, Owen now I am really depressed.”

This meeting had a strange effect. The feeling was one of tension and apprehension for the future, and also it brought a strange sense of relief. In the days that followed the meeting, people reconciled their growing apprehension with the Klein Group’s report. The person who seemed to take the news the hardest was Jane. She was

busy on the phone and hardly joined the conversations for the rest of the week. In someways Jane taking it hard was good for the middle school. Our small group was very fond of her, and as she anguished the staff rallied around her. Being positive and strong for Jane became a theme that defined the following weeks. In a time of organizational stress and economic uncertainty, rather than slipping into organizational accountability as expected personal identification became personal meaning in this situation.

Jane's distress was perfectly timed because it caused on a personal level a break of routines. People focused on bringing predictability to their personal life and supporting Jane. In short people focused on what they could control and what was important on a personal level (the kids) and this refocus was liberating. People were diligent and enacted rules and organizational routines in a way to avoid raising any pressure on Jane. I noticed how over the next month people avoided bringing their personal problems and concerns to Jane. This rest renewed her and others as faculty focused on teaching the students.

I felt guilty for what I said to Jane about future endowment donations because of how hard everyone took the news from the Klein report. I felt my comment made public a concern people were trying to ignore. Middle school faculty were not focused on what the ultimate effect will be from this report. Jane was dealing with the fact that something drastic needed to be done to restore the faith of the alumni and parents (the donors) to ensure future revenue streams.

The report itself had larger implications. It was commissioned at the Board's request so they could police the budget and Tony. In private and in the teacher's lounge people began to reframe Tony's expenditures. The shifting perception that had begun over the past few months was legitimized and people who supported Tony's spending were reevaluating their support. For example, one strong supporter of Tony said, "Tony got a little out of control." No longer was there a just a feeling of resource instability-- now it was out in the open. The obvious explanation that the school spends more than it takes in was so simple it became widely recognized as a joke.

People discussed with gratitude that Sandy the (school accountant) had informed the board of Tony's budget problems. Amazingly it came out after the Klein Report was presented that Sandy was a "Deep Throat". No one could identify the source of the "Deep Throat" story about Sandy. People who whispered the "Deep Throat" joke were reluctant to say the source and I was reluctant to push.

The gossip around the "Deep Throat" joke brought the middle school faculty back to the drama of the report. The plot thickened when someone attempted to circulate the report. This is detailed in the following episode.

All the Same Team

A week after the Klein report faculty meeting an "emergency" faculty meeting was called. Tony was sitting at the desk in the middle of the room and his tone was not his typical jovial self. The mood in the room was austere. People filed in quietly and sat down. Tony began saying how it has come to his attention that a copy of the Klein's report that was for him and the Board only had been photocopied and put into teachers' boxes. The report had sensitive information, some of which he claimed was not accurate, about salaries which was never intended to be distributed. He considered this a serious action of "mistrust and misconduct." The only saving grace was that he was glad that before many teachers were able to pick it up it had already come to Drew's attention. He stated that not only was it wrong to take it and read it, but to photocopy it and distribute it was illegal. He wanted anyone who received a copy of this report to throw it away. If anyone else was caught distributing it, he would consider it a grave offence. Tony went on to say how we were "all on the same team." He added that because this report had been distributed to the faculty, parents were already starting to talk and that we had to present a united front to the parents. Tony went on to put a positive spin on the Klein's report as positive for future development and growth.

The mood in the room was strange and the teachers filed out quietly. There was very little talk after the meeting in public, and even the middle school teachers walking back did not congregate together. There was a real sense of keeping your head down. However, the next day and remaining weeks in school, people laughed about how the

report must have really been bad if Tony was so upset about it. People began speculating that the report showed the differences in salaries under Tony. The rumors produced about discrepancies of pay and benefits were given credibility by Tony's reaction to the unsanctioned distribution of "sensitive and inaccurate information." I guess it confirms the "friends of Tony", also known in the community as "drinking buddies of Tony" or "Drew's inner circle", did receive highly unequal salaries and benefits. People were openly upset to be talked down to by the Headmaster and made fun of the "all in the same team" reference that he used during his reprimand of us. All of this while he kept information from us.

Tony's "all the same team" rant had the opposite effect than he intended. Instead of solidifying his base it drove people from his team entirely. The middle school group was currently reevaluating or creating a new dialogue to make sense of Tony and his past decisions. The drama that was unfolding was being referenced in political terms which gave it a humorous frame. The first person to emerge as a new hero in the process of reevaluating the organization was "Deep Throat"- Sandy the accountant. I guess if it was a Republican culture Sandy would be called Jane Tripp. We had a secret report that someone attempted to release. The meeting itself to criticize the release of the report became a smoking gun such as the Watergate tapes or Lewinsky's blue dress. The meeting was framed in this language by faculty. The episode fed on itself and created more material for jokes and mistrust.

This rant of Tony's gave faculty who were reframing their understanding of the organization one way to interpret the situation. Tony's anger was directed at the staff and directed at the photocopied report. This anger gave faculty more evidence that perhaps Tony wasn't innocently negligent, but consciously irresponsible. The talk started and included discussion around what does he have to hide? Can we believe in Tony at all? The process quickly established itself in the dialogue and jokes.

I mentioned in the episode how radical John was given more of an ear, which reflected a turn in the organizational dialogue, but the most significant shift came from Jane herself. A couple of days after the incident a few teachers now comfortable to be

*back at the Round Table were discussing the “all on the same team threat” (as it was now being called). Jane added how she hated when Tony felt he had to chastise the staff. Jane explained that Tony felt the best way to respond to any challenge was to establish dominance. Her actual term was “like a pissing alpha male.” It was the group’s conclusion that Jane was trying to make sense of Tony’s outburst without coming to the drastic conclusion that other staff were coming to. However Jane’s assessment is consistent with the one other time I heard about Tony in a challenge. There was a story about when he told the school’s attorney that his official statement in response to a parent lawsuit was “F*** you.” Jane’s criticizing of Tony (even if it was this small criticism) at the round table meant Tony was a fair target, and soon all the blame was placed on his shoulders. Two years after the event Jane still won’t blame Tony directly, “I still loved Tony. He did a lot he just stayed too long.” “ He was not the most graceful man when placed in a corner.”*

In this episode we see a social process under extreme duress, the workers are diligently attempting to normalize their environment and culture. However, this taking care of everyday business according to tradition was also clouded by lack of predictability of allocative resources. This unpredictability for resources created tension that negatively influenced perceived personal and organizational capability. Being threatened by your boss at this time, while he underlined the value of unity, was a slap in the face. The people trying to personally make sense of the turbulent climate needed stability and support from leadership. As one teacher said “I want an apology from Tony.” People expected Tony to show some guilt or concern over the economic environment. His anger was all the incentive needed to blame Tony for the woes of the organization. Tony’s anger created a frame to view the person who distributed the report as a hero and Tony as the bad guy who was hiding information. Few people forgot (especially in their joking) that we were promised a copy of the report anyway.

March Madness

A stressful time in the school’s calendar year was contract negotiation time, which came in March. Unlike the beginning of the year faculty meetings, parents day or

comment time, it was not a defined organizational routine (set of predictable traditional practices). Contract time did not have a definitive beginning and end set by the calendar. Rather contract renegotiation time was a collective organizational feeling. It was the only time that the teachers as an entire group, thought and discussed their job in terms of money over services. This is when the reality of teacher's pay surfaced, and the mood was somber. During contract time, the teachers would meet with the Headmaster and discuss their current job, desired changes, their compensation, and benefits. Teachers would attempt to explain their job responsibilities under the rubric of the six-part system.

During my first year, contract time came quickly on the heels of the Klein report and the "all on the same team" incident. As a result, the tension in the air that surrounded the annual re-negotiation was higher than usual. However, in the middle school many of the teachers openly discussed their salaries (this was not a practice in the upper school), so teachers had a good idea what each other made. It surprised me that many of the teachers were so open with their salaries. Another issue they discussed with me openly was my part time classification. As I was moving from part-time (which was a big joke – since I worked full-time but got paid part-time) to full-time trying to reclassify my job to six parts could be a challenge. Teachers told me to be careful because when I came on full time they would try to increase my responsibilities, but not my salary. Some of the female experienced teachers advised me how to position my six parts and what I should ask for in terms of salary. Even Jane and Hugh (the Head of the middle school and the Head of my department) told me what I should argue for to define a six parts job and what I should ask for as salary.

Amidst these helpful conversations came the joking that surrounded the event. Teachers would joke about how certain teachers were or were not successful in negotiating their salaries. I was told by several teachers that "Tony would try and screw you unless you were a good negotiator." This put a lot of pressure on a teacher's meeting with him. This, coupled with the mood set by the Klein report, meant that raises would be low this year and negotiation would be difficult.

Typically, unless you were changing jobs, which really meant redefining your job for most teachers, you received a flat raise. However, in the past five years this flat rate ranged from 6-8%. As a result the minimal raise you could expect (and got used to) was 6%, which was at least twice the inflation rate. This generosity was partly responsible for the school's financial trouble. However, the teachers had gotten used to this raise and still joked that "five percent of nothing was nothing". Teachers got paid so little that a percentage based raise system was unfair to them. "How are we going to like it when its one percent?" was one teacher's comment that drew laughter until it sunk in. "The gravy ship has sunk" was the screen saver phrase in the teachers lounge for a few days (until it was removed by someone). The mood was grim, and Tony's response to the accusation of unfair salary distribution (as culturally confirmed by the "all the same team" episode) added to the brewing discontent.

Apparently what was different this year than in others was that people openly began discussing pay discrepancies. People began to joke about this and blame Tony. As a result, the conversation of the reasons for the pay discrepancies had begun. These discrepancies were attributed to many factors. One main factor was the ability to negotiate coming in. As salary raises and six part definitions were based on your initial year, the most important salary negotiation was when you where hired. This is why converting from a part time job to a full time job put me at a serious disadvantage. This became a common joking point. The joke was that you have to leave and come back if you wanted a "real salary." As the saying goes, "you make your money coming and going."

Another factor influencing pay discrepancies was that friends of Tony (or Drew), seemed to get disproportionate job upgrades. People who were in this group had a sense of confidence going into this period. One upper school teacher, for example, had changed her job every year she taught at the Prep moving up in pay and responsibility each time. There was a shared belief (based on group conversation) that her incompetence was rewarded by more responsibility as she moved from secretary to

teacher to Head of boarding. Some teachers joked that she was due for a job advancement, as she had done absolutely nothing as boarding director this year.

Yet another factor influencing the salary discrepancies was attractiveness. There was a sense that looks got rewarded in negotiation with Tony. One middle school teacher told me she had doubled her salary in three years by going in and flirting with Tony. Another joked that Tony didn't find her attractive, so she got nothing. I found it a strange contradiction in a predominately feminine and liberal workplace that this trait of Tony's was tolerated and joked about with little malice towards him.

It was a shame that I wasn't studying the school last March (when resource confidence was unrealistically high). It would have been beneficial to compare this year to the one before. What amazed me this first March madness or contract season was the seriousness of these charges being made openly towards Tony. People were starting to get angry at Tony for his creation of the mess (pay discrepancies and financial instability) and were openly making fun of him. Equally surprising was how the feeling of frustration at the huge pay discrepancies did not translate into anger at each other, but focused on the source of the pay discrepancies the "CEO" of the school.

In certain departments that were at risk for losing contracted staff, the insecurity concerning resources was higher. One teacher shared his frustration that it was hard when they were talking about possible cutbacks to see a friend of Tony do nothing and get permission to start a special program.

I wondered at the time if this teacher was ahead of the rest of the school in a feeling that was to come or if he was just taking the contract time too close to heart because of his department's vulnerability. In either case it was clear that the lack of trust in the organization and anxiety due to resource predictability affected the daily communications within the group. People focused on the discrepancy in salaries, but at the same time made fun of Tony for being susceptible to manipulation by his friends and/or a women's looks.

This episode sheds light on the strange communication pattern. It consisted of the group accepting the organizational conditions, low trust and perceived capability,

and at the same time making fun or forming personal meaning of the irrational way these conditions came about. However, it was clear to me that this March a shift in public consciousness that started with the Klein report was gathering momentum. The March madness being on the heels of the Klein report and Tony's "all on the same team" speech helped shift the agent's focus on organizational instability (low allocative resource confidence on a organizational level) to a personal level (people began to personally feel insecure and fear for their futures).

Blood from a Stone

Almost two weeks into March, Jane told us that Drew, not Tony, was going to conduct contract talks with teachers this year. Immediately people knew that there would be no special request or raises due to the Klein report. Basically with the exception of myself and Hillary (who were changing job status), this meant that the conversations about contract talk died down. People joked about how they would get nothing this year and "how Tony always lets Drew be the bearer of bad news". The contract negotiation time switched from a serious cultural event of personal jockeying to a mere formality. People resigned themselves to the situation, knowing Drew would not be able to make any changes.

A few days later Drew set up a list for sign-up times, this elicited jokes about futility of the process. Drew also requested that teachers changing roles (which included me) sign up first. Several teachers joked that I was seriously unlucky. Saying things like, "Man did you pick the wrong year to go full time". The next day, after Drew had made the list announcement, a group of us were sitting at the round table and they were teasing Hillary and I. They were making fun of us saying "there was no strategy you could use to get money out Drew." Hillary said jokingly "Even with Tony Owen never had a shot, but I thought I had a secret weapon . These!" Hillary gestured to her breasts implying their persuasive powers with Tony. Everyone started laughing and I sat there amazed at the openness of the comment and the humorous reaction.

As the middle school anxiety rose (and people's moods fed on each other), the mood became more and more despondent. When the routine practice for contracts changed personal anxiety for future security (resource) also rose. However, people knew exactly what Drew taking over Tony's contract talks meant. It meant there was no money to haggle for. In terms of a cultural practice the anxiety that surrounded the annual routine of the negotiation process stopped. People threw in the towel on the situation and resigned themselves to getting nothing. The organizational trust and perceived individual capability was low, people turned to the daily everyday routine and rules that could be trusted. As resource stress was high (both in the organization and the market climate surrounding it) people's confidence to negotiate personal rules and routine diminished. Faculty focused on forming personal meaning of the day through organizational accountability.

The opening up of the humor around the situation was provided by Hillary's and my own part-time status. In some ways the anxiety and joking conversations that surrounded the routine of negotiation (especially in this organizational context) was continued through us. The attempts to understand or reframe the cases for financial crisis also continued somewhat through Hillary and myself.

The Shock Was the Shock

At the end of April, as the end of the year was rapidly coming to a close, another unscheduled faculty meeting was called. Naturally, a late-year unscheduled meeting was an occasion for talk, and before the meeting the rumor mill started. The rumor was that Pearse (the Head of the upper school) was going to resign. Deep down people understood why he was leaving, but discussed how strange that he was going to leave so late in the year without another job lined up. For the last few weeks people were joking about Pearse's job as a waste of money. Pearse had made little impact with his job and had been completely removed from any loop of influence in the upper school. Drew and his friends who felt threatened by Pearse had been accused of sabotaging his efforts from the beginning.

As the Klein report pointed out, we were top heavy in administration. We all joked that we had to pay a consultant to tell us this obvious fact. This had been a constant joke since I arrived. Tony had used administration promotions to legitimize increasing people's pay and avoid scrutiny from the board. As a result several friends of Tony received a new title and more ambiguous job every year. As the last two months unfolded, more and more of the sordid details of favoritism became open conversation. But since these friends of Tony were also close friends to members of the faculty and members of the boarding community, there was a delicate balance because people did not want to openly blame. Naturally Pearse, an outsider from the beginning, became the convenient scapegoat for jokes about administration largess and waste.

Tony announced with little fanfare that "Pearse has unfortunately decided to leave us at the end of this year and there will be a going a way party for him at my house next week." This gave Pearse no chance to address the group of teachers. People pretended to be shocked (which I thought was odd as the rumor had been circulating). As soon as Tony made the announcement, the room as a whole felt heavy. The ambiance felt like that heavy breath that accompanies bad news, and though this feeling is easily recognizable when you experience it, it is impossible to describe. At the end of the meeting, many people approached Pearse to talk and the school was a buzz. Tony's announcement was curt and his resentment was measured but evident. He was clearly angered by Pearse's decision. Jane was upset and the next day at the round table she finally quit holding her tongue on the topic. She referred to him as "the poor kid" and lamenting that he was never given a chance. Surprisingly Jane was not angry but composed as she discussed how Drew and the rest of the upper school administration in Grew Hall (which excluded Tony) had it out for Pearse since the beginning. One teacher commented that regardless, it didn't make Tony look too good. Jane agreed and said Tony should have done more to help him, since "ultimately it falls on him." We started joking (but were careful because of Jane's close friendship with Tony) that was the price Tony had to pay by getting in bed with Drew to run the school as Tony went off on his "other duties".

Three reactions to this event fascinated me. Feigned shock from the faculty at the news, Tony's anger, and Jane's calm indignation. The shock of the faculty even going to Pearse saying how sorry they were and what a surprise the news was seemed fake. Though no one directly talked about it, I believe that the shock reaction was a way of collective face saving for both the faculty and Pearse. This pantomime allowed Pearse the dignity of not feeling he had been the talk of the school, and it also allowed the faculty members to rid themselves of culpability in Pearse's unhappiness and subsequent decision to leave. People knew why Pearse was leaving and the upper-school especially could have done more to make his experience at the Prep better.

The difference between where Jane and Tony placed their anger was equally interesting. The basis of this anger came from a desire to deflect the responsibility for Pearse's departure. Tony placed his anger squarely on Pearse's shoulders and Jane placed it on Drew. I am not sure if Tony's anger was really at Pearse for leaving but for choosing the time he did - making it hard to replace him but more importantly putting Tony's overall leadership under the spotlight again. Regardless, the bigger picture was that Jane and Tony both knew that the Board would not be happy in a time with even more serious problems to address than an open position.

What Is a Board Supposed To Do?

Did you hear? The lounge was abuzz-- the board decided last night to get rid of Tony. Tony's "out". Tony's been fired--we have a meeting after school. Apparently he is going to announce it. I remember saying "well he had to see it coming" which was met with a strange look by Jill as she asked me why I said that. "Look at the financial report and everything else {Pearse's resignation}. Of course the board was going to find someone accountable." Jill had recently been made Head of 8th grade boarding program and dean of student life by Tony and Jane. Jill was clearly shaken up by my frankness as she said, "yeah but it is not all Tony's fault."

I noticed a strange phenomenon starting with Jill's reaction. Even though people had been making fun of Tony since the day I got here, joking about his perks and absences, then to the mismanagement and unethical practices, the teachers as a whole

began to rally around Tony as a victim. A quiet group talked about how they would be happy to see Tony leave. Most of the faculty discussed their anger at “the Board” who none of us really knew but who had such obvious power in the school.

The meeting after school had the sense of a “tragedy meeting” (when faculty would meet after a student had a serious accident or problem). Tony stood up and said unfortunately the board felt that his services were no longer required. He was very professional and explained the process of searching for a new Head and how the transition would be handled. I am going to step down this year and act as “temporary Head” next year while he searched for new job and The Prep conducted a national search for his replacement. When Tony sat down, people clapped and cheered Tony for a long time.

The following week was the end of school. We went through graduation and all that entails with little fanfare. People were not discussing the situation much, due to the fact that Tony was fired going into exam week so the schedule was irregular (you only turned up at school on your exam day conducted your exam and left). The first time the faculty got together after the announcement was graduation, which provided little space for conversations. Tony was impressive at the graduations, as he was larger than life speaking charismatically to both the upper and middle school students.

If a researcher was not embedded in the organization for a period of time, it would be easy to miss how the agents prepared for the organizational change. The change of the communication over time as it shifted from organizational accountability to personal meaning showed how faculty had been preparing for the inevitable. People tried to first make sense of the decisions Tony made from an organizational standpoint and then began to criticize him as a friend and colleague. At the beginning of the school year faculty joked about Tony’s style and personality, but by the end of the year they were criticizing his behavior and decisions as a leader. In Pearse’s case the humor went from commenting on his weak position to pitying his “between a rock and a hard place” circumstances. I believe this change in the joking patterns over the year

foreshadowed the inevitable organizational change both with the leaving of Pearse and firing of Tony.

The change in humor over the year was influenced by the structural components in relation to the organizational change. In many ways the illusion of complete personal freedom and support via resources was diminished. As resources became less reliable, people's perceived personal capabilities decreased, and with it their trust in their own agency to enact rules and routines also decreased. As the economic situation became more tenuous, faculty had less faith in their own agency and the organization that they were embedded in.

The predictability of the school calendar was juxtaposed with the unpredictability of the organizational situation. A phenomenon that is unique to schools and those who work within it is the fact that the whole organization goes on hold for the three month summer break. At graduation, people joked that hopefully there would still be a school to return to in August. I asked Jane (who looked exhausted by the end of graduation) if she was going to Tony's end of year party. She said she couldn't face seeing Tony drown his sorrows "it's like watching Nero fiddle." With that she bid me a good summer.

End of Year Party

The party consisted of an open bar and hors d'oeuvres. I got there an hour late and people were already enjoying the party and consuming adult beverages. Tony was there and so was Pearse. I was talking to Maureen while Pearse came up and joined us, and we were laughing about something unrelated to school. When Pearse left the party, Maureen came up to me and told me about three people wanted to know what Pearse and I were laughing at. Maureen and I joked about the paranoia. About an hour later Barbra made a "good riddance" toast to Pearse. She was under the influence and was being encouraged to be quiet by people around her. Tony's close friends blamed Pearse for Tony's firing. The party got more rowdy as the night went on. Two faculty members got on top of an SUV and drove around campus yelling. An impromptu band started with about ten faculty members playing instruments or banging on anything they could find

as they made up lyrics. Tony and his wife were extremely entertaining and intoxicated. I couldn't believe the party and sat back and watched with another teacher who joked that this year's party was tame in comparison. The previous year at 3 in the morning the entire party (which mostly consisted of the "hardcore partiers" on the boarding faculty) moved to the pool and went skinny-dipping.

I left about 2am when the party was still going strong {my wife came and picked me up}. I was told that many of the off campus partiers were crashing in the dorm tonight. I laughed and excused myself. I was planning to be up at 7:00 am for the faculty golf tournament the next day. Many of the faculty turned up still drunk (and drinking) from the night before. I was put on the team with Rob who spent the whole day making fun of Tony and Drew. It was Rob who purposively "remained distant"(in fact he hardly attended faculty meetings and when he did he was famous for turning off his hearing aid and grading) who provided me the perspective that framed my first year. He said "Drew has run the school for years and Tony was happy to let him do it as long as he could spend the money. The s*** had all caught up with them."

Year Two, Limbo

First Faculty Meeting, Year 2

Sitting up front was Tony. He talked about his trip to Spain this summer and how the rest of the time he spent getting ready for his new job search. When it came time to start the meeting, he explained how he hired a Headmaster search firm from New England for himself (for his job search) and the school. It was the same firm that placed Tony at The Prep ten years ago. This became great fodder for jokes over conflict of interests. It seemed a little strange that this contact of Tony's was handling absolutely every aspect of the search. One teacher said later "wasn't that how we got in trouble in the first place?" Most people felt powerless at the decision process (to keep Tony in place as a "lame duck" – in essence leaving the school without a Headmaster with a vested interest in faculty and the students) that they resided themselves to it. The anger

displayed in the teacher who made the comment was short lived and turned to the shaking of Heads and laughter.

Two teachers were introduced as heading up the search team, though the entire faculty was assured they would have a voice in the process. Both were respected in their own right and represented the upper and middle school respectively. Hugh, Head of the history department and outdoors program, was known for his professionalism and attention to detail. Maureen, the other member, was unfortunately a more controversial pick (see episode Color Success). These teachers were chosen to conduct and Head up the search process and would work entirely independently of Tony. Drew continued as deputy Headmaster (which would effectively mean that he would run the upper school) and Jane would run the middle school. Once again this caused people to joke that why, if the Board fired our Head, is he still acting as an intermediary Head when we have a deputy Head.

In the next few weeks, as people discussed the situation of having no Head, they often joked that Drew was out on a limb. The rumor was the Board really wanted Drew out for his tensions with Pearse, and Tony for his mismanagement of the finances. Apparently when Drew talked to the board he got caught in some discrepancies and basically lied but got caught. The speculation was the Board felt they could not trust Drew to run the school even for the year of the search, hence the necessity for the lame duck Headmaster. The joke around the round table was that the Board felt that even a lame duck was a better alternative to Drew.

The year unfortunately from the first minute threw people right back into the drama. People complained about “whiplash” in terms of going from the peaceful summer to right back in the drama. Most teachers professed they just couldn’t wait for to school start. As it did the middle school group isolated itself more than usual from the upper school, in some sense shielding themselves from the drama. The middle school faculty criticized every major decision by the board as well as Tony and Drew. These first weeks saw a group motivated to reevaluate their culture based around personal meanings. People were in purposeful denial hoping to ride the year out and get new

leadership the following year. In some ways it could be considered shielding ourselves through communication and a special focus on the mundane aspect of work process.

The summer away gave people a new approach to the year. They focused on the routine and rule instantiation that they believed they had control over themselves - their classroom and their role as teacher and colleague. The bonds of the middle school (and desire to remove ourselves from the upper school) were stronger than ever. One teacher captured this feeling by noting that with all the distraction the administration was dealing with, we would be left alone to fulfill our calling.

Humor was irreverent to school leadership but due to the context necessary, because it seemed to liberate the agents from the school crisis. The middle school group cast aside their connection to the “whole drama,” content to get back to the business of teaching. In this sense, due to the uneasiness of the times and unpredictability of the organization, there was a lack of trust in the organization structure, rules and resources. Faculty turned to forming personal meaning in everyday life. However, this disconnection of the structure of the school over a long period of time was impractical because it would take so much energy to maintain this disconnection over the entire year. The organization would undoubtedly envelop the every day actions of the middle school.

Who Is in Charge?

Jane started the middle school faculty meeting saying clearly there were a lot of changes this year. She explained that Tony was acting as temporary-Head and Brenden was taking a break and had stepped down as assistant Head of the middle school to focus on teaching (he was teaching science in the upper school). Tim (who was dean of students last year) was acting as dean of academics, discipline, and students. Tim would be moving into Brenden’s old office (for all intents and purposes this meant that Tim was assistant Head of middle school without the title). This vagueness was too much for one teacher to handle. “So who do I send a referral (a kid who in the past was sent to Brenden’s office)?” “To Tim,” Jane answered., ”Unless it is an academic referral (cheating) that goes to Tim.” Delaney then said “But isn’t Tim Academic Dean?” Jane

answered “Yes with the exception of academic referrals.” Delaney then asked who do we go see for special schedule requests (Brenden used to do schedule) “Brenden will still handle schedule, but Tim is learning the system so he’ll be able to handle many of them.” Then Delaney asked “What about special sixth grade team requests and science requests (both used to be under Brenden’s jurisdiction).” Jane indicated, “I am not sure yet about teams yet, for science go to your department Head.” Delaney said “Sorry I am just trying to figure out exactly the procedure”. Later on that day at lunch Jane was sitting with a group of teachers (excluding Delaney). Megan walked up, “Jane can I sit here, or do I ask Brenden, or Tim?” Jane gave her the middle school salute and we all laughed. For the rest of the week people were making fun of the need for such black and white definition for procedural questions.

Delaney’s questions and Jane’s frustration with the specific questions represented the tension and uncertainty at the Prep. The reality of it was as with most things at the school at that time, it was being “made up as we went along.” Jane had no idea how things would work without an assistant Head and yet could not give the title to Tim because Brenden may come back. This on top of having a Headmaster who was not a real Headmaster made the prospects of the year a confusing one. The frustration of this time was still seen in an interview with Delaney a year later.

Delaney: *Okay Tim was made something, I’m not sure what, but his role was never clearly outlined. I remember last year at the beginning of the faculty meeting I asked ‘Who is going to do this and who’s going to do that.’ I couldn’t get a straight answer from anyone. I don’t really know what Tim’s role is. I know I would occasionally go to him and he would send me to someone else.*

Interviewer: *Is he a deputy Head of middle school in your eyes?*

Delaney: *I thought that is what he was supposed to be last year. I’ve noticed that for this year he is no longer called deputy or Head, like I believe some referred to him last year. He is called dean. I think that means he is not deputy Head or assistant Head.*

Interviewer: *So he assumes the title, just not the job?*

Delaney: *I’m not sure he has the duties either, why would he have the duty and not the title? But again what are the duties, what does it mean to be an assistant Head? I think all these jobs are what a person takes on. I asked Jane when I first took the job of team leader to define the role and she hasn’t defined it. The times that I have asked for it to be discussed it hasn’t been brought up.”*

Delaney's frustration with Jane has an important component that may not be apparent on the surface. Due to the ambiguity in the administration and then the middle school leadership change, Jane was required to make sense of the middle school with what she had. Jane was also astute enough to realize that the more formalized changes she made could create a harder job to adapt the middle school to the new Head's leadership the following year. Jane had earlier told me, "Our job is to try and just get through this year".

In the current climate people were trying to disassociate themselves from the formal hierarchy and power system, while Delaney's insistence for a formalized role was contradicting other faculty's goals. Her desire for structure contradicted the organizational need, which was to work in ambiguity. She had no concept of how to deal with the ambiguity. Jane gave carte blanche for the faculty to develop their own personal meanings to maintain the current structure for the year. Jane's vagueness was strategic and pragmatic and the acceptance of it by the faculty illustrated the understanding the middle school as a whole had.

The person who was perhaps most keenly aware of this was Tim, who also recalled the same incident in his interview.

Tim: *The wonderful thing about the Prep especially right now is that as a manager you can completely create your job. If you take on responsibility and do it well you become irreplaceable. I started my job this year with an outline of basic expectations. Over the year, I consciously took on more and formalized my position. The opposite is also true, if you had a leadership position this year and didn't create opportunity for yourself you can't expect in a budget crunch to hold onto your job as an administrator.*

Interviewer: *So you were happy to take on the role of assistant Head of the middle school not knowing if Johnny was coming back.*

Tim: *I respect Brenden and if after Jane leaves he comes back to run the school he certainly has earned the right. But in my job I can not worry about what Brenden or Scott or Jane. All I have to do is my job and lead by example. I knew that I would earn the same respect of the faculty that I have for them. That is why Delaney trying to pin my job down in the beginning of the year was so frustrating. It wasn't the time to have my job defined. I could appreciate her position and she was right, well, she was right in an ideal organization.*

Genuine/Grandstand

“Jane what ever happened to the Klein Report?” She was asked point blank by a male teacher in a faculty meeting. Jane explained how she didn’t know when we were supposed to have a release of the figures, but with Tony leaving she guessed it was on hold. The plan was to wait for a new Headmaster who would make the tough decisions (Jane’s way of saying how to get us out of the mess we were in).

Radical John had always had an adversarial position with Tony for years. No one could explain why he and Tony hated each other. Once a year, Radical John would schedule a meeting, where they would yell at each other for half an hour. The rumor was it all started when Radical John tried to file a few acres (on the school grounds) as an environmental sensitive site with the EPA that Tony designed to build on. The joke was Radical John threatened to chain himself to a tree to stop the building (and with Radical John it was entirely believable). Radical John at this same faculty meeting further inquired what are the implications for us this year. Jane answered in her own way “the implication are that we’re screwed, and we’ll have to do what we can this year to minimize cost. All administration opted not to take raises last year and I’m sure that we won’t take one this year.”

Radical John then said; “Well I have a proposal.” Radical John was famous for taking a while to make his point. Maureen and Jill started laughing as Jill circulated a note that made fun of Radical John; “Just get to your F*****g point.” Frequently, Maureen and Jill would sit next to each other and pass notes during meetings. Radical John continued, “I like many other teachers benefited from the over generous raises in the last few years. I think teachers who have been here for the good times may opt out of their raise so the money can be allotted to the new teachers. This was met with groans, and Jane thanked Radical John and said she was sure that that drastic of a step won’t be needed. Hillary (a new teacher who started with me) then said, “I second John’s proposal” and people laughed.

The next day at breakfast Jane and I ate with Maria, she asked me “Owen what was that shit with John last night.” I answered that he means well. She asked me if I

believed he was earnest or was taking the opportunity to dance on Tony's grave. I believe it was a mixture of both but answered, "I don't think John would do that." Jane and I discussed John's idea. We respected how generous it was, but how it rubbed some people the wrong way. Certainly If Radical John was serious, the plan suffered from poor delivery. Maria asserted she would like to think he was being honest in that he wanted the proposal to be initiated.

This episode follows the theme of the previous "Who is in charge?" episode. Radical John attempts to reduce his and other's anxiety by requesting information and suggesting a plan. If taken at face value, John's plan acknowledges the generosity of Tony while in the same breath criticizes it as reckless. It also is a wish to help provide at least some comfort in resource capability for new teachers. It recognizes how hard these times were for those not lucky enough to be here in the high times. Perhaps it also reflected a sense of guilt that was not shared by the whole community, that anyone who received Tony's generosity in some degree was culpable.

It should be noted that other teachers may also have shared this guilt. For example, two teachers who received generous salaries from Tony over the next month volunteered for extra duty to relieve newer teachers who were not as well paid . The difference in this approach was they did it quietly and accomplished their goal without pointing out the problem of the wide discrepancy in salary and duties.

People had extremely low trust of the duality of power, which is routines structurally influenced by resource confidence. They also had a low level of trust in the established rule structure of the upper school management. As a result, the middle school team attempted to disassociate itself with the upper school management structure. They attempted to create personal meaning out of differentiation to the organization and conscious routine following through the choice of identifying with their calling not their school. This is seen in both John's equitable salary idea, Delaney's frustration over lack of structure and the basic ridicule of the upper school management. The entire communication pattern that centered around disassociating the middle school

work process of the duality of discourse, duality of power and duality of structure was impractical.

IPOing a Non-Profit

The same day we discussed John's proposal, the conversation shifted to how Tony was an easy target right now. Jane was clearly torn with her loyalties towards Tony. This was shown in the fact that in her own words he left her "holding the bag." Jane discussed how we would not recognize this place without Tony. Tony in his ten years had done a lot of rebuilding. Jane was attempting to rationalize Tony's actions and reframe him positively. Even in this conversation she had an evident slip "What was he thinking letting it get so out of hand?" It was clear that this year and these problems were weighing her down. She then asked me what I thought Tony's plan was. I remember thinking to myself 'How do I answer this question delicately?' "I guess the fact that you're asking me that is the problem" she laughed and agreed. We discussed it further and I gave her my theory; "I guess if you look at Tony's idea, he was riding the area's boom. Look at some of the money we have here now because of Tony. One big donation and Tony would be the savior." Jane agreed "and we've gotten pretty close now, and with the economy going down it's going to be harder."

I consoled her that we still have the land as an asset (the school had over 400 acres of forested land and with the expansion of the surrounding area it was some of the most expensive, and only undeveloped real-estate in this area). Jane laughed, "Oh great who wants that fight, could you imagine John if that happened [referencing the EPA episode]." We laughed. The land committee, which Radical John was a member of, was an extremely powerful and influential group with board and alumni membership. A few years back Drew wanted to start a golf academy through a local golf club and wanted to make a driving range and three-hole golf course for the team to practice. Though the golf academy had serious sponsorship and backing, the land committee managed to fight it and won. Jane joked that we all knew the land was our only asset and as a last resort as it would have to be sold.

The dialogue about asking what Tony's plan was indicates clearly that Jane and I were attempting to form a personal understanding of the current situation. Tony's plan was really not relevant. It was just a way of accessing the topic. How were we to make personal sense of the current resource problem? Based on the current market conditions, our current leadership, and current school finances, Jane and I were expressing our low organizational trust and as a result low perceived personal capability. Interestingly, the conversation I was having with Jane was happening all over the country and at the time I would find ironic humor at this connection. It seems Tony's plan was the same business plan of many companies in the "new economy". The idea that fiscal responsibility (a balanced budget and/or making a profit) was secondary to the perceived value of the company. Tony's plan was to create a school big and grand enough for people to want be part of it. In some senses based on the economic climate of that time there was some rationality to the plan.

The pessimism of a lack of available resources was due to the local economy's collapse with the high tech market and the lack of trust in the Prep's organizational capability. As a result, everyone felt this lack of personal capability. But what we were all forgetting was our wealthy client base, the people who would offer a substantial cash donations. The wealthiest of our client base would actually do better and have more funds available for donations once the market started to recover.

What Does a Head Do Anyway?

Just after comment time and Parents' day, Jane discussed how she felt it was the best Parent's day ever. It was strange, but several teachers commented on it how this year's "hell week" seemed less of a hassle than the year's past. Jane thanked the faculty and said that she had less "crazy parents" this year and, so far, from a school perspective the middle school was ticking along. After Jane addressed us, a few teachers were in the lounge joking about "What does a Headmaster do anyway?" Teachers started making fun of Tony, trying to find ways to explain what he did. Maureen, who was on the search committee, joked why she was even going through all this work looking for a Headmaster anyway. As the joke continued, another teacher came up with the solution.

“I think we should have rotating weeks where we are all Headmaster for a week. It would save a fortune.” We all began jumping in the conversation, each of us contributed to the rules for Head week. These rules went from serious to lampooning Tony very quickly: First you were not allowed to be on campus unless there was a party. Second, you went to lunch everyday in an expensive restaurant. Third, you had to play golf or go out on a boat at least once a day. No matter what activity, you must be with a parent fund-raising of course.

This episode is another example of the staff disassociating itself from the upper school administration. In some ways people welcomed the normalcy of routine. Even when comment time rolled around, routine expectation was welcomed. This stresses the importance of organizational accountability in a time of high resource stress. As people volunteered and were even more diligent to the established rules and routines, they promote a sense of organizational stability which was lacking in our management. This smooth sailing through some of the hardest times of the year had the effect of questioning what was the need for the Headmaster.

An organization that was holding onto traditional routines in order to distract it from resource instability had no way of developing or growing. The school was missing good leadership, which provides a sense of security from resource stress which allows people not to seek comfort in volunteering to organizational routine but find fulfillment in agent-centered action. An organization culture that claims not to need a Head because they are efficient and capable of following traditional routine is really suggesting they don't need management. However, there is a difference between leadership and management. The following quote illustrates not needing micro-management with the school culture where teachers had a high perceived personal capability. “The prep is a place if you have a good idea or something you believe in, champion it and you'll be supported. Look at the drama productions or the math program.”

Color of Success

Before the beginning year faculty meeting Maureen told me of her new job (as a search team member) and through humor communicated her concerns about how her peers would take it. . She joked with me on the way up to the faculty meeting that it was stiff competition for the place. “You know which faculty of color they would put on the search team,” since Maureen was the only African-American faculty member she would often jokingly demean her advancements and attribute them to her color. We were both well aware that she was comfortable venting this way to me about her frustration of the lack of minority faculty members present at the prep. The worst part for her was the reality that regardless of how hard she worked, she felt people attributed her success to her color. For example, I overheard one female teacher one day complaining in the guise of a joke that because she was the wrong minority (Hispanic decent) she was not on the search committee (implying that was the basis for Maureen’s place on the committee).

Maureen had an extraordinary responsibility towards diversity at The Prep due to the lack of minority teachers. Though she dealt with her frustration through humor, it was bittersweet (she described it as her calling and/or burden) for her to be the “black voice” on campus. When asked a question that pertained to race, for example, she was asked how to increase African-American interests in staff positions in a faculty meeting. She would respond, “Well, speaking for all black people....” Any time an African-American student got into a student crisis she was their surrogate adviser (regardless of the student’s real advisor). One situation involved Maureen meeting and pleading the DC (disciplinary) committee to find an alternative punishment than weekend detentions due to the hardship it created for the family. The DC committee did not bend. Maureen expressed her anger to others and me at the round table. The same teacher who was unwilling to find alternative punishment talked constantly about her commitment to diversity. Although Maureen and the rest of group believed the teacher was sincere in her commitment, the incident was typical of traditionally-focused teachers at the Prep. Maureen would joke, “People want to see diversity, but not make any changes to cater for it.”

Maureen and I headed up a panel presenting on the difficulties of minority enrollment and retention in private schools. Maureen told a story during the presentation of how she was recently invited to a board dinner. She went and got her nails and hair done, “like I always do for every day of school” (the faculty laughed because Maureen was typically very casual). “Anyway” she said “then this board member came up to me, and, not knowing who I was, handed me her dirty plate and utensils and walked away. Imagine having to sit through a dinner after that.” Maureen continued that many people are unaware of how difficult it is to be different in a community, even one as accepting as The Prep.

Maureen continued with comments that community members have made to her over the years that were either unintentionally offensive or accentuated her difference from the community. She asked the audience to put ‘for a black person’ at the end of each of these phrases: you are so articulate... you write so well... your kids are so well mannered. The room was uncomfortable. She explained that she knew that “many people may say this could be said to anyone, but when you are black and you hear it over and over and over from people and friends in your community you hear the words ‘for a black person’ at the end of these phrases.” She told us to consider that the African-American students and their parents hear this too when teachers say; “A ‘C’ is a good grade at the Prep”, “You’re doing so well”, “Many new students find the rigor of the Prep a hard transition.”

*Maureen recently was looking for a new job and she would comment that she could not leave the Prep. She would say with some anger, “who the f*** is going to be here for my people.” I told her that was not her responsibility and perhaps the school would be forced to address the issue that they relied on her in an unofficial role as a minority advocate. Maureen did, however, believe that if she could help “her kids” make it here they were certain of success. She laughed about how pathetic it was that she felt trapped by her own success. Because we were close, I could understand her frustration, while those who were not as close would argue she made race “too big of an issue.”*

Maureen slipped into a self-professed depression. She wanted to start a new job as Head of minority recruitment and issues at the Prep. Though several prep schools have this position and our administration supported the need for it, they could not financially support the position. Maureen's experience underlies the importance of personal identity and commitment needed, but also how this must be coupled with structural support of resources for the individual to be empowered in an organization. Maureen's personal story illustrates how people felt in the organization. They were trapped by their commitment to the students, but their place within the organization was not structurally empowering. As a result it provided little space to grow as an agent.

Levers

Tony presented to the faculty a proposal from the “board” to assess ways in which to reduce debt. Tony then presented five choices (he called levers) that could be “pulled” over the next few years. He said at least one of the levers presented was likely to be pulled in order to address the financial crisis. Tony was sure to divorce himself from the plan completely. From my perspective he presented the lever plan as if the board was anxious to “pull” at least one of these “levers” immediately. The levers presented: 1) Five classes become the standard teaching load. 2) Dramatically reduce all financial aid, including that to faculty member's children, who would have to pay a portion of tuition (a rate dependent on household income). 3) Reduce teacher's benefit packages. 4) Increase day student population and average class size from 15 to 18. 5) Increase tuition cost by 25% over the next four years.

Once the lever plan was presented, grumbling started. Immediately teachers started to especially complain about levers 2 & 3. Tony said he has told the board that over his dead body would levers 2 & 3 be pulled. This was met with applause (of course the irony was that Tony was in no position to make any such stand). Lawrence (Head of Admissions) was asked for his opinion by Tony. I sat there astounded that Tony pretended as if this was the first time we were all seeing this proposal (at least Lawrence and Jane must have known about it). Lawrence suggested that if we pulled level 5 we would lose our competitive edge. The second lever, dramatically limiting financial aid,

meant we would lose many current students, if they were not grandfathered in, and it would reduce our ability to attract diverse student populations both economically and racially. Trey then stood up and said that we could not expect to cut faculty kids free tuition. This was loudly applauded, and there was a clear consensus that we did not want to teach in a school which our colleagues or our own kids could not afford to attend. It was agreed that the only levers that could be pulled were 1 and 4 (increase teaching load and acceptance of student enrollment). This would have a serious effect on the quality of education we were able to provide.

After the meeting, the irony of a lame duck Head being the faculty advocate to the board became the fodder for conversation in the middle faculty lounge. Joanne sarcastically joked “Well I feel secure having an ‘acting Head’ represent our interest to the board.” People laughed about the whole situation. Jane said she would go to all the board meetings (which silenced the jokes and, to a degree, the concerns). Jane said it is highly unlikely that any lever will be pulled next year before we had a new Head, and, though it is a concern, she does not see the Board pulling any lever that affected financial aid or teacher benefits by dramatically increasing tuition.

The reality was clear that there was to be a salary freeze for at least four more years. Teaching loads were to go up across the school. One teacher commented the way she saw it, she was going to have to teach four sections of 18 kids and coach two sports under the new system. She said, “But so what, that is exactly what I am doing now.” The middle school teachers laughed as they realized that for many of us the administration have already pulled levers 1 and 4 in the middle school. Jane agreed that it won’t affect us much in the middle school. Jane added, “The middle school is the only part of the school that is economically viable.” Jane asked Joan and I to share our loads beyond the basic expectations (study hall, advisor, lunch table, etc.). Joan answered that she was the varsity coach of two sports and teaches four sections of 18 kids. I mentioned that I had a similar load with no coaching but an additional section of 25 kids for senior elective. “There you go.” Jane replied and we laughed.

The lever conversation died in the middle school as Jane assured us it would have little effect on our daily practices. However, many teachers of the upper school were experiencing a change in the school in terms of official loads. Everyone's teaching load was maintained, yet the number of sections decreased school wide, new teachers were not hired, and the number of kids in every class increased. As a result, most teachers went from teaching four or five sections with 60 kids to four or five sections with 70-72 kids. This was in addition to other basic duties. In my situation, I received no extra compensation for my basic duties, but more importantly I received nothing extra for running student government, or for teaching my senior social science class. The joke that the teachers did not share with the administration was that we were a "do more for less" school. Frequently when an additional expectation was placed on a faculty member, someone would say "do more for less" or "another thing I have to do." This disconnect between the administration and teaching faculty increased over the year.

In their interviews, which occurred at the end of the year, Jane, Brenden and Tim all discuss how the culture has changed and teachers are less willing to step up or volunteer anymore. They all commented on a huge culture change in the last few years from one of willing participation to one where teachers are primarily motivated by compensation.

Interviewer: *Why do you think there has been a change in the way people approach their job for the past 5 years?*

Jane: *I don't know if it is faculty becoming more neurotic, I don't know what it is. Its almost like something is in the drinking water in the last five years. Faculty I guess in this age are really driven by the bucks. I think that faculty are more likely to say to me, if I ask somebody if they can take 8th grade boarders to the store this afternoon, "it's not in my contract," which is really a shame but I see more and more of that. The faculty is not willing to do extra. They don't volunteer as they are supposed to... as they used to.*

Interviewer: *Do you think that the faculty has more expectation of themselves now or less than 10 years ago?*

Jane: *Probably less than taken 10 years ago, I know that. But they seem to be willing to do less.*

Interviewer: *Why do you think?*

Jane: *I don't know, I do not have any idea. But I find it distressing. There is more of "if so and so doesn't have to do it then why do I?"*

Interviewer: *Is it that inequalities are felt and discussed?*

Jane: *I don't know if some of it has to do with the financial difficulties here, but I still contend that our faculty has it so much better than many other schools faculty.*

Interviewer: *Better in terms of ?*

Jane: *In terms of pay, in terms of autonomy, in terms of even daily schedules. I think we are very accommodating for faculty needs. I don't like it, and I don't know what to attribute it to.*

Interviewer: *You sound tired just talking about it.*

Jane: *Dealing with neurotic people all day is pretty exhausting.*

Interviewer: *And not the kids?*

Jane: *....was it Tony's last year? Is it society?*

Clearly the interview with Jane indicates the level of frustration in the administration and the difference of their perception of faculty commitment to the school during this experience. She talked about teachers having to be cajoled or asked to do more instead of the past days where more teachers willingly volunteered. As Vicki says who had been teaching at the Prep for over 10 years, " We have so much more to do just to teach our loads. We don't have the extra time like we used to." The perception of the staff and the administration reflects different experiences. The addition of an extra 10 to 20 kids in classes for the teachers meant extra sections for some but for everyone extra grading, homework, tests, tutoring, more comments, more advisees, more parents to talk to about kids, harder class management, an overcrowded building to be monitored, extra work on field trips, kids in activities and special programs, and a larger commitment to making the necessary connection to do your job well.

However, for administration, who typically only taught one section, it meant 2 to 3 extra kids in a class. The extra work in class, tutoring, comments, and study hall was not perceived. Beyond the economic difficulties of the past two years, the organization in terms of expected personal commitment to kids had remained somewhat stable. The administration's most frustrating change was how much more needy the faculty were and how much more difficult they were to motivate. From the faculty perspective, many confess they would like to do more with the kids, but they haven't got the time. Many complain about being spread too thin. This feeling, when coupled with the pay discrepancies, affected faculty motivation and job satisfaction. As Maureen said, "It

doesn't make you want to do the extra work when some people do so much less, but because they are who they are they get paid more than you."

*Based on their personal experience, the administration believed they were still providing a space of personal empowerment and freedom for individuals to be autonomous (agent centered action). However, due to the discrepancy and workload increase, teachers who still loved their job and calling felt they were being more and more determined by the structural demands of the additional number of kids. This is why when the discussion of winning the lottery came up in the faculty lounge, everyone agreed they would still do their job, but cut their student load. One teacher said he would do the class time, but hire a teaching assistant to take care of the crap. This led the female teachers to listing out tasks for their "b*****es" [term actually used by female teachers in this conversation] that included our least favorite: study halls, daily grades, lunch tables, after school duties and, most important, comments.*

In the episodes What Does a Head Do, Color of Success, and Levers we see the frustration of the Prep's situation start to settle into daily dialogue. The low level of perceived trust in the organization started to affect people's opinion of administration's concern and willingness to help them. The upper school administration had been written off, but now even the middle school administration was being talked about as if they didn't have concern for the faculty. People's low sense capability in terms of resources and future trust in the company had moved into framing their frustration with the everyday enactment of rules and routines. Most of the time, teachers focused on the act of teaching, but when they looked at management and the work environment, frustration emerged.

Academies

At the Prep one of the most controversial topics was the role of the Academies. The idea of Academies was to use the Prep's boarding facility and school to attract kids who could go to a good high school and also specialize in an area of athletics. The major benefit of the academy (and measure of success that was presented to the faculty) was

that they filled the boarding beds with top notch academic kids as well as athletes. These typically were also full-tuition students.

When Tony first became the Headmaster of The Prep, the boarding program was languishing. The boarding program was a large part of the school history (not to mention that many of the largest endowment gifts were from past boarding school students and parents who for obvious reasons had a stronger attachment to the school they lived in--or their children lived in--during their formative years. The Academies and foreign student program had saved the boarding program by increasing the boarding numbers.

However, some teachers felt that the school had won a Pyrrhic victory and that the Academies would slowly corrode the mission of The Prep to educate the whole child. With the Academies filling the beds with specialists and student abroad programs, it was hard to claim the original mission of bringing boarding prep schools to all students, when smaller numbers of boarding students were economically or racially disadvantaged.

Within the same breath of talking about saving the boarding program, Tony would be criticized for destroying it. Tony was lambasted either way: teachers were concerned and made fun of the contradiction within themselves as they complained. The direction of the praise or criticism typically depended on the organizational context of the interaction (but also on the individual relationship with Tony). Teachers would complain that the school had established unequal policies to favor academy kids. The academy kids were able to use study hall to have special coaching sessions. They did not have to fulfill a physical education requirement or art requirement if they were in the sport Academies. The school was liberal in its allowance of absences for tournaments as long as work was completed, and teachers were required to make alternative arrangements if the absences were school sanctioned. The major objection to the Academies stemmed from their contradiction to our school's mission of educating a whole child (people felt we made special allowances for the academy kids).

The Tennis Academy received the brunt of these criticisms, because their academy was the first and the largest. The joke was that they were members of the community only when it suited them. The Tennis Academy also cost millions to build, which they were supposed to pay the school back with donations and sponsorship (the rumor was they were still 5 million dollars in the red). This repayment had not materialized, and the Academies became a convenient scapegoat for blame in regards to the school debt. The Tennis Academy's facilities were so superior in quality some of the wealthy neighbors of the school (not necessarily school patrons) paid fees to have their children use the facilities for lessons and practice. Boarding faculty would often joke that they couldn't get a toilet fixed, but the academy had a spa.

With all the economic troubles, the Academies and their perceived excesses were hard to ignore. Both of the Head coaches of the Tennis Academy were driving high-end luxury cars (which to many of the teachers was a slap in the face) and received incredible salaries while still being allowed to make money with private coaching (using The Prep's facilities for these private lessons). Teachers would ask "Why can a coach make extra money teaching extra tennis lessons, but I can't tutor a kid I don't teach for cash?" The presence and commitment of the Tennis Academy on the campus felt more like a PR campaign than honest commitment to the school's culture. For example, Jack, a Tennis Academy coach, would send emails once a week with a short inspirational/sentimental "values" message typically related to sports. The teachers would read these stories and joke about them. Even coaches of other sports would laugh about the "Jack-cheese." Unfortunately, the other Academies: soccer, swimming, drama, were marred by the history of the Tennis Academy.

The school had plans to start a swimming academy, but had to abandon the sunk costs when the economic troubles hit. Tony had hired an Olympic-gold medalist to start an academy (which would require a campaign fund to build a top notch swimming facility). After the second week of my second year, Tony sent out an email that the swimming coach had to be let go and the swimming academy was on hold. However, teachers were angry because Tony was "star struck again" and he had agreed to pay a

huge salary for the famous swimmer coach. The rumor was we were required to buy the swimming coach out of his contract, which would cost the school several hundred thousand for the original three year deal. Teachers joked (but their anger was thinly veiled) about how they wished they could get a contract like his. The typical comments around this included how one would love to get three times what a teacher made for the next three years, get paid to relocate and never have to actually work. Ironically the coach's wife was in PR, and local media actually ran a story about how sad it was that the coach was let go after he had relocated his entire family. This came up at my wife's workplace, where she explained to colleagues that the "poor mistreated coach" did get paid for his troubles.

The general frustration that people felt with the Academies can be seen in this interview of Jim as he discusses the change he has noted in the school as a whole and the Academies' role in that change.

Jim: *I have been working at the Prep for over fifteen years. When I first came on I was part time. To make me full time I did anything I could. I went on every trip, I helped with the outdoor program and was the official sub teacher. And then half way through last year they get rid of me as a full time employee. Now all I hear is teachers complain that they have no one to cover their classes when they have to miss and to make it worse they are hiring someone to help with the outdoors program next year. It doesn't make any sense, but there you go. I am happier now anyway.*

Interviewer: *Why?*

Jim: *Because now that I am a part time employee I can run private art classes and tutor. I actually make the same money and have more time for myself and my work. It's stupid. If they had let me teach private lessons from the beginning, they could pretend that art was as important as the Tennis Academy. I never would have had to go full time in the first place, or I would have performed my full time duties for free just to help out. Why can the Tennis Academy people charge more tuition to students and then charge for private lessons on top? And then still be full time employees with benefits? Most of the art faculty would even give up full time benefits to be able to teach private lessons. Why do the Academies get to have their cake and eat it too?*

Interviewer: *Is it just the Academies?*

Jim: *No, the school has changed since I started. It used to be people who cared about kids and put friendship over careers. The whole place now is everyone out for themselves trying to make as much money as they can. I think the Academies*

and Tony changed this place to being over-focused on selling the school. We are now specialized, versus a nice place to be and work and just teach kids.

In this interview one can sense the frustration and lack of control that Jim had over his resources. He contrasted his own inability to get resources with the perceived ability of the Academies to establish their own rules and procure their own resources. His frustration also lies in the conflict between the goals of the Academies and the mission of the school. This episode illustrates the frustration with the Academies' special status within the school, the inequity of the academy highlighted the empowerment the academy had through the duality of power and how the other agents felt determined by their structural conditions. Due to the high perceived resource capability that the Academies possessed, the Academies were able to enact rules and routines in ways that ensured their privileged position. Agents who did not have this position became jealous of the confidence that the academy programs and staff had in these turbulent times. Many faculty also blamed the economic challenges on the academy spending.

LBJ

Sam, a founding member of the Soccer Academy, would joke that every academy scandal would pull in the Soccer Academy into the mess. The Soccer Academy was a grass roots academy formed by teachers and soccer staff, rather than by brought-in talent like the tennis and swimming Academies. It had actually made money and paid the school funds. As a whole, teachers made the distinction between tennis and soccer Academies when passions were not running high, because several items were paid for by the Soccer Academy (powered lawn mower, lighting system, etc. that other sports and the school enjoyed). As Sam would sarcastically joke “well of course the Soccer Academy should pay for the new sewer system, can’t play footie without a sewage system.”

Sam would call Tony LBJ because Tony had unorthodox ways of getting things done. LBJ for Sam (a history teacher) was one of those mysterious figures in history. He saw LBJ and Tony as the same: both were charismatic and crude; both were master

political tacticians who ultimately over committed themselves (Tony to expansion and Academies, LBJ to Vietnam). LBJ was a country cowboy from a small town, yet at the same time an intellectual. Tony was the opposite, a New England intellectual who had embraced the Texas bravado. Both were progressive and dreamers but were also pragmatists who got things done.

Like LBJ he argued that Tony had great intentions (referring to the great society and Tony's "school on the hill" analogy). Tony would not always use the most honest or direct way to accomplish his goals. For example, realizing that the school needed a new sewage collection and treatment system (something that no donor wanted their name on, making it impossible to conduct a building fundraiser for) Tony had the Soccer Academy raise money for a new field and training facilities. With a great amount of support for the Soccer Academy, the money was raised. Tony then informed them they could proceed but the only land available for a field that size entailed moving and rebuilding the sewer system, nick-named "bubbling Bertha" due to the noise when you get close and her unfortunate tendency if the wind was right to omit a rank odor that sometimes would float across the campus. This stink was acknowledged with a joking statement such as "Bertha has to change her diet"). The move was considered "Classic Tony" two birds one stone, and people would just quietly laugh and shake their head.

The Soccer Academy existed because of Tony's support, but still officed out of a trailer (unlike the clubhouse of the Tennis Academy) and had rebuilt the sewer system, built a parking lot for its fans on game day (that doubles for student parking during the day). But at the same time Sam was using the LBJ analogy with a respect, because Tony was incredibly empowering. He empowered you to feel you could do anything you wanted, you just have to get the hard work done yourself.

Since the scandal of the school finances had come out, teachers oscillated between blaming Tony for the problems or framing him as an unintentional offender. As the LBJ nickname became identified with Tony, people were able to reconstruct their personal meaning and understanding of him. They positioned Tony in dialogue as if they were admiring that his intentions were good but his "wheeling and dealing"

methods were larger than life. This allowed them to discuss his foibles without being harsh or “kicking him while he was down.”

Living Like Lords

Coming into contract talks, the mood was pretty grim. Teachers were bracing themselves for minimal pay increases for a second year. Jane said that some “money was found” in the budget that was overlooked that would ensure at least a three percent raise for faculty and staff (excluding administration who would take no raise). Jane also explained how she was going to conduct contract talks directly with middle school teachers. Both of these messages were met with relief. People felt that, even with the troubles, Jane would be in our corner and we had a chance at a fair review. Jane was somewhat of a lame duck in that she had no authority to exceed the flat three percent for anyone. However, the sense of relief was clear in the everyday conversation among teachers. As one male teacher said “If I am going to be told to do more and get paid less, I’m glad it’s by someone I trust.” A female teacher put it in her own ‘delicate’ way, “It’s easier to swallow a s**t sandwich from Jane.”

A few weeks later the jokes started about the first half of the message: “Money has been found.” First the jokes circled around the incompetence of the accounting office, “How do you find that much money?” We speculated that amount most have been in excess of \$100,000 dollars to afford a 3% raise for the entire faculty. A couple of days later the jokes turned to a new target – the real source of the funds- apparently the money was “The corporate entertainment budget.” Faculty were irate, one teacher asked “How can we have a corporate entertainment budget--we are a school?” People joked that it was Tony’s travel budget, but then more revelations came out. Apparently in a local (very expensive) restaurant Tony and Gabrielle had an account and could be seen drinking wine on many an afternoon. One day a parent was joking with me after school about how they went to the restaurant a couple times and saw the two of them there. It was a sad state of affairs that a three percent raise could be achieved by cutting a wine and food line item in the budget.

Any charity Tony received due to his predicament was wiped away with the latest scandal when his entertainment budget became public information. People's trust and identification with Tony and the rules of fair conduct disintegrated. The fact that he continued using this entertainment budget after the economic troubles first appeared made people feel cheated. This sense of betrayal diminished what was left of personal empowerment. The culture shifted towards one of structural determinance as faculty gave up hope that there was a champion for their security.

Search for the New Head

As the search for the new Headmaster narrowed, four candidates were chosen by the search committee to visit the campus and meet the faculty. Maureen and Hugh (faculty members of the search committee) presented each candidate's credentials to the faculty and explained why these four candidates stood out. All four candidates had impressive experience: each had been or were currently Headmaster of a school. The visits were presented as interviews of the candidate and for the school. As Maureen said at the round table when talking to Jane and myself, "Through all the fake bull****t hopefully we both get a view of the real personality[behind each candidate]." The candidate had a grueling couple of days: breakfast with academy directors and chaplains, attending chapel service (giving the worship talk), observing two classes (upper school and middle school), in-depth conversations with an upper school and middle school faculty panel, attending a student panel, a dinner with board members and parents, meeting with the admission director, sports director, academic discipline directors, business manager, physical /grounds manager, fundraisers meeting and finally meetings with top administration (Jane, the Head of middle school, Drew the assistant Head, and Tony).

During this final stage of interviews, four humorous interchanges permeated and ended up dominating conversations. People were clearly trying to make sense on an organizational and personal level of the significance of this change, and humor was an important tool. These humorous interactions are presented in rank order from the

incidental conversation to organizational wide conversations. The last two dominated conversations for the entire site visit periods.

So Ridiculous You Can Only Laugh. People would laugh in disbelief that Tony and Drew would interview the new Head. One teacher said “you can only laugh it is so ridiculous.” People joked about how awkward it must be to interview for a job with the person or persons you are replacing. One line got constantly repeated when rumor circulated that Tony started his interview with this question: “So, how are you going to fix all of my f**k ups?” Several teachers had a long conversation that joked that “Only at the prep would we fire and keep a Head for a year, then ask him to interview his replacement.”

Who Gets to Make an Impression? Who is chosen to make the “impression” of the school or be on the panels became a subject of humor and conversation. I have left out of some of this dialogue, because I was chosen to meet the Head master candidates on three of the four separate site visits. I was on the middle school faculty panel that had lunch and conducted a group interview with the new Head. My class was chosen to be middle school class visits for all four candidates and in addition I was asked to have a conversation with one candidate on his teaching philosophy. Out of all the teachers, I probably had the most face time with the prospective Heads, and this caused some tension that manifested in teasing. One teacher joked that the new Head would be sick of me by the time the process was over. Three teachers actually confronted me as to why I was chosen to be on the middle school faculty panel when I had so many other opportunities to meet the new Heads. One teacher asked to be on the committee and had been passed over. Though he was teasing me, I could tell he was bitter. He attributed that only Jane’s favorites were selected (a joke shared with me that I believe continued between the “outsiders” for some time). This assertion was scoffed at, with the mention of one teacher on the committee who had some conflicts with Jane. I explained that I was on the panel because of my multiple meetings with the new Heads (not despite them) I could make more in-depth observations. For my perspective this was true; Hugh asked me to write a short report

to the committee on my impression for the prospective Heads. However, when I brought up these conversations to Jane, suggesting that there was some grumbling about who got face time with the new Heads and perhaps I should be taken off the teacher's panel, she offered a less diplomatic reason for the panel selection. "What do they thin--I am going to put those three whiners on the panel?"

Fine Art Ambush. Jokes began to surround the full faculty meeting with the prospective Heads. These faculty meetings were designed to allow every faculty member to have a chance to meet the prospective Head. The Heads would outline their interests, vision and answer questions from faculty members. It seemed that these meetings were being co-opted to the agenda of the fine arts program. They had clearly (unlike any other group) planned questions that centered on commitment to art programs, special lessons, etc. At the end of every full faculty meeting the entire fine arts department would introduce themselves to each of the new Heads. After the first faculty meeting, people commented how odd it was, but by the end of the second prospective Head meeting peoples' attitudes shifted to openly ridiculing the fine arts program. It was considered bad form to use this opportunity to pitch for a program when it was supposed to be an introduction meeting. At the round table teachers gathered to complain, Jane discussed how it made all of us look like greedy idiots "asking for candidate support". Maureen commented that you don't see the sports program trying to dominate the faculty meetings. People joked how "fake it all was," asking for candidate's interest in fine arts, like a candidate applying for a job is going to say "Actually I hate all forms of art."

The choir teacher poured gasoline on the fire by sending an email to all faculty members about the importance of fine arts in education. The message asserted fine arts as the most important factor in predicting academic success. He included an article with statistics to back up his claim. Suddenly Stewart's email was the most read email in the school (testimonies in the angry conversation by faculty everywhere). The litmus test for a scandal's diffusion was whether Sam knew about it. He typically didn't pay too much attention to any gossip. Stewart's email even sparked an angry

reaction from Sam. These faculty conversations did not so much focus on the message, but on its timing. The assumption that the school was against the fine-arts department offended several people.

As a result of the unfortunate email, Stewart's personality, and the fine arts' department's apparent agenda in the search for the new Headmaster, Fine Arts became subject to strong criticism and jokes. It got so bad that Billy (middle school drama teacher) had come down to the faculty lounge after lunch to distance himself from the email and scandal. Everyone loved and respected Billy (some teachers were resentful of his popularity with the kids), but the consensus was "You'll never find a harder worker." Billy, unlike his colleagues in the fine arts department, was able to joke about the "collection of nuts". Jane asked him point blank, "Billy, what the hell?" Billy explained that though it looked bad, they were just anxious, as other schools had often cut arts funding in tough times. [Their concerns were warranted as two of their members were let go as part of cut backs the following year.]. Maureen disagreed with Billy and suggested that sports were just as vulnerable. Billy avoided the argument, "I am not saying its right, but it is not a planned attack." People jokingly questioned Billy's sincerity and disagreed, but before the conversation got too heated (this was an odd occurrence because faculty members hardly ever openly challenged each other especially at "the round table" where kids could see) he said, "As a far as he knew there was no plan." He then added "what are the odds of the art department being able to ordinate an agenda in secret?" The deprecating humor about his own department had diffused the tension at least for Billy. In some cases the joke was a convincing argument to persuade them that fine arts was exhibiting their collective anxiety (which was understandable) rather than attempting to over influence (monopolize) the new Head search.

The Anti-Tony. The last and most significant from an organizational change perspective were the jokes that surrounded the last candidate to visit, Scott. Almost immediately the buzz went around that Scott was the man for the job. Though Scott's CV was impressive, it was no more so then any of the candidates before him. Yet he

was clearly the front-runner. The major difference between Scott and the other candidates was that Scott was a religious leader. More importantly from a cultural perspective (fitting in with the Prep faculty) Scott was a “progressive priest” who professed “being spiritual without being over pious.” Scott had also made a name for himself speaking and writing out against the fundamentalist and Christian conservative message. Scott’s personal hero was the bishop (who founded The Prep) who was a champion for civil rights in the church. Scott expressed his interest in the job at The Prep as continuing the bishop’s mission. He immediately made an impression and members of the search committee sought out opinions quietly. Scott had impressed Jane (and the parent’s welcome committee) at the dinner the night before. She raved about him at breakfast that morning. However she had no definitive reason for her liking Scott above the others. She said he just was “approachable and sincere.”

I knew at breakfast that Scott was going to be offered the job. As Tim and I walked back to the middle school, we joked about how long it would be before they would offer Scott the job. Tim had a keen sense of the power structure in the school and would share his observations. He knew I understood that, with the dismissal of Tony, the leaving of Pearse, and the compromising position of Drew, Jane represented the sole source of stability of the administration. The board could ill afford to offer the job to someone Jane disapproved of.

Scott’s rave review from Jane grew stronger when she learnt that (apparently) he woke up early and before his breakfast appointment had gone into the kitchen and met with all the people preparing the breakfast. He also walked down to the security guard hut and talked to Ken. The next morning he walked down to maintenance and talk to workers down there. This story quickly circulated, as it seemed to demonstrate a level of respect, concern and interest in all staff. I had two questions that I shared only with Tim, I wondered if Jane was circulating her support to get faculty by-in on purpose and whether Scott knew what he was doing from an interview perspective. “Was it strategy or his character? Scott’s actions were (his seeking the opinion of the

staff, non-faculty workers) seen as testimony that he fit into the cultural mission of the school.” Tim laughed and said, “I don’t know, but its working.”

Almost immediately the buzz went round that he was the man for the job. Several teachers throughout the day said that the future Head was visiting my class today (he was coming to my 6th period lecture). I was amazed at how quickly this all went around the campus. Before the faculty meeting Scott was already unanimously (but still officially) appointed the new Head. This is when Scott threw us all for a loop. He started the meeting with thanking the school for its hospitality and added he believed in the mission and that it was a dream of his to continue the bishop’s work here. That said, he explained that he was not the man for the job. He explained his strengths were the daily running of a school; he liked to focus on improving the education environment of the kids and community. The school had significant financial problems and he may not be the best man for handling that piece of this job.

After this meeting, for the next week the talk was not which Headmaster should get the job, but how could we convince Scott to come here. Without seemingly knowing it, Scott had said everything right. He presented himself as a humble man who wanted to return the school back to its central mission. To contrast with Tony and his style, priorities of leadership became the subject for many jokes because these two men were opposites. One of the largest contrasts was the way Scott carried himself and spoke - very collected, soft and unassuming (but not meek), while Tony was bombastic and larger than life. This style along with Scott’s humble self-assessment as “not the man for the job,” provided reason for the critics of Tony to be even more supportive of Scott for the position.

A week later Scott accepted the job. Everyone was happy, but careful because at the same time it ushered in the final stage of Tony’s tenure. Tony ironically had been on campus and more present in functions over the past few weeks (due to the search committee interviews) than he had ever been as Head. I remember thinking and chuckling to myself how strange the culture was. People almost immediately stopped talking about Scott (the primary conversation until he accepted the job) and stuck their

heads into their jobs. The mood reminded me of hell week (comment time and Parents' Day) when people focused primarily on work. The mood was best captured by Jane who said "I can't wait for this year to be over." Still people seemed optimistic for next year and the change that was coming with the next school year.

This episode and mini-episodes that surrounded the search for the new Headmaster show a progression and shift in the group's understanding of the process. In "So Ridiculous You Can Only Laugh," you see a lack of identification with the organization which results in a high identification informing personal meaning at the organization's expense. People began to have such mistrust in the established rules and traditions that even something as serious as replacing the new Headmaster was ridiculed as a means to feel better. This speaks to a lack of trust and faith in the process to find a future Head.

This lack of trust continued into the open critique and questions of "Who Gets to Make an Impression," in which faculty are questioning who is meeting the candidates. The teachers' lack of identification with the administration's choices made them question the entire search process. Several faculty had a low identity with the search and selection process. They viewed some of the participants as being selected because they were in favor with some administrators. Faculty also wanted to be part of the process to find personal meaning in it. All faculty realized the seriousness of the search and began to measure their value to the school and their job based on their involvement in the search activities. Being left out of the process had the possibility of hindering a faculty member's ability to secure resources and future job opportunities (see mini-episode, "Fine Arts Ambush").

In "Fine Arts Ambush" you see a collective group panic. The difference between the fine arts faculty and the middle school faculty who developed mistrust was the significantly lower perceived capability in procurement of resources. From a duality of power perspective, the fine arts faculty used the routines of the interview process to present themselves as an indispensable part of the school--worthy of resources. Billy's ability to use humor to reduce the tensions between these faculty and the other middle

school faculty is important. He used personal meaning and understanding of the teachers involved to reduce suspicion of an organized department effort to fight for resources.

With a lack of trust in the search process, finding a candidate who was so clearly the opposite of Tony was a relief to many faculty. This is indicated by how quickly the faculty dialogue and excitement around this candidate spread through the organization. People were attempting through agent centered action, personal meaning, to reshape the organization by endorsing a candidate opposite of the current Headmaster. At the time I suspected that the overwhelming buy-in displayed was the faculty's unconscious attempt to persuade the board to select a candidate everyone believed in. On a personal level, faculty needed to believe in something – to believe hope for change was possible. With more details spreading about Tony's spending, as staff worked through the financial dealings of the school, it became critical for a belief in something completely opposite.

Throughout this episode related to the search, the mini-episodes represented the building tension for the agents and the resolution of this tension that led to hope for the next school year. Faculty took on the focus of finishing the year because change was coming and change they could be hopeful for. Faculty started to exhibit mixed emotions towards Tony. He was leaving and faculty became less critical of his faults.

Play Under the Same Rules

The last month of school found all the teachers in the home stretch (even more so than usual). Tony was seen as even more of a lame duck than before. One more major event occurred when we were least expecting it. Several students, as well as a few who were also the top players in the Tennis Academy, were involved in a disciplinary action that necessitated their removal from any extra-curricular representation of the school. For the Tennis Academy students, this meant removal from a major tournament as part of the punishment. The Tennis Academy coaches were unwilling to follow the school policy and took the stand that these players were critical and would participate in the tournament.

This turned into a major school scandal. The faculty was furious at the hypocrisy of a previous chapel service where the Tennis Academy coach claimed school community and asked for support at the upcoming tournament – prior to the discipline incident. This became fodder for several jokes. The academy explained that they would handle punishment after the tournament because with sponsors and tennis media attending the event they could not pull top players. The faculty complained and asked why the academy could not play their other players not involved in the discipline issue. The answer was that without the ones in trouble the academy had little chance of winning.

The stance of the Tennis Academy did not sit well with the faculty. The feeling was quite unanimous, though getting the entire faculty to agree on anything was almost impossible but this issue was cut and dry. Faculty were concerned that the message was “it is okay to teach kids they can break the rules as long as they can win” and this sentiment was expressed on several levels. The faculty members questioned what would the outgoing Headmaster do?

There was much surprise when Tony called a faculty meeting where he showed up as his old self (which many commented how much they missed the self confident Tony) and said, “for all those who thought I was done, they were wrong. I have one last fight in me.” The faculty cheered and he read his letter that he had sent to the academy director stating that in no circumstances could the kids in question participate. Tony recommended that he play the younger kids, they may lose but he guaranteed an unprecedented level of faculty and community support. Tony requested that the faculty members get behind the academy and the students, along with their families, to help them in this tough time to do the right thing. People walked out of the meeting with a respite from the recent tension. There was a general feeling that it was nice to see Tony being his old self. One teacher said, “Unbelievable that on his way out he does the right thing.”

There was an irony in that Tony’s last act as Head was to stand up to the Tennis Academy, and force them to be accountable to the school rules. Many people saw the tension between the school mission and the Tennis Academy (let alone the huge debt) to

be a large reason for Tony's departure. It was seen as justice that he would have a chance in the end to reassert himself against this academy. Teachers lamented how it was "too little too late."

Jack (the director of the Tennis Academy) then canceled the school's participation in the tournament. He chose to not attend over losing with the eligible players. He had a meeting with the student body of the academy and injected what became the next dose of gasoline to this already burning controversy. He positioned his discussion as the school was right in insisting the punishment of the students in question. However, the academy would have complied and given an even more severe punishment after the tournament. The tournament for the academy superseded all other concerns, because it was the academy's basis of fund raising and opportunity for college scouts to see the players. Note that the players in question had already secured scholarships and the incident did not impact their college situation in any way. The director continued to stress that the school was punishing the entire academy (instead of just the guilty) and had a history of prohibiting the academy's financial success

This controversial meeting and the resulting tensions blew up when the director of the Tennis Academy resigned. Teachers got angry again that Jack was bringing the kids into the argument. Within 24 hours an email went out from the director saying that he was leaving the Prep's Academy, taking some of the other coaches with him and starting "the State Tennis Academy" at a local country club.

The middle school advisors who had tennis students (like myself) met after school with Jane. Jane explained that it was our hope the kids enroll in the new Academy and that we will hire someone just as qualified as Jack. Jane admitted that she was sorry that as a faculty we were supposed to ask the parents to please stay with The Prep's Academy. The teachers joked, "How can we tell them to stay here with no coaches or program?" It was so late in the year that this presented a formidable problem for an outgoing Headmaster and an incoming Headmaster who was not on board yet. One teacher said she couldn't even look at Jack in the face, "How could he bring the kids into the middle of this?" Another teacher then made a statement that made us laugh, but also

added the final word to the meeting, “Of course he brought the kids into this, how long has he been planning to switch his Academy to the country club? It always his plan to move. The scandal just made it easier.” People laughed, but she had put into words what we all knew. This didn’t happen over night. Even worse, the now infamous chapel tennis talk became a clear view that he lied about commitment to the Academy and desire to work with the school. The director had always intended to quit; he was just going to do it over the summer when the faculty would have less influence over the families. I was angry and added to this meeting, “So Jack leaves before Scott (the new Head) makes him responsible for the debt, and takes the kids with him, and starts all over at another place.” Jane replied “That’s about it, except we have a duty to educate the kids regardless.” The situation was so bleak we had to laugh.

Even though this scandal shook the school, it was what the school needed. Faculty were able to rally behind the central mission and increase their personal identity and meaning with the organization in everyday dialogue. From a structural perspective the scandal was helpful in two ways. It enforced the need for proper rules and discipline as well as equitable treatment of all students. This strengthened the agent’s identification with both rules and routines. The second way it was helpful was focusing on resources. At the heart of the school was funding for the Tennis Academy. It made the faculty feel they weren’t being determined by the Tennis Academy’s needs. The faculty and school value system was held in higher regard than the resource demands of the Academy. From a structural perspective, this allowed a connection of personal identification within duality of action, routines and communication. This connection via the duality of discourse and power strengthened the long-damaged trust in the organizational structure. This also allowed the Headmaster an opportunity to exhibit his bravado, which he had at times been respected for. It almost gave him a way to “save face” before his departure.

Risk on Us

It was one of Tony’s typical parties, adults only, with very little food, but a large open bar that was serviced by the dining staff. Tony’s faculty house parties were always

held outside in his large driveway that circled a colossal oak tree. Unlike most of Tony's end of year parties, everyone was there as it was the last goodbye to Tony. Tony was already well tucked into the bar by the time I got there and was laughing and hugging people. The Heads of the various groups of faculty, middle school, upper school (represented by Drew), and admission all gave a short speech and presented gifts. The last group to go was a few of Tony's close staff members. Barbra was crying but still gave the speech where she thanked Tony for his trust in them and for giving them an opportunity. Sally added, "Thank you for taking the risk on us when we had no experience or qualifications." This was met with large amounts of laughter, especially because she lumped in another teacher who was qualified, but advanced at some of the same times. At the same time, one teacher whose contract was not refilled (he was let go) said to a small group of teachers standing in the back, "Hey I am unqualified and have no experience—

why not give me a job?" Another staff member laughed and said loud enough for most of the party to hear, "I can't believe they actually admitted that out loud." People embarrassed for Sally and Barbra tried not laugh. Several party attendees talked to Hugh (the teacher Sally mentioned as having no experience) and commiserated that he should not have been lumped into that category. My wife even apologized to him and said, "She obviously forgot you had a doctorate."

The dialogue in this episode illustrates dramatically different perceptions of Tony. Some faculty felt a high perceived capability through Tony and a large amount of trust in his decisions. This was juxtaposed with faculty who felt vulnerable or those who had lost their positions because of his decisions. One teacher in an interview was sick of the idea of the party for Tony because he had lost his full time post as a result of Tony. Personal meaning can be extremely different within a situation depending on one's structural position. Hugh's reaction is key. He was a person with high perceived capability and a high degree of trust in his own power for personal instantiation of rules and enactment of routines. Unlike other faculty who felt the perceived capability was because of Tony's favoritism, he believed the perceived capability stemmed from his own

abilities. He was conscious of being lumped in with those who felt Tony took a “risk on us” because Hugh was aware of the tension from the other faculty toward Tony’s preferred staff.

Tony’s Erections

At the end of the official party (I am told Tony’s hard core friends stayed to sunrise) an honorary film was shown. The film started with the music from *2001: A Space Odyssey* close up looking at the obelisk from its base. As the music hits peak the word’s “Tony’s Erections” came up. This drew huge laughs, especially from Tony. The film was a fake documentary, which examined the “architecture” of Tony’s additions to the campus.

The video started with Brian as narrator beckoning us into the front gate to marvel at Tony’s erection and the first stop was the security hut at the gate. As Brian jokingly marveled at the air conditioning in the modest security hut they opened the small fridge in the hut. They had stocked it with beer for the video, but it implied that all security did was drink beer. They left the hut stealing the security cart and the beer. The next stop was to the daycare facility and the two men lay in the sand pit with kid’s toys drinking a beer as if it was a beach. In each scene Brian the narrator was getting more disheveled and drunk in appearance (what made this especially funny was the audience realized that Brian was really drinking all the beer and adlibbing all his lines). The video tour then went to several more locations with skits in each proclaiming the next “even more magnificent erection” a new gym, new dorms, classroom block and an administration building. Here they stopped and asked “How was he able to get all this done? How did he get permission? Well, lets take a look, come on.” Brian ushered us into the scene where he and Trey pretended to be Tony and Drew. Drew constantly said “No” to all of Tony’s grand schemes that were outrageous construction projects, thus implying only the viable construction projects occurred. With Brian back in the narrator role he said, “that is how Tony was able with Drew’s help to achieve such amazing and frequent erections.” At this point the audience (party) was crying from laughter as Tony had his arms around Drew’s shoulder in the audience.

The video tour had one more stop, the Tennis Academy (which when mentioned was met with a booing by the audience). The scenes were spliced in from a professional P.R. film that Jack's Tennis Academy had made. It was a visual tour with a voice over about the incredible facility. This was followed by Brian and Trey playing tennis in the main court while hold a beer can in each hand. Brian got tangled in the net and at this, a facility member dressed up as the Head of the Tennis Academy who left in the recent scandal and kicked them off the court. Brian and Trey protested that they were friends of Tony and he said they could play here. Jack answered that this was his facility not Tony's or The Prep's (this drew huge laughs). The video ended with Trey talking to Brian (who was passed out with beer cans all around him) on top of the hill that overlooked the entire campus. Trey (all joking aside) then made a touching tribute on how the beauty of the school and facility were due to Tony's vision. The video ended and the faculty cheered for Tony and said goodbye.

The film offered a reframing of Tony's successes while distancing him from the structural costs. The tone of the video itself, with its irreverent humor, was able to highlight character traits and criticisms of Tony that couldn't be said to him directly. In the context of the "roast," it allowed the faculty to vent because someone – the film – had conveyed a message to Tony that no one person could have. It also did this in a way that we could celebrate Tony's vision and risk taking that helped the school grow. Over the next year, when faculty referred to any of Tony's projects or schemes, it would be called "one of Tony's erections."

Year Three, Renew

First Faculty Meeting: Year 3

The first faculty meeting had an unusual feeling of anticipation. In the week before school, people typically would start to grumble about sitting through a few days of boring meetings before school. The prospect of a new Head gave the New Year significance. The first faculty meeting started in the chapel with a full mass in which Scott would act not as Headmaster, but preside over the service as priest. People seemed

rested from the summer and eager for a new start. The service seemed to set a new frame for the year. The reading that Scott chose was the letter of Paul to the Romans in which he assayed that the church and its members were like parts of a human body, each essential and linked to form the whole. In his sermon Scott chose to frame The Prep's community through this metaphor and introduced the new additions to the faculty, including the new Head of the Tennis Academy.

Scott went on to say that we had some hard choices to make and that they must be made to reflect on the school as a community in Christianity and education. He then asked people to offer blessings to each other. This traditional part of the service where you shake the hands of your neighbor was extended and people hugged and shook hands for at least ten minutes. There was a real feeling of community and togetherness that the old faculty meeting in the recital hall could not provide. This feeling of togetherness was confirmed when Scott asked for those not comfortable receiving the Eucharist to please come forward for a blessing and even a few non-religious folks came forward.

After chapel we had a breakfast before the meeting resumed. People commented how it was a nice way to start the year. People joked how different Tony and Scott were. Contrasting the obvious differences in the setting for the first-of-the-year faculty meeting was once again Scott and Tony's styles, not only in voice but also in dress (Scott wore his priest collar). Scott discussed that his vision was to renew the mission of the school. He praised Tony for doing the hard part, making this a first class facility and tackling the difficulties of growing pains (this was gracious, but looking around at the facial expressions of most present, they were not as prepared to offer as gracious a view on the past few years). "Our challenge is return to basic the core principles that make this place so special," Scott stated. "The financial situation will be a challenge for the entire community but we have a good story, and I feel confident I can tell it." Scott said he wanted to have a personal meeting with everyone and asked them to sign up for a slot to see him as soon as possible. Scott then made the announcement that Hugh (Head of the history department and search committee), the new Head of upper school, would lead the upper school meeting." He made it clear to the faculty that Hugh was equivalent of

Jane in the middle school. He then thanked God that we had “Jane with us to show the way forward” and relayed that she and Hugh had been wonderful resources this summer in preparation for his taking on his new Headmaster role.

The meeting was adjourned and people went to their divisional meetings, the middle school with Jane and the upper school with Hugh. As we walked to our meetings we were shocked by the announcement about Hugh, not because Hugh wasn’t qualified or deserving of the promotion (to the contrary people were clearly in favor of Hugh taking the leadership role), but that Drew had not been mentioned at all. Hugh was even leading the upper school divisional meeting rather than Drew, who had led them even when Pearse had the position. Drew’s position and authority was clearly on the way to becoming merely titular. We joked how for the first time we wished we were going to the upper school meeting, just for the drama. People joked about how Drew must be fuming and that it would be a mistake to count him out so soon.

It is hard to capture in words the difference between the previous first faculty meetings and Scott’s first meeting. Because of Scott’s calming influence and focus on the original mission of the school, faculty personally identified back with the school’s mission. This identification influenced both everyday conversation, as well as the way faculty consciously choose to enact routines. Typically the beginning of the year’s routine involved some drudgery around the “housekeeping” of starting a school year, cleaning out your desk, organizing your files, setting up your classroom, etc. Faculty were upbeat as they performed these routines. This culture of agent-centered action, through the duality of discourse and power, influenced people’s perception and trust in their personal capability. It almost seemed unreasonably high.

Hugh had his position formally established from the beginning, both in routine and resources, the duality of power. Faculty approved of this move, but were still wary of a potential power struggle. Drew’s position was ambiguous, because the new Headmaster had not removed him completely, but had terminated his administrative authority. There was concern that Drew would use agent centered action and regain control. The middle school made fun of this situation because we were removed from

the direct line of the drama. Faculty in the upper school were more cautious and displayed concern. I suspected that had the board made this position change during Tony's transition year, the acceptance of this change could have gone completely differently. With Scott as a new influence and the new leader, faculty took this news calmly and "waited to see" what would happen.

Middle School Reshuffle

The middle school meeting started this year with a very personal announcement that my wife and I were having a baby. Everyone congratulated me. The talk then turned to how we had lost four full-time faculty members last year, which required some "reshuffling." Tim (who had assumed Brenden's job last year while he went on a sabbatical) is now assistant Head of the middle school. Brenden is staying up in the upper school to teach. People were sad to lose Brenden, but everyone was happy for Tim, who clearly deserved the position. After we congratulated Tim, Jane announced that three teachers left who would not be replaced and that departments would cover their classes with current resources (which meant several teachers were taking on five part teaching loads, or administrators were teaching more classes). Jill, dean of student life and 8th grade boarding, was no longer in that position (it was eliminated) and she would be teaching a full load. I asked who is going to run 8th grade boarding? Jane said one dean would run student life and the boarding program for the whole school, while Megan would be the middle school liaison. I looked at Megan who smiled back with a (isn't this crap grin). She had picked up Jill's old job (that had counted as 2 parts before) as well as teaching a full load (four classes), coaching two sports, and being 8th grade team leader. Later Megan joked how she was being screwed, "They promised they would let me out of coaching soccer next year" (we all laughed). "What can I do, I either accept it as part of my load or I will be doing it anyway with no recognition." We all felt bad for Jill, who had just been given the promotion of dean of student life two years ago. However, none of us knew exactly what she did. As one teacher said, she took an ambiguous job and then didn't make herself indispensable.

The middle school physical education department had been completely changed. The department used to have one full administrator and four full time coaches who also taught PE class. Now it had two administrators, Maureen who used to be dean of 6th and 7th grade and James who was promoted. The joking rumor was that Tony had promised the job of the past sports dean to both James and Maureen as basis for them agreeing to take on larger roles in the past. Scott felt he had to honor Tony's promise, and James was in charge of boy's sports and Maureen Head of girls, while both would cover all PE classes. Of course this arrangement was a disaster (see episode two Heads), as their responsibility overlapped. All the other coaches would be part time employees or current four load teachers (this meant four staff members who taught PE lost benefits).

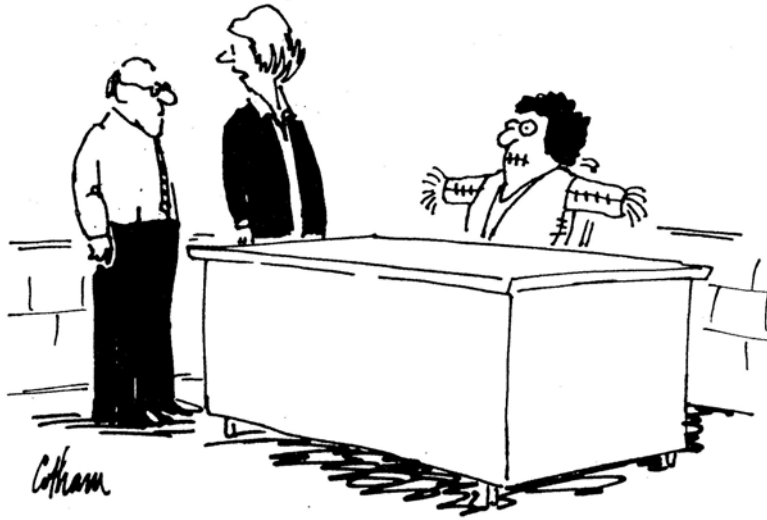
The arts department as a whole had lost four full staff members who were now part time workers but allowed to book private tutoring lessons in school. Two of the art teachers who were now on part-time basis (once again losing benefits), had been our permanent substitutes and putting them part-time meant that this vital role had not been replaced.

The different perspectives reflected in the meeting showed how faculty were viewing their roles in the current culture. The middle school meeting and reshuffling jobs brought faculty down to earth from the euphoria of Scott's arrival. The perception of resource stability being high was not an accurate view. Staff who had high trust in Jane were more long-term focused, looking at the overall change for the organization and could accept an agent-centered organization steered by Jane. They were conscious that their role was to suffer through the ambiguity for the sake of transition and support the vagueness of the exact role for this person. They recognized that it was a better alternative to accept the ambiguity and work through the process rather than formalize a process that might have to be changed. The process of changing formalized processes could be much more difficult down the road. Faculty who wished for traditional actions and established rule patterns were unwilling to volunteer themselves to an agent-centered organization steered by Jane. Following an agent-centered organization steered by someone else required trust and faith in the vision and decisions made by this

leader. This took daily buy-in to the necessity of ambiguity just to get through the day to day work.

Substitute Teachers

Jane recognized that the lack of substitute teachers was clearly a problem. In the middle school we could not let a class go with an assignment, but had to provide an in-class lesson and secure a substitute teacher to proctor the class. This met with complaints. Jane was clearly pissed off about it as well and said, “it was a battle I lost.” A solution will be found. To most of us this meant don’t push Jane, but to the teachers who could not stand ambiguity, it was frustrating. One teacher became more frustrated with the lack of preplanning, and Jane began to get frustrated with direct questions to issues she had not addressed yet. Tim stepped in and said that subs would not be a problem—let’s all agree not to be sick this year. We all laughed at this. “In all seriousness”(this is when Tim’s military training came in) he stiffened up and explained it was decided (he looked at Jane, who shrugged--clearly they wanted to introduce the plan at another time) that teachers would sub for each other, but had to sign a log to make sure every teacher was subbing for others. The idea was if you needed a sub you were to check the log, and if a teacher had not subbed many classes you were to ask them first to sub your class. This, of course, was a joke because it did not address the problem. Since every teacher was teaching a full load, they had few time slots to help substitute a class. We all knew it would never work, because in addition to lack of time, we all knew some teachers would never do it and in a pinch (as all sub situations typically were) you tended to ask your friends to do you the favor of subbing your classes. The meeting was adjourned, and the next day the following cartoon (Figure 20) was on the faculty lounge door.



“Are we that desperate for substitute teachers?”

Source: Unknown

FIGURE 20
Substituting Frustration with a Cartoon

This cartoon’s placement and the joking that surrounded it showed a clear sense of personal meaning and identity in the current course of action in the middle school. Faculty were able to make fun of a tense situation in which an extra burden was placed on the teachers. The humor they found in this joke also represented a lack of trust in the resources to accomplish the extra burden or fix the problem.

The Party Is Over

The beginning-of-year party started at six rather than eight and was a fully-catered dinner. The location was the back lawn that opened onto the Headmaster’s house. The food was catered so that dining hall staff could also attend. A jazz band (a professional band in which one of the teachers was a member) played music for the attendees. Family activities were arranged for the faculty kids, and the biggest change from previous years was the attendance by entire families – kids and all. The bar was

only soft drinks and a small collection of beer and wine. The alcoholic drinks ran out in an hour and people laughed when this happened. It was as if the “crazy days were over” officially. I stood there with Hugh and watched as the people sat around and talked. We both commented on the different feel of the place and observed how many people showed up to this event versus Tony’s. We never realized how many people felt unwelcome at Tony’s big parties. The faculty appetites have changed. We laughed as we saw the major partiers of the past playing with their kids. It was strange that the conversations around the tables and all the next week was how completely different Tony and Scott were.

Faculty remarked on the differences between Tony and Scott; however, the differences were never more pronounced than at the beginning-of-year party. Mariah’s interview remarks on this difference.

Mariah: *I couldn’t get over how different Scott and Tony were in the beginning of the year. It still amazes me. But Scott has set a whole new tone to the place. You hear the stories of the parties that went down before we got here. Now the place is so quiet and has a family feel. It’s funny--it’s all the same players just now the focus is on family.*

Interviewer: *How much of it’s Scott?*

Mariah: *More than you think. Sure those with young families were the partiers a couple of years ago. But if the parties were still going on they would still be there. How hard is it to get a baby sitter on campus or even put the baby monitor on and go for a few drinks? I think people know it’s not going to be appreciated, so they keep it quiet.*

This episode and interview show a new ethos permeating the school, an ethos that was more focused on family and translated into Scott’s expectations for the boarding community as well. Though the shift in personal meaning for the boarding faculty from a group that partied together to a more family oriented group would have been resisted a few years prior, with the increase in new children, it fit well with the lifestyle of these faculty members. This focus on family led faculty to believe it would carry to all facets of school management. Faculty believed the allocations for housing would be based on a combination of position and family needs, such as size of family. People bought into this change because of the perceived resource security for their families.

Carrion Housing

In the beginning of the school year, there was sometimes a surprise where a teacher would find a new job over the summer and leave the school to scramble to fill the position. This year it was Martin leaving, and his decision brought with it the first rumbling of scandal. After Martin left, his position was eliminated, which was met with jokes about how a person can leave and the school sees no need to fill the position. In reality however, Martin was the acting athletic director while the actual director only coached football as he did when he was just the football coach. The inside joke from some of the members of the athletics department was that the director would actually have to do his job.

The decision for Martin to leave was hard for him and his family who had lived on campus for the past four years. No sooner had it been made, people started talking about the housing unit on campus opening up. In a boarding school faculty housing provided you an opportunity to live rent-free, and for the most part bill free (easily a \$20,000 compensation package considering market rate for housing and rent prices). As soon as a house opened up, people on campus jostled for the better location and those off campus vied for the accommodation. Those with smaller units tried to see if they could get into the larger houses. A problem existed that several of the larger family houses were occupied by long tenured teachers who no longer needed the larger spaces to accommodate children living at home. At least five faculty members, one even a widower, lived alone in multi-bedroom homes (3-4 rooms) where they had raised their families. They saw the accommodation as a privilege of tenure, while the some larger families had three kids in two-bedroom homes and saw this as selfish. It was a real problem, but a political one in which the most influential teachers would be upset.

The question was what would Scott do with this opening? Maureen, who was close to Martin, said that the jockeying had begun the day Martin resigned. She joked at the incredible lack of tact of some of the faculty. The night of the announcement two sets of faculty families stopped by Martin's house to evaluate the space. Maureen claims one had a tape measure and notepad. This was probably exaggerated, but it was believable

because houses opened up so rarely that when they did it gave rise to a flurry of back stage activity. The lack of empathy was disconcerting and I likened it to a carrion feast over a fallen friend. We laughed because the metaphor summed it up. I myself had wanted to get on campus and asked Maureen if it would be bad form to ask to be considered for Martin's house. She told me, "S**t you would be a fool if you don't do it now. You think others aren't trying for it?" Maureen then relayed the story of the faculty members already measuring up Martin's space.

As in the housing cases before this one, Jane, who professed that she hated housing decisions even more than dealing with irate parents over sports, would attempt to champion her staff. However, as the narrative goes, Drew is the one who in the past made the decision because Tony was reluctant to get between Drew and Jane and so he let Drew "be the bad guy." The joke in the past was that it was Drew's decision who got which accommodation. This was often referenced that this is why the ghetto row, the worst houses on campus, a cluster of old houses in the middle of campus (near the dorms and without views) went to middle school teachers.

Joan: One of the jokes we have about housing areas: we call it Ghetto and country club, anything below a dorm, like sub-ground level, with plumbing issues we call it ghetto, it's the singles or just out of college who get those. Then there are 'commoners' areas, where I live, where the normal people live, you know the people who aren't Heads of school or related to Drew. The country club row is where the Headmaster, Heads of school [Drew], Chaplin and Head of upper school [Hugh]. Very nice, administrator heavy [exclusively occupied by Administration], very nice, big places. Different standard than were everyone else lives in.

The most famous example of Drew's behind-the-scene control of boarding that was constantly repeated in the middle school involved his daughter and Joan, a middle school teacher. Joan had been promised an accommodation by Jane and Tony. However, Drew's daughter (as a single woman) received the brand new 2 bedroom and one and a half family house while Joan, a recently divorced single mother with a small baby, was given a single bedroom dorm loft style accommodation. Tony of course let Drew break the news to Joan and when she went to Tony in protest he pretended he didn't realize the accommodation was one bedroom and was sorry. This part of the

narrative was so unbelievable I challenged its accuracy to Joan when she first told me, but she was adamant in her own language that was his “p***y excuse.”

Scott gave the accommodation to George, a new teacher. George had made an agreement with Scott to perform dorm duty (a boarding faculty responsibility) for as long as it took (which could have been a year or so commitment) until a house came free. We all made fun of George when he made this deal, because it was crazy. It paid off, because Scott honored the agreement. Hugh and Jane both said sorry to me about my request, but I felt Scott did the right thing. Hugh said that it’s a matter of time before they have to deal with the housing system and that a reshuffle is in order, but it was too soon in Scott’s tenure. Hugh joked that if Scott attempted that out of the gate they would lynch him.

Maureen: *Living on campus is a pain in the a**, but it’s still worth it. Now we have Ben [new Head of boarding program hired to replace Barbra in Scott’s first year] who is checking up on everyone. People are pissed because they have to do your job. The end of the day it’s worth it, you know, it’s a huge benefit. But people get used to it, they expect it. They expect the nicer house. They don’t realize that it’s payment for their job. At the same time I have been promised a bigger place for the past four years. My family is busting out of this place. You got a*****s who are sitting in four bedroom houses by themselves. What’s worse is it ain’t just me it’s (list of names) as soon as one of those houses comes up it’s gonna be a fight. People are not rational about it. But it’s where you live and you have no control..*

Interviewer: *What would make it better?*

Maureen: *Nothing, it’s been going on too long. People who live in the big places, and the people who want them feel entitled. There has never been a system to deal with it. Now, Scott has to come in and make one; no matter what he does they [the boarding faculty] are gonna hate him.*

Faculty housing was a strange commodity. It was a privilege and payment for a job. It was allocated through a system of tenure and special preference. Due to the importance of the house as a resource yet the lack of rules and routines around how housing was allocated, housing placement became a competition. The competition was worse because it was between friends and colleagues who were fighting for space for their entire families, thus increasing the tension around the issue. The housing conflicts

were hardest on spouses who were not part of the faculty organization and dependent on a culture they were not involved with as their employment. Because of the lack of structure to the allocation but the importance of the resource—where your family lived—those involved in the faculty organization were closer to the process and “had to play the game carefully.” Spouses had to trust in a process they could not see or measure. The implication to a faculty member was that there could be tension both in the workplace and at home when housing was discussed.

Scott’s most challenging hurdle in his new position was the area of housing. How would he address the culture and the rules, when faculty were so irrational about housing? There were multiple houses that had extra bedrooms with senior level faculty whose children were long gone. Any faculty member would be quick to defend their own current allocation, but select others who should move from their spaces. With Ben taking the new position, he allocated himself a nicer place at the same time he started to establish rules and routines on how boarding life would be run. He indicated that he was willing to tie housing as a resource to task performance. He viewed your job on campus as your primary job, and your payment for this job was your house. This was a different perspective from those of some faculty who viewed the housing allocation as a reward for working there. The day-to-day running of the boarding areas became formalized where rules and routines were enforced and structurally determined. A disconnect existed between these everyday structural demands and the lack of perceived structure and predictability in future allocations of boarding houses. Faculty could deal with Ben’s formalized structure better if it directly tied to housing security.

Two Heads

Maureen and James shared running the sports and PE program, and both felt the other had taken their job (because Tony had promised the position to both people). They quickly started to resent the other as their jobs overlapped so much. They didn’t talk to each other and as a result mistakes were constantly made, with each blaming the other. To the rest of the middle school teachers it was amusing to watch them squabble and blame each other, but to Jane, whose ideal world would entail delegating everything to

do with sports, it was frustrating. “Middle school sports will be the death of me” as she was constantly having to deal with frustrated parents and having to mediate between Maureen and James. We would all laugh when these problems routinely came up at the round table at the end of the day. A parent would call because of a sports conflict. Jane would get furious, knowing she would have to deal with it. In one instance neither James nor Maureen printed up a practice sheet. So every kid (about 50 of them) came individually to the round table (where the practice sheet was supposed to be posted) and asking Jane where practice was (she was trying to be nice to each kid who asked, but by the tenth one she had lost all patience). Maria put up a sign “WE HAVE NO IDEA ABOUT YOUR PRACTICE.” We all laughed as Jane refused to answer the kids and pointed to the sign. Maria then said “It was all Owen’s fault; he was supposed to book the game.” I would say “No it’s Maria’s fault; she forgot to buy the Gatorade.” Jane gave us the middle school salute as we all laughed.

The only good solution for both of these staff members was to put concern with resources aside and both work together to establish the best program. This called for volunteer action on both parts and sacrificing individual identify with work. Neither person was able to do this, which resulted in not helping each other, as well as squabbles over limited available resources. The problem was if either had put his/her individual identify (heart and soul) into the job, he/she ran the risk of having the other take credit for their work. It became a catch 22 where the job required personal commitment but no guaranteed recognition for the effort expended.

These two staff members were both well-liked by many faculty. Their squabbles between each other made it difficult for some staff. The middle school faculty as a whole stayed out of the issue, because they felt for both staff. Middle school faculty made fun of the issue in their comments, but refused to take sides.

Value of Parents

This episode contains mini-episodes highlighting the reframing of parents as intruding and overbearing to the education process. It was discussed how over the last few years parents seemed to be becoming more neurotic.

Careful of Those Bears. Brenden had recently been made Dean of Faculty and held the first faculty meeting in this position. In this meeting he said that faculty training and support was an important issue for Scott. Scott convinced the board to create an annual budget and position to foster faculty development. This was clearly well received, especially since few people on campus were viewed as fair as Brenden. Brenden said that he would send out further details via email. He would also contact individuals directly if he found out about a program he felt was a good career opportunity. A week later Brenden contacted me directly, handing me program information concerning a course he felt would be interesting for me. People would later joke about the difference between someone like Brenden and Drew being Head of faculty development. The common perception was that Drew would fight to stop you from receiving funding or assistance for development (unless you were one of his friends). In his communication Brenden purposely did not review the changes from the previous systems. Instead he changed the focus of the meeting “I’m here to talk about something far more serious than faculty development, I am here to talk about bears.” We all laughed.

Brenden went on to explain, “There is nothing more dangerous than being caught between a mama bear and her cub.” No matter what your intentions, the crazed bear is bent on blood. This analogy of a crazed mother bear was instantly picked up as an organizational metaphor to describe an “irrational over-protective parent”. Usually angry or concerned parents were consolable and their needs could be met, or they could be brought around to see a teacher’s or the school’s point of view. In some incidents teachers and/or administration would comply with the request of a parent. Usually parents were angry because they had the best interest of their children in mind. Their concern, not always their emotion, was seen as justified and respected by the staff. However, every once in a while a parent would be a “bear,” and no matter what the school tried, the parent could not be reasoned with or satisfied.

Teachers made a clear distinction between parents who had their child's or their own self-interest at heart. Some parents would insist on things for their child, such as an advanced class, playing time in varsity games or on changes to certain grades. Teachers had little patience or empathy with bear parents and usually resisted unreasonable requests and complaints. But due to the nature of a private school, parents had incredible access and influence on the administration. At times as a path of least resistance the teachers or school would sometimes acquiesce to the "bear's" demands in order to get them off their back. But being an unreasonable bear came at a price, because the parent lost respect in the teacher community. Teachers would appease these parents and avoid getting "the bear's back up," and at times their kids suffered a lack of support, pushing or honesty from a teacher, because it wasn't worth the parent's wrath. When teachers are close to the kids, they develop a strong distaste for either type of parents (bear parents or absent parents) and would often discuss them in the lounge or at the round table. One female teacher would exclaim, "I don't know how people can be so cruel to their kids".

Sports Bear. In his first year, George had coached 6th grade flag football to fulfill a part and he was told, "no one takes it seriously". Sixth grade sports were really a space for parents and kids to form a community in their first year at the prep. However, for some reason, even reasonable parents felt it was legitimate to be fanatical towards sports. George would soon learn this and from day one "had a bear on his back." It was so bad that it marred George's first year. No one was clear of the mother's real complaint, but she made George's life miserable. The bear from day one would call up every parent on the team after every practice with a litany of George's offenses. The other parents distanced themselves from the mother and many of them complained to the school about how unreasonable she was. Of course some parents didn't realize that this mother had sights on George and would call the school concerned that her complaints were legitimate. Luckily, her complaints were clearly absurd and many of the parents who were present at the practice or game went out of their way to dispute her tirades. Jane and James (Head of middle school sports) attempted at first to make her happy by

listening to her concerns and even having sit-down meetings with this parent and George. Jane was attempting to broker peace, though at this point she assured George that she knew the parent had no legitimate case. The mother persisted, and it became clear that she wanted George fired. Finally, Jane told her to remove her son from the school or the football team. Jane used her famous line reserved for unreasonable parents “maybe the Prep is not the best place for you.”

During the whole time with this problem, George would attempt to keep his chin up, though clearly it upset him. Of course the teachers teased George unmercifully. Every day he had a game, a teacher would joke “Have fun at the game.” Other teachers would say “what cruelty he was putting the kids through,” or pleading, “could you please let up on the kids?” Once it was clear that a parent was unreasonable, the teachers would typically make light of bears to deal with them. Several teachers would dismiss the parents, saying “If they had the best interest of their kids at heart we could excuse it.”

Country Club A’s. In the past few years the number of tutors on campus and off had dramatically increased. The concern of the faculty was that many of the tutored kids were not children in need but the B students whose parents were pushing them for A’s. As parents got competitive, it was seen as a necessity to have a tutor to stay up with other kids. The tutors were not being hired to help the students learn, but to get better grades, putting pressure on the tutors to help with and in reality do the homework. This was nicknamed “the pursuit of country club A” where a parent’s motivation for high grades was vested in a desire to brag at the country club rather than a sign of the child’s excellence. Teachers had had enough, and Christy brought it up in a team meeting. It started as a “venting session”. Jane would often say she was a firm believer in “sharing our frustration,” but quickly progressed to a policy level discussion. Jane suggested we meet for lunch and draft a policy (an open invitation lunch before school started) to address the surge in private tutors and excessive parent help with work. A new teacher present in the team meeting for the first time said “Wow, I can’t believe that this is how decisions are made here. At my last school the Head decided and that was that.” Jane

answered her by saying that she had been here for a long time and things always remained the same when it came to your class and academics. No one can tell you what to do. Administration is here to make your lives easier. Tim called his management style “clear the obstacles so you can teach better. If I tried to dictate policy I would betray my beliefs and the trust in my faculty.”

At lunch the next day, the meeting was held. Colleen conveyed how frustrating it was with her example of being berated by a student’s parent for not suggesting he get a tutor because he made a B. Colleen tried to explain she would rather the child learn how to make a B by himself than an A with someone else. Colleen suggested to this parent that over-tutoring a kid can make them dependent on this. The parent answered that the greatest minds in history were privately tutored. We all laughed. All shared Colleen’s frustration and talked about how parents had gotten worse. Jane responded by telling a cultural narrative that I have heard her tell dozens of times. Each of the teachers hearing the story feigned disbelief (pretending this was the first time they heard it). They enjoyed Jane’s retelling of her ousting of a parent. The story acted as a panacea to the frustration of bear parents who actually hurt their kids progress due to a selfish desire “for country club A’s”. Jane told the story of how she knew a student’s essays were being written by the mother and after the second time of gentle hinting got tired of it. On the next term paper Jane addressed her grading comments directly to the mother “Sarah nice work, have you considered ...” and went on critiquing the mother’s work. The teachers laughed and collectively brainstormed a policy to deter the problem.

These three mini-episodes represent a shift in organizational perception of a parent’s role and demands. This could be seen in how quickly the bear phrase was adopted into the group discourse. Several teachers also commented on the change in parents over the last five years. The national culture of accountability in education through measures permeated the culture of our private school. As the perception of securing entrance to a top college became more difficult and more important the pressure at an early age for high achievement grew. The joke was that it was difficult to persuade parents that nothing a child did in middle school would count towards college.

*All three mini-episodes show increased pressure on the faculty from parents in ways that could be negative towards the student's best interests. This was in direct odds with the school mission of developing a well-rounded child and a culture that respected diversity and personalized achievement. Parents were demanding special attention and high marks as well as excellence in extracurricular activities. Some parents became more focused on the end product - excellence to get into college – then the process of learning and growing to be a well rounded student. I believe as Hochschild's (1997) notes in *Time Bind* as parents were busier in their work lives, they try to be over-efficient and use outward measures to gauge their parenting quality. As this trend was developing, teachers became more resentful of what they believed was parent mis-focus.*

Parent mis-focus merited a faculty meeting for policy discussion because as resources tightened teachers had to do more with less. The stress from the job of doing more with less made it harder to deal with a neurotic parent who at times we knew didn't know the child as well as the faculty did. The worst cases were when parents would openly ignore teacher's concerns about a student in need because they (parents) perceived this as a bad reflection on themselves. In my three years I saw the tension between "bear" parents growing and defense mechanisms increase through discourse. The positive outcome of this was the faculty's dependence on each other for support. It increased internal cohesion among the faculty, and often we would seek each other out for venting or to joke about a situation.

Still in the Market

Jane often said how she wanted to put the last year behind us. She joked that if her stock investments had done better, she doesn't know that she would have stuck through last year. Though we all knew that Jane was not about to leave the middle school (her baby), until she felt comfortable with the current culture and future of the school. The stock market bubble bursting had affected her short-term plans and pushed retirement back at least five years. Yet at the same time, this last year with Tony seemed to tire her.

Several of the older teachers commiserated with Jane, and they all joked that they would all have to put off returning for another decade to recover from the loss of their retirement plans. Their humor brought a human face to the real cost of the over-inflated markets and escapades of the greedy. The school's community taught some students of the greedy. In one case we lost two great kids because their dads lost their jobs when their company's stock crashed. At the same time the CEO of the same company lost his job, his kid was in the same class, and they were flying their private jet to the winter Olympics every weekend, where some of the events took place on their private ski slope. The bubble bursting in our town was keenly felt by the community and many parents; however, there were groups of parents so insulated from the market with their wealth that this was a blip on their radar.

The market affected our enrollment, where we had a high acceptance rate of qualified applicants, but very few middle class kids applying. This reality had an effect on the admission committee and especially Jane. She was worried and verbalized her fear for the future, "What is to stop us from becoming a school of the super rich and poor (on financial aid) living in such different worlds." Jane's tone was changing. She looked less favorable, as she assumed Tony's legacy of the past ten years and saw no hope for the future as she once had. This bitterness came out in a wit that was more cutting than playful, as it once was. Many of us commented how Jane seemed a little less patient at the end of last year and hoped the new-year would bring the spring in her step back. In conversations like these, Jane's optimism and enthusiasm were beginning to wane. The phrase "Jane's getting tired of it all" was used by several folks.

Jane was considered the strong pillar during this time of change when the financial instability came out, Tony left, and we now had a new Headmaster. The middle school dialogue included comments like "Thank goodness we are under Jane and can ignore some of the upper school stuff." However, with Jane's fatigue starting to show, people started to lose their trust in Jane's vision to guide us in this challenging time. Her discussion of the national economics as an individual pressure (also felt by other teachers near retirement) added to the doubts of resource predictability. It also

led to lack of trust in the structure of the organization because our financial difficulties dovetailed the national recession. At a time when the school needed to focus on rebuilding, we were faced with the national recession and the impacts that could mean to our ability to raise donations. At a time when the staff needed their leader to be most energetic and encouraging, she was suffering from the strain. I suspect had the problems with Tony not occurred, she would have retired at the end of my second year. This influenced the culture in middle school to stay structurally determined instead of seeking ways for personal empowerment. The leader didn't have the energy to encourage agents to find security within the structure.

MBS Chapel

It was 7:58 one morning and James and I were having breakfast together, talking about nothing important, when James looks up, “What day is it? (he answers his own question). “Oh it’s Tuesday and it’s MBS chapel. MBS chapel stood for “Must Be Seen” chapel and was called this because Scott conducted the chapel service. Tony had made it to a handful of chapels a year, and when he did, he sat up front, so he had little idea of faculty attendance. With Scott it was different. He would address the crowd and sometimes call on a teacher asking for him or her to answer a question. It became clear to the teachers to remind them to break their traditional routines and be up there earlier. As James and I hustled up the hill, we bumped into George, who wore a full dress collared shirt. James teased him of getting dressed up for MBS. Megan had also dressed up and was sitting in the front row. After chapel on the way back James and I teased them by bringing to the attention of another teacher that they were showing off to Scott. As George and Megan both lived in faculty housing attached to the same dorm (Chapman) they both complained “Chapman ruins it for everyone.”

At first MBS came as an informal push, because Jane told the faculty how Scott was not happy at the level of participation/engagement by the kids in chapel. He felt that adults needed to model the proper behavior. Only a few teachers made it to chapel everyday of the week, and even fewer made it early. Many of us (at least on days when we taught first period) used the 15-minute chapel time to organize or photocopy for

class. It wasn't until Scott sent an email saying it was his basic expectation for all teachers to attend chapel that attending chapel became a formal job duty. This memo was accepted without much conversation and without any resistance. The only comment I remember anyone making was one teacher who said, "Well I guess this is for real." Over the following months for the first time since I was at The Prep, chapel attendance (especially Scott's services) became a formalized job expectation. The joking with each other over the missing of chapel began to dwindle and was replaced with joking about chapel as another job requirement.

Informal traditional routines of the agents were consciously being considered as people had to choose whether to attend chapel as part of their job expectations. This shift in the role of chapel first began on MBS days when Roger ran the service. However, as he began to attend chapel more regularly to stress the importance of being there, it became clear his purpose and how the faculty needed to attend. Here we see the personal decision to skip chapel was being formally criticized. As the year progressed, a senior administrator in the middle school began to note the absences of students and teachers during these services for the middle school. This became a point of contention with this administrator, because it was making a formal expectation an established rule. In an organization where the lack of resource predictability made it difficult to personally identify with the organization or feel empowered in one's job, the addition of an established rule on what had been an expectation fostered resentment.

Shoot the Messenger

Right after Thanksgiving Scott had scheduled a full faculty retreat (versus the traditional separate middle school and upper school retreats) where the faculty could discuss the financial situation. Brian, the Head of the business office (who was a stand up comedian in his spare time), began the discussion by saying this talk was going to be hard to hear because unlike other conversation about budget, this one is honest (this drew laughter that turned into clapping). Brian then went on to state that much of the information is directly from the report that shall never be mentioned (Klein's report) but some of the information is from his office (business office) and therefore not as reliable

(this drew laughter). He discussed the problem with our debt whose interest payments alone could not be covered annually under the current budget. Brian described the expenditure of close to a million dollars a year (that could go to the endowment) being used to cover interest payments. This did not account for the 31 faculty children receiving tuition reimbursement. Brian resisted when asked how much reimbursement cost the school, but finally he stated that it was in excess of \$400,000 a year. To this people gasped, Brian added, “So stop breeding them freebies.” Brian was repeating a famous quote from a board member who was against tuition waivers for faculty children. This was clearly Brian being humorous and the audience took it as such, because Brian had just had a baby.

Faculty reimbursement for tuition is a hot topic (especially because there had been a population boom on campus and in five years eight kids of the same incoming class could destroy the financial aid budget). As people began to talk, Scott stepped in and stated “None of us want to teach in a school where our own or colleagues kids cannot afford to attend” (people clapped). Brian continued his report using graphs that tracked our future position if things continued as they were. The graphs clearly showed us falling behind on paying off interest as well as the principal loans. He then used the credit card analogy to explain the detrimental long-term effect of just paying the interest (on borrowed money). I looked at the teacher who was chastised by Tony a year before for using this analogy, and we smiled as she mouthed silently “What the f***”.

Brian continued his report, saying “Now the bad news” (people laughed). “The bad news is that we are forced to switch health insurance plans.” The report then pointed out the cost of health care which had gone up over 50% in just three years and the school had absorbed this increase as part of its benefits, but could no longer continue to do so. As a result we would enter a new plan that Brian had promised was a good comprehensive plan for the money. One teacher put up his hand and said was he right to assume that on the whole “the new plan would provide less but cost more”. Brian disagreed “No” it will cover nearly as well, but cost less for the school. Sandy (a person in the business office) corrected him, yes but the direct cost to you will be more. At this

statement the crowd became restless. Scott quieted the crowd down and said for us to be honest we have to be willing to hear this and give respect to Brian and his team, who are just the messengers. Life insurance, Brian explained, had changed “to \$100,000 or double your salary whichever was less, which changed from the old policy which was \$100,000 or double your salary whichever was more”. Finally the good news is that we have managed to convince the board to commit to the current 401K matching plans. At this the retreat was concluded.

The next few days were somber, as it sunk in that people’s pay would be less due to the rising cost of health insurance. To make matters worse, the long-term solution looked bleak with the millions of dollars in outstanding (consolidated debt). One teacher said, “I just feel comfortable that Brian is running the finances.” This drew laughs. Many people laughed that Brian was still Head of the business office when he was one of the people who allowed the mess under Tony to spiral out of control. Many people commented how it was disturbing that Brian joked as he delivered the report. One teacher said, “Well it’s Brian (Brian was a stand up comedian) what do people expect?” A female teacher answered “I expect someone with more experience than Brian to be making those decisions.” People laughed, but acknowledged that was harsh. In a school where open confrontation and criticism was avoided, this level of frankness or cutting humor was extremely rare.

A teacher and I laughed later at how pissed off that teacher must have been to say something mean, and we joked about Brian. We laughed how Brian was completely incapable of not telling jokes. Many of the jokes directed at Brian ceased when later that week Scott made the announcement that a parent had given a gift of three year’s salary and benefits package appointment for an experienced accountant to come and help us out of the situation. People stopped complaining about the business office, now feeling sorry for the stress this group would have when a professional came in.

This episode brings in three factors that led to mistrust in the organization: first, the dire financial position of the school; second, the lack of experience to deal with the problem; and, third, the school’s reduction in insurance payments – the effect on family

financial security. The school was in a tough situation with staff, and one of the only saving graces was the effect of the current market conditions. Newspapers were filled with stories of rising healthcare costs and irresponsible financial management at the senior levels of organizations. At a state level there was a legislative bill to reduce health care coverage and pension benefits for teachers in the public schools. The alternatives to go elsewhere for better pay, benefits or an empowered workplace did not appear to exist.

Dealing with some of these variables would be manageable, but facing all three at one time overloaded several staff. This crushed the perceived ability for agents to direct their actions and trust in the organization. People liked Brian, but the burden of this financial situation brought into question his experience to address these issues. Because the school had so much cohesion and he was so well liked, faculty had a hard time voicing their frustration with the situation. They wanted someone to be angry with, but he was so well liked he wasn't that person.

He's Done This Before

A couple of weeks after the faculty retreat, rumors started from everywhere all at once. I heard it from four different people in one day that apparently Tony's last school went bankrupt as well. The rumor was fueled by the frustration with our current situation. Even Jane repeated this at the round table that day. I asked how we know this. She said from someone who used to work at the school. I removed myself as people began to complain about it further. More and more of the debt situation and responsibility were being thrust on the shoulders of Tony. I went into Tim's office and shut the door. We both made fun of everyone scandalizing Tony, especially the friends of Tony whose turn on him was good for a laugh, but distasteful. Tim and I agreed that blaming Tony was a diversion from the problem and if true "shame on us" for letting him do it to us (us being The Prep, not us personally).

The target for faculty anger emerged from the story of Tony's previous management experience. Whether this really happened or not, the story took off and it showed the importance of agent perception becoming reality. I do not believe an agent

consciously began this rumor to find a scapegoat for the current situation. The current situation led to open agent discourse about Tony's previous experience that generated this rumor and converted it into reality. On every level he now became the villain for all the school's problems. If he had done this before, shame on us. How did the school not know about this beforehand? Agents on a group level didn't logically think through the process that we probably would have heard about this before now and in fact made our school culpable for our own problems.

This focus on Tony as the villain allowed the agents to trust in the organization and the new Headmaster who was the "anti-Tony." Because the current market conditions were so turbulent and questionable, blaming Tony allowed them to ignore the economy's problems, something they had no control over to focus on what they could manage.

Insecurity Pays

After Christmas break Scott announced via email some major changes "finalized over the break". Instead of four deans (one for each grade) there were to be two deans (one for 9th and 10th, and one for 11th and 12th). In total this move brought 4 (3 deans and Drew) of our best teachers back into the classroom full time and reduced administrative cost. Two significant staff changes in this reorganization were the demotion of Drew to full time teacher and the promotion to dean of a non-teaching staff member (coach) who was not viewed as having the leadership and experience to be a dean.

As a rule The Prep culture fears all bureaucracy and management and is typically very suspicious of organizational change that is "finalized" without faculty input. However, what was funny was people were not up in arms. Nobody seemed to care. The word went round about the major change, some jokes were made that those who kept the administrative jobs were those who could not teach. "Once again incompetence pays," said one teacher. Overall, though, very little conversation surrounded the major change. I made a joke to the Jane at the round table, "I can't believe all the fuss that is being

kicked up about Drew and the rest.” She agreed it was funny how little dust had been raised. We discussed how people didn’t seem to focus on it for some reason.

A week later at a faculty meeting Scott addressed us and said that it was impossible to pay the consolidated debt and financial aid and that in order to preserve financial aid the 10 million debt must be paid off. The only choice is to sell some of the school’s land. The decision was made regretfully and we will be careful to maintain the feeling of campus as an “island,” but we have little choice. One teacher leaned over to me and said, “watch Radical John.” We were ready for him to blow. To our disappointment he didn’t. People had some specific questions on exactly which land would be for sale and hoped we would maintain control of what was built on it, but very few people challenged the actual land sale itself.

After the meeting I was talking to Hugh, who had been Head of the land stewardship committee for the past few years before his promotion to Head of the upper school. He stated he couldn’t believe how easy that went down. Hugh had been involved in some downright fights with Tony to preserve the land in the past 10 years. Hugh and the land committee had rallied a large group of alumni to the cause and as a result had been extremely successful in maintaining the campus environment. I commented that it was hard to defend the environment over the need for financial aid and faculty kids’ tuition. Hugh sent out an email with his support for the land’s sale, which reflected this conversation. In the email he lamented the necessity of the sale and that sometimes-environmental concerns have to come second. One teacher read the email and said to me, “What’s the best way to defeat an environmentalist? Promote him to administration.” We laughed.

Teachers were very accepting of these changes in two of the most protective areas of the school – the environment and the administration. The administration was protected by the old guard, but they accepted this change. The environment issues, however, held high personal identity for many agents and had a large part of personal meaning for the Prep. The culture tensions set a stage for this level of change. The agents were already prepared for change to occur and expected a change on this type of

level. As a result, the shock that might accompany an announcement like this didn't occur. Several faculty actually felt relief because the possibility of a reorganization was worse than the change itself. Staff now knew the scope of the cuts that would be made and could relax when they weren't negatively impacted. The relief from knowing that a large part of the debt would be paid from this sale also gave assurance that the endowment was now protected and could grow. People supported the change, which was not typical of the faculty, because there was a sense that these changes would help the organization correct the problems it faced.

This episode is titled "Insecurity pays," because the Headmaster was able to make some sweeping changes that would have been controversial and drastic had the insecurity not existed. Using Hugh, an environmentalist leader and land steward, to advocate the necessity of this sale quelled objections that would have come from some staff.

The staff member who was promoted to dean with very little teaching experience, was a friend of the upper school Head. Faculty were not happy with the suggestion of cronyism, but grudgingly accepted, because of the insecurity within the structure of the organization. What could have become a wedge issue for Drew and the other three deans became a non-issue in this culture. Some faculty viewed this as a situation in which we now have four teachers who were behind desks to help relieve some of the teaching burden. Faculty were also accepting of the experiment, because it was worth trying to see if two administrators could do what four were doing before. An unspoken thought was what value did having four deans bring if two could do the job?

Circling the Wagons?

Drew attempted to resist Scott's reorganization. There was a rumor that Drew had a get together in his house with the deans who recently lost their jobs and several of the old friends of Tony. Jane told me that when she directly inquired about it, it was billed as a "drown your sorrows" meeting, but she didn't trust Drew. Even though they still had half a year in their positions, I asked, "What can they do?" "Make Hugh's life

hell like they did Pearse's," Jane replied. Rumor had it that Jane called two of the deans directly and told them not to back Drew.

It was 4:30 and one female teacher was sitting at the round table. I joked with her that she had been there since lunch. She laughed "think I am going to go leave with all the s*** going down? This is better than TV." I asked her to tell me the short version. She replied mixing metaphors "Drew went out on a branch. Jane cut it off and no one is out there with him. He is circling his own wagons." I laughed at her statement. We commented on how we didn't know what was funnier, the image of Drew riding a round in a circle by himself or that ridiculous sentence.

For better or worse Drew was tied to Tony. Through dialogue people had determined that Drew was not a structural player. He had no authority within the duality of power. Drew undermined Pearse a few years before. Faculty would not follow him now because the faculty had already created the social context for this structural change. Neither Hugh nor Drew was backed as faculty waited to see where to put their loyalties. As Jane started to back Hugh and the seriousness of the financial situation became widely known, Drew was pushed more to the periphery because of his ties to existing problems. Had Drew been able to position himself as acting Headmaster during the search year instead of Tony, who stayed as a lame duck, he would have had the structure in place to protect himself when the new Headmaster came in.

Shut Up

Scott had a meeting with the deans a few days after the stories of Drew's secret meeting took place. I was not there, but one teacher told me about the events. Apparently they were all sitting there while people were disagreeing with Scott that administration should be cut so drastically. Tim said "It was simply those who were out of their administrative jobs who were upset at Scott." All of the close friends of Tony were careful to lie low, except for one female dean. She supposedly "went off" on Scott and called him "heartless" (at this we laughed). The male teacher said it was painful to

watch even when he and others were trying to get her to shut up. “I interrupted her, but she would not stop.” The way Tim told the story was very funny and I commented that I felt bad for laughing. He said he didn’t. She could have made her job indispensable, but she didn’t and it’s her fault, not Scott’s that she lost her administrative job. We discussed how she listens to the friends of Tony bitching about Scott and maybe she thought they would back her up. They didn’t. She basically ruined her chance of ever being an administrator again.

When Tony was Headmaster the administration felt empowered by the structure. Now it was the administration who were having to volunteer to the structural demands. Most of the teachers removed themselves from the situation because they weren’t administration and formed personal meaning from their work. Most of the administrative faculty were politically savvy enough to realize this was a time of volunteered action to the demands of the structure and market conditions. This former administrator opened private discourse among the discordant.

In Group

I was invited to a middle school science meeting to help brainstorm ideas. One female teacher was complaining that as she was not in the “in-group,” she could not go to Jane about a 7th grade trip proposal. Radical John and Delaney (the other science teachers), and I listened to her complaint. It seemed strange to me—and I realized that she wasn’t just complaining or being dramatic (as she herself admitted she can be)—that she really felt prohibited in her access to Jane and therefore in her efficacy as a teacher. I joked that she was not serious that she really felt that she did have access to Jane or administration support. Radical John answered, “Face it. Without Jane’s support in the middle school nothing will get done. Some have more access than others. I professed that I have never found it difficult to talk to Jane, in response to which they all laughed, “You’re in the ‘in-group’ ”. “I am? No one told me,” I joked. It was explained that I, like another male teacher, floated in and out of whatever group we felt like.

I was unaware that the perception of “in-group” and “out-group” was so pronounced. I knew that in the middle school there were two groups of close friends (they for the most part sat on opposite tables during free seating), but almost everyone seemed to get along. But apparently over the past few years some felt that the groups have “created boundaries.” The perception was that when Jane was in her office she shouldn’t be disturbed. I argued that I walk in all the time and just sit down, to which they argued that was me and that not everyone could do that. For example, a few teachers said they would not feel comfortable hanging out at the round table. As a result, they felt they were out of the loop and out of favor of Jane. I asked Radical John if he felt that Megan was made Head of 8th grade team over him because he was not friendly enough with Jane to ask for the position. John answered that he felt the team should be leaderless, with a different member chairing the meeting every time.

The irony of this conversation was two-fold. First Jane called Drew’s friends and the friends of Tony the “inner circle.” She often criticized Tony for bestowing special favors and advancements on this group. I knew that the round table’s open discussion was an important part of Jane’s management style. On numerous occasions Jane had cited herself as having a democratic leadership style. Jane felt that this was evident in how she had encouraged anyone to come and hang out at the round table discussions or pop in her office. The problem was that clearly some teachers felt unwelcome to walk in this open door. I also knew that Jane formed evaluations of teachers based on their informal interactions with students and peers. She held these rolls to be as important as what one did in the classroom. If some teachers felt they were unable to “hang” out with Jane, this could actually effect Jane’s evaluation of their capabilities.

I talked to Maureen later to see if she knew about it. She said she heard people complaining recently, but never paid any mind to it. Why do you think this feeling had developed all of a sudden? Maureen said she had no idea, but she argued that the charge of favoritism was overblown. Maureen argued “We (the in-group) get more work because we hang out with Jane. Look at the admission committee--that is a ton of work. And look at student government. You got lumped with that because Jane knew she

could ask you as a friend.” Lumped was the right word. I was asked by Jane to help out a new teacher doing it and got lumped with it permanently. Maureen continued, “Why did Jane ask you? Because the other teacher was inept. No one does less than her. Why? Because she has never had a conversation with Jane. Jane doesn’t feel comfortable asking her for anything.” We joked about how this teacher brought her department chair with her to talk to Jane when she had a problem.

It was ironic that the “in-group” as well as the “out-group” both felt their close (or lack of a) relationship with Jane affected them negatively. However, the subtle difference was that those close to Jane felt they worked more, but had a higher efficacy as teachers. The efficacy stemmed from a perception of support from Jane. On the opposite end, the out-group felt they lost opportunities and lacked the support to create their own ones.

Due to the changes of the last three years and the lack of trust people had in the structure which prohibited any personal identity through resources and personal instantiation of rules to keep the organization running faculty had to rely on their personal calling and identity as teachers. People tolerated the structure because they believed in their job and in the calling of teaching. As a result of this climate, Jane’s personality and personal vision became the primary currency of power in the middle school workplace and in some ways the entire school because of the value the board held in her during this time. This is why faculty who didn’t feel comfortable on a personal level with Jane felt less empowered as agents. Due to the additional constraints on Jane’s time, she was tired and seemed less approachable. It also meant one had to have high self-efficacy in their relationship with her to push through a concern.

The disconnect between those who felt empowered to go to Jane and those who felt hindered by their relationship with her illustrates the importance of personal identity and discourse in the workplace. High maintenance faculty, ones who needed more coaching or handholding, were given fewer opportunities because Jane didn’t have the structural empowerment – time- to deal with their demands. For example, I was asked

to take over student government from a high maintenance faculty member. This could be looked at by some as favoritism, but in reality I was asked to do it because she knew I would just go and take care of it. Her exact words were “I just can’t handle the headaches.”

Man’s Room

It was a highly unusual occurrence to have all male faculty in the lounge at one time. We began to talk about sports and then, almost stereotypically, the conversation turned to sports that we played in school (amazingly, we had all played college sports). When one female teacher came in and used the computer after a minute, she got up declaring “I can’t stand the testosterone in here”. Later in the conversation another female teacher told other females not to enter the lounge as “male bonding” was occurring. Sam was telling a humorous/painful story of when in an NCAA championship soccer game he got injured badly when the “opposite man missed the ball and connected squarely with mine.” Apparently the whole stadium groaned and went silent as he lay on the floor. Except for one voice that yelled “Suck it up Sam.” the voice was his mother’s. We all died laughing and retold our worst witnessed or experienced testicle injuries and with each story we all groaned. One female teacher in the connecting room complained jokingly to some other female teachers that “there were women present.” I turned to Sam and said, “Can you believe after all of their ‘Sex in the City’ stories that they make us sit through, they are complaining?” The female teacher said back “Excuse me. This is the middle school. This is a women zone. You accepted that when you came to work here.” Another one jumped in, “Yeah, get used to it.”

This episode illustrates how agents monitor their social climate in order to determine what type of communication is appropriate. This communication ends up creating the social culture. When it was recognized by the agents that there was an opportunity to shape discourse that was commensurate with their gender issues, they took the ball (no pun intended) and ran with it. The fact that women in the organization resisted the male influence in the discourse points to how conscious people are of the guiding factors in everyday talk.

Grandparents/Shakedown Day

The Prep started Grandparents day, which was a mirror of Parents Day, but less stress because report cards and teacher's comments were not due that week. However, in terms of presentation within the classroom and teacher's appearance, the administration seemed more guarded. Jane a couple of times joked at the round table that she hoped that faculty would remember that grandparents are a little more conservative, "I just hope Radical John wears a tie." She teased me in front of the faculty to further her point: "Let's hope Owen is not teaching Freud." On the eve of the day, I reminded my classes that their best decorum was expected Tomorrow. Faculty joked about the shallowness of this new day. This was an attempt at tapping into a new source of donations for the school. Jane said, "Shit are we that transparent?" We all cracked up.

Grandparent's Day was seen as an established expectation that had no buy-in from the staff. Based on resource determinism the faculty realized this was a practice they would consciously have to accept and go through, regardless of any misgivings. The demand and resource determinism of Grandparents' Day meant that the duality of power could not be ignored. The frustration of having to volunteer to the resource climate was joked about in everyday discourse but never openly challenged.

Grace Period Over

The year was coming to an end and the few teachers who were considering leaving campus houses decided to stay on campus. I was told by Jane to hang in there. Roger was supposed to reevaluate housing and reassign housing based on need over tenure. This was going to be a huge change in The Prep's policy. However, Scott backed off from making a decision. One person complained to me that it really should be incumbent on those people who lived in big houses and didn't need them, to volunteer, but unfortunately this required Scott to act.

A week later Billy was complaining at lunch that he was running a camp over the summer that was set up by another teacher who did minimal, if any, work. He and another fine arts teacher were complaining that neither of them knew what this teacher did in their department. They joked that Scott had approved this questionable teacher to

hire another person for drama to replace a teacher who had left. “Why doesn’t he replace her?” Megan who was also there said “There are a lot of people who should have been on there way out but aren’t.” In general people were getting tired of waiting for changes and characterized Scott as too passive. Billy said he was sick of it, “I have hung in there thinking it would change and I am getting tired of it” (Billy left for another job this past summer). In the faculty lounge and after meetings people began to imitate Scott, whose charming gentleness and habit of sitting in a meeting or chapel for awkward periods of silence (with his eyes closed) had begun to wear a little thin.

Scott was beginning to be judged solely on his work and not in comparison to Tony. The grace period of coming into a crisis setting was over. Faculty housing is a good example, because he was hesitant to change the housing structure due to worries about agent acceptance. However, by not addressing this housing situation sooner and by tying needed changes to the resource demands of the organization and market, he would bear the responsibility of any change he made in the future. He would now have to build buy-in to his vision for housing change.

At the end of the third year the culture was beginning to shift and the faculty’s lack of trust and personal identity with the structural components of the organization were beginning to transfer to the Headmaster himself. As the agents themselves were no longer setting the stage to allow dramatic changes to be acceptable or to be pushed through, it would require a charismatic leader to help agents view change as agent-centered action.

Conclusion

This case study of a middle school has provided detailed accounts of how organizational members, primarily through group interactions, form meaning of their work culture. It illustrates how the process of forming meaning through interactions both creates impetus for and reacts to organizational change. This chapter presented an in-depth focus on the episodes within the context of group interactions. I illustrated how the episodes unfolded over time from the perspective of individual motivation as well as a

structural influence perspective. To conclude this chapter, I will briefly describe my observations of change over three years.

This chapter focused on the everyday experiences of the episodes in the context of the organization. This everyday focus made it difficult to see the entire structuration process. Rather it emphasized how the episodes were experienced and shaped by individuals; how the experiences were interpreted through past and present structural influences; and how the faculty would form the new organizational culture. As a result, I found the best way to maintain focus on the everyday structuration process was to pay attention to how I experienced the episode, then reframe the episodes using the two components of action (communication and routine) and structure (rules and resources) to understand its role within the structuration process.

A fair criticism that can be leveled against the analysis of the episodes is that I do not utilize the entire model (Figure 18). I primarily focus on the components of action and structure, their influence with and on each other. The shaded areas of the model shown in Figure 21 (reproduction of Figure 18 highlighting the areas) were not discussed in the analysis of these episodes. This area of the model requires a high level assessment that is difficult to connect when discussing the everyday interactions. One must remove oneself from the everyday descriptions and the episodes to examine them over a long period of time. This area of future research is highlighted in more detail in the conclusion (Chapter VII). This chapter focused on the messy details of everyday life. Once this analysis of the episodes in their everyday context has been explored, the episodes can then be looked at in the broad perspective to connect the everyday process to the structuration process.

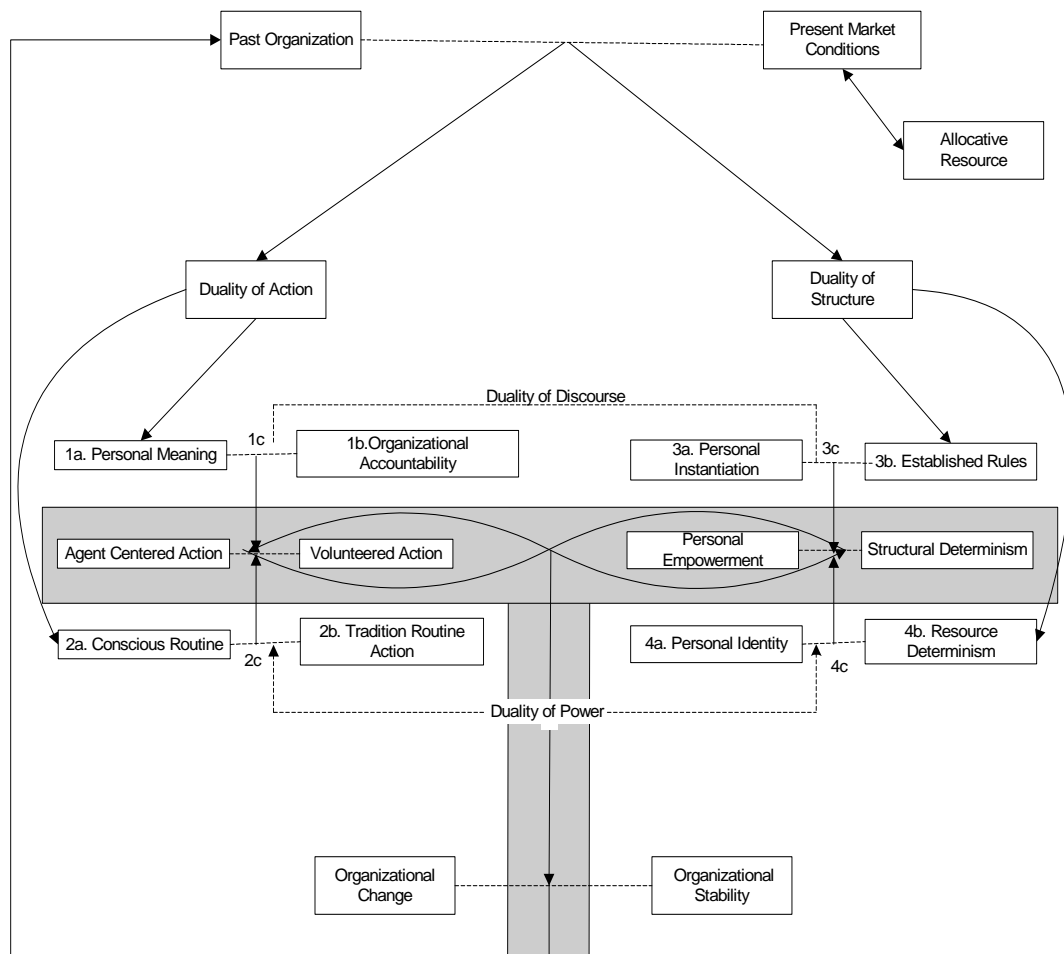


FIGURE 21
Structuration as a Process

1c, 2c, 3c, 4c are four points where the three influences within a component come together to form the ultimate influence of that component on the structuration process. Communication is an action and 1c represents the ultimate influence of communication on the process of structuration. It is shaped by the degree of personal identification with organizational process and mediates the combined impact of these

three influences (1a, 1b, 3). Routines are an action and 2c represents the ultimate influence of routine on the process of structuration. It is shaped by personal consciousness and mediates the combined impact of these three influences (2a, 2b, 4). Rules are a structural component and 3c represents the ultimate influence of rules on the process of structuration. It is shaped by the degree of perceived capability and mediates the combined impact of these three influences (3a, 3b, 1). Resources are a structural component and 4c represents the ultimate influence of resources on the process of structuration. It is shaped by the degree of personal capability accessing resources and mediates the combined impact of these three influences (4a, 4b, 2).

To take a broader view I believe that during my first year from late August to late October the climate was one of high personal capability in terms structural components. Agents had a belief in their ability to access their own know-how and shape the use of rules. They also had high organizational capability and confidence in their ability to access resources. From an action perspective the period was dominated by a culture of personal empowerment and trust in the ability to use organizational context to form personal meaning (1a). Routines (2) were followed unconsciously as tradition (2b). Routines provided a guideline to follow to keep the school year on track, while agents felt comfortable individualizing their own process. In early November, the façade of resource stability (4) began to crack, as tensions began to surface through humor on the level of communication. Agents began to question access to resources (4) and their own beliefs in resource capability (4c). This focus on individual ability to access resources led to increased focus on the rules (duality of structure) and routines (duality of power) surrounding the access to resources. The practices of Tony's unexplainable action in this regard started to make agents question routines (via the duality of power) and rules (via duality of structure). If Tony was neglecting traditions (2) and rewarding others who didn't play by observable rules, the conclusion to be in Tony's grace was essential to their perceived capability(3c, 4c). This lack of self-capability fostered mistrust in individuals and surfaced in daily communication (duality of discourse).

By January faculty were beginning to disassociate themselves from Tony in their action and interactions (1,2). Faculty members also started to turn on each other through humor for not pulling their weight (1a). There was a sense of organizational pessimism not, ironically, in personal commitment to the job, but in trust of the viability of the current structural stability (1c, via the duality of discourse). It is my belief that these communications were preparing the school for the change that was about to come as a result from the Klein Report, which was presented in February. The two months that followed saw an increase in the lack of personal identification with the upper school administration. This dominated everyday sense making (1). Routines were consciously followed for the predictability they provided agents. In May the Headmaster was let go and people reacted as if they were surprised. However, faculty in their interactions (1) and actions (1, 2) had been disassociating themselves from Tony and preparing for him to be accountable for months.

The following year was demoralizing as a whole. People had no trust in the lame-duck head (our fired Headmaster) as well as no contact with the Board that was making an important decision that would provide stability to the organization. People's faith in their personal capability to shape rules (3) and routines (2) was diminished. People switched to a culture of organizational accountability (1b), traditional routine (2b) and established rules (3b). Faculty had completely dissociated themselves from Tony and openly reframed the lack of stability in the organizations to lie solely on his shoulders when he still had a few months left as acting Head. This set an unfair expectation on the power of the new Head being interviewed at the time that he/she would need to be the cure all for many problems. Access to the new Head was viewed as an important commodity (as it had been for Tony) and tensions rose in interactions around this access. April of this year saw the scandal with the Tennis Academy, which offered a distraction and unity-building event to reaffirm personal commitment and identification (1c, 2c) in The Prep. The end of the year meant a goodbye to Tony and a wider frame, a more complementary one, than the past two years had placed on him. Still many people were

firmly set in their personal position on the outgoing Headmaster mostly based on the access (or lack of) to Tony's generosity.

Year three saw the rebuilding of personal identification on a personal level as well as a new focus and emphasis placed on accountability for rules (3), routines (2), and especially resources (4). This left people strangely wishing for the old days of unbounded freedom, but also having to reconcile that the empowerment they felt in the past was built on a foundation of sand. The pressures of work became more apparent and teachers who felt less empowered to personally form meaning (1) in their labor began to become guarded in their commitments to work. By January agents as a whole were willing to accept what was seen as necessary changes. They had spent the year reviewing and reframing Tony's choices as past conduct and preparing for the necessity of change across the organization. The desire for an increase in capability set the stage that allowed Scott to make changes. However, by the end of the year people began to stop identifying all problems as Tony's fault and expected Scott to find a solution. However, people wanted the solution to fix the problem while ignoring their own benefits acquired during the past ten years of Tony's leadership. Scott's future challenge would be to maintain identification in the necessity of change but also maintain willingness to give up the benefits of the past spending habits.

My focus on the influences on both action and structure (1c, 2c, 3c, 4c) rather than the shaded areas that led to organizational change and stability is not an oversight. It was necessary to maintain this level of focus when examining the episodes as daily interaction-based events. Now that I have completed the hard part, an in-depth review of three years, I believe that it is possible to make some broad conclusions about culture change. In other words, I can now shift to the broad implications of culture change over time in an organization. In the next chapter I do exactly that and suggest that this level of culture change study adds to organizational communication structuration studies.

CHAPTER VII
HUMOROUS CONCLUSIONS:
ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE AS A STRUCTURATION PROCESS

Change is such an evident feature of social reality that any social-scientific theory, whatever its conceptual starting point, must sooner or later address it.
(Haferkamp and Smelser¹)

I was prepared to accept and embrace change as a part of my research experiences, but I did not expect an organizational restructuring. This level of change helped underscore the importance of understanding humor and all interactions as part of a meaning-making process that both creates and reacts to organizational change. This work has attempted to understand and convey the subjective and consensual meanings that constitute reality. In this way it sits firmly within the interpretivist tradition. In this work I have examined the Prep's (particularly the Middle School faculty's) organizational culture as an intersubjective construct.

It is with the goal of understanding organization as an intersubjective construct that I believe my participatory ethnography experience gave a significant advantage as a researcher. Experiencing the organization as a process with the teachers provided a window into to the psychological motivation of the individuals. This required an action/interaction focus that was sensitive to the structural components but not designed to view all interactions as a means to end. This is why (as I discussed in the conclusion of Chapter VI) I do not push each episode to explain how the experiences (as intersubjective meanings and actions) affect the organizational Structuration process. I realize that this lack of pushing through each episode into the shaded areas of figure 21 (the organizational influence) could be considered a limitation of this work. However, I feel that it is also a strength as it provides an everyday detailed longitudinal account of linkages among members' actions, perspectives, motivations and how members' form beliefs, attitudes, values and interpretations of the organizational culture.

In Chapter VI I focus on the intersubjective attitudes and values of the Prep's members; the identification and trust in the organization's informal and/or formal communication systems; the conscious choice to enact routines; the personal capability felt within the realm of rule instantiation; and the organizational capability perceived by individuals as they secure organizational resources. I believe that it is now possible to glean long-term themes from this analysis to fill in or analyze the episodes in order to ascertain the ultimate effect on change and stability within the organization (the shaded area of the model, Figure 21).

To conclude this chapter I will make some observations on change over the three years of the study. This final section reviews with a broader brush the change and shift in the meaning of the organization for the Middle School faculty. It will feature four calendars that place the episodes within the context of the school year. The first calendar will illustrate the organizational episodes and context for humor that arise every year. The remaining three will cover each year of the ethnography respectively.

The Calendar

A school has a fixed calendar and sequence of events, which for the faculty began and ended with faculty meetings and for the students began and ended with orientation and graduation. Over the course of this school calendar several predictable events occur, which carry with them expected routines and rules as well as communication practices. However, this does not mean that the expected events create the same meaning for the members. The particular social and fiscal context of the year also has an influence on how these expected routines or traditional practices are carried out. In other words, the calendar and the expectations remain the same, but the surface experience of them changes. It is for this reason that yearly traditions provide useful objects of study, because even the tiny surface differences in the way traditions are recreated and understood could indicate a deeper change within the organization.

Even a calendar as predictable as a school calendar is not an example of structural determinism because the events require agents to do them. The same event can

be experienced very differently, taking on many different meanings for its members (on a group and individual level). To illustrate this point, the timeframe for comments can be examined as it was experienced over the three years. Comment time (late October) held the same expectation every year at the same time. It was deeply resented by the teachers as it represented a large degree of unproductive work. In year one (my first year) the teachers actively complained about the requirement and offered advice to me on how to shorten my comments. They advised me not to put as much individual effort into each comment (yet curiously they ridiculed teachers who put what was perceived as too little effort into them). It was clear that although the comments were resented and viewed as a task to be completed in the most routine manner possible. The teachers in year one volunteered their action to the structural demand of comments. However, they were conscious of their choice to do so and informally formed their negative personal meaning of this routine.

With budget cuts and increasing teaching loads (particularly the Upper School) the following year, I was sure resentment to the task would increase from the previous year and the teachers would demand that something had to be changed. However, the school was in such upheaval with no Headmaster and an increased personal anxiety of the members that the frustration of the comments was put on the back burner. Though on a personal level comments were just as painful, the group wide frustrations were not shared in the faculty lounge as they had been the year before. People went ahead and followed the accepted comments routine without complaint. In the Middle School many people said how comments felt less painful this year. It was almost as if in a time of great uncertainty even an unwelcome event is accepted because at least it is predictable.

Even the narratives that surrounded comment time (“Who Wants to Be a Robot”, and “Parents Day Prank”) were less frequently referenced. Teachers once again volunteered their agency (still refusing to do the bare the minimum to satisfy the requirement) to the routine task, but in a far less conscious way than in the past. Because the structural support for personal empowerment was low, the possibility of change in the comment system was not even entertained.

In my third year the frustration with the comment system increased again and was voiced both formally and informally. This was a time of organizational-wide change coupled with a degree of anxiety reduced due to the hope introduced by the new Headmaster. Middle School teachers attempted to change the comment system and a committee was formed to examine the problem. Though this was the wrong year to change the comment system from a managerial perspective due to significant changes in other aspects of the Prep, the teachers were conscious of the unnecessary demand comments placed on them. Teachers reluctantly complied (volunteered) with the yearly task. Though the committee was viewed as a method to pacify the complaint, the expectation of the teachers was clear that the comment expectation would have to change in the future. I am confident in predicting that comments will change, barring unforeseen obstacles that could defray the voicing of comment frustration.

The Prep’s calendar and sequence of events is featured in following table (Table 7). The organizations changing events are numbered 1-13.

TABLE 7
The Calendar of Yearly Events

<p>August</p> <p>Late Aug.: (1) <i>First Faculty Meetings</i> <i>Student orientation/enrollment</i> <i>First day of school</i></p>	<p>September</p> <p>Mid Sept: (2) <i>Narrative “Who Wants to be a Robot” emerges</i></p>
<p>October</p> <p>Mid Oct: (3) <i>Narrative “Parents Day Prank” emerges</i> (4) <i>Comment Time</i> Late Oct: (5) <i>Parents Day</i> (6) <i>Halloween</i></p>	<p>November</p> <p>Late Nov: <i>Fall Exams</i> <i>Thanksgiving Break</i> (7) <i>Faculty Retreat</i></p>
<p>December</p> <p>Late Dec: <i>Christmas Break</i></p>	<p>January</p> <p>Early Jan: <i>Back from Christmas Break</i></p>
<p>February</p>	<p>March</p> <p>Early March: (8) <i>March Madness, Contract</i> <i>Time</i> (9) <i>Narrative “Percent of Nothing” emerges</i> Mid March: <i>Spring Break</i></p>
<p>April</p> <p>Mid April: (10) <i>Grandparent’s Day</i></p>	<p>May</p> <p>Late May: (11) <i>Final Exams</i> (12) <i>Graduation</i> (13) <i>End of Year Party</i></p>

Table 7 illustrates the scheduled events that help shape the culture of the school year. Though all these events are culture shaping, the significant culture changing events (one’s that are experienced different every year due to the changing organizational culture as a whole) are numbered 1-13 and will benefit from a brief description of how they are experienced over the year.

1. First Faculty Meetings: In year one this meeting was a ceremonial routine given little conscious meaning, accompanied by a high degree of trust in the organization. The event structurally empowered people to use the time to form personal meaning for the new school year and to renew friendships versus conducting business. In year two the meeting received conscious scrutiny with every message and symbol discussed and noticed, unlike the previous year when members tried to make sense of the organization context and power struggle. In year three, the meeting had new significance on a personal and organizational level. A new cultural routine was formed with a feeling of optimism and renewed focus on the community.
2. The narrative of “Who Wants to be a Robot?” surfaces every year. However, in year two, the transitional year, the narrative took on less significance and was referenced only once or twice. In year three, people began to feel empowered to form personal meaning but were still hindered by the structural demand of comments. The story was retold, even expanded upon, with sexual references in greater intensity and frequency.
3. Narrative of Parent’s Day Prank surfaces. The Parent’s Day Prank narrative was experienced and retold in a similar fashion to the “robot” narrative above.
4. Comment time. Discussed earlier in this section.
5. Parent’s Day. The actual experience of Parent’s Day varied very little over the three years studied at the Prep. The day was so busy and demanding there was little time to think. Agents ensured organizational accountability and allowed the structural demands of the day to determine their interactions from the way they dressed to the way they communicated. However the frustration surrounding the day, focusing on the demands of the parents grew intensely over the course of the study. After Parent’s Day the joke was the year was over - the rest of the year seemed to fly by.
6. Halloween: Teachers pick a staff member to make fun of by dressing like them. For example, one year everyone made fun of Brenden, every teacher came to school with a white hair wig, Hawaiian shirts with hiking pants and shoes. The joke was that if you weren’t told who to dress up as that meant they were dressing up as you.

7. Faculty Retreat Meeting: This meeting took on greater structural significance and tension as the years progressed. In year one, the retreat for the middle school was held at a teacher's house and was a potluck breakfast. The afternoon was a meeting with the whole school and was one of the last games of faculty bingo which showed clearly this was a time of little anxiety and designed in the calendar as a time and space (getting the whole school together) for forming personal meaning and identification. In year two, the retreat meeting was the "lever" discussion (see "Levers" episode) with high anxiety about the future as a backdrop. This second year meeting was framed by low trust in the organization, low personal identification in the practice and a lack of personal capability to enact will in the organization. Year three's meeting was more formal than previous years. It was held at a conference center and consisted of a daylong discussion of the financial situation (see "Shoot the Messenger"). There was a culture of low trust and personal capability as members reconciled (personally) the cost of past economic decisions.
8. March Madness/ Contract Time. In first year it followed the bad news of the Klein report and was a time of resigned frustration. Organizational members perceived little capability to rely on personal know-how to bend the rules (as in years before) to secure extra compensation. This reality increased in subsequent years as the lack of allocative resources (therefore perceived capability to secure them) became more evident.
9. Narrative of "Percent of Nothing" surfaces. The joke, that 20% of nothing is still nothing grew in popularity and intensity every year I taught at the Prep. Ironically, it was first used to complain about Tony's generous raises still amounted to little money. As resource capability and trust in fair/good compensation for labor diminished over the three year study, the joke actually changed to be "3% [or the exact number of the fixed percent raise] is nothing and 3% of nothing is really nothing." The narrative was used as a script to voice the frustration with the fixed percentage raises in the school.

10. Grandparent's Day (only in the Third Year). This was only experienced in my last year and was mocked as a dog and pony show to generate donations. Agents volunteered without much protest as it required little personal planning, effort and we were conscious of the economic troubles when this event was introduced.
11. Final Exams: There was no change to the final exam ritual. In my third year some of the teachers questioned having a final exam week in the Middle School (though this shift was not directly discussed in year three, it falls under the last episode of "Grace Period Over" as teachers began to feel comfortable to begin to air the frustrations and tensions that had not been addressed by the hiring of Scott. Teachers vented their frustrations but as Head of the academic disciplines were perceived to be in favor of final exams, the teachers continue the practice. Though the teachers volunteered to continue the practice the fact that teachers were openly venting frustration with formal expectations (rule and routine) illustrates an opening up of the desire to form personal meaning in the organization and question the academic authority of the Upper-School department Heads.
12. Graduation: Graduation remained unchanged the entire time I was at the Prep. Even in Tony's last year (year two) it was performed the exact same way. Though the ceremony and teachers role within it follows a script the uniqueness of the event is the students graduating. As these experiences are personal, I have left them out of this report.

13. End of Year Party. The party, though an organizational tradition, was a space for forming and reframing the personal meaning and understanding of the year. The first two years were serious drinking parties. The first year party was an informal opportunity for supporters and critics of Tony to voice their opinion of Tony's leadership and the recent shake up of the school. The second year's party became a strange bon voyage or roast of Tony. The final year party was almost a non-event with a seated picnic family dinner outside. People seemed unwilling to really discuss the school year at all. Many people discussed the difference in parties. In this last year, it seemed people volunteered to the current situation, hopeful the culture would be more agent empowering next year but not discussing it directly. I got the sense that people were waiting to see, and make a judgment, of where to go from here.

Year One's Episodes as Organizational Change

As discussed in this chapter "year one" was a period of dramatic organizational change. I believe that the agent's actions and changing culture both prepared the agents for and helped create the conditions of this structural change. The following table (Table 8) places the year one episodes discussed in this chapter in the context of the calendar year. The events are numbered (1-15) and briefly discussed following this table.

TABLE 8
Year One Episode Calendar

<p>August</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>(1) Job Interview (March of Previous year)</i></p> <p>Late Aug.: <i>(2) The Salute</i></p>	<p>September</p> <p>Early Sept: <i>(3) No Such Thing as Part Time Work</i></p> <p>Late Sept: <i>(4) You Can't Serve Two Masters.</i></p>
<p>October</p> <p>Early Oct: <i>(5) First Class Tony</i></p> <p>Late Oct: <i>(6) The Headless Head</i></p>	<p>November</p> <p>Early Nov: <i>(7) Enigma Job and Cronyism</i></p> <p>Late Nov. <i>(8) Faculty Bingo</i></p>
<p>December</p>	<p>January</p> <p>Early Jan: <i>(9) Weakest Link</i></p>
<p>February</p> <p>Early Feb: <i>(10) Careful What You Define</i> <i>(11) All the Same Team</i></p>	<p>March</p> <p>Early March: <i>(12) Blood from a Stone</i></p> <p>Late March: <i>(13) Not Playing Nice in the Sandbox</i></p>
<p>April</p> <p>Late April: <i>(14) The Shock Was the Shock</i></p>	<p>May</p> <p>Early May: <i>(15) What is a Board Supposed to do?</i></p> <p>Late May: <i>End of Year Party.</i></p>

Not all episodes discussed in year one are featured in Table 8 for three reasons. First, some episodes were described above in the Calendar of Yearly Events. Secondly, some episodes discussed in year one have a timeless quality and occurred throughout the ethnography or described cultural characteristics. They may have been discussed in other areas to facilitate the flow or highlight key changes. These episodes are “Middle

School Routine”, “Six Part Myth”, “The Round Table”, “Hired Help”, and “Gendered Jokes.” Lastly, some episodes featured in year one are placed in year one to capture an in-depth discussion of a topic that was related, but actually occurred in another calendar year such as “Bitching Comments into Committee.”

1. “Job Interview and the First Faculty Meeting.” My experience in the job interview showed a relaxed, casual and fun-loving environment. The first faculty meeting maintained this environment but showed an organizational culture of structural empowerment where agents felt assured in their ability to utilize their own know how to navigate rules and access resources. The faculty as a whole used the organizational meetings for forming personal meaning and informal discussions.
2. “The Salute” episode culture was the same as the one that framed the First Faculty Meeting and my job interview.
3. “No Such Thing as Part Time Work” reflected an understanding that quickly developed once I began to work in the Middle School. The official labor classification (6 parts defined full time with various things defining a part – teaching one class might be one part) was not relevant, but rather expectations about work were informally set through peer interactions and expectations. With a high perception of structural empowerment to support your teaching goals, a high level of performance and commitment were expected as part of your personal calling to be a teacher.
4. “You Can’t Serve Two Masters” illustrates a culture theme that Jane and Tony assessed and gave their support based on very different criteria. At the Prep the hierarchy or organizational chart was not as relevant as how the hierarchy was experienced. Informal friendship and trust was the currency of the Prep. Jane’s respect was gained by meeting organizational responsibilities and her friendships. Tony did not have organizational wide trust from the faculty. Friendship with Tony was a guarded commodity.
5. “First Class Tony” and the discussions of his job perks showed how a group of faculty members felt that the resource capability and rule instantiation was only

available to those in Tony's favor or to Tony himself. The culture was still one of agent centered interaction and work environment but the sense of structural empowerment was less for some than others. This distribution was beginning to be a culture theme.

6. "Headless Head" is significant because it illustrates an organization-wide understanding of Pearse as a lame-duck. He had very little structural authority or informal interactions to form authority through friendships. This widely recognized belief would influence future events and Pearse's ability to solicit the volunteered support from the faculty.
7. "Cronyism" saw complaints of cronyism entering the conversation and personal meaning making in early November of my first year. Here we see a serious fissure developing between Tony's actions and his rhetoric. He spoke of an empowered community yet the empowerment seemed to go to a select few (bending rules for friends and family as well as the perceived misallocation resources). Agent's willingness to volunteer to the structural constraints (i.e. resource system and duality of power) decreased. As a result Tony's basis for legitimacy in the system was decreasing as the agents began to reshape their interpretation of Tony. I believe that it was this agent-centered action and meaning that was preparing the system for the eventual change of Tony being fired.
8. The last game of "Faculty Bingo" signified a change - the end of perceiving faculty meetings as a pointless ritual. They were taken more seriously. Meetings became scheduled times when topics (not decisions) would be openly recognized. This change in attitude towards faculty meetings reflects a volunteered action based on recognition of the seriousness of the structural problems that faced the Prep.
9. The "Weakest Link" episode illustrates how the agent's knew what the Klein report would find. It represented an emerging culture that our school was economically at risk. Agents realized that this would threaten job security or at least empowerment from the structure. The humor about the report allowed them to form personal meaning of this emerging culture without directly discussing it.

10. “Careful What you Define” is when the culture understanding fully emerged into formal recognition. The identification and trust in Tony lessened. The formal recognition on a structural level of an already emerging understanding was an important transition. The faculty had already prepared themselves for the change and some unconsciously picked up the signals.
11. The episode and Tony’s quote of “All the Same Team” annoyed the faculty and legitimized (on a group personal meaning level) the faculty’s disassociation from Tony. It reflected the growing realization for the middle school to cut off all trust in their structural capability from the Upper School administration.
12. “Blood From a Stone” reflected a realization that the staff had lost all sense of empowerment from the structure. They accepted the renegotiating of contract time as a structurally determined process in which they had little input or capability.
13. “Not Playing Nice in the Sandbox” turned the faculty’s view of Pearse (personal meaning). The public embarrassment and blow he received in the meeting was considered overly harsh by the faculty and the lame duck began to be viewed as a victim of unfair circumstance.
14. “The Shock was the Shock” saw the formal recognition of the mistreatment of Pearse, though people did very little to intervene on Pearse’s behalf, partly due to the lack of structural support (or risk) that this intervention would mean for them.
15. “What is a Board Supposed to Do?” described the final decision of letting Tony go. Considering the level of change – a new Headmaster - it was taken with surprisingly limited resistance or fanfare. This was because the faculty had clearly prepared themselves for this eventuality.

The following table (Table 9) places the year two episodes discussed in this chapter in the context of the calendar year. The events are numbered (1-11) and briefly discussed following this table.

Year Two's Episodes as Organizational Change

TABLE 9
Year Two Episode Calendar

<p>August</p> <p>Late Aug.: (1) <i>First Faculty Meeting, Year Two</i> (2) <i>Who is in Charge?</i></p>	<p>September</p> <p>Mid Sept: (3) <i>Genuine/Grandstand</i> (4) <i>IPOing a Non-Profit</i></p>
<p>October</p> <p>Late Oct: (5) <i>What does a Head do Anyway?</i></p>	<p>November</p> <p>Late Nov. (6) <i>Lever</i></p>
<p>December</p>	<p>January</p>
<p>February</p> <p>Late Feb: (7) <i>Living Like Lords</i></p>	<p>March</p> <p>Early to late March: (8) <i>Search for the New Head</i> 8a. <i>So Ridiculous You Can Only Laugh</i> 8b. <i>Who Gets to Make an Impression?</i> 8c. <i>Fine Art Ambush</i> 8d. <i>The Anti-Tony</i></p>
<p>April</p> <p>Late April: (9) <i>Play Under the Same Rules</i></p>	<p>May</p> <p>Late May: (10) <i>Risk on Us.</i> (11) <i>Tony's Erections</i></p>

1. "First Faculty Meeting, Year Two": People consciously followed routines with little trust in the organization or lack of empowerment from the organization. Members

primarily volunteered to the constraints and requirements of the day. This was my first transition into a new school year after a summer break. It seemed that returning teachers slipped back into their behaviors and their conversations with friends surprising quickly (similar to the phenomenon with a good friend after an absence one can fall back into your old patterns). To a degree this still happened; however, the formal aspects of the job (those that direct structural support) did not transition smoothly as in previous years.

2. “Who is in Charge?” showed a small conflict that arose between a staff member, who (due to a lack of structural identification and empowerment) wanted structural clarity of the hierarchy, and middle school management. She didn’t want to rely on the Middle School’s informal communication-based hierarchy to be used to avoid complications with the high school. Many recognized the value of removing yourself from the mess in the Upper School Administration.
3. “Genuine/Grandstand” reflects how teachers were so unsure of their culture and understanding of the present organization that they could not openly trust a teacher personal solution to the problem. This lack of trust and questioning reflects a time of organizational ambiguity in the meaning of the culture and individual stakes within it.
4. “IPOing a Non-Profit” reflects the lack of organizational identification in structural components of the school. The Middle School group began to openly question (form new personal meaning) their trust in the resource stability of the past few years. Like much of America after the Internet bubble burst, we were questioning why we didn’t see reality coming. September of the second year began an organizational-wide reexamination of self. Agents asked themselves, did I believe in Tony’s resource plan (expanding building while offering increasing raises) because of greed or because I was lied to?
5. “What Does a Head Do Anyway?” was more than a question. It was a culture shifting belief that teachers could rely on their commitment to the kids (even following pointless routines like comments) not because we identified, therefore

volunteered, with the structural rules or resources of the system, but due to our commitment to the kids. The more structural demands (i.e. same work for less salary) that piled up, the more the personal commitment to the students was used to justify our unusual devotion to our jobs.

6. The “Levers” episode (asking the teachers to give additional sacrifices to pay for debts of the past) widens the distance between the faculty and the Upper School administration and the Board. The interpretation was that the board was asking teachers “to do more for less”. This saying began to sum up an emerging culture that would chip away at the core identity of the place. Jane and Tim (Middle School Administration) in their interviews both lament the change in faculty commitment. They both discussed how reluctant the faculty were to go beyond their job descriptions. With the lever conversation and the realization that raises would stop rising, but responsibilities increased, teachers began to see the structural demands on them as disempowering (structurally deterministic). As a result teachers did the minimum required if they saw it as non-essential to their real commitment - teaching and helping the kids.
7. “Living Like Lords” showed teachers’ frustration was at a critical mass a few months after the “Levers” conversation and prior to salary negotiation time. This episode reflected the socially constructed reality that the budget problems were a result of Tony excesses. The faculty connected the newly “found budget money” with Tony’s expense budget. The question asked in IPOing a Non Profit (Was the financial crisis due to our greed or Tony’s plan?) was answered as Tony’s fault.
8. “Search for a New Head” was a medley of themes and mini episodes. The process and dialogue that surrounded the search for the new Head illustrated the wide range in ways people made sense of organizational change. This sense-making process conveyed the importance of personal meaning making within ambiguity to create new direction and sense in the organization. Faculty criticized and made fun of the search process as corrupted. They also criticized those who got access to the new head as having a chance to gain early access and resource security. People were

suspicious of each other's departments trying to get an upper hand. Finally, these tensions on a personal level abated as people searched for the anti-Tony candidate predicated on the belief that all of their concerns and problems were because of Tony. The process therefore created the result and for better or worse the anti-Tony was selected as our new Head.

9. "Play Under the Same Rules" showed how with the new Head and a culture shift of new hope, the faculty tension with each other on a personal level lessened. The scandal of the Tennis Academy brought about a recommitment to the school. For the first time this year (a month before graduation) teachers united in their commitment to hold the line on an established rule (a structural component).
10. "Risk on Us" - See below.
11. The end of year party, with episodes "Risk on Us" (10), and "Tony's Erections" (11), was a reframing of Tony's tenure at the Prep. Many teachers were willing to look beyond the past few years and examine Tony's contributions over a decade. Some teachers could not forgive Tony at all, while others viewed the entire "firing of Tony" as an injustice. The wide range of views expressed and the way the jokes (both in the "Risk on Us" and the video described in "Tony's Erections") were understood illustrated how different individuals and groups can form different culture understandings of an organization. I do not believe that one can contribute it to a less definitive culture to account for these differences as agents who were aware of their view and the differing view of others.

The following table (Table 10) places the year three episodes discussed in this chapter in the context of the calendar year. The events are numbered (1-15) and briefly discussed following this table.

Year Three's Episodes as Organizational Change

TABLE 10
Year Three Episode Calendar

<p>August</p> <p>Late Aug.: (1) <i>First Faculty Meeting, Year Three</i> (2) <i>Middle School Reshuffle.</i></p>	<p>September</p> <p>Early Sept: (3) <i>Substitute Teachers</i> (4) <i>The Party is Over</i> (5) <i>Carrion Housing</i></p>
<p>October</p> <p>Mid Oct: (6) <i>Two Heads</i></p> <p><i>Bitching the Comments into Committee (discussed in year 1).</i></p> <p>Late Oct: (7) <i>MBS Chapel</i></p>	<p>November</p> <p>Early Nov: (8) <i>Value of Parents: Careful of Bears Sports Bear Country Club As</i> Late Nov. (9) <i>Shoot the Messenger</i></p>
<p>December</p> <p>Mid Dec: (10) <i>He's Done this Before</i></p>	<p>January</p> <p>Early Jan: (11) <i>Insecurity Pays</i></p> <p>Late Jan: (12) <i>Circling the Wagon</i></p>
<p>February</p> <p>Early Feb: (13) <i>Shut up</i></p> <p>Late Feb: (14) <i>In Group</i></p>	<p>March</p>
<p>April</p>	<p>May</p> <p>Early May: (15) <i>Grace Period Over</i></p>

1. "First Faculty Meeting, Year Three" showed how the attitudes and communication that surrounded the new faculty meeting characterized an unrealistic hope for the renewal of the culture of empowerment from the "old days". The renewed trust in the

organizational structure was based not on a change to structural practices nor was it resource based but a change in leadership and as a result was unreasonably high.

Under the surface optimism, it was clear that the collective personal meaning represented a thinly based hope rather than a reality. However, part of this surface optimism was also due to the “absence grows fonder” phenomenon. The return from the summer breaks were good for boosting organizational moral (not because we were back from break, but because we were together) friendship ties reestablished themselves as conversations freshened by the three month absence.

2. “Middle School Reshuffle” reflected the reality that the structural resource support was still unknown. The “how and what” rules that would be formal expectations (and if any would be added by new administration) were equally unknown. People felt determined by the structural forces in a time of ambiguity and change. As a result, they consciously clung to the routines of the past for the security of predictability.
3. “Substitute Teachers” showed how people joked to hide their frustration with the lack of structural resources - a communication response to the structural determinism force. The lack of resources was no longer abstract it was visible in the everyday increase in duties. It became clear with the new requirement for teachers (in their spare time) to cover for each other as substitutes.
4. “The Party is Over” reflected a growing realization that Scott was truly the anti-Tony candidate. People communicated (directly and unconsciously) a growing culture of trust in Scott as a person. Even though Scott would preside over difficult times, faculty felt he could be trusted to at least be fair in his approach. Personal friendship and access to informal power would be less of a basis for resource capability.
5. “Carrion Housing” described the drama that surrounded the opening up of a house on campus. The space was an important commodity placed unexpectedly in Scott’s hands. In many ways this opening became a test of Scott’s honesty. Would he honor an agreement or use the house’s commodity to sure up an alliance or attract a new high profile staff member (as Tony had done). Scott honored the commitment.

In a time when resource a capability was low, and structural empowerment was non-existent, a new perspective emerged that formalized boarding faculty expectations - people trusted Scott's fairness.

6. "Two Heads" episodes and the "Bitching the Comments into Committee" (discussed earlier in this chapter under calendar events) both occurred in October and reflected the tensions of the faculty wanting change relief from ambiguity and unnecessary work. They wanted to negotiate the terms of this change as agent centered action in a time when the structure was not able to support it.
7. The "Must be Seen (MBS)" chapel" was a strong personal value for Scott. It stressed the meaning of the chapel and faith as the center of the Prep. For many teachers it became another "basic" expectation of the job. In a culture where basic expectations seemed to be increasing while compensation and empowerment were decreasing, even little requests led to frustration and a reluctant volunteerism which was the case of MBS chapel. In other areas of additional workload such as advisee contact rules (new rules were introduced by Scott to reflect a change in our clientele's expectations) the new basic expectations were not volunteered by agents but seen as structural determinants with formal checks to ensure completion.
8. The "Value of Parents" as a series of episodes should not be limited to November, as it is on the calendar, but this is when the teachers began to openly talk (reached common consciousness) about the change in the parent's view of the teachers. The emerging consensus was that a growing number of parents began to expect more and appreciate less the commitment teachers made. This shift in clientele happened for several reasons: new money in the area (new money that felt entitled), the economic downturn that limited middle class students from applying, and the increase in tuition cost. "Bear" parents felt entitled to go directly to the Head administration (Jane, Hugh or Scott) to make demands on the teachers. These new clients and demands became resented, typically because they were contradictory to our central mission to educate the children to be self-reliant critical thinkers. Though administration typically supported the teachers, there was a sense that these new entitled "bear

parents” had power because they represented a stream of allocative resources the school desperately needed. This demand acted as a constraint by an outside force and was thus viewed by the teachers as a new structural force determining behavior.

9. “Shoot the Messenger” illustrated the desperate situation of the Prep where the seriousness of our financial situation took on a direct implication (cutting of benefits). Teachers became conscious of the lack of choices available to them and their trust in the organization and their resource capability hit rock bottom. Yet at the same time, the person they had to rely on was a staff member who had good friends in the community. The tension between two important values became hard for many teachers to make sense of as they reconciled the personal meaning of friendship with the community’s financial restraints.
10. “He’s Done this Before” as a narrative followed shortly after the “Lever” discussion. It allowed the staff to resolve their conflicts in personal meaning when the organization morale was decreasing. With this convenient narrative the faculty could stop blaming each other and themselves for the financial problems and focus the blame on Tony. I believe this narrative spread just when it did and was so persuasive because it gave people the unconscious excuse to trust the new Head and the organization again. It became the beginning of a culture shift from structural determinism to realizing the need to volunteer for some hard choices to pull us out of trouble.
11. “Insecurity Pays” followed the financial report (“Shoot the Messenger”). As a result, the teacher’s communication helped prepare for the change that made a drastic structural change possible. The stage had been set structurally as well (with reports on the lack of raises and resource support for new programs or hires) to accept this change. The change focused on correcting the administration’s top-heavy organization as well as the impractical cultural commitment to land over financial stability.
12. “Circling the Wagon” was Drew’s futile attempt to rally support to undermine the changes proposed by Scott. Since Drew had lost all resource power and burned

bridges to create new alliances long ago (i.e. with Jane and Hugh), his resistance attempts gathered no momentum. His friends on a personal level agreed with him but within the organization distanced themselves from him as much as possible. The culture of the organization and even his small group had volunteered to the necessity of the changes.

13. “Shut Up” illustrates the separation sometimes necessary between informal and formal communication. A teacher shared her informal beliefs, her personal feelings, within a formal context (an administration meeting). These feelings she unwisely shared were part of the personal meaning formed by her group of close friends and though many of them were present in the meeting she received no support. This episode illustrates the level of volunteerism present in the organizational culture, that even though many disagreed with Scott’s decisions they refused formally or even outside of their small group to openly criticize the plan. This level of volunteerism even on a personal meaning level was unusual at the Prep as people usually felt comfortable regardless of the structural context to voice their opinion and vent their emotions.
14. The “In Group” versus out-group within the middle school small faculty was an odd occurrence. This illustrated even within a tight group like the Middle School that when resource capability is perceived as low while rule and routine expectation became more formalized, cracks and division will rise. As the personal work load increased at the Prep so did the feeling of structural determinism and lack of meritocracy and equal workloads.
15. “Grace Period Over” reflected a view of the teachers framing their current organizational culture by focusing on future challenges. This was a shift from the last two years that attempted to understand the current culture based on the past - attempting to blame the present challenges on Tony’s past mistakes. As a result people’s future hopes were placed solely on Scott. People wanted and expected Scott to find a way to return to the structurally empowering culture of the past. They wanted Scott to be more direct in his vision to get us there, but at the same time

protect the benefits they had received in the past from Tony. A tension rose because people wanted change. They wanted a solution to fix the problem but didn't want the change to affect them personally.

Change over the three years of this case study was dramatic. As this case experience illustrated, the change did not come primarily from structural influence or agent actions/interactions but as a combination of both. In all of the examples of major structural change at the Prep (i.e. the departure of the Head of the Upper School, the firing of the Headmaster, the scandal of the Tennis Academy, the reshaping of the administration structure, the hiring of the anti-Tony, etc.) dialogue proceeded that change and in many ways foreshadowed and/or created the change. I argue that structural change is dependent on agent-centered action and interaction while organizational interaction is influenced by the structural change as perceived by the members.

In year one, I entered a culture that in the past ten years had readily expanded and changed to embrace the vision of the Headmaster. I entered the last stages of an organizational culture of structural empowerment and agent-centered action. It was a culture of high personal and organizational confidence to secure resources and personally shape rules, coupled by a high personal confidence and support of personal meaning process at work. However, within this first year the cracks in this confidence began to show as people began to question the vision of the Headmaster and the Head's contradictory behavior (his selfish actions). This questioning became part of the change process that ultimately led to the firing of the Headmaster. The following year, agents made a conscious choice to volunteer to routines and rules as well as make resource sacrifices. Through this period of low organizational vision and low structural support, the agents decided to stick to traditional routines and rely on informal communication systems for morale. In other words, agents put their heads down and took care of the work while personally maintaining a close personal connection to each other. Year three started with a culture of renewed hope that did not materialize due to low resource support. This resource reality ultimately affected all structural support. The culture

quickly shifted from one of renewed hope (agent centered action and empowerment) to structural determinacy. Our clients became more demanding: our job requirements, structural expectations in terms of rules and access to resource support, became more formalized. The new Headmaster preached transparency in leadership but had no good news to be transparent about. Hope slid into structural determinacy as agents hoped for a turn in culture back to one of agency and empowerment.

Contribution of This Study

The faculty's organizational culture is based on generalized beliefs and attitudes about the organization. I have attempted to answer the research call of Putnam and Pacanowsky (1983), in particular Poole and McPhee's (1983) chapter, that calls for the study of organizational culture as intersubjective – “constituted by the supraindividual linkage of members' perspectives, particularly their beliefs, attitudes, values and interpretations (p. 202).” I, like Poole and McPhee, conclude that Structuration offers a particularly useful integrative frame in which to study this intersubjective meaning and actions.

I believe that this work makes an important and long overdue contribution to organizational Structuration research. I have provided a long-term analysis of organizational culture change from an experience-based qualitative perspective. Poole and the integrative group have argued over the years for the need for a combined analysis of quantitative and qualitative approaches to get a full view of the culture as an interaction-based system. As discussed in Chapter I, I believe the best example of a qualitative approach to understanding an emerging culture process is Bastein et al (1995). In this work the authors utilize in-depth interviews (using a snowballing sample) over four years and then analyze the text of the interviews to deduce kernel culture themes. I believe I add to this study by providing an account of culture emergence that was experienced personally. I was part of the process of forming social meaning within the change process, and as a result I can fully empathize with the members of the organization. My ethnographic qualitative perspective enables focus on the process and

individual motivations that shape the intersubjective meanings that form organizational culture. The empathetic frame is able to capture individual and intersubjective beliefs while the participatory approach allows me to be part of the organizational practices that make up the organization culture. Though I use humor to access and focus on everyday interaction, my study went beyond humor to study how the interaction, change and power are all integrated - how they are all part of the organizational experience and culture. They are both the outcome and medium of the Structuration process.

In this project I have maintained that organizational culture should be understood as an intersubjective phenomenon and ongoing process continually being structured and restructured by organizational member's actions. I have provided in-depth examples of experienced change of an organization and its members over a three year time-span. I used Structuration as a meta-theory and provided a model (see figure 21 in chapter VI) to bring out the multiple interrelated influences of the Structuration process (what Falcione et. al. (1987) called the interrelationships of subsystem cultures). As a result the model illustrates how the components of the Structuration process, structure (rules and resources) and actions (communication and routines), relate to each other. This Structuration process is experienced on a personal, group and organizational level as degrees of personal identification, trust (consciousness and unconsciousness), and influences- how members assess personal capability to rely on their know-how and/or secure organizational resources.

Future Research

Promising areas of future research for this project would be to reexamine and glean types of organizational change and stability as an outcome of organizational culture. In addition to this study of everyday interactions effect on change and stability of an organization, one could study how simultaneously within different groups of an organization different organizational realities and cultures can exist. In the first case research using this model could be used to examine the organizational process and form an understanding on the direction of the change/stability momentum. This momentum

could help form predictions of change or stability patterns within the organization. On a second level this research can be used to understand the complexity of different sub-group perceptions of the organization. It can attempt to find a bridge between these groups' interests and perceptions as it can provide dialogue and frames to see and appreciate other group's perspectives.

As a result I see this work as a beginning point (a process that has led to asking questions rather than answering them) for numerous areas for future research. It is my hope that this work leads to more qualitative research to enter and take on perspectives that have benefited mostly from a quantitative analysis (i.e. adaptive Structuration). To this end, I believe that the adapted Structuration theory model used here may offer qualitative research a frame for study (to understand and link everyday interaction to structural components). For future research this model needs to be simplified as well as the process of its application. It is my intention that this work provides a basis or starting point to ask new research questions.

I believe that a Simmel-based perspective deserves a second look and may provide the key to how to simplify this process. This simplification requires a complete bottom up examination of the theory presented in this work and could only be done once this project is finished and is beyond the scope of this work. A Simmel-based adaptation of this model that maintains the strengths of the Structuration theory would allow for a cleaner dialectic framework than presented in Giddens from a sociological perspective.

In addition to a reexamination of Simmel, this work would benefit from an additional case study to reexamine this structural model in another context. A new organizational case study will have the benefit of being able to build on this model, which, unlike my first humor model, has an explicit meta-theory framework integrated within it. The Structuration-based model presented in this text could be used to unearth the integrated relationship between change, power, actions, and structure. It can provide a framework to recognize the dialogue as part of a process that creates and maintains the organization. It can also help illustrate how an organization is a communication/action

based process and that all organizational communication/action also has a structural component, a group reality and psychological motivations.

Application of this model in another case still requires a familiarity and in-depth understanding of the agents' motivations as well as a familiarity with the deep cultural values of the members. This in-depth understanding is essential to attempt to link personal interaction and structural components influence on each other. It is also possible based on further research to create an interview and focus group approach that could utilize the perspectives of this model. Hopefully it could be applied to develop to apply this model without requiring a participant observer perspective. Though the product from an interview-based project will not be as rich in personal experience, it may be necessary to address the largest structural deficit of the organizational academic researcher - lack of full access and time.

Limitations

I believe that in good qualitative research a limitation section should be addressed earlier in the methodology section and within the future area for research section. Qualitative research should acknowledge its biases and limitations openly, not to control them out, but to inform the reader of the necessity to question the study and analysis with these limitations in mind. In qualitative research the future research section should also imply areas to expand and improve upon the work in order to address the limitation of the current project. That being said some broad limitations can be outlined for this project.

First and foremost are the ethical considerations for this research. I eliminated significant content and research from my three years at The Prep. Many experiences (especially the humor) surround the everyday interactions with the kids. These experiences were not used in respect for the students. In addition much of the very sensitive information about my fellow faculty members also ended up on the ethnographer's ethical cutting floor. The major limitation this presents is that many of the experiences that guided my understanding of the Prep and people within it are not

present in this report. Many of my conclusions I have attempted to link to experiences in this report were in reality richer, but unfortunately this richness could not be included.

Along with limiting many of the jokes the same charge can be made for the loss of explicit reference to power within this work. As I focused on change and stability (though I integrated volunteer power and determined power influences within this focus) power as a concept was not fully integrated as it should have been.

Another limitation of this work on humor is that it is not very funny. As stated before though the humor allowed access to understanding the everyday organization, I felt uncomfortable putting much of it within this report. This underscored the importance for humor but also the difficulty of studying humor within an organization. What draws closer scrutiny for a future work is why the kitchen humor could be reported without the same ethical concern? The answer to this question goes beyond the study of the Middle School and the content of children but to the difference in the work place culture, the role of personal interaction within each workplace. The Prep's humor frame was much more personal and soul bearing, the personal connection between agents were much deeper. As a result it was not conveyed as funny and harder to produce in a report without ethical consideration.

Another limitation of this study is that it focused on a school's culture as an organization. The school culture may have problems (or be seen as having problems) being transferred to other organizational models. Though I think in many ways this limitation is deceiving in that I believe that there were many parallel experiences at the Prep and organizations throughout the country during this economic downturn. For example, the misunderstanding of our true market-value (and therefore reckless spending and over-estimated vision for future growth) parallels the experiences of other organizations of early 2000's. The harsh fall and coming back to reality currently being experienced is as a result of this overoptimistic period of excessive outlays. This experience is not unique to the Prep but quite commonplace.

In every case study the limitation of generalizability must always be considered. Especially important in this case is that the teachers' commitment to the Prep's

community and their sense of calling to their profession. In a for-profit work place where laborer's identity is less tied to their professional calling, the change at the Prep would have had a more drastic effect on the workforce. People at the prep were willing and able to divorce them from the organizational problems because their core identity still identified with their jobs.

Giving Back

As an act of service and giving back to the school, I have come to respect and care for many of the faculty. I have accepted the difficult task of reviewing and creating a plan with the Board and the financial director. I have been asked to represent my fellow faculty members while we review the teacher's benefit package.

I had fears that came out of my research project. I explained to the Dean of Students and the Head of the Middle School that in the past four years due to the budget crunch and organizational changes there has been an increase in the structural demands on teachers: the number of kids in the classes, number of advisees, increased accountability of teachers, a perception in parent's attitudes that demand immediate attention. All these demands have taken a toll on the teachers. Most teachers have remained committed to the kids, but no longer to the school.

The faculty still does amazing work and goes far beyond their job description but they don't commit to the extra duties as they once did. I explained how the teachers sought sanctuary in the only place they find empowerment - their role as a teacher. In short, though this job has gotten increasingly more difficult, the teachers have sacrificed to make this place work, regardless of lack of structural empowerment. I cautioned strongly that asking the faculty to make additional sacrifices through reductions in benefits might corrode the remaining trust and loyalty they have left for the school. Teachers would either leave or, at worst, resort to cutting out the extra immeasurable 25 percent of their job. This would make a teacher miserable because it is an affront to the culture and personal values.

I was asked to report my fears (based on my ethnography) to the board and benefit committee before we begin our examination. I can only hope that my insights will be listened to and frame the tough dialogues of the benefit's committee. I believe that it is an important goal to give back the knowledge one gathers when doing qualitative research. So much of my experience is based on the friendship and connections I have made at the Prep. It is my hope that the insights I have gathered from this study will help me serve them as they deserve.

It has always been my goal not to lose the individual within the discussion of the Structuration process. This case study of a Middle School has provided detailed accounts of how the Prep's agents, primarily through group interactions, form meaning concerning their work culture. This chapter has presented an in-depth focus of the episodes within the context of group interactions. It has attempted to understand these episodes as they unfold over time from an individual motivation perspective as well as a structural influence perspective. It illustrates how the process of forming meaning through interactions both creates impetus for and reacts to organizational change.

Chapter VII Notes

¹ As Quoted in Sztompka *The Sociology of Social Change* (1993, p.xiii).

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