A Study of Organizing as the Re-Entanglement of Space and Time

Amanda Jean Porter

University of Colorado at Boulder, amanda.porter@colorado.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholar.colorado.edu/comm_gradetds

Recommended Citation

https://scholar.colorado.edu/comm_gradetds/18

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by Communication at CU Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Communication Graduate Theses & Dissertations by an authorized administrator of CU Scholar. For more information, please contact cuscholaradmin@colorado.edu.
A Study of Organizing as the Re-Entanglement of Space and Time

by

Amanda J. Porter
B.S., University of Texas, 2004
M.A., University of Texas, 2007

A dissertation submitted to the
Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Colorado in partial fulfillment
of the requirement for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Communication
2011
This thesis entitled:
A Study of Organizing as the Re-Entanglement of Space and Time
written by Amanda J. Porter
has been approved for the Department of Communication

__________________________________________________________________________

Dr. Michele Jackson

__________________________________________________________________________

Dr. Timothy Kuhn

Date ________________________

The final copy of this thesis has been examined by the signatories, and we
Find that both the context and the form meet acceptable presentation standards
Of scholarly work in the above mentioned discipline.

IRB protocol # 10-0136
Organizational communication and organizational technology scholars are grappling with a dual problem of boundaries. On the one hand, scholars are challenging boundaries to show how communication is more than epiphenomenal to our understandings of organization and how organizational dynamics are more than epiphenomenal to our understandings of technology. On the other hand, scholars are also taking boundaries more seriously to show how the materiality of organization and technology matters. This project offers a solution to address this dual problem of boundaries. In order to accomplish this, I articulate a variable ontology that helps scholars to challenge boundaries conceptually. I then combine this with an epistemology that theorizes a central role for boundaries in practice. Together, these address the dual problem of boundaries. I call this the “re-entanglement” logic. I then translate the re-entanglement logic into a framework for studying organizations called problem-centered organizing. To study problem-centered organizing, I provide a methodology that features a dual mode of inquiry, discovery and creative practice. Finally, I analyze a community planning project using my framework to show how problem-centered organizing occurs. My analysis shows how the re-entanglement logic builds on and extends existing approaches to theorizing the relationship between communication, organizations, and materiality.
To Jon:

For your immense love and support.
There are many people that have made this dissertation possible. I first want to acknowledge my family. I thank my dad, David, for his continued inspiration. Even in his absence, I feel his impact daily. I thank my mom, Judy, and sister’s, Scarlet and Sarah, for their support of my dreams. I have made it through the last four years because of the laughter we have shared. I want to thank Jon for his perseverance and seeing me through this journey until the end. My friend Sara, my experiences mean so much more with you in my life. Your support I will always cherish.

I would also like to acknowledge my advisor, Michele Jackson. You have guided me and inspired me for the last four years. I loved the way that we would “think together.” Our talks were always exciting intellectual conversations. I look forward to many more. Thank you.

To my committee, Tim Kuhn, Bryan Taylor, Karen Ashcraft, and Leysia Palen, for your continued support of my project. I thank you for your insightful comments. Taking your comments to heart truly deepened the value of this project.
## CONTENTS

### CHAPTER

I. The Dual Problem of Boundaries in Organizational Communication and Organizational Technology Studies ........................................ 1

II. Challenging Boundaries Through Dynamic Relationality .......................... 31

III. Taking Boundaries Seriously Through Re-Entanglement .......................... 48

IV. Problem-Centered Organizing ................................................................. 73

V. Making Complexity Through Dual Inquiries of Discovery and Eclectic Practice .......................................................... 97

VI. Heart & Soul Community Planning as Problem-Centered Organizing ........ 146

VII. Conclusion ........................................................................................................ 173

### REFERENCES ...................................................................................................... 183

### APPENDIX

A. Project Data Log ............................................................................................... 196

B. Interview Schedule .......................................................................................... 205

C. Memo of my choices for eclectic practice ......................................................... 206

D. Relational Reflexivity Account ......................................................................... 207

E. Data Collection Reflections ................................................................................ 209

F. Reflexivity Questions ........................................................................................ 211

G. Provocation questions ....................................................................................... 212

H. Theoretical foundations of situational analysis ................................................. 215

I. Abstract Map Questions ..................................................................................... 219

J. Abstract messy situational map ......................................................................... 220

K. Ordered map ..................................................................................................... 221

L. Memo about my ordered map ............................................................................ 222

M. Relational analyses .......................................................................................... 223

N. Social worlds questions ..................................................................................... 225

O. Social worlds/arenas map ................................................................................ 226

P. “Problem-context” map ..................................................................................... 227

Q. Positional map .................................................................................................... 228
TABLES

Table

1. Comparison of Dynamic Relationality ........................................51

2. Comparing Problem-Centered Organizing with Existing Approaches........91
FIGURES

Figure

A: Assumptions of Dynamic Relationality ........................................34
B: Epistemology of Re-entanglement.............................................60
C: Illustration of Constructive and Deconstructive Interference............67
D: Interference in Moments of Contact ...........................................72
E: Problem Centered Organizing .....................................................82
Chapter One

The Dual Problem of Boundaries in Organizational Communication and Organizational Technology Studies

There are two lively intellectual conversations taking place in both organizational communication and organizational technology studies. In organizational communication, scholars are working on how to conceptualize the relationship between communication and organization. This conversation has been labeled as the “communicative constitution of the organization,” or CCO conversation (Ashcraft, Kuhn, & Cooren, 2009; Cooren & Fairhurst, 2009; Cooren, 2004; Kuhn, 2008; McPhee & Iverson, 2009; McPhee & Zaug, 2009; Putnam & Nicotera, 2009; Taylor & Van Every, 2000; Taylor, 2009; Weick, 1979). In organizational technology studies, scholars are working on how to conceptualize the relationship between organization and technology. This conversation has its roots in the social construction of technology (SCOT) and the conversation is known for its recent turn to theorizing the materiality of technology (Bruni, 2005; Fulk, Schmitz, & Steinfield, 1990; Jackson, 1996; Leonardi, 2007; Leonardi & Barley, 2008; Orlikowski, 2007; Orlikowski, W., & Scott, S. V., 2008; Orlikowski, 2010; Pickering, 1995; Pinch & Bijker, 1984; Suchman, Trigg, & Blomberg, 2002). I wish to draw your attention to these two intellectual conversations because both have something interesting in common.

Both conversations are grappling with a dual problem of boundaries. On the one hand, scholars are challenging boundaries to show how communication is more than epiphenomenal to our understandings of organization and how organizational dynamics are more than epiphenomenal to our understandings of technology. On the other hand, scholars are also taking
boundaries more seriously to show how the materiality of organization and technology matters.

In sum, both challenge taken-for-granted boundaries yet take boundaries seriously in practice.

The problem of simultaneously challenging boundaries and taking boundaries seriously is a tricky one. So far, solutions to this problem have been successful in addressing one of the two boundary issues. In other words, scholars have been unable to address the dual problem of boundaries without either dissolving or reifying boundaries.

If we take this dual boundary problem seriously, organizational communication and organizational technology scholars will be pushed to theorizing in uncharted territory. Scholars are currently on the cusp of this new territory, and it is my intention to take full advantage of this position and to invite scholars to take steps to go further. As such, my project makes its first contribution in this chapter by identifying the dual boundary problem and articulating how taking this seriously provides an opening for new theorizing that benefits organizational communication and organizational technology studies alike.

The rest of my project is concerned with offering a solution to this dual problem of boundaries that attempts to address how to challenge boundaries and take boundaries seriously in practice. I address the first boundary problem in chapter two by offering a variable ontology, called dynamic relationality, which scholars can use to challenge taken-for-granted boundaries conceptually. I then address the second boundary problem in chapter three by articulating an epistemology, called re-entanglement, which theorizes a central role for boundaries in practice. These two chapters together contribute a solution for addressing the dual nature of the boundary problem. I then use my solution to articulate a framework for the study of organizations and technology in chapter four called problem-centered organizing. Following this, I offer a methodology that scholars can use to address the dual nature of the boundary problem and study
problem-centered organizing. Finally, I provide an analysis of a community planning project using my framework to show how problem-centered organizing occurs. In sum, my approach speaks to scholars who take emergence seriously but also recognize the limits of emergent explanations that fail to address materiality in some form.

I will now turn to unpacking the dual problem of boundaries. I will take each problem in turn, explaining the nature of problem these scholars are addressing and describe specifically how different scholars in these conversations attempt to provide solutions to the problem. The work of scholars who have challenged boundaries inspired me to think about relational logics for theory, which forms the basis of my approach in this project (Barley, 1986; Fulk, Schmitz, & Steinfield, 1990; Jackson, 1996; Pinch & Bijker, 1984; Taylor & Van Every, 2000; Weick, 1979). The work of scholars who have taken boundaries seriously in practice have inspired me to think more deeply about practice, which I build upon in my project (Bruni, 2005; Cooren, 2004; Leonardi, 2007; Orlikowski, 2007, Pickering, 1995; Suchman, Trigg, & Blomberg, 2002).

**The Problem of Challenging Boundaries**

Why is challenging boundaries is an intellectual problem? What exactly does challenging boundaries look like? The answers to these questions can be found in a large body of scholarly work in organizational communication and organizational technology studies responding to the “container” model of organization and “deterministic” models of technology.

Container and deterministic models share some assumptions. They share a similar logic of rationality and generally adhere to a representational ontology. A representational ontology purports that entities in the world correspond to the reality of the world and we exist in separation as entities. In other words, the world is independent and apriori.
Organizational communication scholars have argued that these assumptions downplay discourse and reify the organization (Fairhurst & Putnam, 2004). Organizational technology scholars have argued that these assumptions downplay social and organizational influences of technology and instead, grant technology an internal logic of change (Jackson, Poole, & Kuhn, 2002). The task for scholars challenging the container was to show that the container was not a natural logic and why challenging this logic would lead to new insights.

I have chosen to highlight the problem of the container because scholars who challenge this boundary form the foundation of my own thinking. Their work has collectively inspired my confidence to challenge boundaries and give myself the permission and freedom to explore new ways of understanding the world. However, I also want to highlight these scholars because they offer insights for how conversations in organizational communication and organizational technology studies turning to materiality can hold onto a logic of emergence.

Scholars who seek to challenge boundaries have offered different solutions for showing how the container logic is not natural. I will now highlight some of these solutions, selectively choosing approaches that have made strides to theorize organizations and technologies using a logic of emergence.

**Organization as “Organizing”**

The turn to organizing fundamentally changed the way organizational scholars understood organization. Weick (1979) made the shift from the noun to the verb, bringing sensemaking processes of organizational members to the forefront of our explanations. Weick (1979) understood sensemaking as an intersubjective phenomenon and as such, only by acting, or seeing what we say, do we know what we mean. Specifically, enactment described how organizations actively constructed the environment that impinged upon them. “Organizing
processes are then merely the dynamics of enactment as they work themselves out over time” (Taylor & Van Every, 2000, p. 145).

Organizing illuminated new relations for explanation not previously available to scholars in the container model. The move to organizing allowed organizational scholars to challenge the boundary between organization and environment (Weick, 1979). The relation between organizational members and environment was illuminated as an intellectual problem for organizational scholars, and as such, the relation between communication and organization became available as a renewed line of inquiry. The move to organizing removed communication from its epiphenomenal status and made it central to the explanation of organization.

*Organization as Mapping of Text-Conversation*

Taylor and colleagues follow Weick’s (1979) line of inquiry and push a process theory of organization into the domain of both intersubjective processes and the ontological basis of language. Coorientation theorizes that communication occurs as the intersection of two modalities: text and conversation. Conversation is framed by circumstances and conversation form. Text is framed by a repertoire of frame knowledge and by text form. These interact in what Taylor and colleagues refer to as a "mapping" process (Taylor & Van Every, 2000).

The theory of conversation-text has many nuances, but Taylor made two important moves for this conversation. One is to show a communicational basis of action, one where action and knowledge are bound to one another. Second, is showing how organization becomes a macro actor through texts taken up in different realms. Both of these moves challenges taken-for-granted boundaries and virtually dissolves the container logic.  

---

1 In his later work, Taylor (2009) talks about conversation and text in relation to Communities of Practice. He then shifts his approach slightly to say that language is practice.
The Social Construction of Technology

Now I will turn to the organizational technology scholars who created a foundation for challenging boundaries in this conversation. Pinch & Bijker (1984) drew on insights from the Sociology of Science and the Empirical Program of Relativism to craft their Social Construction of Technology (SCOT) approach, which confronted the container logic of determinism head on. SCOT approaches attended to the specific social and organizational arrangements that explained “impact” of technology and showed how social and organizational arrangements matter to how we can interpret the development of a technology (Pinch & Bijker, 1984).

Through a process of selection and variation, Pinch & Bijker, (1984) showed why some artifacts survived and others did not. Relevant social groups were key to defining the problem of an artifact and when there were multiple relevant social groups, this brought forth the interpretive flexibility of the artifact. As such, different closure mechanisms were studied to understand the stabilization of the artifact. SCOT approaches shared the assumption that technology has always been social. The success of the social constructionist paradigm has made the “working” of any technology clearly tied to social-organizational arrangements.

Seminal constructionist studies of technology in organizations showed how perceptions of technology by co-workers were proven to play a critical role in individual media choice in organizations (Fulk, Schmitz, & Steinfield, 1990). Other seminal studies have showed how the same technology in different organizations resulted in radically different changes to social structures (Barley, 1986). This research broke down the internal logic of change of the container, determinist frame.
The Technology-Context Scheme

Jackson (1996) posed two questions to open theorizing of technology to a new relationship with context. 1) is the constitution of technology separable from context and 2) is the constitution of context separable from technology? Answering both questions resulted in four different approaches: determinism (1-yes-2-yes), context as filter (1-no-2-yes), technology as change agent (1-yes-2-no), and integration (1-no-2-no). When context was conceptualized as separate from technology, the material definition of the artifact became more important because technology was acontextual. However, the same can also be true for context. When what counts as context does not depend on technology, context becomes atechnological. Jackson’s (1996) theory showed that in either condition, the logic was the same. A boundary had been established that precluded theorizing their relation.

The technology-context scheme played with boundaries and showed how the container logic was not a natural logic. Further, the scheme illuminated the relation between technology and context as an intellectual problem for technology scholars. How to understand the relationship between technology and organizations became available as a renewed line of inquiry.

In sum, a long tradition of challenging taken-for-granted boundaries exists in both organizational communication and organizational technology studies. I have chosen to highlight scholars who have challenged boundaries and in doing so, shown the value in a logic of emergence. I learned from these scholars that in order to challenge the container, it took more than breaking down walls. The very foundation of rational logics and representational ontologies had to be challenged. I have taken from their collective work a reminder to hold on to a logic of emergence.
In the next section, I turn to the second boundary problem. This boundary problem has developed out of the challenge to the container and taken-for-granted boundaries. However, scholars working on the second boundary problem have begun to ask if disrupting the container has caused scholars to overlook the materiality of organization and technology. To what degree have these solutions dissolved boundaries to an untenable point? What about the materiality of technology and organization?

The Turn to Materiality

Scholars in organizational communication and organizational technology studies who have turned to materiality make similar arguments for why challenging boundaries is not enough. In organizational technology studies, the turn to materiality attempts to show that although previous approaches opened up a new line of inquiry for the relation between technology and context, the tendency to “tilt” toward the social left the material artifact under-theorized (Jackson, Poole, & Kuhn, 2003; Leonardi & Barley, 2008). Leonardi and Barley (2008) argued that scholars working within the SCOT paradigm have long since proved that social construction of technology matters. They implore scholars to shift from focusing on the micro and the social to dealing directly with the blind spots of social construction: materiality and power (Leonardi & Barley, 2008). The sentiments of a turn from a predominately social approach is also echoed in Orlikowski & Iacano’s (2001) article titled “Desperately Seeking the “IT” in IT Research: A Call to Theorizing the IT Artifact?”

In organizational communication, the turn to materiality shows that although previous approaches opened up a new line of inquiry for the relation between communication and organization, the reduction of organizations to communicative process left the heterogeneity of organizing under-theorized. Ashcraft, Kuhn, & Cooren (2009) argued that scholars must theorize
organizations as communicatively constituted while also taking into account material conditions. They implore scholars to theorize the relationship between ideation and materiality through examination of objects, spaces, and bodies. Scholars responding to this call have shown that organizations exist in networks of heterogeneous relations, and as such, cannot be reduced to just sensemaking (Bruni, 2005; Cooren & Fairhurst, 2009).

Both organizational technology studies and organizational communication converge with similar concerns at this point and time. We have a problematic to investigate that brings these two conversations together and has implications for a broad range of concerns in both technology and organizational research. The new problematic is to how to theorize materiality and hold onto a logic of emergence. In the next section, I explain this as the problem of taking boundaries seriously in practice.

**The Problem of Taking Boundaries Seriously in Practice**

Why are taking boundaries seriously an intellectual problem? What exactly does taking boundaries seriously look like? The task for scholars who take boundaries seriously is to theorize the inextricable relationship between the social and material while holding onto a logic of emergence and surfacing obduracy. Technologies and objects do have a material form and space and bodies are sites of organizing work (Ashcraft, Kuhn, & Cooren, 2009; Leonardi, 2007; Orlikowski, 2007).

A theme that binds the emerging work on materiality across organizational communication and organizational technology studies is what I call the “problem of agency.” Agency functions as the starting point for theorizing the relation between the social and material. Variable agencies in this conversation span from ontology to practice, however, the basic idea is
that if we “animate” the material we can better account for the ways in which materiality makes a difference in practice and still hold on to the logic of emergence.

I have chosen to highlight the problem of agency because scholars who are developing these explanations inform my own approach (Ashcraft, Kuhn, & Cooren, 2009; Bruni, 2005; Cooren, 2004; Cooren & Fairhurst, 2009; Leonardi, 2007; Leonardi & Barley, 2008; Orlikowski, 2007; Orlikowski, 2005; Pickering, 1995; Suchman, Trigg, & Blomberg, 2002). These scholars’ work has collectively inspired me to take a closer look at practice and how constraints exist in the configuration of objects we use, surround ourselves with, and embed into our built environment. Because of these scholars, I have challenged myself to also hold onto a logic of emergence while theorizing the materiality of practice.

However, I also highlight these scholars because I believe there is an opportunity to do more work on this boundary problem. We need approaches that combine specific mechanisms for identifying the concreteness of organization and technology in practice and mechanisms for ontological flexibility. In other words, scholars have demonstrated the concreteness of organization and technology in practice, however, doing this while challenging boundaries conceptually is difficult. To what degree have these solutions inadvertently reified boundaries? How has the problem of agency enacted new, unexpected boundaries?

In the following sections, I highlight scholars who take boundaries seriously in practice and analyze the different solutions they give for doing this work. I examine scholars using three different approaches that I have categorized as: the interpenetrating practices duality approach (Leonardi, 2007; Pickering, 1995), the hybrid network approach (Bruni, 2005; Castor & Cooren, 2006; Cooren, 2004), and the sociomaterial configuration approach (Orlikowski, 2007; Orlikowski, 2005).
I argue that duality approaches have conditions built into their logics that constrain the types of empirical sites we can study using this approach. I argue that network approaches have a condition built into their logic that inadvertently reifies boundaries between humans and nonhumans. Finally, I argue that sociomaterial approaches have a solid logic but a problem of translating that logic empirically and as a result, have inadvertently adopted some of the logic problems found in the duality approach.

Now I will take a closer look at these three approaches. How have scholars in organizational communication and organizational technology studies addressed the boundary problem through the problem of agency?

*The Duality Approach: Interpenetrating Practices*

Recently, scholars have argued that to take boundaries seriously in practice we should grant technology a degree of *material agency*. The concept of material agency allows shifting agencies between humans and nonhumans at the level of *epistemology*. Pickering (1995) and Leonardi (2007) made similar observations about technology use: clearly technologies make a difference in practice and “do” more than what social construction explanations have been able to explain. Pickering (1995) made this observation of scientific machines in the laboratory. Leonardi (2007) made this observation of technology used in organizations. Both approaches share a logic of “interpenetrating practices,” where technology, as a material agency, shapes organization through practice as recursive. I argue that duality approaches have conditions built into their logics that constrain the types of empirical sites we can study using this approach.

Ontologically, humans remain the sole mode of being with agency, defined as having the capacity to choose to do otherwise (Giddens, 1986). The rationale for this view of agency is simple: you can have as much symmetry as you want between humans and nonhumans from a
semiotic approach, but in practice, agencies are simply different. Pickering (1995) argues that humans can delegate to machines to accomplish many things in practice, however, a machine cannot delegate back to the human.

Because these approaches rely on human agency a priori, material agency occurs in relation to perceptions of that agency through use or working of a technology. Thus, the relation is one of reciprocal interpenetration of human agency and material agency in practice. A key question of this approach is, how does material agency, activated through use, shape social arrangements and organizational structures?

Pickering (1995) specifically theorizes the emergence of scientific culture by looking at goal-oriented practice for the patterned nature of material/human agency. Pickering refers to this pattern as the “dance of agency.” The dance of agency describes how through the practice of “tuning” humans and machines become engaged in reciprocal periods of activity and passivity. While a scientist is actively working on a machine (“tuning”), the machine remains passive. However, the scientist takes on a passive role when testing the machine, and during this time, the machine is active. These periods of activity for machines are what Pickering recognizes as material agency. Based on the machines performance, the scientist may need to make accommodations to their next round of tuning. When the machine does not respond to the intended tuning as the scientist expected, then we have a moment of resistance. The interlocking pattern of accommodation and resistance between human and material agency is the “mangle of practice.”

Leonardi (2007) chooses to start by specifying what counts as material agency, a priori. In his formulation, material agency is linked to technologies “material properties.” These are basic functionalities of the technology. Humans encounter these material properties in use and
upon their contact in use, these material properties become *affordances* (Gibson, 1986). Affordances are what the human user perceives as the functionality of the machine through use.

Once material properties are activated, material agency can be traced in terms of how it affects certain social arrangements and structures. Leonardi (2007) examined the social arrangement of intergroup interaction. A key to Leonardi’s (2007) approach to isolating the effects of material agency is to also define the social unit of analysis. Doing so makes it possible to isolate interaction effects. Repeated use patterns over time shapes group relations and as such, shapes organizational structure.

In sum, these approaches share a logic of “interpenetrating practices,” where technology, as a material agency, shapes organization through practice as recursive. Human practice is recursive and human agents are reflexive (Giddens, 1986).² Practices are patterns and over time these patterns form organizational structures. Empirically, it is possible to study humans everyday use with a technology and argue that use forms an organizational pattern or structure.

However, because of the conditions set up by the logic of material agency, there are limitations to the empirical contexts scholars can study using this approach. These approaches are better suited to empirical contexts that adhere to the ability to isolate technological agency and where the social structure is established. This allows the analyst to account for an interaction effect as indication of change. Studying one technology within a well-established organization with clear organizational roles is best. Also, it would be ideal if the users of the technology were using it on a regular basis.

---

² I would like to clarify that the dominant social theory at the basis of interpenetrating practices approaches is Giddens’ Structuration Theory. What will become clearer in the next chapter is how a new approach to the question of the relationship between the social and material provides a basis for a new approach to time and space. I think this makes for a good case for why we should develop a different approach to use in communication. Hagerstrands time-geography is the basis of Structuration Theory and is a fairly static and arresting view of time and space.
In sum, the empirical contexts that make a good match for the conceptual understanding of this approach puts limitations on the contexts we can study. I argue that the limitations of this type of empirical context will make it difficult to address both boundary problems.

*The Actor-Network Approach: Hybrid Networks*

A major shift in theorizing materiality occurred with the recognition of variable ontologies. By this, I mean the recognition of modes of being that exist outside of human agency. Cooren and colleagues and Bruni and colleagues have made similar observations about objects in organizations. Objects “make a difference” and extend the agency of humans. Cooren (2004; 2006) and colleagues made this observation of nonhumans through an examination of organizational discourse. Bruni (2005; 2007) and colleagues made this observation of technologies in organizational spaces and practices. Both of these scholars have argued for granting nonhumans agency, where the definition of agency is making a difference in interaction (Latour, 2005). I argue that network approaches have a condition built into their logic that inadvertently reifies boundaries between humans and nonhumans.

The recognition of both human and nonhuman agential modes of being differs from the interpenetrating practices approach because the relation between these agencies is considered inextricable, both conceptually and in practice. The focus of analysis from this approach is the hybrid agent, or the combined human and nonhuman. In fact, from a hybrid network approach, all agencies exist in a hybrid fashion. The relational logic is one of “mutual transformation” rather than interpenetrating effects.

Castor & Cooren (2006) start with the assumption that the world is filled with agencies and organizations are filled with objects, texts, and materiality. If organizational scholars explored objects as agencies rather than as inanimate, Castor & Cooren (2006) argue we could
better explain the phenomenon of organizing and organization. They argue there is always social and material in any agency, it just depends on how far you go downstream or upstream in the chain of agencies. At some point, the analyst will see the connection of human and nonhumans.

One key to Cooren’s (2004) approach is its semiotic take, which understands communication as discourse in interaction. A semiotic approach allows the analyst to see how agencies are mobilized and drawn together into hybrid agents in discourse and narrative. A hallmark of this approach is the belief that discourse is speech act, meaning that communication is action (Austin, 1975). The focus of analysis is to examine how hybrid agents mobilized in discourse and narratives work to structure/span organizations across space and time. Through chains of agency that form networks, we can explain the structure of organizations. A key question is, how do hybrid agents connected in discourse structure/span organizations across space and time?

Rather than relying on concepts like “structures” to explain organizations, the hybrid network approaches demonstrates how it is that we come to have organizational structures. Human actors can act at a distance, via tele-action, through the nonhuman agent (Cooren, 2004). This shows how material objects have a form of textual agency, capable of performing speech acts. Because of tele-communication and tele-action, organizations, as chains of agencies, are able to span space. They span time because nonhuman agents, as material objects, are thought to provide particular durability in chains of agencies. Nonhumans are not only constitutive of organizations, but participate in the process of organizing.

Bruni (2005) and colleagues seek to better theorize nonhuman agency as it occurs in networks of associations in practice. They ask the central questions, “What is nonhuman action? How do we define that?” Because they start with observation of situated practice, their approach
is slightly different than Cooren and colleagues. The key to their approach is that the technology is conceptually developed as embedded in the context of practice. They are drawn to the ways in which technology is embedded in context and become a part of the “ecology of representations” (Bruni, Gherardi, & Parolin, 2007).

Bruni, Gherardi, & Parolin (2007) argue that an analyst can understand the contextual relations of objects and understand nonhuman action by observing the material practices that perform relations. The analyst traces the boundaries around elements that enter into reciprocal relations when a working practice associates them. As a result, the analyst will be able to see the ways in which technologies structure space and activity. In addition to this, they also play attention to discourse specifically within practice. Much like Cooren and colleagues, they find that discourse does alignment work within the situated context between human agents and objects (Bruni, Gherardi, & Parolin, 2007). They find that the alignment work performed in discourse often makes the materiality of practice invisible (Bruni, Gherardi, & Parolin, 2007).

Both of these approaches share the assumption that change does not occur as transformation of structure, but as particular chains of agencies compel certain actions. Organization is literally the effect of the network or chains of agencies. Recursivity is replaced with associations and connections and reflexivity is not a basic ontological condition, but an accomplishment of hybrid agencies (Latour, 2005).³

Hybrid agencies pose challenges for empirical study of practices. The tracing of associations in practice or in discourse becomes the primary job of the analyst. Hybrid network approaches that start with situated practices work well in bounded organizational contexts where

³ I would like to clarify that Latour’s Actor-Network Theory is the theoretical basis for hybrid network approaches. However, unlike Latour, the specific role of communication in hybrid networks is thematized by these scholars. In the next chapter, it will become clearer that my approach departs with these scholars on the basis that connection and linking should not be privileged over disconnection and exclusions.
the situatedness of the object in relation to space can be marked out. Hybrid network approaches that start with organizational discourse in interaction work well in bounded organizational interactions where the hybrids and chains of agency can be sufficiently shown.

In sum, hybrid network approaches expand the definition of agency to include nonhumans. However, I argue that pre-specifying human from nonhuman creates a condition built into their logic that inadvertently reifies boundaries between humans and nonhumans. Though agencies are conceptually hybrid, tracing their boundaries and associating their relationships as chains binds both humans and nonhumans as entities in practice.

*The Constitutive Intra-action Approach: Sociomaterial Configurations*

The final solution to taking boundaries seriously in practice is the “co-constitutive” approach. Rather than granting an agency to nonhumans, this approach starts with no assumption of what agencies exist, but rather sees human and nonhuman as an emergent distinction occurring in practice. This rejects a so-called “ontology of separateness.”

Orlikowski (2007) and Suchman, Trigg, and Blomberg (2002) have observed that everything is both social and material, always. As such, it is not necessary to ascribe a difference between human and nonhumans a priori. I argue that sociomaterial approaches have a solid logic but have a problem of translating that logic empirically and as a result, have inadvertently adopted some of the logic problems found in the duality approach.

The key to this approach is the basis of practice in “intra-action,” not interaction (Barad, 2007; Orlikowski, 2010). This is a conceptual move to avoid the ontology of separateness. For agencies to interact, that presumes two separate modes of being. Intra-action, however, is how certain boundaries, such as “subject” and “object” get made. A central question of this approach is “how do sociomaterial practices produce particular boundaries, agencies, and normative
categories?” We can then see how determinacy and exclusions are made through sociomaterial arrangements. Importantly, the end point for this type of explanation is an account of the constitution of sociotechnical agency.

Orlikowski (2007) and colleagues refer to their sociomaterial configuration approach as “entanglement in practice.” She adopts the ontology of no inherent modes of being to suggest that technologies are understood as having no inherent properties, boundaries, or meanings. Rather than materiality theorized as occasions in practice, she sees that every practice is bound up with materiality (Orlikowski, 2010). The social and the material are inextricably related and thus their nature is to recursively intertwine in ongoing situated practice. Materiality from this view is constitutive of everyday life, not a preformed substance, but a performed relation.

Rather than isolating the material and how it interacts with the social, the goal of this approach is to explain how in their very constitutiveness, particular sociomaterial configurations make some things seem determinate through exclusion. Intra-action is fundamentally a process of making “cuts” between what is included and excluded, including agencies. Through time, certain cuts result in the materialization of an “apparatus.” This apparatus then becomes the dominant way in which agencies, subjects, and objects are “seen” in particular contexts of practice. From this vantage point, she argues that we can address how practices enact local resolutions to the question of the ontological nature of phenomena (Orlikowski, 2010). Rather than presuming hybridity, all agencies are co-constitutive. Conceptually, the central focus is not on associations or connections, but rather the process through which agencies become distinct.

Intra-action logic requires a different empirical translation. Presumably, the analyst only has access to the already differentiated agencies. This means that the empirical must be

---

4 I would like to clarify that the theoretical basis of a sociomaterial configuration approach is Barad’s (2007) Agential Realism. It will become clearer in the next chapter how I seek to use this approach, but I translate it in a slightly different way than these scholars.
deconstructed for its sociomaterial configuration. Change is not something that occurs through time, so much as it does in the making of boundaries and distinctions. However, I argue that scholars currently using the sociomaterial configuration approach often start with a frame of practice as recurrent activity. As such, these scholars face some of the same limitations as I have pointed out in the duality approaches. There is considerable work to be done in order to empirically translate the sociomaterial configuration approach.

In sum, I have highlighted the above solutions to the problem of taking boundaries seriously in practice because all three are working on this problem while holding onto a logic of emergence and addressing materiality through agency. However, I seek to extend how these scholars have addressed this boundary problem for a few reasons. First, I do not think we can address the dual boundary problem through a human-centric view of agency. We need a variable ontology. However, I do not think we need agency to animate objects. It is time for a logic that does not need a theory of agency as its foundation. If such a theory is possible, it must be translatable in practice. We need a sophisticated epistemology/practice approach to accompany such a theory.

In the rest of this chapter, I will discuss how I plan to address this problematic. I argue two things that can be done: 1) scholars can adopt a more fluid ontology to continue to better challenge boundaries and 2) employ an epistemology where making distinctions is a basic condition of doing and knowing. The latter will enable scholars to continue to take boundaries seriously in practice.

**Re-entanglement Logic**

I use the term “logic” often, and perhaps somewhat unreflectively at times. However, a logic is what an approach to the world uses to navigate that world. We can think of logics as
enabling both movement and location. An appropriate logic becomes necessary when you are trying to address the dual problem of boundaries. You see the world as fluid, yet you want to say something about how it has taken shape. This means the analyst needs a mechanism to remove boundaries that are unnecessary and another mechanism to see boundaries that are operating in practice. I call this mechanism a relational logic.

My overall goal for this project is to create a new relational logic for the study of organizations and technology called “re-entanglement.” I argued earlier that interpenetrating practices, or duality approaches, were based on a relational logic of “reciprocal interaction.” I argued that hybrid actor-network approaches were based on a relational logic of “mutual transformation.” And finally, I argued that sociomaterial configuration approaches were based on a “constitutive intra-action” logic. I have already pointed out what I believe are the strengths and limitations of these approaches, so I will not return to that now. The point is to highlight that I am addressing the same problematic as these scholars, but I am creating a new relational logic to do this work.

My re-entanglement logic is based on a multi-dimensional ontology. I created the ontology by combining the work of three scholars: John Law (2002) and colleagues, Karen Barad (2007) and colleagues, and finally Tor Hernes (2007). I will introduce my ontology now, which I in detail in chapter two. The goal of this ontology is to address the first boundary problem of challenging taken-for-granted boundaries conceptually.

**Dynamic Relationality Ontology**

I decided that if I was going to address the dual nature of the boundary problem, I wanted to start from the ground up, so to speak. Luckily, I was already immersed in readings of scholars who live in the world of variable ontologies. I was able to start thinking about the problem of
boundaries, in part, through their work (Barad, 2007; Law, 2002; Hernes, 2007). Through their work I was able to assemble a “multi-dimensional” ontology that I could use to challenge boundaries. A multi-dimensional ontology theorizes the world as relationality and process. I argue that when we combine these dimensions, we can see many more relations as they unfold.

A relational, process-based ontology has no commitment to an objective exterior (Iedema, 2007) and remains ontologically relativist. As such, the world is little more than a primitive sense of “out-thereness” but without any inherent form (Law, 2004). So what are we left with? Where do we start in a world without foundations?

A relational ontology gives us specific guidance here. If there is any single assumptive resting point for this approach, it is that processes are at work, and these are relations in the process of becoming (Hernes, 2007). Every “thing” is enacted in relations.

Flows, Waves, and (Dis)connectings

If we picture in our minds what this looks like, we might imagine waves intersecting, appearing, and disappearing. What we see is nothing beyond this movement, because the movement is constant enough that once one wave disappears, another one emerges and catches our attention. Importantly, unlike particles, waves can occupy the same space at the same time (Barad, 2007). We are no longer concerned with location and positionality between elements or particles, but we are concerned with the movement of waves, how waves connect, and the patterns waves produce. At the heart of this approach is a commitment to seeing as many (dis)connectings, rather than entities, as possible.

The only essence exists in relations and (dis)connectings. So process is the basis of our ontology and “entities” emerge out of relations forming continuously in ongoing process.
Particular configurations of relations are constantly becoming, never finished or fully done (Chia, 1999; Cooper, 2005). Everything is this view is an effect of relations in ongoing process.

So we might imagine effects like the white caps of a wave. Something forms and differentiates itself from the flow, even if just for a moment. But the white cap is not the interesting part. Rather, what becomes interesting is that now we can begin to see the relations that give rise to momentary peaks. We have removed the a priori boundaries and can thus presumably see a torrent of connections and relations pushing formations to the surface. Some waves last for a really long time, others seem to disappear as soon as they appeared. Why do some waves seem more stable than others?

*From waves to realities*

Thinking about processes of relationality using the metaphor of waves helps us stay in right frame of mind to explore. Let’s hold onto the fluidity and emergence of the wave, but replace waves with “realities.” That’s right, there are potentially thousands of realities emerging from endless connections and relations. Rather than a single external reality, connections and associations *enact* multiple realities (Hernes, 2007; Law, 2007). I call this fluidity an *excess of meaning*.

*The Excess of Meaning*

An excess of meaning is the basis of my ontology. Connections and associations of relations enact multiple realities (Law, 2008). So far, we have been fixated on those realities that seem to have been bigger, endured longer, and looked the same in different places. However, in our attempts to explain stability, we have lost sight of the multiple realities that far exceed the dominant one. This excess of meaning is so far undertheorized. What would our research look like if we explained stability not on its own terms, but in a more round-about way? What if we
chose to immediately inquire into the many realities that were not dominant? Where would we begin, what would we look for, and what could we gain?

*The Problem of Presence*

At this point, I have argued that the world basically consists of a sea of meanings, or what I call the excess of meaning. Once we begin to see the world as fluid, made up of multiple realities, we can begin to become curious about how presence in this world is accomplished. The “problem of presence” becomes the condition that is built into this ontology. How exactly is meaningful presence made when there is no a priori reality? The problem of presence requires us to reconceptualize what the nature of presence is and how it is performed.

In order to think about how meaningful presence occurs, I theorize the excess of meaning as *potentialities*, following Hernes (2007), who is theorizing using Whitehead’s process philosophy. A potentiality is a meaning that exists in a different time-space than the present. Thinking about the excess of meaning as potentialities is my way of positioning the excess of meaning to become part of present reality. The world is now a sea of potentialities.

So far we have a world of meaning, in the form of potentialities. When presence is the problem we are trying to explain, this means that meaning cannot come from within. All meaning that is used in the accomplishment of presence exists in a different space or time than the present. I specify two kinds of potentialities: time potentialities and space potentialities. Making meaningful presence always occurs in the meeting and making of different space and time potentialities. As such, I theorize that presence is the “weight of things” in the meeting and making of different times and spaces. But how does the re-entanglement logic move us to the realm of doing and knowing? Next, I will introduce the epistemology that I detail in chapter three.
Re-Entanglement Epistemology

So far we know that presence is an accomplishment occurring in the meeting and making of meanings from different spaces and times than the present. I called these time-space potentialities. However, I knew that if I was going to make this ontology work, I would need to specify an epistemology. I had learned from other approaches that attempts to use complex variable ontologies often fall short because there is a missing piece between the ontology and how it gets translated.

I started looking at how Law (2002), Barad (2007) and Hernes (2007) translated their work into the empirical. I found I could use some of their concepts, but I had to add some of my own too. As a communication scholar, I was a bit unsatisfied with how they talked about doing and knowing, especially because I was also becoming more intrigued with approaches to practice in organization studies (Nicolini, 2009; Rasche & Chia, 2009). I came up with a re-entanglement epistemology by combining scholar’s approaches from chapter two with an approach to practice. I theorize doing and knowing as based in the concept of organizing.

Organizing Time-Space Potentialities

Now I can specify what I meant by the words *meeting and making* that I was using as fillers in the previous section. Potentialities are relational phenomena that gain meanings specific to contexts of practice. In particular, relations between potentialities become meaningful through a process of organizing. I articulate organizing as two main processes: enactment and sedimentation of potentialities. In other words, we enact and sediment meanings in practices.

Enactment of present meaning is comprised of connecting with past and concurrent potentialities. Past potentialities are meanings from the past. Concurrent potentialities are meanings that are currently being made, but in a different space. A past or a concurrent
potentiality can be enacted as an actor, object, discourse, ideology, practice, etc. We can think of enactment as the *consumption* of time-space potentialities.

However, once present meaning is enacted, an interesting question is how that present meaning is sustained in practice and with what effect. This encompasses the second process of organizing that I wish to highlight: the sedimentation of present meaning. Sedimentation of present meaning is comprised of a dual process of *distributing* potentialities into absence and *reifying* potentialities into a projected future.

Absent potentialities are related to space, and specifically that which is made exterior to the current practice of concern through practices of distribution and exclusion. The reason an absent potentiality is produced is because sustaining meaningful presence requires certain meanings be reduced or silenced. Projected potentialities are related to time and specifically what becomes reified in sustaining the meaning of present practices. The reason a projected potentiality is produced is because every process of sustaining present meaning can be understood as having an effect. Potentialities that are projected can take the form of an actor, object, discourse, ideology, practice, etc. Again, the exact form of what is an effect of the sustaining of present meaning is variable and an empirical question.

Organizing work is the making of distinctions that occur through enactment and sedimentation. Organizing consumes past and concurrent potentialities and produces absent and projected potentialities. Conceptually, we can think of sites of organizing work as moments of contact.

*Moments of Contact*

When we see organizing work taking place in practice, I call this the “moment of contact.” The moment of contact is the place where meaningful presence is being made in
specific heterogeneous practices. The moment of contact actually takes place as an experienced reality, by which I mean that there is a presence that is meaningful in some way. Everything that “exists” outside of the moment of contact is variable meanings and relations in the form of time-space potentialities.

So far I have addressed what I argued was needed to address the dual boundary problem: 1) a more fluid ontology and 2) an epistemology based in the making of distinctions. By the time you get to chapter four, you will have a fairly well-developed answer to how I think organizational communication and organizational technology scholars should address the dual boundary problem. The next step is to specify how we can use the logic of re-entanglement to study organizations. Next, I will introduce the framework that I detail in chapter four for the study of organizations.

**Problem-Centered Organizing**

My goal in this chapter is to set up a sufficient framework for the study of organization such that an organizational communication or organizational technology scholar could do a study that employs the logic of re-entanglement without having to know all of the background. To this end, what I have taken care to do is build a framework that has my ontology and epistemology built into it, but brings us into the realm of organizations. I call this framework problem-centered organizing.

The only way to study organizations using the assumptions that I have laid out so far is to re-think what “counts” as an organization. So, I shift my terminology in this chapter from talking about organizations, to talking about *organizing* work that occurs in *problem-contexts*. Essentially, organizing work is straight from my epistemology chapter. Problem-context is a new word that I introduce and use instead of organization.
I specify that organizing and problem contexts come together in *responses to complex social problems*. Thus, an analyst using my framework to study organization will always study organizations in relationship to how they are responding to a social problem. The end goal for an analyst using this framework is to be able to saying something about the nature of organizing, the relationship between different problem-contexts, and how the social problem itself is materially organized.

The problem-centered organizing framework is sufficiently complex to match my goals to address the dual nature of the boundary problem, but simple enough that it can be employed for empirical study. I studied “Heart & Soul” community planning using my problem-centered organizing framework. In order to do this, I asked these research questions:

RQ1: How did problem-centered organizing occur?

A: What connecting work occurred and what meanings did this enact?

B: What reification and distribution work occurred and what meanings did this sediment?

C: How did potentialities interfere in the organizing process?

I will share the results of my analysis later, which I also detail in chapter six. However, the next step was to develop a methodology that would help me see problem-centered organizing. In the next section, I introduce the methodology that I developed and detail in chapter five.

**Methodology: Dual Inquiries of Discovery and Eclectic Practice**

I was excited about the challenge of working on a methodology because I see this as a need in our field right now. Currently, there exists multiple approaches that use variable ontologies to theorize the world, but there are not many methodologies to match. I could not do

I decided that it was impossible to study problem-centered organizing using only one mode of inquiry. By mode of inquiry, I mean way of seeing the world. I knew that my approach was situated in practice, first and foremost. Thus, I created the first mode of inquiry to study situated practices. I call this mode of inquiry discovery-based mode of inquiry.

In a discovery-based mode of inquiry, the goal is to see situated practices as sites of organizing work. I offer specific methods to do this. Magnify ordering work in practices, contextualize objects, disrupt individuals, and hyperlink places as sites of organizing work. The goal of discovery-mode inquiry is to challenge boundaries in order to reveal more relations for analysis. This portion of the methodology seeks to disrupt in order to apprehend the complex relationships between order and disorder.

In the second mode of inquiry, the goal is to further pursue the meaning of interest in situated practices by the analyst engaging in connecting work. I call this mode of inquiry eclectic practice. This mode allows the analysts to expand an understanding of particular organizing work by arranging it alongside relevant potentialities that exist in other times and spaces. I offer specific methods for wrapping objects in discourse, disseminating subjects, and traveling to other sites, both literally and metaphorically.

Finally, I use a method of analysis from Clarke (2005) called situational analysis. This method involves three situational mapping procedures that are designed to perform a relational analysis of many heterogeneous elements of a situation. I used these procedures to locate time-space potentialities and see connecting, distributing, and reifying work. I reflect on the use of this
methodology in the conclusion chapter of this dissertation. Next, I will introduce the site I studied and share a summary of the results of my analysis.

**Heart & Soul Community Organizing**

I used my problem-centered organizing framework to examine a “Heart & Soul” community planning process. In my analysis, I show how the concept of interference can be used to communicatively theorize relationships between organizations. I found through my analysis a distributive meaning-organization site where it became possible to see how other spaces and times materially impact the process of organizing. I found that interference, combined with my findings at the distributive meaning-organization site, allowed me to communicatively theorize relationships between organizations as they relate to complex social problems. I show how a meaning, organization, technology configuration bound two problem contexts into a relationship of deconstructive interference. My overall analysis shows that the re-entanglement logic extends existing approaches to theorizing the relationship between communication, organizations, and materiality.

**The Difference that Re-Entanglement Makes**

What can we gain from using a re-entanglement logic? I will offer a few ways that the logic I have fleshed out in this project might be useful for organizational communication and organizational technology scholars. First, the re-entanglement logic offers a place to start thinking about future steps in the turn to materiality in our sub-discipline. My approach extends beyond “accounting” for materiality. Rather, what I have done is reconfigure sociality too, which is important if we want to theorize the inextricable relation between the social and material (Ashcraft, Kuhn, & Cooren, 2009). In addition, my approach has shifted the focus from the problem of agency. Agency does not go away in my framework, but the difference is that I do
not use agency to animate objects. Rather, subjects and objects alike are animated through a different treatment of space and time.

My approach is also useful to scholars who want to study new organizational forms or inter-organizational relationships. The concept of problem-contexts and their relationships through interference and organizing in response to complex social problems is a way to get at the complexity of these organizational dynamics. A shift from organizations to studying organizing as the consumption and production of time-space potentialities positions organizational scholars to say a great deal about complex social problems in our world.

Finally, this project is on the way to developing a theory of communication that is both fundamental and concrete. A fundamental theory would center communication as a basis of making the world. A concrete theory would be based in practice and also have a normative edge to attend to actual social problems. A wide-ranging and useful theory of communication should develop out of this project’s growth in the future. I talk more specifically about implications in my analysis and conclusion chapters.

In the next chapter, I flesh out the details of my “dynamic relationality” ontology. I will explicate the theories that I am weaving together to create this approach. I will discuss the excess of meaning, the problem of presence, and the concept of potentialities in detail. I argue that this ontology addresses the first boundary problem of how to challenge taken-for-granted boundaries conceptually.
Chapter Two

Challenging Boundaries Through Dynamic Relationality

Challenging taken-for-granted boundaries is important to organizational communication and organizational technology scholars alike. For organizational communication scholars who theorize the communicative constitution of the organization, challenging boundaries is important for showing how communication is more than epiphenomenal to organization (Ashcraft, Kuhn, & Cooren, 2009; Cooren & Fairhurst, 2009; Cooren, 2004; Kuhn, 2008; McPhee & Iverson, 2009; McPhee & Zaug, 2009; Putnam & Nicotera, 2009; Taylor & Van Every, 2000; Taylor, 2009; Weick, 1979). These scholars challenge organizations as containers inside which communication processes occur. For organizational technology scholars, challenging boundaries is important for showing how organizational processes are more than epiphenomenal to technology (Bruni, 2005; Fulk, Schmitz, & Steinfield, 1990; Jackson, 1996; Leonardi, 2007; Leonardi & Barley, 2008; Orlikowski, 2007; Orlikowski, W., & Scott, S. V., 2008; Orlikowski, 2010; Pickering, 1995; Pinch & Bijker, 1984; Suchman, Trigg, & Blomberg, 2002). These scholars challenge technologies as containers of designer’s intention.

These conversations already have a long history of challenging boundaries. Given that, I am utilizing the sensibilities of these scholars, but offering a new ontological starting point. I am appealing to scholars who question what appears as given, or black-boxed, to problematize the metaphysics of presence. In this chapter, I show how problematizing the metaphysics of presence works to create a dynamic understanding of space and time that can be used to challenge boundaries in new ways. I call this ontology “dynamic relationality.”

My contribution in this chapter is a robust ontological foundation that makes challenging taken-for-granted boundaries easier for the researcher. Embedded within my ontology is a logic
of change that necessitates boundary challenging as a basic condition of the world. The ontology requires that we let go of presence as a state and instead theorize presence as a process. The result is that meaning-making has an ever more important role in the making of the world.

In order to arrive at this new ontological starting point, I turn to the work of scholars in Science and Technology Studies (STS), Feminist Technoscience Studies, and organizational process theory (Barad, 2007; Hernes, 2007; Law, 2002). I turn to these conversations because these scholars have been working on variable ontologies very directly. I use their well-developed variable ontologies in order to develop boundary challenging as a fundamental part of theorizing. The basic condition of these ontologies that I utilize for challenging boundaries is ontological indeterminancy and relationality. The universe is assumed indeterminate and constantly in the making (Lee & Hassard, 1999). There is no assumption of starting with any inherent difference in kind (Barad, 2007). A relational ontology assumes that essence is not entititative, but rather exists in the relations and connectings that give rise to entities. In other words, this is a relational, process-based ontology.

I start with ontological indeterminancy and relationality to show how the basic condition of the world can be thought of as an excess of meaning that exists in different times and spaces than the present. I call the starting point that follows from this logic the problem of presence. Any presence is an accomplishment that occurs in the making of meaning, but not just any meaning. Once we have effectively upset the metaphysics of presence, we can turn to relations between the meeting of time and space as the primary formation of meaning. I call these different times and spaces potentialities (Hernes, 2007). Presence, when theorized as the meeting of time and space potentialities, becomes significant as the “weight of things” (Ingold, 2010). I use the concept of presence as “weight” in order to honor the emergence that is revealed when
we challenge boundaries, but also to set the stage for taking boundaries seriously in practice. In sum, the logic of change embedded in dynamic relationality is generative of a complexity that challenges boundaries in new ways.

My contention is that this ontology will be more robust and fruitful for organizational communication and organizational technology scholars who seek to challenge taken-for-granted boundaries. I encourage scholars who already question organizations and technologies as containers to consider how repositioning their sensibilities with this ontological starting point might make it easier and more desirable to conceptually challenge boundaries. I offer that my treatment of time and space is useful for scholars that seek to understand both organization and technology as complex processes.

**Assumptions of Dynamic Relationality**

In the next sections, I unpack dynamic relationality by moving from foundational assumptions to implications. In each section, I will introduce an important assumption of dynamic relationality. After introducing each assumption, I will discuss how I derived this assumption from the three main thinkers that have inspired my approach: John Law’s (2002) “Fractal Coherence,” Karen Barad’s (2007) “Agential Realism,” and Tor Hernes’s (2007) “Tangled Organizing.” Following this discussion, in each section I will advance my argument for why the assumptions I have adopted will help scholars to challenge boundaries in new ways. See figure A for the assumptions of dynamic relationality.
An Excess of Meaning

Dynamic relationality is a relational, process ontology. Essence is not entitative, but rather essence is the relations and connectings that give rise to entities. The basic idea is that entities have emerged from fluidity. Dynamic relationality is quite opposite of representational ontologies, which state that entities in the world correspond to the reality of the world and the world is independent and a priori. Dynamic relationality privileges fluidity over entity.

There are many different ways of understanding the fluidity of a relational, process ontology. I theorize fluidity as an excess of meaning. The excess of meaning is the ontological starting point for dynamic relationality. So how did I come to the excess of meaning as my starting point? First, I had to assume that entities emerging from the fluidity are constituted by the fluidity. Second, I had to assume that entities are secondary to the fluidity. This means that any entity that seems coherent or intelligible is fundamentally tied to an excess of meanings that are unintelligible when the entity emerges with the status of reality.
Each of the scholars I draw on has their own unique way of conceptualizing the fluidity. I derived the excess of meaning from combining all three of their approaches to conceptualizing fluidity. I will now share each of their approaches with you, starting with Law and Mol’s (2002) concept of multiplicity, followed by Barad’s (2007) concept of indeterminacy, and finally Hernes’ (2007) concept of flow.

Multiplicity

John Law’s work draws, in part, on Latour’s (1986; 2005) Actor-Network Theory (ANT). However, I classify his work, along with Anne Marie Mol and colleagues, as “Post ANT.” Post ANT scholars’ central intellectual questions have shifted from traditional ANT concerns to questions of how we can better honor complexity in our studies (Law & Mol, 2002). One of their critiques of ANT points out that the macro actor has obscured the role of relations not present in the network (Law, 2007). Even further, Post ANT scholars ask, “What role might the obscured relations play in the macro actor’s stability?” In particular, their work has sought to denaturalize the network form in order to rehabilitate fluid space (Law, 2002). This fluid space is a primitive out-there-ness, which constitutes the basic reality for Post ANT scholars.

Post ANT scholars began to study heterogeneous practices with an eye for fluidity. They became fascinated with the many partial connections they began to notice. They saw that the practices that did not “win” far outnumbered the relations that became stable. They found that heterogeneous practices enacted multiple realities. Anne Marie Mol (2002) called this fluidity the “multiplicity” of practice. Post ANT scholars expanded the relational ontology of ANT to include ontological multiplicity.
Indeterminacy

Particle physicist and feminist scholar Karen Barad (2007) has recently produced one of the most robust feminist accounts of the relationship between the social and the material. She seeks to rework Butler’s (1988) notion of discursive formation of gender to include the material and sets out to show that matter and meaning are not separate elements. Much like Post-ANT scholars, her “Agential Realist” framework posits an ontology of relationality in order to do this work.

Specifically, Barad (2007) theorizes the ontological fluidity as indeterminacy. She derives her concept of indeterminacy from Neils Bohr, who observed how the relation between the “object” and agencies of observation was made with scientific instruments. She describes Bohr’s insight that we must have different scientific instruments (apparatus’) to be able to see different dimensions of reality. For example, “instruments with fixed parts are required to understand what we mean by “position” yet theses apparatuses necessarily excludes other concepts such as “momentum” since it requires an instrument with moving parts for their definition” (Barad, 2007, p. 83).

This observation led to Bohr’s “complementary principle” which states that it is impossible to have a situation where all quantities will have definite values at once. Rather, some values are always excluded. This means that indeterminacy is always present and observation is only possible because of what is made indeterminable in that observation. Barad (2007) applies this concept to her ontology, which she uses to see the world as made up of undifferentiated “phenomena.”
Tor Hernes (2007) is an organizational theorist who draws together different process theorists in order to theorize organization as “tangled.” I include his work with other “strong” process scholars in organization studies that have sought to push process approaches further by weaving together insights from scholars like Weick (1979) with insights from process philosophy (Chia, 1999; Cooper, 2007). Hernes (2007) articulated a “strong process” approach to the study of organization by reading the philosophy of Whitehead through process thinkers Weick, Latour, Luhmann, and March and colleagues.

Hernes (2007) theorizes the fluidity as flow. He begins by assuming that the world exists as flows, where entities are in a state of continual becoming. He rejects absolute substances and a priori distinctions between subjects and objects. Hernes (2007) derives the notion of flow from the philosophy of Whitehead, who theorizes by starting from occasions of experience. Occasions are how we sense the world. Whitehead’s basic assumption is that experience is prior to consciousness. Experiencing occurs through connectedness with other occasions, which in relations forms “events.” Events are points in timespace when relations happen between entities. Organization is “how entities combine in the process of becoming” (p. 8). Hernes (2007) uses the flow to conceptualize organizing as creating a meaningful and predictable world out of a tangled world.

I used the concepts of multiplicity, indeterminancy, and flow to theorize the basic condition of the world as an excess of meaning. An excess of meaning as the basic condition can be summarized as a multi-dimensional ontology. I am arguing that the excess of meaning exists, and that scholars should attend to this. Challenging boundaries conceptually is built into this ontology.
The Problem of Presence

Starting with an excess of meaning upsets the metaphysics of presence. This is an important move, because once we have upset the metaphysics of presence, we have created a condition to take boundaries quite seriously. Once we begin to see the world as fluid, made up of multiple realities, we can begin to become curious about how presence in this world is accomplished.

When the making of reality is an accomplishment, the new intellectual problem becomes the problem of presence. Specifically, I theorize presence as an accomplishment that occurs through a process of differentiation. I derived the problem of presence by combining the “problems” that Law (2002), Barad (2007), and Hernes (2007) are obligated to address after they set out their approaches to fluidity as multiplicity, indeterminacy and flow.

Problem of Difference

Law (2002) and colleagues see the world as multiple. They notice many more relations as enacting numerous realities. For Post ANT scholars, these realities are enacted in heterogeneous practices. As such, Law is obligated to theorize how singularity is performed from his multiplicity. This is the problem of difference.

Law is interested in how the conditions of possibility are made and defined in this fluid world. He argues that we need to explore metaphors for processes of incompleteness and he attempts to do this by addressing the nature of reality as “fractal coherence.” In mathematics, a fractal is a line that occupies more than one dimension but less than two (Law, 2002). Law uses the fractal as a way of understanding the drawing of things together without centering them.

Using the fractal as a metaphor, the nature of reality is always in between one and many, both/and and either/or. The argument is that when we take alterity seriously, noncoherence is
assumed a chronic condition of practice and as such, practice will always reveal difference (Law, 2009).

*Problem of Exclusion*

Because the essence of reality for Barad is theorized as a nondualistic whole, what Barad calls “phenomena,” or the inseparable entanglement of agencies, she must address the problem of exclusion. She has to explain exactly how undifferentiated phenomena become differentiated. Barad (2007) theorizes the processes through which particular realities are formed in what she terms as processes of materialization.

In processes of materialization, undifferentiated phenomena become differentiated as material discursive practices work to produce separation between the “object” and agencies of observation. Barad calls this part of the process of differentiation “intra-action.” Through intra-action, boundaries of phenomena become determinant and meaningful, enacting agential separability, or the condition of exteriority within phenomena. Essentially, the world is a dynamic process of intra-activity and materialization in the enactment of determinate casual structures with determinant boundaries.

*Problem of Becoming*

Hernes (2007) theorizes the fluidity as flow. This means that he is now obligated to explain the process of becoming. Becoming occurs as we connect experience with other occasions. Hernes (2007) calls these relations “events.” How we form entities and how they enter the process is what he refers to as entification. However, an entity should not be equated with a physical object. "An entity is something that is delimited and recognized as something that can be talked about, such as a concept, a company, a technology, a person, or a group of people" (Hernes, 2007, p. 30). Further, entities are not discrete, they are hybrids and complex units that
“not only change but also transform into something qualitatively different” (Hernes, 2007, p. 53).

Entification is how we can see the connecting work taking place.

Events done with consciousness are more important because they connect to form a meaningful pattern over space and time. Consequential events alter the “tune for future events” (p. 47). Following this, the point of concern is how we disentangle this to cope with the world. Hernes (2007) argues that our processes of disentangling never can be fully achieved because the connectedness of the world is far too complex. So we have to simplify to make sense and representations are distinctions that are useful for doing this. Thus, distinction lies as the basis of understanding, and Hernes (2007) argues that acts of organization are a projection for subjective forms that we continually strive to achieve. Given this, “organization is perpetually in the process of becoming” (Hernes, 2007, p. 41).

I combined the problem of difference, exclusion and becoming to theorize the problem of presence. All three approaches share in theorizing the process of the making of the world as a process of differentiation. This is a multi-dimensional ontology because now we have a condition of reality that binds doing and knowing to the enactment of reality.

**Presence as the Entanglement of Potentialities**

So far I have argued that the world exists as an excess of meaning where presence is accomplished in a process of differentiation. Exactly how this differentiation occurs in my ontology is through an *entanglement of potentialities*. The entanglement of potentialities makes presence the “weight of things” (Ingold, 2010).

I am drawing the term “potentiality” from Whitehead’s process philosophy. These are other spaces and times, outside of the present, that are significant to the present. I have adopted the term, as it has been interpreted for the study of organization, by Tor Hernes (2007).
What is a potentiality? In the above section, I described the excess of meaning as the basic ontological condition. When the excess of meaning is contextualized in relation to specific doing and sayings in the world, the excess meaning becomes a potentialities. These meanings far “outnumber” what is intelligible. Potentialities embody meaning and give meaning to present practices.

How should we understand the relationship between potentialities and presence? A potentiality only exists as such because it was at one point a meaningful presence. I argue that all potentialities necessarily take place in relation to a particular place, time, or set of practices. Potentiality is a relational phenomenon and begins as specific to a context of practice.

Further, potentialities set up the possibility for novelty in presence. “Novelty comes about through the potentiality provided by processes that operate outside of the time space of the processes themselves” (Hernes, 2007, p. 44). I interpret novelty as the complexity that makes the “problem of presence” persist.

Each of these scholars has a different way of theorizing the process of differentiation. Though I borrowed the basic concept of potentiality from Hernes (2007), I detail the concept by specifying four types of time-space potentialities. These include past, concurrent, absent and projected potentialities. These four types come from my analysis and combination of Law (2004), Barad (2007) and Hernes (2007) approaches to the process of differentiation.

Specifically, what I have done is taken Hernes (2007) theory of potentialities and flow from Whitehead and combined with this an approach to space as absence and exteriority. I derive my notion of an absent potentiality, distributed into a space of exteriority, from Law (2002) and Barad (2007).
Law (2002) argues that the multiplicity of the world will always reveal difference. We can have singularity and coherence in this fluid world, however, this will always be an accomplishment made possible by distributing other realities into absence. Law calls this the distribution of difference.

Law (2002) argues that in the making of singularity, or fractal coherence, we can actually attend to the specific ways in which difference gets distributed. Law (2002) focuses primarily on how realities are made absent, or distributed, in order to make singularity. As such, he pursues the relationship between absence and presence as one of the central issues of the problem of difference. We must interrogate what is immediately present in order to understand absent actors and objects that generate the presently complex reality. For enactments to be possible, there must be particular realities that are also made absent. Thus, there is an inextricable relation between absence and presence.

But Law & Singleton (2005) argue we can take this notion even further. We might interrogate how sets of absences make the present reality. They articulate a logic of relationality between absence and presence that denotes absence a generative quality in relationship to presence. Law also calls these absent realities “collateral realities,” made silently along the way in practices (Law, 2009). This means that multiple absent or collateral realities can interfere with one another. Absences shuffle and interfere with one another to create singularities, or fractal coherence (Law, 2002).

The study of absence shows how all singularities are heterogeneous in character. They work in the form of oscillation between absence and presence where there is always a tension between what is present and what is absent but also present (Law, 2002). “Recognizing this
oscillation enables us to come to terms with forms that are fractional-subjects and objects—more than one and less than many” (Law, 2002, p. 115). Singularities arise from the interferences between multiplicities produced in the characteristic oscillation between one and many (Law, 2002).

For example, Law and Singleton (2005) use absence to show how alcoholic liver disease is a “fire object,” making the treatment of the disease very difficult. Their study shows how the disease becomes elusive and difficult to treat because hospital and aftercare organizations were enacting different versions of the disease in the treatment of patients. These differences could not be reduced to different perspectives on the same object (alcoholic liver disease), an epistemological explanation. Rather, the hospital and aftercare organizational practices were enacting and treating a different disease all together. These differences could be discerned by examining what was absent in each context of practice and how these absences differed across the contexts of practice.

In the hospital, treatment renders alcohol and the drinking person absent. In aftercare, alcohol is not rendered absent. Rather, the focus of treatment is on managing the disease relative to other aspects of life, so what becomes present are realities of balancing and regulating the disease. In the hospital, “it [alcoholic liver disease] is a lethal condition that implies abstinence. In the substance abuse centre [aftercare organization], it is a problem that implies regulation and control” (p. 346). Law and Singleton (2005) show how these methods of treatment excluded one another, yet remained necessarily related to each other because they exist as part of the same healthcare system. This illustration shows how their approach to social practice, which foregrounds patterns of absence as constitutive of presence, is characterized by complexity and messy sets of relations and practices.
Boundary Making

Barad (2007) sees the world as dynamic un-differentiated phenomena in the process of being differentiated. The basic process of differentiation is a process of \textit{boundary-making}. This follows from her logic that doing and knowing is a process of making some things determinable while simultaneously making others indeterminable. Dynamic processes of intra-activity and materialization enact determinate casual structures with determinant boundaries.

Barad’s (2007) focus is on how what is made indeterminable is actually constitutive of what is enacted as intelligible. Through intra-action, boundaries of phenomena become determinant and meaningful, enacting agential separability, or the condition of exteriority within phenomena. As scholars, our job is to trace the “intra-action” of the apparatus and show how particular “cuts” get made in phenomenon so as to produce boundaries such as inside/outside or subject/object.

Boundary-making practices make only certain things intelligible at any given moment, to the necessary exclusion of others. She theorizes boundary-making practices as material discursive practices. “Discursive practices are specific material (re)configuring of the world through which the determination of boundaries, properties, and meanings is differentially enacted” (Barad, 2007, p. 148).

For example, in a study of ultrasound technology, Barad (2007) analyzes how technological improvements to fetal imaging technology such as increased magnification, resolution, and real time imaging encourage the patient and practitioner to focus exclusively on the fetus, whose moving image fills the screen. Such material arrangements both facilitate and are in part conditioned by political discourses insisting on the autonomy and subjectivity of the fetus (Barad, 2007, p. 212). The fetus itself is also a complex phenomena and the technology of
the ultrasound is in intra-action with a multitude of practices including design constraints, political factors, the hospital environment where the technology is used and the nature of the training of technicians who use it. In addition, she points to the epistemic seduction of visual representations of 3-D ultrasound. She argues that this make the fetus body intelligible to us in ways that matter to the making of the subjectivity of the mother.

Connecting of Events

Hernes (2007) theorizes becoming as a process of connecting events in the flow. Hernes (2007) argues that processes are more than what we can see. Events will always be more than just points of experience. “Process is more than meets the eye” (Hernes, 2009, p. 138). The other events that experience (actuality) connects are potentialities. These are the many realities that exist outside of what can be observed, in a different time and space. When actualities associate with potentialities, the event embodies the past and future, thus making it meaningful. So seemingly disconnected events may hold potential effects for one another. This connecting of events to other events is what makes process (flow) and provides the basis for action. Whiteheads process philosophy argues that the here and now is never fully separated from the then and there. The present is rather a projection in an onward movement.

So how do events connect into recognizable patterns? Events take on meanings and feelings, which are associations, and the stronger these are, the stronger that event will be in agency. Once a pattern is set, then other events become enrolled into that pattern, which takes in “all of the frozen data from its predecessors and adds novel feelings of its own” (Hernes, 2007, p. 50). Hernes sees connectivity as distinct from stabilization. Stabilization represents a strengthening of something that is connected, while connectivity actually refers to "formation of the tentative, the possible and the contingent, and the potentiality unstable in process" (Hernes,
2007, p. 58). Connectivity is what allows us to study potential forms of stabilization (Hernes, 2007).

For example, Hernes (2007) analyzed the Grameen Bank as tangled organizing. He describes the becoming of the bank and the processes that met in timespace to make it what it is today. He offers this as a good example because it is difficult to see “the bank” in what Grameen does, and as such, the boundaries of the bank are difficult to draw. He points out how the bank is at once stable and novel and has a social and ideological aura that makes the organization have a plot. He argues that the retelling of stories about the bank creates a web of belief about it that transcends what the bank actually does, which propels the idea of the bank forward. He also accounts for this by describing other potentialities, such as the independence of Bangladesh and the following famine. He concludes that the plot works in the coming together of contrasts in how Grameen performs as both a bank and a social movement.

I draw my concept of the entanglement of time-space potentialities from these three thinkers. Specifically, what I have done is taken Hernes (2007) theory of potentialities and flow from Whitehead and combined with this an approach to space as absence and exteriority. I derive my notion of an absent potentiality, distributed into a space of exteriority, from Law (2002) and Barad (2007).

When the process of differentiation is an entanglement of time-space potentialities, the result is a more dynamic understanding of space and time. This more dynamic understanding, in combination with an epistemology that is tied to making distinctions, means we can position meaning-making as more central to the accomplishment of presence.
Organizing as Topologically Complex

The most important implication of this ontology is how it locates meaning-making in the making of space and time. I theorize space and time by drawing on these three thinkers. I share with them the assumption that all present meaning is sedimented from the past, but that the enactment of presence sediments out new meanings. Presence has a history, is ever-changing, and creates conditions for future possibilities. In this section, I expand my description of the four types of potentialities.

There are two kinds of time potentialities: past and projected. Past time potentialities are relations and meanings that persist from times previous to the present practice of concern. They are important to the present practice of concern in some way. Projected time potentialities are those that are sedimented out from the present practice of concern that have a great likelihood of becoming sedimented potentialities for future processes. We can ask then, what past time potentialities exist in the present practice of concern? What is being sedimented in the present process so as to form a potentiality for future processes?

There are two kinds of space potentialities: concurrent and absent. Concurrent potentialities are those relations and meanings that are taking place concurrently to the present practice of concern but in a different space. They are important to the present practice of concern in some way. Absent potentialities are those relations and meanings that are necessarily absent to the present practice of concern. These can come from other concurrent potentialities, but are also produced in the present practice of concern. We can then ask, what concurrent potentialities are important to the present practice of concern? What is being absenced in the present practice of concern so as to form an absenced potentiality?
Presence is the “weight of things” that occurs in the relationships between the four forms of time-space potentiality: past, projected, concurrent and absenced. The process by which these relate in the present practice of concern I call “re-entanglement.” Re-entanglement cuts across ontology and epistemology. This means that the specifics of re-entangling will always be associated with the particular potentialities that are important to the present practice of concern.

Once we see the nature of presence as the re-entanglement of time and space potentialities, then the basis of action is the “weight of things” that occurs in the re-entangling of space-time. We are always concerned then with how other times and spaces (potentialities) shape the process of organizing. This means that we will always see the process of organizing as topologically complex. The question of interest becomes, how is organizing topologically complex in the re-entanglement of time and space potentialities? For a detailed comparison of dynamic relationality to the other approaches in this chapter, see Table 1.

Table One

*Comparison of Dynamic Relationality*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Fractal Coherence: Law</th>
<th>Agential Realism: Barad</th>
<th>Tangled Organizing: Hernes</th>
<th>Dynamic Relationality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theoretical Foundations</strong></td>
<td>ANT</td>
<td>Feminist Theory</td>
<td>Process Philosophy</td>
<td>Post ANT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post ANT</td>
<td>Poststructuralist Theory</td>
<td>ANT</td>
<td>Feminist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poststructuralist Theory</td>
<td></td>
<td>Organizational Process Theory</td>
<td>Technoscience Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Basic Reality</strong></td>
<td>Primitive “Out-there-ness”</td>
<td>Phenomena</td>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Excess of Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instantiation of Reality</strong></td>
<td>Fractal Coherence</td>
<td>Apparatus</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Moment of Contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process of Concern</td>
<td>Distribution of differences through performances of fractal singularity.</td>
<td>Intra-actions that materialize particular apparatus’</td>
<td>Connecting of events through entification or oscillation of abstraction and experience.</td>
<td>Tangling of sedimented, concurrent. Othered, and projected potentialities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of Analyst</td>
<td>Analysis of the</td>
<td>Analysis of the</td>
<td>Analysis of</td>
<td>Analysis of re-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Point of Entry</strong></td>
<td><strong>Semiotic choreography of difference in heterogeneous practices.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Boundary drawing of sedimented material discursive practices.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Connection of entities in meaningful practices.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Situated practices of re-entangling potentialities.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time</strong></td>
<td><strong>Oscillation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Enfolding</strong></td>
<td><strong>Connecting of Events (Actualities-Potentialities)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sedimented &amp; Projected Potentialities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Space</strong></td>
<td><strong>Interference of Network, Fluid and Euclidean Space</strong></td>
<td><strong>Interiority/Exteriority of Topology</strong></td>
<td><strong>Abstraction of Process</strong></td>
<td><strong>Concurrent &amp; Othered Potentialities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How to discern differentiation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Semiotic analysis of visual representations &amp; narratives</strong></td>
<td><strong>Diffractive analysis</strong></td>
<td><strong>Trace humans connecting entities and making abstractions.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Situational analysis of response to complex social problem</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strengths</strong></td>
<td><strong>Theorizes space. Opens up the object. Makes materiality central. Highlights the problem of distributing difference.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Makes materiality central. Theorizes space. Highlights the problem of exclusion.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Theorizes time. Meaning and feeling are central to the explanation. Highlights the problem of distinction.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Theorizes the meeting of space and time. Meaning is central to the explanation as both feeling and weight. Highlights the problem of presence.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Important Question</strong></td>
<td><strong>What kinds of objects do strategies of coordination perform?</strong></td>
<td><strong>What kinds of subjects/subjectivity do apparatus produce?</strong></td>
<td><strong>What kind of organization does entification stabilize and how does this shape experience?</strong></td>
<td><strong>What spaces and times shape organizing?</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In sum, I start with ontological indeterminancy and relationality to show how the basic condition of the world can be thought of as an *excess of meaning* that exists in different times and spaces than the present. I call the starting point that follows from this logic the *problem of presence*. Any presence is an accomplishment that occurs in the making of meaning, but not just
any meaning. Once we have effectively upset the metaphysics of presence, we can turn to
relations between the meeting of time and space as the primary formation of meaning. I call
these different times and spaces *potentialities* (Hernes, 2007). Presence, when theorized as the
meeting of time and space potentialities, becomes significant as the “weight of things” (Ingold,
2010). I use the concept of presence as “weight” in order to honor the emergence that is revealed
when we challenge boundaries, but to also set the stage for taking boundaries seriously in
practice. In sum, the logic of change embedded in dynamic relationality is generative of a
complexity that challenges boundaries in new ways.

The complexity that dynamic relationality generates is important for scholars who seek to
challenge taken-for-granted boundaries. The variability of meanings made available through the
concept of potentialities sets the stage for addressing more complexity in how we theorize the
accomplishment of presence. In the next chapter, I will use this complexity to connect to an
epistemology that I call re-entanglement. You will notice that I call this an epistemology for the
sake of clarity, but in my framework, meaning-making cuts across ontology and epistemology.
Chapter Three

Taking Boundaries Seriously Through Re-Entanglement

The problem of boundaries I identified in chapter one is a dual problem. On the one hand, scholars in organizational communication and organizational technology studies challenge taken for granted boundaries in order to theorize organizations and technologies as processes. However, organizational communication and organizational technology scholars who have turned to materiality also need to take seriously boundaries in practice (Ashcraft, Kuhn, & Cooren, 2009; Bruni, 2005; Cooren, 2004; Cooren & Fairhurst, 2009; Leonardi, 2007; Leonardi & Barley, 2008; Pickering, 1995; Suchman, Trigg, & Blomberg, 2002). These scholars argue that there are limits to social construction and turn to examining the materiality of objects, bodies, and spaces in order to theorize more concretely how matter “matters” (Barad, 2007).

Because scholars working on this problem are pushing on new theoretical territory, I am taking advantage of this position and inviting these scholars to take steps to go further. The new territory that many of these scholars have in common is the turn to practice, and in particular, attempting to understand how boundaries work in practice to make organization and technology more fundamental than processes of social construction. In this chapter, I push on this new territory and address the second part of the boundary problem by developing an epistemology that will make it easier for scholars to take boundaries seriously in practice.

My contribution in this chapter is an epistemology that theorizes doing and knowing in practice as a process of making distinctions in the face of complexity. I call this epistemology “re-entanglement.” Re-entanglement builds on the dynamic relationality ontology I articulated in the previous chapter. The “work” of taking boundaries seriously is built into the basic condition of doing and knowing so scholars can turn to understanding the effects of boundaries made in
practice and the normative concerns that follow from conditions set up by particular boundaries. Re-entanglement provides enough guidance to facilitate theorizing boundaries in practice, but is general enough that the exact nature of boundary effects is an empirical question.

I build on the approaches of scholars in Science and Technology Studies (STS), Feminist Technoscience Studies, and organizational process theory (Barad, 2007; Hernes, 2007; Law, 2002). However, I add my unique organizational communication perspective to this work by specifying the process of making distinctions in the face of complexity as organizing. Organizing is concerned with how meaningful presence is accomplished through two distinct processes: enactment and sedimentation. Enactment of present meaning is comprised of connecting with past and concurrent potentialities. Connections may be strong or partial, which creates variation in how we “see” connecting work taking place in practice (Hernes, 2007). Sedimentation of present meaning is comprised of a dual process of distributing potentialities into absence and reifying potentialities into a projected future.

Scholars can attend to organizing work in order to understand how different potentialities entangle in the creation of present meaning. I use the term interference to describe entanglement in practice. Interference (Law, 2009) is designed to allow scholars to think about and ascertain multiple potentialities as relating. Meaningfulness is accomplished through constructive and deconstructive interferences of potentialities. Constructive interferences result in heightened meaning and deconstructive interference result in disseminated meaning.

In sum, re-entanglement theorizes organizing as a process of consuming and producing potentialities in practice. The effects of organizing are boundaries that make time and space. Scholars can turn to how the craftwork of re-entanglement makes past/future and inside/outside.
Organizational communication and organizational technology scholars can use re-entanglement to facilitate the work of taking boundaries seriously in practice.

**Situating the Re-Entanglement Approach to Practice**

Before I explain the details of re-entanglement, I want to take a moment to say a few words about practice. We are currently experiencing a “re-turn” to practice in social theory (Nicolini, 2009; Rasche & Chia, 2009). One hallmark of this return to practice is an interest in the doings and makings of the world. However, exactly what “practice” entails is up for considerable debate. Scholars employ a variety of implicit and explicit ways to think about and describe practice, which can lead to an excessive variation and obfuscation of the concept. Practice is a complex space, full of promise, but full of unexamined assumptions.

However, the return to practice is useful for scholars who seek to address the dual problem of boundaries. A practice lens renders a scholars’ object of study into different forms of relationality because of the assembly work implied in practice. This often means that our very understanding of the phenomenon in which we seek to study changes when we employ a practice lens.\(^5\) The study of situated practice is useful for scholars who seek to take boundaries seriously because sites of practice are composed of spaces, bodies, and objects for observation.

**The Precarious Ordering Work of Practice**

We can look to early Science & Technology Studies (STS) as providing the groundwork for the move to practice as re-entanglement. Latour & Woolgar (1986) were interested in understanding how phenomena become closed off, stabilized, and “black-boxed.” Their examination of the construction of scientific knowledge in the laboratory features practice as a

\(^5\) A good example is a recent study by Suchman, Trigg, & Blomberg (2002). She explains that to research how new objects came about in a non-practice paradigm, we looked to the concept of invention. This often focused on inventor’s roles and intentions. In a practice-based paradigm, we look to the assembly practices for an explanation of how new objects come about.
precarious ordering. After studying the precarious ordering of scientific knowledge, they found that knowledge could not be explained without attention to this ordering work.

To study the ordering process, Latour & Woolgar (1986) began with an examination of the material practices of the laboratory. In doing so, they noted the desk as the central “hub” of the laboratory through which different texts traveled. They found that because these materials were integral to this ordering work, practice could not be explained only through examination of reflexive human agents. Rather, there was a reliance on a number of “materials” to accomplish this ordering. However, in the case of the laboratory, scientific knowledge could not be produced without some erasure of the material. Once accepted as knowledge, precarious ordering practices were “black-boxed” so other scientists did not have to engage in a similar ordeal.

Re-entanglement seeks to build on the insights of Latour & Woolgar (1986) and extend these to new end goals. At a basic level, re-entanglement does characterize practice as a precarious ordering process. However, rather than attention to what becomes black-boxed, re-entanglement is concerned with understanding how distinctions are made in the face of complexity. A scholar employing re-entanglement has an interest in fluidity and indeterminacy.

**Basic Assumptions of Practice as Re-entanglement**

Practice as re-entanglement makes three assumptions that I will highlight to further situate my approach. First, re-entanglement assumes a complexity of the world that displaces the central role of the reflexive human agent. As such, the focus of inquiry is not practice in service of highlighting human agency or the formation of institutions and societies (Giddens, 1986). Rather, the focus of inquiry is practice in service of honoring and understanding the effects of complexity. Second, following this displacement of the reflexive human agent, there is a

---

6 This relation is reversed in practice as re-entangling. However, I should clarify that this should not be understood as a reversal back into the pattern dominance of Schultz, which Giddens (1984) was seeking to disrupt by introducing the rationale human actor.
different character to practice. Practice becomes the foundational texture of everyday life and “constitutes the horizon within which all discursive and material actions are made possible and acquire meaning” (Nicolini, 2009, p. 1394). Practice is the instantiation of reality. Third, following this ontological basis for practice, the role of space and time changes. In practice as re-entanglement, space and time are not the background on which practice occurs. Rather, through re-entanglement, we attend to how “spacing” and “timing” occur in practice (Jones, McLean, & Quattrone, 2004).

Complexity as Site and Surface

I have characterized re-entanglement as making distinctions in the face of complexity. In the previous section, I explained the basic assumptions that form the basis of this statement. Now I will make the link between complexity and re-entanglement more explicit. Making this link involves returning to some of the ideas from the dynamic relationality ontology I articulated in chapter two in order to make an argument about complexity as the site and surface of doing and knowing.

Complexity forms the surface of the epistemology of re-entanglement. The ontology of dynamic relationality does not assume a fixed or pre-determined external reality. Reality is enacted in re-entanglement practice. However, because re-entanglement is not a single, monolithic process, but rather distributive, local, and highly precarious in nature, we know that the realities that practices enact are multiple. There are plenty of realities to enroll into the process of making present meaning.

Complexity is also the site of re-entanglement. Specifically, complexity as site occurs when the ontological condition of excess of meaning meets the doings and knowings of practice. The epistemological process becomes a making of distinctions from this complexity. Where the
excess of meaning meets the making of distinctions, that excess of meaning becomes potentialities. Potentialities embody meaning and give meaning to present practices. Potentialities are relational phenomena and gain meanings specific to contexts of practice. I introduced the concept of potentiality in the second chapter and I will flesh it out in this chapter by linking potentialities to an articulation of organizing. In the following sections, I describe the ‘engine’ of practice as organizing meaning at the site and surface of complexity.

**Organizing Meaningful Presence**

Now I will explain what comprises a process of organizing. As mentioned above, relations between potentialities become meaningful through a process of organizing. I articulate organizing as two main processes: enactment and sedimentation of potentialities. Enactment of present meaning is comprised of connecting with past and concurrent potentialities. Sedimentation of present meaning is comprised of a dual process of distributing potentialities into absence and reifying potentialities into a projected future. In the following sections, I describe each one of these processes in detail. In the rest of the chapter, I will speak about the process of re-entanglement as it relates to practice, or the “current practice of concern.” See Figure B for a figure of re-entanglement.
**Enactment of Potentialities**

When presence is no longer a state of being, we have to first inquire how presence is accomplished. Organizing is an accomplishment of presence through enactment of meaning. I specify the enactment of meaning as a process of *connecting*. Specifically, the enactment of present meaning involves connecting with two kinds of potentialities: past and concurrent.

Past potentiality is related to time and specifically meaningful practices that occurred before the current practice of concern. The reason a past potentiality is able to become meaningful in a current practice of concern is because it was once a projected potentiality of a different practice in a different time (more on projected potentialities later). A past potentiality can be enacted as an actor, object, discourse, ideology, practice, etc. The exact form of any potentiality is variable and an empirical question. We might expect that a past potentiality when connected appear as “history.” However, the point is that all presently meaningful practice is bound up with certain past potentialities.

*Figure B: Epistemology of re-entanglement*
Concurrent potentiality is related to space and specifically meaningful practices that are occurring simultaneously, but in different spaces than the current practice of concern. The reason a concurrent potentiality is able to become meaningful in a current practice of concern is because it was once a projected potentiality of a different practice in a different space. A concurrent potentiality can be enacted as an actor, object, discourse, ideology, practice, etc. Again, the exact form of any potentiality is variable and an empirical question. We might expect that a concurrent potentiality, when connected, appear as “outside influences.” However, the point is that all presently meaningful practice is bound up with certain concurrent potentialities.

Both past and concurrent potentialities are connected in practice in order to make present meaning. *Enactment* describes the process of making connections with past and concurrent potentialities. Connections may be strong or partial, which creates variation in how we “see” connecting work taking place in practice (Hernes, 2007).

Strong connections central to the current practice of concern will be hard to miss. A strong connection is not necessarily related to a pattern, but rather to intensity or impact of the meaning. We might expect to “see” these connections being made through experiences, doings, or sayings. However connecting to potentialities may also be indicated in architecture, materials, spatial arrangements, and emotions (more on that later in chapter five).

Partial connections may only be partially visible, or what Law (2002) refers to as “manifestly absent.” Law (2004) uses emotional and aesthetic interactions with space to see how partial connection is manifested. For example, he examined the building of the Alcohol Advice Center, looking at sites of disorganization in the building as indications of partial connections to other meanings. Importantly, Law (2004) argued that we have to read between the lines when looking to space for manifest absence.
The enactment of potentialities will always be specific to the context of practice the analyst is examining. There is no a priori limit to the amount or form of potentialities that might inform the making of meaningful presence. The nature of enactment becomes an empirical question: What potentialities were made salient through enactments in the current practice of concern? How were these potentialities enacted as meaningful?

**Sedimentation of Potentialities**

Enactment describes how present meaning is made through connecting with past and concurrent potentialities. However, once present meaning is enacted, an interesting question is how that present meaning is sustained in practice and with what effect. This encompasses the second process of organizing that I wish to highlight: the sedimentation of present meaning. Sedimentation is a dual process of distribution and reification. Specifically, the sedimentation of present meaning involves the distribution of present meaning to form absent potentialities and the reification of present meaning to form projected potentialities.

Absent potentialities are related to space, and specifically that which is made exterior to the current practice of concern through practices of distribution and exclusion. The reason an absent potentiality is produced is because sustaining meaningful presence requires certain meanings be reduced or silenced. There are absent potentialities that are reduced and silenced, which are manifestly absent. However, there may also be absences that are not manifest in some way. These are “Other” to the current practice of concern (Law, 2004). An absenced potentiality may be in the form of an actor, object, discourse, ideology, practice, etc. The exact form of any potentiality produced in the sustaining of meaning is variable and an empirical question. We might expect that an absenced potentiality appear differently if it is manifestly absent versus made “Other” to the current practice of concern. A manifestly absent potentiality might appear as
“noise” in the present practice of concern. An Othered potentiality will not have a recognizable form from within the present practice of concern, but can be surfaced through analysis. However, the point is that all presently meaningful practice is sustained through the production of absent potentialities.

The final kind of potentiality, projected, is related to time and specifically what becomes reified in sustaining the meaning of present practices. The reason a projected potentiality is produced is because every process of sustaining present meaning can be understood as having an effect. Potentialities that are projected can take the form of an actor, object, discourse, ideology, practice, etc. Again, the exact form of what is an effect of the sustaining of present meaning is variable and an empirical question. We might expect that a projected potentiality appear as “consequence.” However, the point is that all presently meaningful practice produces effects in the form of projected potentialities.

Both absent and projected potentialities are effects of sustaining present meaning. Distribution describes the process of reducing and silencing some meanings into absence. Reification described the process of how in sustaining present meaning, some meanings are made to persist. The degrees of distribution and reification will vary depending on the current practice of concern, which creates variation in how we “see” this sedimentation work taking place in practice.

Distribution (Law, 2002) means that some realities have to be absenced in order for presence to make sense. We might expect to “see” these distributions being made through doings, sayings, materials, spatial arrangements, etc. Distributed potentialities exist both inside and outside of discursive awareness. A more extreme degree of distribution is exclusion (Barad, 2007), which says that some realities always have to be Othered for presence to make sense.
There is always absence as Othering, but we cannot say anything general about that Othering. We can only say things about it in particular moments (Law, 2004) to try to understand how what is Othered becomes necessary for present enactments.

Reification encompass the effects of present meaning being sustained. These meanings are most connected in processes of enactment (Hernes, 2007) and “survive” the inevitable process of distribution. We might expect to “see” these reifications being made through doings, sayings, materials, spatial arrangements, etc. However, since these potentialities are reified, this exists largely inside of discursive awareness. These meanings that become sedimented will act as past potentialities for future practices.

The sedimentation of potentialities will always be specific to the context of practice the analyst is examining. There is no a priori limit to the amount or form of potentialities that might become effects of the making of meaningful presence. The nature of sedimentation becomes an empirical question: What potentialities were absenced through distribution in the current practice of concern? How did these absenced potentialities relate to meaning in the current practice of concern? What was excluded in order for the present enactment of meanings to be accomplished? What potentialities were projected through reification in the current practice of concern? How did these shape meanings in the current practice of concern? How might these projected potentialities shape future practices of concern?

**The Interference of Potentialities**

I have identified organizing as comprised of two processes: enactment of past and concurrent potentialities and sedimentation of absent and projected potentialities. At this point, I have described the framework as fairly static for purposes of clarification. However, complexity occurs in the relationship between different space-time potentialities. I call the relationship
between potentialities *interference* (Law, 2009). I borrowed this concept from Law (2009) but I expand it by reading it through Barad’s (2007) notion of diffraction. She specifies two types of interference. Meaningfulness is accomplished through constructive and deconstructive interferences of potentialities. Constructive interferences result in heightened meaning and deconstructive interference result in disseminated meaning. In any practice of concern, the analyst will be most interested in how different potentialities relate in the creation of present meaning. This relationship encompasses the essence of what I mean by “re-entanglement” as an epistemology performed in practice.

There are two ways in which relationships can be discerned between potentialities. First, the analyst can look at how different potentialities relate within a single practice of concern. For example, how might particular past potentialities shape the concurrent potentialities that are enacted? Or, how do absent potentialities shape what becomes a projected potentiality? Below, I posit a set of relationships based on the four potentialities. Second, the analyst can compare potentialities, and their relationships, across different sites of practices. This means an analysis of existing potentialities in one practice of concern is compared with potentialities enacted and sedimented in a different practice of concern. How do the past potentialities in one practice compare to the past potentialities enacted in a different practice? Or, how might the absent potentialities in one practice compare to the absent potentialities distributed in a different practice? Below, I describe how we might approach this comparison.

**Interference Between Potentialities**

We can begin by looking at the relationship between potentialities in a single practice of concern. If you recall, all present meaning is enacted in practice through connection to past and
concurrent potentialities. All present meaning is sustained in practice through distribution and reification of absent and projected potentialities.

Importantly, the analyst will want to entertain how these potentialities entangle. This is a different logic than “construction” and “constitution.” To think about entanglement, we can return to the notion of interference (Law, 2009). I borrowed the concept of interference from Law (2009) but expanded it when reading the concept through an understanding of waves and diffraction patterns in Barad’s (2007) theory of Agential Realism. Diffraction has to do with the way waves combine when they overlap (Barad, 2007). Waves can occupy the same space in time and when this occurs there is a composite waveform. This is a diffraction pattern.

There is both constructive and deconstructive interference with waveforms (Barad, 2007). This is fairly simple to illustrate. I will turn to an entry from Wikipedia to describe this in clear form. “If a crest of a wave meets a crest of another wave at the same point then the crests interfere constructively and the resultant crest wave amplitude is increased; similarly two troughs make a trough of increased amplitude. If a crest of a wave meets a trough of another wave then they interfere destructively, and the overall amplitude is decreased” (Interference, 2011). See Figure C for an example. The areas of blue are constructive interference and deconstructive interference are the shades of red and yellow. Constructive interference is when meaning is heightened and deconstructive interference is when meaning is disseminated.
My point is that the analyst can understand potentialities as operating in dynamic constructive and deconstructive interferences. Interference is thus a way to think about and ascertain multiple potentialities as relating. Based on interference, a few general statements about relationships between potentialities in a single practice of concern can be posited:

A. When past and concurrent potentialities constructively interfere, meaning is heightened.

B. When past and concurrent potentialities deconstructively interfere, meaning is disseminated.

C. When absent and projected potentialities constructively interfere, meaning heightened.

D. When absent and projected potentialities deconstructively interfere, meaning is disseminated.

These reflect different relationships possible between potentialities of enactment and potentialities of sedimentation. What about the relationship between the time potentialities across enactment and sedimentation and the space potentialities across enactment and sedimentation?
When a past potentiality becomes reified into a projected potentiality, this is constructive interference and meaning is heightened.

When a concurrent potentiality becomes distributed into an absent potentiality, this is constructive interference and meaning is heightened.

These reflect different relationships possible between time potentialities and space potentialities. What about the relationship between enacted time potentialities and sedimented space potentialities? Or, what about the relationship between enacted space potentialities and sedimented time potentialities?

When a past potentiality becomes distributed into an absent potentiality, this is deconstructive interference and meaning is disseminated.

When a concurrent potentiality becomes reified into a projected potentiality, this is constructive interference and meaning is heightened.

Othered potentialities existed outside of the discursive awareness of the practice of concern. However, Othered potentialities may be recovered by the analyst to interfere with what projected potentialities are possible. Othered potentialities inevitably condition what sorts of enactments occur and how different enactments relate. Once we understand what is Othered we can better understand and define the “topography of reality-possibilities” in any given set of practices (Law, 2004, p. 34).

**Comparing Interference of Potentialities Across Contexts of Practice**

So far I have posited different sets of interference relations between potentialities in a single practice of concern. However, the analysis of relationships between potentialities can be extended to comparing and contrasting two or more different contexts of practices. Specifically, the way in which potentialities interfere is an important dimension of understanding complex
social problems. For example, we might notice how two different sets of practices share the same sedimented potentialities. Or we might compare what was Othered in one context of practice with what as Othered in a different context of practice. We might also notice that what is an important concurrent potentiality in one context of practice is not in another. Or, perhaps two contexts of practice are reifying different projected potentialities. The point is that these relationships might have meaning relative to your reasons for comparing and contrasting the two contexts of practice.

For example, Law & Singleton (2005) studied Alcoholic Liver Disease using this approach. The disease was a problem of societal concern because patients who were treated in the hospital were constantly returning after treatment with the same problem. Essentially, the patient was taking up valuable and limited bed space in the hospital. Law & Singleton (2005) approached the disease as diffuse, located both within and beyond the body. It was medical in character, located in the body of the patient, but also reached into the political and cultural milieu. They found that the social practice of treating Alcoholic Liver Disease in outpatient treatment was manifestly absent to the medical treatment of the disease in the hospital. These different sites enacted different “objects” of the disease, and as a result, when patients moved from one site to the next, they experienced displacement. This explained, in part, the problem of relapse. It was not just an individual problem, but a problem located in one context of practice distributing potentialities that were actually central to the enactments of the other context of practice.7

Re-entanglement lends itself to addressing complex social problems by trying to understand how different meanings enacted in different contexts of practices relate together. My

---

7 This is what Law (2004) refers to as Ontological Politics.
goal is not to posit cause and effect relationships. Rather my goal is to honor complexity while also being able to say a few specific things about complexity in certain contexts of practice. Then the analyst can ask, what is the event horizon\(^8\) of a particular context of practice? What is the boundary, that once passed, makes particular meanings indeterminate and inaccessible to other contexts of practice? If we could attend to these differences, then we can better address the important normative question: how can we make different contexts of practice overlap in ways that are more productive (Law, 2004)?

In sum, re-entanglement is an epistemology that is generated in complexity and generative of distinctions. As such, the central issue of concern shifts from how knowing constructs our world to how the craftwork of practice makes past/future and inside/outside. The exact nature of re-entanglement is a question for empirical study. How is meaningful presence enacted and sedimented in the re-entangling of space-time potentialities?

**Locating the Process of Re-entanglement in “Moments of Contact”**

So far I have described the process of re-entanglement in the conceptual realm and alluded to how it might look in the “current practice of concern.” However, once the analyst locates the “current practice of concern” more specifically, she can refer to this place as the “moment of contact.” The moment of contact is the place where meaningful presence is being made in specific heterogeneous practices. The moment of contact actually takes place as an experienced reality, by which I define that there is a presence that is meaningful in some way. Outside of the moment of contact are variable meanings and relations in the form of space-time potentialities.

---

\(^8\) “Event Horizon” is a term that explains the entry point of a black hole in space. Black holes are an interesting analogy to the complexity of absence in social life. However, once matter crosses the threshold of a black hole, it cannot be recovered.
Moments of contact are sites of situated, heterogeneous practices. The analyst can expect in these moments of contact to notice and attend to organizing. Organizing work is the making of meaning and should encompass connecting, distributing, and reifying. We focus first and foremost on this ordering work to understand what potentialities are relevant to our moment of contact, and what effects the connecting, distributing, and reification are producing. Then, we can inquire into how these constructively or deconstructively interfere. See Figure D for a figure of “moments of contact.” Through an examination of organizing work, the analyst should be able to see in “moments of contact\(^9\)” how relations between potentialities create local conditions of objectivity and how this relates to projected potentialities for the future (Barad, 2007).

Figure D: Interference in moments of contact

\(^9\) What I mean by “moment of contact” will become clearer in the next chapter when I contextualize this framework in relation to the study of organization.
Implications of Practice as Re-Entanglement

Re-entanglement is based on the ontological excess of meaning and the problem of presence. Enactment is the process that shows how presence is made by actively connecting to meaning. I intend that enactment will allow scholars to challenge boundaries. We know that there are entities in the world that look like containers, but we are always inquiring into their accomplishment. Sedimentation is the process that shows how what is made present takes shape through a stabilization of meaning. I have theorized distribution as an inextricable part of sedimentation in order to incorporate the notion of “being organized” into the analysis. I intend that distribution and sedimentation will allow scholars to take boundaries that are performed in practice seriously. Re-entanglement both challenges and takes boundaries seriously to focus on how presence is made meaningful in the connecting, distributing, and reification of different space-time potentialities.

What good can a study of the re-entanglement of potentialities do? In the following sections, I offer some possible implications of re-entanglement for our ability to study complex social problems, for expanding our understandings of communication, and finally, for our understanding of power.

Prospective Explanations for Complex Social Problems

Complex social problems are distributed, dislocated, and diffuse, perhaps only present to us in fragments. An approach to the study of complex social problems that is able to apprehend those fragments, both materially and ideationally, would be valuable. Potentialities as inextricably tied to any presence, adds a new dimension to the study of practice that can help us to better apprehend the complexity of social problems. Moments of contact are meaningful enactments of presence that become past potentialities for future moments of contact. The logic
of re-entanglement is useful to apprehend the “layering” of meaning that occurs in the formation of complex social problems. In re-entanglement, meaning making is always a process of “re-meaning.” Every moment of contact will have past potentialities that are connected. However, in the process of making meaningful presence, new projected potentialities are always in the process of being sedimented out (Barad, 2007).

Moments of contact that re-make past potentialities into projected potentialities have an important bearing on understanding complex social problems. This is not because repetition creates pattern, but because that moment of contact becomes a possible potentiality, or source of novelty for future moments of contact. We can examine projected potentialities in moments of contact to anticipate what meanings future moments of contact might enact. As such, the value in a re-entanglement explanation of social life is that it has a prospective element that is important to its explanation, rather than just a deconstructive explanation. This type of prospective, future-oriented explanation is needed when trying to tackle complex social problems.

**Meaning Making Broadly Defined**

The epistemology of re-entanglement might belong to any discipline of research practice. What makes re-entanglement important or interesting for organizational communication scholars? Before I answer this question, I think it is valuable to think about where we locate “communication” in our explanations. For many organizational communication scholars, there is an assumption that meaning is occurring in the intersubjective awareness and obligation between actors. While re-entanglement does not eschew this basic process, it does not make intersubjectivity its assumptive “engine” of communication. For other organizational communication scholars, the meaning is seen as occurring “in” the discourse itself produced from interactions. While re-entanglement would certainly look to discourse for the making of
meaning, not all meaning would be located in discourse produced in interactions. Still yet for others, meaning occurs in the condition of possibility set out by discourses that are at once disembodied and embodied in the process of organization. Re-entanglement is concerned with discourses that set out the conditions of possibility, but only as these relate to embodied and performed meanings.

In my framework, the ontological basis of communication is broadly defined as “meaning-making.” The ontological basis for communication is the excess of meanings. The problem of presence is a complex one, following this ontology. Complexity becomes the site and surface of an epistemological basis of communication as meaning-making that occurs in the process of making distinctions. Communication is defined broadly, as any form of meaning-making, and ties communication to a process that is both in and of space and time.

What are more specific aspects of communication that should be highlighted within this broad approach to communication? For one, meaning outside of spoken discourse has a central role in explaining re-entanglement. For example, Marcus (1998) argued that eccentric heirs of great wealth had a keen awareness of their multiply authored, double, parallel selves constructed by others in different spheres of production. Drawing on Taussig, who was inspired by Walter Benjamin, Marcus (1998) calls this meaning “mimetic.” Mimetic meaning is a form of communication that depends on performance and the senses, an embodied and felt communication, rather than a discursive mode of communication.

Additionally, a great deal of meaning exists in partial connections, absence, and the process of distribution. If we look to absence for meaning, we are able to access a “distributed” form of communication because absenced meanings are those that are also distributing space and time. We can tap into these displaced meanings, and how they are picked up in different contexts.
of practices, in order to understand emergent maps of displaced meanings. Meaning that is more ephemeral and fleeting becomes important to any communicative explanation.

**Conceptualizations of Power**

Partial connections and distribution are important organizing processes to examine carefully for power. To understand the meaningfulness of presence, the analyst must look to actors, objects, discourses, and ideologies that may be only partially connected to the moment of contact. This attention to partial connection helps us to avoid explaining stability on its own terms (Hernes, 2007). The processes of distribution and exclusion focus the analyst on the “unseen.” This process has implications for power, because absent potentialities have been silenced or excluded in some way. When our analysis ties this to a specific actor or discourse, re-entanglement can reveal of different forms of power and control.

In the following chapter, I explicate a version of “organization” that is derived from the dynamic relationality ontology and the re-entanglement epistemology. I call this “problem-centered organizing.” Problem-centered organizing describes a way of conceptualizing organization as a topologically complex process of organizing. It matches the epistemology of re-entanglement and contextualizes many of the aspects of re-entanglement more specifically to the problematic of concern: how to both challenge boundaries conceptually and take boundaries seriously in practice.
Chapter Four

Problem-Centered Organizing

In organizational communication, CCO scholars who have turned to constitution ask, how does communication constitute organization (Ashcraft, Kuhn, & Cooren, 2009; Cooren & Fairhurst, 2009; Cooren, 2004; Kuhn, 2008; McPhee & Iverson, 2009; McPhee & Zaug, 2009; Putnam & Nicotera, 2009; Taylor & Van Every, 2000; Taylor, 2009; Weick, 1979)? In organizational technology studies, scholars who have turned to materiality ask, how should we understand the relationship between organization and technology (Bruni, 2005; Fulk, Schmitz, & Steinfield, 1990; Jackson, 1996; Leonardi, 2007; Leonardi & Barley, 2008; Orlikowski, 2007; Orlikowski, W., & Scott, S. V., 2008; Orlikowski, 2010; Pickering, 1995; Pinch & Bijker, 1984; Suchman, Trigg, & Blomberg, 2002)? Scholars in both conversations share the dual problem of boundaries: how to challenge taken-for-granted boundaries while also simultaneously taking seriously the central role of boundaries in practice.

I now return to these two central questions through the ontological and epistemological lens that I developed in the previous two chapters. I offer a framework to study organizations as entanglements of time-space relations. A distinctive feature of the framework is that responses to complex social problems become the “entry” point for conceptualizing and studying organization. Responses to complex social problems are any effort to sustain, shape, or change an existing, but also quickly changing and elusive state of affairs. For clarity purposes, a complex social problem is like a wicked problem, which is difficult to solve because solving one aspect may lead to additional problems. The point is that both the response to the problem and the problem itself is complex. I call my framework “problem-centered organizing.”
My contribution in this chapter is to show how addressing the dual nature of the boundary problem allows scholars to better study organizations, communication, and technology as inextricably related to complex social problems. My hope is that this renews a normative basis for the study of organization and shows how complex social problems are materially organized.

My framework is designed to help scholars apprehend how different times and spaces shape the practice of organizing. First, the entry point for the study of organization is responses to complex social problems. This means that the scholar uses the complex social problem to focus and sharpen how she sees organizations. Organization, in relation to a response to a complex social problem, becomes situated in a broader set of relations and issues. Attending to a broader set of relations is an important move for examining organization as re-entanglement of time-space relations.

Next, the framework specifies an invariable core for organization based in organizing, which grounds the study of organization in practices. As described in chapter three, organizing is the processes of enactment and sedimentation in the effort to make present meaning. Because the focus of the analyst is on organizing work, rather than organizations a priori, I call sites of organizing work problem contexts. I use the term problem contexts to replace the term organization and extend its meaning. Problem-contexts are locations where confluences of different relations are working on responding to a complex social problem. The analyst can expect to find organizing work taking place in problem contexts.

Finally, the analyst can turn her attention to how time and space potentialities are organized in problem contexts. As I explained in chapter three, organizing work involves the enactment of past and concurrent potentialities and the sedimentation of potentialities into a space of absence or projection into the future. The enactment process is the production of
organizing, or the use of space and time. Past potentialities and concurrent potentialities become the basis for making present meaning in the problem context. The sedimentation process is the effect of organizing, which is the making of space and time. Absent potentialities become spaces of exteriority to the problem context. Projected potentialities survive and persist as future time. The goal of paying attention to time-space potentialities is to introduce a dislocal complexity to the study of situated organizing practices and for the analyst to be able to say something about the nature of complex social problems.

My hope is that this framework will open up new questions for scholars in organizational communication and organizational technology studies. The question that becomes relevant for CCO scholars in organizational communication who have turned to constitution is, how should we understand the dynamic entanglement of organization, communication, and complex social problems? The question that becomes relevant for scholars in organizational technology studies who have turned to the materiality of technology is, how should we understand the dynamic entanglement of organization, technology, and complex social problems? These questions make an important shift from the relationship between entities to theorizing multi-dimensional processes.

I also use my framework for an empirical study of a problem contexts responding to a complex social problem. My analysis follows chapter five, and examines the social problem of how to engage citizens to participate in local governance. The response to this problem that I studied is called “Heart & Soul” community planning. In order to empirically study “Heart & Soul” using a problem-centered organizing framework, I asked these research questions:

RQ1: How did problem-centered organizing occur?

A: What connecting work occurred and what meanings did this enact?
B: What reification and distribution work occurred and what meanings did this sediment?

C: How did potentialities interfere in the organizing process?

A Problem-Centered Organizing Framework

In the following sections, I detail the problem-centered organizing framework. I first describe how and why time and space become the analysts primary concerns. Following this, I explain how responses to complex social problems become the “entry” point for conceptualizing and studying organization and technology. Then, I contextualize the framework by specifying exactly how we “see” organization and technology when time-space relations and complex social problems are the analysts main concerns.

The first layer of contextualization in the framework depicts organizations as problem contexts where specific forms of organizing work take place in the making of meaning. As mentioned above, I use the term problem contexts to replace the term organization and extend its meaning. Problem-contexts are locations where confluences of different relations are working on responding to a complex social problem. A second layer of contextualization in the framework depicts the organizations as problem spaces where organizing is making space and time. I use the problem space as a term that ties organizing back to the social problem. See figure E for a figure of the problem-centered organizing framework.
When I think about organizations in society, I see a “mess” (Law, 2004). The term mess conjures up many meanings and images. On the one hand, mess sounds a bit like chaos. However, mess is also the result of when well-intentioned processes have gone wrong. I locate mess in-between accident and design. This means that happenings in the world are never complete coincidence or the playing out of already pre-determined relations. Rather, mess is an intentioned process combined with happenings that always seem to elude intention.

---

10 The term “mess” should be credited explicitly to John Law and in particular his Method After Mess (2004) account.
When a scholar is concerned about time-space relations, it is possible to see the mess. The dynamic relationality ontology I articulated in chapter two challenges “Euclidean” notions of time and space. Time does not “march by” and space a not just a container around matter. Rather, time and space become much more dynamic. I argued in chapter three that doing and knowing is the process of making distinctions in the face of complexity. In particular, this involves entangling of time-space to make meaningful presence in practice.

When time-space is the analysts primary concern, something happens to how we see organizations. Not surprisingly, we can think of organizations as specific intersections of time-space relations. I will detail these specific relations more in a later section. However, a general concern with time-space relations, rather than an organization defined a priori, expands what “counts” in the realm of study. This inspired me to see complex social problems as an integral part of thinking about organization. In the next section, I argue for putting the conceptualization and study of organization into direct relationship with complex social problems.

**Responses to Complex Social Problems**

The “entry” point for conceptualization and study of organization in my framework is *responses to complex social problems*. An “entry” point does several things. First, it is the lens that we can use to focus and sharpen how we see the world. Second, it is a starting point for our empirical investigation. Before I address how responses to complex social problems operate as a lens and a starting point for study, I would like us to first think about responses to complex social problems. What exactly is a response to a complex social problem?

I like to think about this topic very broadly. Responses to complex social problems are any effort to sustain, shape, or change an existing, but also quickly changing and elusive state of affairs. The point is that both the response to the problem and the problem itself is complex.
One might think, after reading the above description, this could include just about anything! I would answer simply, yes. I think leaving it broadly defined is important because complex social problems are diffuse and changing. The point of broad definition is also to give the analyst room to shape and define the boundaries of her object of study. When the conceptualization and study of organization is in relation to complex social problems, the result is an object of study that is sufficiently complex to the re-entanglement epistemology.

Though I leave the response to the complex social problem broadly defined, it becomes a lens through which we begin to see organization in new ways. At minimum, any response to a complex social problem will include a confluence of different time-space relations. As a lens, it does not delimit the relations we might examine in the study of organization. Rather, starting with a complex social problem opens up more relations for analysis and explanation. Organization is situated in a broader set of relations and issues. One of the goals of problem-centered organizing is to apprehend as many relationships as possible.

Responses to complex social problems operate as a lens for positioning organization in an inextricable relationship with important normative concerns. If we study organizations as they relate to complex social problems, the ability to address normative issues will become part and parcel of doing research.

An “entry” point operates both as a conceptual lens and as starting point for empirical study. In regards to the latter, the response to the complex social problem, quite broadly, should serve as our guide to determining what “counts” as an organization, rather than assuming the organization apriori. This is refined, in part, by a focus on the response to the social problem,
which situates the starting point as fundamentally more "organizational." Responses will always encompass a site of organizing work that we can attend to empirically. Organizing work forms the “site” of organization in problem-centered organizing. In the next section, I develop these last two points by further contextualizing how the analyst will “see” organization after focusing on a specific social problem.

**Problem Contexts and Organizing Work**

Before I detail the specifics of problem contexts and the organizing work that characterizes these contexts, I need to draw out the relationship between this portion of the framework and the epistemology that I articulated in chapter three. I explained the “engine” of practice as the making of distinctions in the face of complexity. I argued that the relationship between making distinctions and time-space occurs in “moments of contact.” Specifically, the moment of contact is where time-space relations are enacted and sedimented in specific heterogeneous practices in service of making the present meaningful. The relationship between epistemology and time-space is located in the making of present meaning.

Once the analyst has defined the response to the complex social problem, moments of contact become *problem contexts*. Problem-contexts are locations where confluences of different relations are working to respond to a complex social problem. In problem contexts, the analyst should expect to find multiple organizational efforts taking place. I should clarify that problem contexts do not have to correspond to an actual physical location. Rather, what the analyst is

---

11 One of the issues in current Communicative Constitution of Organization (CCO) conversations is how communication is “organizational” (Taylor & Van Every, 2000). In Taylor and colleagues formulation this occurs because actors have obligations to respond to each other in relationship to an organizational goal. What is organizational about communication in my framework is how it orders time-space relations. This is not based on an obligation to a shared goal, but a need for meaningful presence in the face of complexity.

12 If there are not multiple organizational efforts in your problem context, this means the analyst may need to broaden how she is looking at and defining her response to the social problem.
doing is deciding, out of all of the relations that our social problem has surfaced, which relations are most salient to the present meaningfulness of the problem? We may select to examine a single problem context or several problem contexts. This depends on the specific goals of the project. Problem contexts are variable, so choosing which problem contexts are the most salient to a particular social problem is a matter for empirical inquiry.

However, what the analyst attends to at the site of specific problem contexts is not variable. Every problem context is a specific site where organizing work is occurring. If we return to the practice based epistemology in chapter three, organizing work refers to the specific activity of enactment and sedimentation. Enactment is defined as connecting work that takes place in heterogeneous practices in order to make present meaning. Sedimentation is defined as distributing and reifying work that also takes place in heterogeneous practices in order to sustain present meaning. Processes of enactment and sedimentation, in relationship to making meaning, form the invariable core of the framework, encompassed by the term organizing.

A focus on organizing in problem contexts directs the analysts attention to the many heterogeneous organizational efforts taking place in the social problem domain. Organization is conceptualized as a “site” where organizing work is occurring. A focus on organizing also shifts the analytic focus to process. The analyst can expect that organizing work is continuously unfolding. Exactly how organizing work is accomplished in practice is of primary concern to the analyst. Because organizing is always ordering work in relation to meaning making, there is an implied disorder that is also inherent to any organizing practice. In the next section, I develop this last point by further contextualizing how the analyst will “see” organization and technology after locating specific problem contexts.
The Entanglement of Time-Space Potentialities

If you refer to Figure E, you can see that I have now made it as far as the inner ring of the framework. Nested within problem contexts is another layer of contextualization, which addresses what meanings the analyst should attend to in organizing work. In particular, the analyst is concerned with how time-space potentialities are organized and what effects this produces. I call problem contexts infused with time-space potentialities problem spaces. The effects of organizing become the making of space and time. Importantly, time-space potentialities are the final piece needed in order to reach the goal of conceptualizing and studying organization as topologically complex.

The analysts interest in organizing work is always in relationship to time-space potentialities. However, before I detail how time-space potentialities relate to organizing work, I need to describe exactly what a “time-space potentiality” refers to. In chapter three, I offered four different types of time-space potentialities. First, past potentialities are related to time, and specifically meaningful practices that occurred before the current problem context. We might expect that a past potentiality when connected in a current problem context appear as “history.” Second, concurrent potentialities are related to space, and specifically meaningful practices that are occurring simultaneously, but in different spaces than the current problem context. We might expect that a concurrent potentiality, when connected in a current problem context appear as “outside influences.” Third, absent potentialities are related to space, and specifically that which is made exterior to the current problem context through distribution and exclusion. An absent potentiality, when distributed in a current problem context might appear as “noise.” Finally, projected potentialities are related to time, and specifically what becomes reified in sustaining meaning in the current problem context. We might expect that a projected potentiality appear in
the current problem context as “consequence.” In sum, the reason for identifying time-space potentialities is to put the analysts focus on how "elsewhere" is made present in processes of creating meaning (Marcus, 1998).

Time-space potentialities are necessary to organizing in problem contexts. Though I have specified types of potentialities, the exact form a potentiality will take is variable and contextual to the specific problem context. A potentiality could be in the form of an object, actor, discourse, practice, etc. What becomes important is how, through organizing, certain potentialities are connected in the enactment of present meaning and how this meaning is sedimented through distribution and reification.

Time-space potentialities become the “object” of organizing that the analyst focuses on after locating the relevant problem contexts. Now that I have explained what a time-space potentiality is, I will explain why time-space potentialities become the objects of focus for the analyst. In the previous section, I described a problem context as a “site” where organizing work takes place in response to complex social problems. This was necessary to localize organization as sites of heterogeneous practice. Time-space potentialities, as the “objects” of organizing work, become important because they introduce a dislocal complexity to the site of problem contexts. Every problem context is connected to other times. This means the analyst will “see” organization as “filled with time” (Ingold, 2010). Similarly, every problem context is connected to other spaces. This means the analyst will see organization as infused with different sites. Connections to time-space potentialities introduces topology to the site.  

13 Topology is the study of spatial properties under conditions of continuous transformation. In topology, the focus is not on objects themselves, but rather the connections between objects and the resulting transformation implied in that connection. I was first introduced to topology through readings of John Law (2007). Since then, I have been investigating topology in geometry and have become more favorable to it as a metaphor for a situated yet highly complex view of organization.
I have one final claim left to explain. I mentioned earlier that the effects of organizing become the *making of space and time*. Above, I described how connecting to different time-space potentialities in the problem context makes it topologically complex. However, at the same time, organizing also includes distributing and reifying time-space potentialities. Distribution refers to the process by which potentialities are absenced in practice. The logic behind distribution is that some connected potentialities *necessarily* have to be silenced, or not recognized, for problem contexts to have coherent meaning. These absent potentialities become spaces, and specifically spaces of exteriority to the problem context (Barad, 2007). Reification refers to the process by which potentialities are projected forward in practice. The logic behind reification is that these are connected potentialities that “survived” the process of distribution and include meaning that persists. These projected potentialities become time, and specifically indicative of the future for the problem context.

In sum, time-space potentialities introduce novelty to problem contexts. The exact form a time-space potentiality will take is variable and the exact relationship between different time-space potentialities and the problem context is also variable. However, through the process of distribution and reification, we can expect to see certain “effects” of organizing work. The potentialities that are absenced and reified in a particular problem context should speak directly to our understanding of the complex social problem that defined the entry point of the project. In essence, the point of creating a topologically complex organization is to be able to say something specific about the nature of the complex social problem.

**Organization-Communication-Technology Relationships as Problem-Centered Organizing**

Now I will return to the questions that I wish to address through my framework and my empirical study. In organizational communication, CCO scholars who have turned to constitution
ask, how does communication constitute organization (Ashcraft, Kuhn, & Cooren, 2009; Cooren & Fairhurst, 2009; Cooren, 2004; Kuhn, 2008; McPhee & Iverson, 2009; McPhee & Zaug, 2009; Putnam & Nicotera, 2009; Taylor & Van Every, 2000; Taylor, 2009)? In organizational technology studies, scholars who have turned to materiality ask, how should we understand the relationship between organization and technology (Bruni, 2005; Leonardi, 2007; Leonardi & Barley, 2008; Orlikowski, 2007; Orlikowski, W., & Scott, S. V., 2008; Orlikowski, 2010; Pickering, 1995; Suchman, Trigg, & Blomberg, 2002)? Scholars in both conversations share the dual problem of boundaries: how to challenge taken-for-granted boundaries while also simultaneously taking seriously the central role of boundaries in practice. I believe that problem-centered organizing addresses the dual boundary problem and brings these two separate conversations and their concerns together.

In the following sections, I highlight the unique aspects of problem-centered organizing and explain some implications for how we might approach organization, communication, and technology in practice. I will to show how this approach differs from existing approaches I analyzed in chapter one. I will specifically compare problem-centered organizing to the three approaches that I classified as working on the problem of taking boundaries seriously in practice. I called these approaches interpenetrating practices, hybrid networks, and sociomaterial configurations. See Table 2 for a comparison of problem-centered organizing with these three other existing approaches.
Table 2

Comparing Problem-Centered Organizing with Existing Approaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Relational Views</th>
<th>Interpenetrating Practices (Leonardi, 2007)</th>
<th>Hybrid Networks (Bruni, 2005; Cooren, 2004)</th>
<th>Sociomaterial Configurations (Orlikowski, 2007)</th>
<th>Problem-Centered Organizing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agential Modes of Being</td>
<td>Human</td>
<td>Human &amp; Nonhuman</td>
<td>No Inherent Mode of Being</td>
<td>Time-space Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational Logic</td>
<td>Reciprocal Interaction</td>
<td>Mutual Transformation</td>
<td>Constitutive Intra-action</td>
<td>Becoming Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanism for Entry</td>
<td>Human perceptions of material properties of technology through use and practice</td>
<td>Formation of hybrid agencies in discourse and practice</td>
<td>Making of agencies in already configured sociomaterial practices</td>
<td>Relations between time-space potentialities in heterogeneous practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Question</td>
<td>How does material agency activated through use shape social arrangements and organizational structures?</td>
<td>How do hybrid agents connected in discourse structure/span organizations across space and time?</td>
<td>How do sociomaterial practices produce boundaries, agencies, and normative categories?</td>
<td>How do relations between time-space potentialities enact and sediment organizational space and time?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results of Expanded View of Ontology</td>
<td>We see how material technology effect and extend structures through repeated practice.</td>
<td>We see how organizations span space and time through durability of hybrid agency.</td>
<td>We see how determinacy and exclusions are performed in social and material arrangements in practice.</td>
<td>We see complex relationships between multiple organizations and technologies as they unfold.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation of Relational Logic</td>
<td>Humans use of material properties of a technology</td>
<td>Tracing associations and connections and the relations these perform</td>
<td>Intra-action of material discursive phenomenon</td>
<td>Enactment and sedimentation of time-space potentialities meanings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Affordance</td>
<td>Object</td>
<td>Apparatus</td>
<td>Emergent Relief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Structure of Recursive Practices</td>
<td>Effect of Network</td>
<td>Modes of Ordering</td>
<td>Problem Contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logic of Change</td>
<td>Recursive practices reinforce or transform structures/cultures</td>
<td>Ordering/ Organizing chains of agencies</td>
<td>Boundary Making</td>
<td>Continuous Becoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Empirical Contexts</td>
<td>Single technology in well established organizations</td>
<td>Bounded organizational contexts or organizational interactions</td>
<td>Developed configurations</td>
<td>Multiple organizational and technological efforts in response complex social problem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Highlighting the “Relationship Between” Organization and Technology

Problem-centered organizing uniquely repositions the analytic focus on one operative word in the above question: relationship. Rather than specifying an organization or a technology apriori, the concern is with specific relations between organization and technology as they dynamically emerge in particular problem contexts. This framework requires that the analyst take two steps away from what is perhaps a more well-known view: organization as a “place” where work gets done and technology as a tool that is “used.”

The first step involves making both organization and technology equivalent as “sites” of organizing work. The conceptual equivalency of organization and technology is certainly not new to scholars addressing the question of how organization and technology relate. However, the second step is less familiar territory. Problem-centered organizing requires that the analyst attends to sites of organizing work as entangled with different time-space potentialities. 14

What does this mean for the study of technology and organization in practice? In practice, a technology can appear somewhat fixed and static. Several of the existing approaches see technology as its material form. A technology is a machine that has particular affordances when used (Leonardi, 2007), or technology is an object that is durable and provides stability to an organizational network (Cooren, 2004). In a problem-centered organizing framework, the face value of the material form is no longer apparent. This is largely because organization takes on a dynamic form as organizing. As such, technology in problem-centered organizing emerges in how it is marked out through three specific processes: connecting, distributing and reifying.

Because the focus is on process and relationships, rather than the technology as an apriori object, the form that technology takes in practice resembles what we might think of as a relief, 14 Karen Barad (2007) and Wanda Orlikowski (2007) have argued for a similar conception. However, they translate the technology as an “apparatus” which reflects a less variable view of time-space relations than the one I am articulating here.
emerging from time-space relations. Technology has a material form, but this is entirely emergent from the organizing process. This relief form may or may not “match” what appears to be the static form of technology in practice. The central question from a problem-centered organizing approach is, what emerges as salient technology through organizing of time-space potentialities in problem contexts?

**The Centrality of Meaning Making**

An additional unique aspect of problem-centered organizing, in comparison to existing approaches, is the way in which meaning-making is central to defining technology and organization in practice. In chapter three, I described re-entanglement as having a much broader view of communication than current views of practice and discourse. In particular, I pointed out how most approaches adopted the implicit logic that practice gains significance because of repetition or recurrence. Practice is assumed to take on meaning _over_ time. Problem-centered organizing employs a different logic of practice. Practice is meaningful because it is infused with other times and spaces.

The logic of practice that problem-centered organizing is based on locates meaning making more centrally: doing and knowing is a process of making distinctions in the face of complexity. As such, meaning making is the mechanism that defines both the engine and the result of practice. This logic of practice is more fundamental than the logic of recurrence because it encompasses both order and disorder. Meaning occurs not only in what is ordered and recurrent, but also in what is necessarily disordered and distributed. If we believe the world is

---

15 Relief is a sculptural technique that “is thus to give the impression that the sculpted material has been raised above the background plane. What is actually performed when a relief is cut in from a flat surface of stone or wood is a lowering of the field, leaving the unsculpted parts seemingly raised” (Relief, 2011).
complex, and that organization-technology relationships are complex, then a logic that privileges order will not be fundamental enough to explain this complexity.

A problem-centered organizing approach to practice is also more concrete. Rather than assuming implicitly that practice is recurrent, an explicit concrete logic is given. Specifically, three types of meaning-making occur in practice: connecting, distributing, and reifying. I am not suggesting that these processes of making meaning are not recurrent in practice, but the recurrence over time is not what makes them meaningful. Rather, what makes them meaningful is their relation to different time-space potentialities. Instead of relying on “practice” to explain meaning, these three processes attempt to provide a basis for action in meaning-making. As a result, the organization-technology relationship is always conceptualized and studied in relation to meaningful presence in practice.

**Challenging Boundaries Between the Social and Material**

A final unique aspect of problem-centered organizing relates to how time-space relations challenge boundaries between the social and material in new ways. In chapter one, I critiqued existing approaches that focused on the problem of agency for attempting to “account” for materiality. Accounting approaches looked for “objects” or “bodies,” things that seem inherently material, and attempted to work them into the explanation, without making significant changes to explaining what was “social.” In problem-centered organizing, the relationality of materiality is better theorized because sociality is also disrupted. Both “social” and “material” categories are abstracted up as “time” and “space.” This means that instead of looking for “objects” or “bodies,” things that seem inherently material, we are “looking for” how spaces and times are entangled. Resituating the analytic focus one dimension higher than what appears to be material gives the analyst more room to develop and explore reasons why she is concerned with
materiality in the first place. Problem-centered organizing situates materiality in a conceptually broader way. However this broader view works because in practice it will always be defined, in part, by the response to the complex social problem.

Materiality can also be theorized in problem-centered organizing in a manner that is perhaps more akin to thinking about materiality in relation to the conditions of possibility (Foucault, 1970). Because problem-centered organizing locates problem contexts as those sites where there exists a confluence of time-space relations, there is a “weight” to these relations that can be understood through analysis. For example, if a particular problem context connects to past potentialities that significantly determine the present meaning, then there is a “materiality” that comes along with the connections to these time relations. This will always be specific to the problem context. However, this more specific view works because it will always be expanded, in part, by the response to the complex social problem.

**Implications of Problem-Centered Organizing**

Now that I have addressed the unique aspects of problem-centered organizing relative to existing approaches, I would like to turn to a discussion of implications. What does the lens of organizing as the tangling of time-space potentialities get us? How does reworking the relationship between organization, communication, and technology help us to advance knowledge and address concerns of practice? These are the issues that I address in the following sections.

**A Lens to Study New Organizational Forms**

A problem-centered organizing approach has implications for advancing knowledge about new organizational forms that are often enabled by new technologies. One of the defining characteristics of new organizational forms, is that they often elude our assumptions about the
“purpose” and “place” of organization, which often defined how the study of organization is approached. Concerns with purpose and place are distributed in problem-centered organizing to the background of a more dynamic process. As such, problem-centered organizing provides a lens of requisite variety to understand these new organizational forms.

New organizational forms are important to understand because they often occur in direct relation to complex social problems. Organizational scholars have noted that organizations are increasingly reorienting to face undefined challenges by entering into new partnerships and configurations (Hassard, Keleman, Cox & Lee, 2008). For example, participatory governance, or attempts to connect citizens and governments, has spawned new organizational forms and partnerships. One of the hallmarks of participatory governance is the development of new “intermediary” organizations. In order to build capacity, non-governmental organizations are often the mediators between government and citizens (Head, 2007). This ultimately means more community-based organizations and public-private partnerships (Ghose, 2005). Engaging stakeholders, building stakeholder trust, and treating stakeholders as citizens are a few of the concerns in participatory governance that suggests boundaries between organizations are continuing to blur (Backer, 2007; Bandsuch, Pate, & Thies, 2008; Crane, Matten, & Moon, 2004).

Problem-centered organizing is also a useful lens to study the emergence of less visible organizations or organizations that may be temporally finite. Problem-centered organizing makes very few assumptions about the form of organization apriori, so we can expand what “counts” as an organization. Stohl & Stohl (in press) point out that our assumptions about transparency in organizations have hindered our ability to explain more loosely configured organizational processes, such as clandestine organizations. Further, Weick and Roberts (1993) showed us what
important things we learn about organization when we studying settings that have different time constraints. Organization compressed by time and urgency reveals the tension between routinized and spontaneous behavior (Hernes, 2007). Following a problem-centered organizing approach, the moments where organizational boundaries blur are important openings for expanding how we theorize organization.

One reason problem-centered organizing addresses the organization-technology relationship, is because technology has a prominent role in new organizational forms. Technologies often introduce challenges to taken-for-granted approaches to organization. In addition, technology and organization are becoming increasingly intertwined. For example, technology is often seen as breaking down barriers of traditional organizational structures. Bimber (2010) argued that access to cheap information on the Internet is reducing the need for bureaucratic organizations and calls into question traditional structures in civic engagement. With new technologies come new forms of information that upend traditional organizational structures. Novel groups have formed to replace traditional entities as the organizers of civic engagement (Bimber, 2010). Because problem-centered organizing focuses on emergent processes, it is well-equipped to investigate these novel occurrences.

Emerging technologies are also becoming increasingly ubiquitous, implicated in organizational processes with greater nuance and subtlety. In Human-Computer Interaction (HCI), ubiquitous computing is a concentrated area of research and design (Grudin, 2008). This describes how computing will increasingly be brought into the physical world, leading to the “disappearing computer” (Weiser, 1991). The argument is that rather than sitting in front of computers to use them, computing will be embedded into “non-technological” objects, such as

---

16 For more see the special issue “The Disappearing Computer” of Communications of the ACM published in 2005.
walls and other structures. While the concept has been around for a very long time, for my purposes, the notion of ubiquitous computing is important because it points to the real possibility that technologies will become less intelligible as technologies per se. This means that to study technology, we may need to let go of assumptions that people using a technology will even be able to identify it. Rather, the technology itself may be absent to its “users.” A problem-centered organizing framework is useful for approaching this problem because it is designed to investigate technology as emergent.

In sum, a problem-centered organizing approach provides a lens to take seriously the forms of organization and technology that challenge many of our existing approaches. Further, problem-centered organizing can position the development of new organization-technology forms more closely to the normative questions that they raise. In the following section, I explain the implications of problem-centered organizing as a result of relating organization, communication, and technology more directly to complex social problems.

**Explaining Complex Social Problems**

Earlier in this chapter, I described the goal of problem-centered organizing as the conceptualization and study of organization as topologically complex. This goal cannot be accomplished without addressing complex social problems. In particular, problem-centered organizing is concerned with how social problems are entangled by our own efforts to respond to the problem. As such, one implication of problem-centered organizing is that the explanation will always develop practical knowledge of the complex social problem at hand.

If you refer again to Figure E, this is what the last arrow to the right indicates. Problem-centered organizing always ends the analysis by returning to the social problem. The result of the empirical investigation of complex social problems should be to understand how the response to
the social problem materially organized the problem itself. This approach widely expands what it means for an organization or a technology to have an "effect." For example, we are not just interested in the effect that a technology has within an organization. Rather, effects are always determined in the relationships between different potentialities and the complex social problem at hand. As such, any problem-centered organizing analysis will inform the "state" of the social problem.

**A Guide for Using a Problem-Centered Organizing Lens**

Now that I have finished describing problem-centered organizing and its implications in detail, I want to turn to thinking about the framework in relationship to actual empirical studies. A problem-centered organizing lens should be used for empirical study of actual responses to complex social problems. The central question that we are interested in, generally, is as follows: how is organizing topologically complex in the re-entangling of time-space potentialities? However, to begin to think about this question, we must first contextualize our approach based on the complex social problem at hand. The relevant question is simply: what is the complex social problem of concern? What is the relevant response to the complex social problem? The goal in taking time to think about these questions is to get the broadest sense possible of the problem at hand. This is not a stage where we will want to delimit or put up too many boundaries. The goal is to understand the response to the complex social problem as “mess,” in-between accident and design.

Once the analyst has an idea of what is at stake in the social problem and the response that she wants to examine, the analyst can then begin to explore specific problem contexts that seem to be the most salient to the complex social problem. The relevant question is: what problem contexts are most salient to the complex social problem? The goal here is locate the
densest confluence of space-time relations in the data. The analyst should be sure to “see” multiple technologies and/or multiple organizations in each problem context that is identified. This will provide the richest “site” for the following analysis of time-space potentialities.

Once problem contexts have been identified, the analyst will want to probe these for the salient time-space potentialities and how they are organized. The relevant questions are: what potentialities are made salient through enactments in the problem context? What potentialities were made salient through sedimentation in the problem context? The goal here is to explore as many potentialities as possible. We want our problem contexts to begin to look topologically complex. Then, the analyst can set up some sort of comparison. This can occur either within a single problem context, or this can involve comparing potentialities across two or more problem contexts. The relevant questions are: how do time-space potentialities interfere? How does the interference of potentialities differ across different problem contexts? The goal here is to gain more insight into how organizing work in problem contexts is potentially reducing or amplifying certain potentialities. Finally, the analyst can ask specifically how this relates to the complex social problem at hand. The relevant question is: how does the entanglement of time-space potentialities shape the response to the complex social problem? The goal here is to return to the normative concern that guides problem-centered organizing.

I use my framework for an empirical study of a problem contexts responding to a complex social problem. My analysis follows chapter five, and examines the social problem of how to engage citizens to participate in local governance. The response to this problem that I studied is called “Heart & Soul” community planning. In order to empirically study “Heart & Soul” using a problem-centered organizing framework, I asked these research questions:

RQ1: How did problem-centered organizing occur?
A: What connecting work occurred and what meanings did this enact?

B: What reification and distribution work occurred and what meanings did this sediment?

C: How did potentialities interfere in the organizing process?

In sum, problem-centered organizing is a lens for both theory and practice. First, problem-centered organizing provides a lens to continue to develop organizational communication theory and methods for apprehending complexity. Second, the framework ensures that we have something to say practically about better understanding and shaping our collective choices for living in an increasingly interconnected and complex world. In the next chapter, I detail a methodology that can be used to study problem-centered organizing.
Chapter 5

Methodology

Making Complexity Through Dual Inquiries of Discovery and Eclectic Practice

The dual boundary problem presents a unique problem for organizational communication and organizational technology scholars alike. On the one hand, scholars need to challenge taken-for-granted boundaries conceptually, but on the other hand, scholars need to theorize a central role for boundaries in practice. So far, my project has attempted to address the dual nature of this boundary problem through the provision of an ontology makes challenging boundaries easier for the analyst. I then followed this with an epistemology that provides a logic for taking seriously boundaries in practice as re-entanglement. I then brought these ideas into a framework for the study of organization as problem-centered organizing.

The goal of this chapter is to offer a methodology well-suited to study problem-centered organizing. This methodology is based on two different modes of inquiry. One mode is geared towards the study of situated practice and the other mode is geared towards expanding the site of study from situated practice. These two modes of inquiry are rich and open enough to allow the analyst to challenge boundaries conceptually, but are concrete and specific enough to enable the analyst to theorize a role for boundaries in practice. I specify these two modes of inquiry in detail by sketching out a set of procedures that addresses what, where, when, and how we look to the world to facilitate the empirical study of problem-centered organizing.¹⁷

¹⁷ This methodology is based on the philosophy of John Law (2004) and his account in Method After Mess, combined with the flexible and useful procedures that George Marcus (1998) gives us to study multi-sitedness. My intention is to use Marcus’ means of being multi-sited without prescribing to his aims, which is the study of identity through problematizing traditional approaches to ethnography. I will also draw on a mixture of approaches that adhere to the “spirit” of post-representational research and in doing so, I will highlight their fluidity and malleability to the goal of making complexity that inhabits my project. I will selectively borrow and draw together my unique perspective from pieces of other perspectives, many of which, stand alone as solid approaches to research on their own. I have an
Researcher as Detective and Eclectic

Before I detail specific procedures, I will begin by addressing the roles of the researcher. There are two roles that a researcher using this methodology embodies. The first role of the researcher is to perform as a detective (Austrin & Fransworth, 2005). The second role of the researcher is to perform as an eclectic.

How did I decide on the first researcher role of detective? I began by thinking about how, in order to study the world as fluid and continuously becoming, we have to understand our role as researchers within the same frame. In this fluid world, the researcher is a tentative interpreter (Law, 2004), and this requires an experimental attitude (Marcus, 1998). We need an openness, perhaps even a naïveté to the ways in which we absorb what we encounter. The curiosity that this role embodies can be likened to the work of a detective (Austrin & Fransworth, 2005).

Detective work involves following and tracing out multiple paths, even partial leads are investigated for their potential value. The process of detective work is about discovery, not of truth per se, but of possibility. The point is that even though there is no more literal world out there to discover, we can still engage in discovery by making a more complex object for study and representation (Marcus, 1998). Process-based discovery of possibility is what a tentative interpreter should embody. A researcher using this methodology acts as a detective in order to “see” organizing work taking place in the fluidity of the world.

How did I decide on the second researcher role of eclectic? I began thinking about how, in a fluid and continuously becoming world, our object of study never remains still. Rather, we can always assume that our own objects of study travel (Marcus, 1998). As such, researchers understanding and appreciation of the “whole cloth” from which I have cut, but it is the pieces that I will foreground to the background of their respective traditions and histories. The analysis procedures I offer here are based on the account of Adele Clark (2005) in *Situational Analysis: Grounded Theory After the Postmodern Turn.*
must be willing to travel with our objects of study, and draw from broad and diverse sources to make the object complex. The creativity that this role embodies can be likened to the role of an eclectic.

An eclectic is someone who composes elements together drawn from heterogeneous sources and unlikely times and spaces. Eclectic practices are what a creative researcher should embody. A researcher using this methodology acts as an eclectic in order to “see” different times and space that shape the organizing work taking place in the world.

How does a researcher perform as a detective and an eclectic? I believe that the researcher needs more than a single mode of inquiry. First, we need a mode of inquiry that will allow us to appreciate, be curious about, and see the complexity of organizing work in the world. I call this mode of inquiry discovery. We make complexity by “seeing” the many relations that give rise to possibility in practice. Second, we also need a mode of inquiry that allows us to actively gather and assemble time-space relations. I call this mode of inquiry the method of eclectic practice.

In the following sections, I explain the two modes of inquiry, discovery and eclectic practice. I provide procedures for each mode of inquiry that is designed to produce the quality of data needed to study problem-centered organizing. But first, a few points to remember as we begin empirical study of practices (Hassard, Kelemen, Cox, & Lee 2008):

1. The empirical is not passive raw material, but a site of active processing.

2. We are ontologically relativist, but empirically realist. We will not assume what we will find, but we can describe that in practice.

3. We are problematizing, not “finding” answers.¹⁸

¹⁸ These are borrowed from Hassard, Kelemen, & Cox’s (2008) edited volume on Disorganization Theory.
The Discovery Mode of Inquiry

In order to become curious about the possibilities of the world, the researcher can take a close look at how things work. The discovery mode of inquiry is a form of “zooming in” or studying the detail of the discursive and material accomplishments of practice (Nicolini, 2009). Examining practice as a site of organizing work is an investigation of the process by which meaningful presence is accomplished.

To perform this inquiry, the researcher must use methods that unsettle sedimented and situated practices and meanings. In doing so, this investigation should discover and recover the “work” of organizing. In the following sections, I offer four methods for unsettling situated practices through discovery mode inquiry: problematizing presence, objects, subjects, and space-time. See Appendix A for a data log for my project. This details all of the data I collected in discovery mode inquiry.

Magnifying Organizing Practices

Scholars in the tradition of Ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967) and Science and Technology Studies (STS) (Law, 2004) have drawn our attention to the choreography of practice. In this section, I draw on the sensibilities of ethnomethodology and STS studies of practice in order to provide methods to magnify organizing practices.19 These methods are based on the assumption that we can “see” organizing work occurring between order and disorder. As such, the methods I provide are designed to help the analyst locate nodal points between order and disorder empirically.

---

19 Ethnomethodology examines the mundane and everyday in new ways (Garfinkel, 1967). Ethnomethodology is a flexible tool, and has been described, ironically, as neither a theory nor a method (Sharrock, 2001). Even though I draw on ethnomethods, I am not adopting the assumption or generative mechanism of ethnomethods, which is based in an intersubjective notion of the moral and practical grounding of everyday action.
So what specific occurrences of situated practices might an analyst look for to magnify organizing practices? First, I want to direct the analyst to observe situated practice for routines. Starting by looking for routines is procedurally useful for the analyst because they are often easy to identify in practice. This of course assumes that the analyst has spent some time observing situated practice or has a familiarity with the “doings” of a particular practice. In other words, the analyst should ask, what are the practices that allow the actors in the scene of study to define reality and in particular, a taken for granted reality (Law, 2004)?

There is a conceptual reason to look for routine in situated practice. The analyst needs an in-depth understanding of how things are done to make visible what is suppressed and unacknowledged (Rasche & Chia, 2009). The analyst can look to routine to understand the organizing processes of reifying and distributing and how these two might relate. In the problem-centered organizing framework, reifying work is the organizing process that makes meanings that persist. Examination of routine should speak to this work. However, routine can also potentially tell us something about how meanings are also distributed away, into absence. This is based on the assumption that all organizing work must absence some meaning.

So the analyst knows that she is looking for routine, but where does the analyst turn to pick up on routine? What are some specific artifacts or elements in situated practice that can be examined in order to become curious about the routine of practice? To name a few concrete options, the analyst can look to standardized forms, regularly scheduled meetings, what people participating in the practice describe as “fact” or common knowledge, practices that are codified through text or visual representations, and specialized jargon.

In addition to routine, a second way to magnify organizing processes is to look specifically for moments of contested authority and irony in situated practices (Law, 2004).
Irony and contested authority are occasions in practice that the analyst can use as mechanisms to surface complexity and illuminate relations (Peshkin, 2001). Looking for moments of contested authority and irony is procedurally useful for the analyst because after becoming familiar with the routines of practice, moments of contested authority and irony should be relatively easy to identify in practice. Seeing moments of contested authority also assumes that the analyst has spent some time observing situated practice or has a familiarity with the “doings” of a particular practice. I became familiar with the routines of my site through monthly meetings.

There are also important conceptual reasons to look for moments of contested authority and irony in situated practice. First, moments of contested authority are revealing of difference (Law, 2004). Much like our assumptions about routine, the analyst will also assume that the accomplishment of authority is only possible if some difference is marginalized or homogenized. As such, contested authority also exists at the intersection of distributing and reifying work. Through moments of contested authority, the analyst can tap into what is “difference” in a given situated practice, and this should become a site for seeing distribution and reifying work.

Irony in practice is a useful and amusing way to tap into organizing work in practice. Irony is when the effects of practice are the opposite of what was intended. Irony exists in the space between two forms of organizing work: connecting to the past and reifying work. My thinking is that often times, the past “shows up” as ironic in present practices, because the irony was allowed to persist through reifying work. The assumption is that for ironies in practice to be tolerated, there is specific reifying work that is done to maintain that ironic meaning.

The analyst knows that she is looking for moments of contested authority and irony, but where does the analyst turn to pick up on these? What are some specific artifacts or elements in situated practice that can be examined in order to become curious about irony and the
contestation of authority? For moments of contested authority, the analyst can look to disruptive moments in interactive exchanges, any label of “deviance” that is applied to, for example, a discourse, practice, or person, and forms of resistance in practice that “call out” sources of authority. For irony, the analyst can look to artifacts in the situated practice. Artifacts often embody irony when their physical form clashes with the present meanings that are trying to be accomplished in practice (e.g. dated technology in so-called “cutting edge” organizations). The analyst can also look to the actual rhetorical or literary device of irony in spoken and written discourse.

Finally, the analyst can magnify organizing practices by looking for improvisation in situated practice (Ingold, 2010). Improvisation refers to occurrences “in the moment” that are in response to some situational condition or stimuli. Looking to improvisation is based on the assumption that improvisation is a necessary occurrence in a disorderly and complex world. Looking for moments of improvisation is procedurally useful for the analyst because after becoming familiar with the routines of practice, moments of improvisation should be identifiable. Seeing improvisation also assumes that the analyst has spent some time observing situated practice or has a familiarity with the doings of a particular practice. I noticed moments of improvisation at my site of study through my understanding of the routines of practice that I gained after spending some time at my site.

There are also important conceptual reasons to look for improvisation in situated practice. First, improvisation is a good indication of connecting work taking place. I argued in chapter three that the enactment of present meaning is based in connecting work, and that these connections may be partial, but nonetheless relevant. Improvisation in practice is a good place to look for partial connections. This is based on the assumption that the spontaneity of
improvisation occurs quickly and sporadically. Second, moments of improvisation may exist at
the intersection of connecting and reifying work. This is based on the assumption that
improvisation is required on a temporary basis in order to “fill the gaps” for meanings that are
usually stable.

The analyst knows that she is looking for improvisation, but where does the analyst turn
to pick up on this? What are some specific artifacts or elements in situated practice that can be
examined in order to become curious about improvisation? Moments of improvisation can be
located by tapping into the feelings of people participating in practice. This is based on the
assumption that improvisation is often in response to the moment, which is detected through
feelings people have about being in that moment. Moments of improvisation can also be located
in spoken, written, or embodied discourse about “temporary solutions.” This is based on the
assumption that improvisation often takes place to fix unforeseen problems that arise in practice.
Finally, the analyst can look to uses of technology in practice. In my experience, improvisation
often occurs around technological objects (e.g. think about the last presentation you saw where a
video did not play, a projector did not come on, etc. But the show must go on).

In summary, magnifying organizing work involves coming to understand how the
“topography of reality possibilities” have been defined in practice (Law, 2004, p. 34). All three
methods of looking for routine, contested authority and irony, and improvisation in situated
practice share the ability to magnify organizing work because they all tap into nodal points
between order and disorder. Nodal points between order and disorder are where the nature of
organizing can be most fully apprehended by the analyst.
Contextualizing Objects as Sites of Organizing Work

In this section, I show the analyst how to probematize objects in order to challenge boundaries to see objects as sites of organizing work. In order to accomplish this, I offer a set of methods to make objects “talk” more readily (Rasche & Chia, 2009). The basis of my approach is that objects are themselves sites of relations that can be made more visible through discovery mode inquiry. So what does the analyst attend to in order to reveal objects as sites of organizing work?

First, the analyst can become curious about the “sociality” of objects in situated practice (Bruni, 2005). Sociality refers to the context dependency of objects, as specified by Bruni (2005). Specifically, sociality proposes that objects are more like emerging “subjects” because we see them as part of events, making a difference in practice. Object sociality is thus a way of seeing the nature of the relationality of objects and other actors in a specific situated practice (Law, 2007). In certain situated practices, the sociality of objects might be special occasions for revealing forms of organizing work we might not otherwise notice. Looking for the sociality of objects is procedurally useful for the analyst because after observing situated practices, sociality should be identifiable in practice. Seeing sociality assumes that the analyst has spent some time observing situated practice or has a familiarity with the doings of a particular practice. I became familiar with the sociality of objects at my site of study through observation of meetings and events.

There are important conceptual reasons to look for the sociality of objects in situated practice. Objects gain sociality from being a part of the “doings” of practice. For example, most

---

20 I prefer the term sociality over agency because the term is more relational.

21 The term “subject” is admittedly problematic. This conjures up all sorts of meanings (e.g. research “subject”), though in post representational/constructionist theory it has a new meaning intended to divorce “subject” from meaning individual human actor.
of my day-to-day life revolves around my laptop. This object has a sociality because who I am and what the object is are inextricably tied to each other. The laptop and myself have a particular character in practice that can be examined for the meanings being reified, connected, or distributed. In other words, the sociality of objects should tip off the researcher to see organizing work.

The analyst knows that she is looking for the sociality of objects, but where does the analyst turn to pick up on this? What are some specific indicators in situated practice that can be examined in order to become curious about object sociality? First, the analyst can examine how objects structure and define space by looking at the objects’ actions in situated practice. For example, Bruni (2005) argued that technologies in practice are inseparable from their use, so there is an intimate relation between space and the structuring of activities. He found that virtual medical practice (telephone medical advice) required the presences of objects to attest to its concrete existence.

Second, the analyst can note how objects intersect with other subjects and objects in situated practice. Bruni (2005) found that a new clinical software was a “newcomer” in the “community of objects,” marking out the material boundaries of organizational practices (p. 376). As a result, nurses were more concerned about relations between objects than relationships between each other. Objects that intersect with many subjects and objects or very few can tell the analyst something about organizing work.

Third, we can look to moments when objects “disrupt” situated practice. Michael (2004) examined how various nonhumans “misbehaved” during an interview he conducted and concluded that it is possible to examine how such entities need to be “disciplined” in order to
make the production of social data possible (p. 6). Disruption of situated practice by objects can then be followed up on by the analyst through interviews for additional understandings of the disruptive experience.

The analyst can also reveal objects as sites of organizing work by contextualizing objects as inscription devices. Inscriptions, from Actor Network Theory (ANT), describe how objects make possible a type of calculation (Czarniawska, 2004). Inscriptions are “sets of arrangements for labeling, naming, and counting- for converting relations from non-trace like to trace-like form” in objects (Law, 2004, p. 29). When we look to objects in this way, we see objects as devices for “shifting material modalities” (Law, 2004, p. 29). Procedurally, if the analyst has observed situated practice and attended to objects, noticing inscription should be fairly easy to do. Perhaps the more difficult task is to understand which inscription device matters the most. To understand an object as an inscription device means that the analyst needs to zoom in and take a closer look at the workings of the object. I noticed inscription devices at my site through situated practice. I then followed up on those that interested me through interviews of device designers.

There are important conceptual reasons an analyst would examine objects as inscription devices. Inscription devices do organizing work by privileging certain meanings over others. This is based on the assumption that inscriptions are both centres of calculation and distributors of difference (Jones, Mclean, & Quattrone, 2004). The analyst can look to inscriptions as sites of both reifying and distributing work.

---

22 He was interviewing a woman at her house and he sets his tape recorder on the floor between them. Then, her pit bull comes in and sits on his feet and her cat comes in and pulls the tape recorder away by its strap. Michael (2004) concludes that the cat and dog made it possible to have a situation where the interviewee could go off on a tangent. This person was enabled by a coagent made up minimally of the cat, the person and the pit bull. What he terms “piipercat” (p. 15). Then you have another coagent interacted with and disrupted- the interviewer and tape-recorder- what he calls “intercorder” (p. 15). He concludes that this social exchange is thus an abstraction – or subtraction- from the heterogeneous communication of coagents. Attention can then be paid to how such singular entitles like “interviewer” are derived from this.
The analyst knows that she is looking for objects as inscription devices, but where does the analyst turn to pick up on this? What are some specific indicators in situated practice that can be examined in order to become curious about object inscription? First, the analyst can look to objects that seem well connected to routines in situated practices. Often, in organizations, inscription occurs for the purpose of simplification of a process. Processes that are broken down often take the form of routine. Second, the analyst can look to the “work flow” in a situated practice and examine this work flow for beginnings and endings. Devices that do inscription work are often involved in making particular inputs or outputs for work in situated practice.

Contextualizing objects is a way to challenge conceptual boundaries and reveal objects as sites of organizing work. By making objects talk, the analyst creates an opportunity to access more meanings. Objects are often treated as invisible or even neutral in practice, and contextualizing objects creates an opportunity to reposition objects from neutrality into moments where different forms of organizing work coalesce. This is how contextualizing objects reveals sites of organizing work.

**Disrupting Individuals as Sites of Organizing Work**

In problem-centered organizing the knowing individual is no longer the central figure from which theory of social behavior derives. This presents an interesting dilemma for qualitative researchers. Models of qualitative research in communication often place the knowing subject at the center of scholarly inquiry. The goal of that kind of research is to understand the lived experience of participants (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). However, the goal of a research agenda following my framework is to apprehend and create complexity in order to surface organizing for analysis. So what does the analyst attend to in order to reveal subjects as sites of organizing work?
The researcher should seek to disrupt individual subjects in order to reveal the individual as a site of organizing work. This is another way to challenge boundaries. However, this does not preclude a researcher who adopts this stance from ethical and moral human concerns. Even though obligation to respond to other humans is not the sole generative mechanism of action, there is still a central role for subjects in discovery mode of inquiry. This central role comes from the recognition that there is no “real” subject (Hardy, Phillips, & Clegg, 2001) and that subjects find their world opaque (Hannerz, 2003). Once an analyst approaches subjects in this way, “knowledge” is repositioned as an activity located in time and space (Rhodes, 2009). The implication of this is that some sort of coordination between subjects is doubly important in order for coherent meaning to be achieved. The analyst is then moved to look very closely at relations between individual subjects (including the researcher) for apprehending and making complexity. How can the analyst disrupt subjects in situated practice in order to reveal sites of organizing work?

First, the analyst can begin by being curious about what is valued as “knowledge” and how expertise is accomplished in a situated practice. This is based on the assumption that there is often “centering” work that is often done around individual subjectivity in situated practice as people have a bias for giving reasons and generally seeking out coherence (Law, 2002; 2004). The analyst can look to what is valued as “knowledge” and how expertise is accomplished in a situated practice. Rather than viewing subjects as sources of knowledge, for our purposes, subjects can be sites of organizing work. Disrupting knowledge assumes that the analyst has spent some time observing situated practice or has a familiarity with the doings of practice.

---

23 This is, in part, why I felt the need to articulate dynamic relationality. Had human obligation not been the basis of Taylor’s conversation-text theory, I probably would have simply used his theory for my dissertation. Though he tries to enroll nonhuman agency, he overlays the notion of nonhuman agency onto a decidedly human-centered frame.
Then, the analyst can interview people in order to further pursue points of interest. I conducted interviews for my project. See Appendix B for an interview schedule and Appendix A for the data log that lists the interviews that comprised this study.

There are important conceptual reasons that the analyst would want to be curious about what was valued as knowledge in situated practices. Valued knowledge exists across two different forms of organizing work: connecting and distributing. Importantly, knowledge in my framework will always be enacted. Enactment means that knowledge, as presently meaningful, comes from connecting work to other space and times. And these connections could be very partial or very strong. We can look to what is valued as knowledge in situated practice in order to tap into this connecting work. Being curious about valued knowledge is also important because as Law (2002) pointed out, we have a penchant for singularity and attempting to distribute difference to make cohesion. This means that when the analyst is curious about what counts as knowledge, she should be able to see distribution work. This reason is based on the assumption that making present meaning always entails a process of distributing, silencing, and Othering meanings that do not cohere.

The analyst knows that she is looking for what is valued as knowledge in situated practice, but where does the analyst turn to pick up on this? What are some specific indicators in situated practice that can be examined in order to become curious about valued knowledge? First, the analyst can look specifically for moments of decision making in situated practice. Decisions can be read as forms of valuing, or not, particular knowledge. The analyst can also examine texts and visual representations associated with decision making for indicators of what is valued as knowledge. Second, the analyst can look to people in situated practices who appear to have “authoritative” voices. Related to this point, the analyst would be just as interested in
people in situated practices who appear “voiceless.” The analyst could pursue an understanding of how knowledge is connected to organizing work through interviews with these people. However, the analyst should take caution in doing interviews. Talking with people in this methodology is a way to understand the details of how meaning is organized, not to reinscribe individuals as sources, or not, of authority.

Second, the analyst can reveal subjects as sites of organizing work by becoming curious about affect, or emotion. The analyst would disrupt subjects by positioning affect not as individual expression, but as a form of felt pressure. In order to flesh this out, we could liken the individual to a barometer. A barometer is an instrument that reads air pressure. Understanding individual affect in this way rests on the assumption that the body is a finely tuned detector of difference (Law, 2002). Thus, rather than viewing affect as an expression of individual feelings, affect is a manifestation of intersections of different kinds of organizing work, which is felt as pressure. The analyst can pick up on affect in forms of bodily performance and use these moments to detect subtle degrees of difference. This means that the analyst should be looking to understand “sensed meaning” as a form of communication (Marcus, 1998). Procedurally, this means that the researcher will need to observe situated practices and how people react in situations. To understand a subject as sensing pressure of organizing work means that the analyst may need to zoom in and take a closer look at a particular individual or set of individuals. This also means that the analyst has an awareness of her own feelings of pressure in the situated practice.

There are important conceptual reasons why an analyst would examine affect as a sensing of pressure. People do organizing work, but they are also being organized. As such, affect as a sensing of pressure is an occurrence that is important to look for to see organizing work because
people sense when they are organizing and being organized. When people feel as though they have accomplished something, this can be examined for processes of connecting or reification. Or, on the other hand, when people feel anxious, this can be examined for tensions between reification work and connecting work. Finally, feelings of fear or frustration can be read for how a person is sensing that they are being distributed into absence.

The analyst knows that she is looking for affect in situated practice, but where does the analyst turn to pick up on this? What are some specific indicators in situated practice that can be examined in order to become curious about affect? First, the analyst can look to what is affectively “good” or “bad” in a situation. It is not difficult, for example, to tell when the mood of a room suddenly shifts for some reason. The analyst can be in tune with these moods by also being in tune with her own. The analyst can also try to identify moments associated with particular types of emotions in situated practice or in conversations with people. For example, the analyst might look specifically to moments of “frustration” experienced in situated practices and expressed through interviews for indications of an interference occurring between organizing processes.

Third, the analyst can reveal subjects as sites of organizing work by reading intentionality as movement (Ingold, 2010). Intentionality usually is considered to be an expression of individual thought towards some goal or thing. We know that often times intentions do not come to fruition. Instead of viewing intention as something that either successfully or unsuccessfully comes to fruition, intentionality, and the ups and downs associated with it, should be viewed as interferences between different kinds of organizing work. Procedurally, it may be easier for the analyst to “see” intentionality as movement if she has spent some time observing the situated practices of people. This is because you see how intentions change shape. However, to really
drill down on intentionality as movement may require the analyst to talk with, or interview people. The same caution about interviews applies here as it did above.

There are important conceptual reasons an analyst would examine intentionality as movement. Intentionality, much like knowledge, is enacted in my framework. This means that the analyst should be curious about the connecting work involved in forming an intention. However, when we assume intentionality moves, the analyst will also be curious how intention is reified and distributed. Much like other empirical elements that become part of reification processes, distributing work always accompanies this. The extent of intentionality as movement will depend on the degree of sedimented meanings that have been enacted in the specific contexts of practice that we study. The point is that intentionality becomes an empirical question.

The analyst knows that she is looking for intentionality in situated practice, but where does the analyst turn to pick up on this? What are some specific indicators in situated practice that can be examined in order to be curious about intentionality? First, the analyst can look to plans that are made in situated practices for intentionality. Plans are often a manifestation of intentionality and there is certainly no shortage of these in situated practices. The problem the analyst will face is determining which plans are most important to pay attention to. Plans are manifest in situated practices through interactive exchanges, texts and visual representations, and “roles” which designate, for example, a person a leader of a plan. Second, the analyst can look to explicit statements by actors in situated practice or through interviews for goals, normative values, or actual statements that make intentions explicit. The analyst is curious about the way things “should” be as an indicator of intentionality. Finally, it may be useful for the analyst to compare what reads as intention in situated practice with what reads as intention in interviews.
Differences or similarities would become indicators of the movement, or organizing work, of intentionality.

Disrupting subjects is a way to challenge conceptual boundaries and reveal individuals as sites of organizing work. Disrupting individuals as sources creates an opportunity for the analyst to access more meanings. Emotion and intentionality are usually associated with individual expression and knowledge is usually associated with shared meaning. Disrupting the subject takes these and repositions them as moments where relations between forms of organizing work coalesce. This is how disrupting subjects reveals sites of organizing work.

**Hyperlinking Place as Sites of Organizing Work**

This entire project of problem-centered organizing is about problematizing time-space. However, in discovery mode inquiry, there are specific methods that we can use to deal with time-space directly. Specifically, these methods offer another way to challenge boundaries and reveal place as a site of organizing work. In order to accomplish this, I draw on Marcus (1998), who argues that we can and should rethink the notion of “place” as unproblematically local. So the basis of my approach is that place is itself a site of relations that can be made more visible through discovery mode inquiry. So what does the analyst attend to in order to reveal place as a site of organizing work?

The analyst can begin by hyperlinking place through observation of situated practices. The reason situated practice is a good starting point for hyperlinking place is because studying doings often leads to seeing the heterogeneity of place. Rather than viewing place as background to action, or not even recognizing place at all, for our purposes places are sites of organizing work. How can the analyst hyperlink place in situated practice to reveal place as a site of organizing work?
First, the analyst can become curious about “world systems” in situated practices (Marcus, 1998). For Marcus (1998) world systems are like structures, but these structures have to be reimagined not as holistic forces, but rather as broken and unpredictable (Law, 2004). These structures are reimagined as other sites, in different places. The analyst can engage in a detectable awareness of clues of other sites in the situated site by examining the everyday doings for signs of time-space compression (Marcus, 1998). The logic behind this is that other places put pressure on situated practices and this is where we will find the space compression of social life. Marcus (1998) refers this to identity, calling it an existential doubleness, as people have a sense of being here and being tied to things happening simultaneously elsewhere. His point is that no one has an authoritative representation of what that “elsewhere” is. This puts into question the “fixing of meaning or the spatio-temporal pinpointing of phenomenon” in place (Marcus, 1998, p. 158). Seeing space compression assumes that the analyst has spent some time observing situated practice or has familiarity with the doings of the particular place.

The analyst knows that she is looking for space compression in situated practice, but where does the analyst turn to pick up on this? What are some specific indicators in situated practice that can be examined in order to become curious about space compression in place? First, the analyst can examine contradictions that occur in practices. Contradictions are when two things form logical opposites. The analyst can read contradictions for clues of connections to other spaces that are compressed in the present making of meaning. For example, the analyst can look for contradictions by comparing actions in practice with the texts (or rules) that govern practice. Or, the analyst can examine the arrangement of artifacts in a place for signs of space
Second, the analyst can look affect in the situated practice. This draws on Marcus (1998) who argues that people have anxiety over knowing that they are being affected by something elsewhere. He argues that nonlocal agencies can be found as ambiguities and anxieties in situated practice. For example, in his study of wealthy eccentrics, Marcus (1998) found that eccentric heirs of great wealth had a keen awareness of how their identity was constructed by nonlocal agencies, namely by their prominent ancestors. He argued that the ancestor can invade one’s life as a form of possession. Marcus (1998) called this a “mimetic ancestral doubling” where a living descendant has become the ancestor while still being him or herself: “Eccentricity is the expression and management of this mimetic doubling” (p. 173).

The analyst can use interviews and observations in order to tap into the affect that occurs when people sense nonlocal agencies. Finally, the analyst can look for explicit references to other places in spoken discourse, interactive exchanges and visual and textual documents. I analyzed many documents that were produced at my site for this project. See Appendix A data Log for a list of documents that I collected in discovery mode inquiry.

Second, the analyst can become curious about past-present-future relations as the “weight of things” that occurs in organizing work (Ingold, 2010). What this means is that the analyst will always see place as including a contiguous past and projecting a future. This is distinct from seeing time as historical fact or time as something over which phenomenon “develop.” This is a form of time compression that we can examine in situated practice. Hyperlinking place through time means that the analyst makes an effort to study phenomenon, empirically, as “filled with

---

24 Robert Venturi (1966) published a famous book in architecture called “Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture” that describes how architects organize parts in an unconventional way to create a meaningful context. “I prefer 'both-and' to 'either-or,' black and white, and sometimes gray, to black or white. A valid architecture evokes many levels of meaning and combinations of focus; its space and its elements become readable and workable in several ways at once” (p. 23.). Purposefully drawing together elements from different spaces into place is a form of space compression.
time” (Berger, 2005, p. 139). The analyst will look to representations of the past in situated practice, not for understanding the reality as it took place, but for purposes of questioning the taken-for-granted (Hassard, Keleman, & Cox, 2008). Procedurally, this means that the analyst has spent some time observing and experiencing the place of practice.

There are also important conceptual reasons for becoming curious about time as the weight of things in place. Time has weight because of doings in practice. This means that anytime we are looking to the weight of things in practice, we are going to see organizing work. Specifically, the weight of time occurs across two organizing processes: connecting and reification. The assumption behind this is that for time to gain weight in situated practice, there has to be some connecting work taking place to past potentialities. The weight of time is also important for locating the beginning of projected potentialities as they are becoming more stable through reification work.

The analyst knows that she is looking for time as the “weight of things” in situated practice, but where does the analyst turn to pick up on this? What are some specific indicators in situated practice that can be examined in order become curious about time as the “weight of things?” First, the analyst can look to textual and visual representations. These would be considered sites for coming to understand the past as tied to the contiguous present. But again, the analyst approaches these for the purposes of understanding the past as it manifests in the present, not for the “reality” of times past. Second, the analyst can look to artifacts or objects. Objects often have a physical form that is easily marked by time. Perhaps people do too. Third, the analyst can also look for specific references of the past or history in spoken discourse or

---

25 Technologies carry their age and become quite obvious in place. For example, I walked into a doctors office and saw that they were still using an IBM Selectric to process forms. I was effectively shocked with past. On the other hand, when I first saw the iphone years ago and used the touch interface for the first time, I was struck with a sense of the future.
interactive exchanges. Interviews often become good forums for this type of inquiry. Finally, the analyst can look to tie these past elements with other elements that speak to the future. The analyst might look to plans for indicators of how past meanings that are being projected (or not) into the future.

Methods to examine space compression and the weight of time are perhaps the most difficult to translate empirically. I am aware that the methods I have offered above are partial and ambiguous at best. However, one of the outcomes of my work should be improved ways to understand the working of space and time empirically. I believe that these ideas are worth working out and I hope to contribute to that effort.²⁶

**Summarizing the Methods of Discovering**

A discovery mode of inquiry uses methods that allow the analyst to problematize presence, objects, subjects, and time-space. The goal of discovery mode inquiry is to challenge boundaries in order to reveal more relations for analysis. Disrupting the taken-for-granted is likely a goal of all good qualitative research (Tracy, 2010). However, this portion of the methodology seeks to disrupt in order to apprehend the complex relationships between order and disorder. However, the work of the researcher does not end here. In the next section, I present the second mode of inquiry, eclectic practice.

**The Eclectic Practice Mode of Inquiry**

By now a researcher using this methodology has “discovered” some interesting things about how organizing works in practice. She has noticed some very strong connections and perhaps some partial connections to different potentialities that interest her. Now it is time for

---

²⁶ I also want to acknowledge my awareness of this sections connection to conversations of space and place in cultural studies. I do not engage that literature directly, but I hope to in the future. However, I believe it is okay to proceed at this time without making a direct link to that literature since my aims are to use space to understand organizing. That is, I am not interested in space as an object of study per se.
her to further pursue the meaning of these connections by doing some connecting work of her own. To understand this we can return to the metaphor of the wave that I explained in chapter one.

I argued that waves are an appropriate metaphor to challenge boundaries because waves can occupy the same space at the same time. When we think about waves, boundaries dissolve and the movement becomes more important. Engaging in eclectic practice is a way to take a step back and examine the pattern that intersections of waves create. We follow that pattern out as it moves through space and time. This can be likened to following a ripple in water as it cascades out from the point of disruption. Another useful way to think about it is in terms of light waves that cascade when they encounter a prism. We are interested in apprehending the cascading effects.

As such, an eclectic practice mode of inquiry is a form of “zooming out” or studying practices as “always immersed in thick textures of interconnections,” which requires “moving between practice in the making and the texture of practices which causally connects this particular instance to many others” (Nicolini, 2009, p. 1407). The point of zooming out is to expand the analysts understanding of particular organizing work that was interesting by arranging it alongside relevant, but perhaps not entirely obvious, potentialities that exist in other times and spaces.

To perform this mode of inquiry, we need methods that support the researcher moving about to different sites. As such, the eclectic practice mode of inquiry requires that the analyst travels, gathers, and arranges a variety of data (Marcus, 1998). In doing so, the researcher should be creating more complexity of the situated practices of organizing. In this section, I offer three methods for gathering time-space potentialities through an eclectic practice mode of inquiry:
wrapping objects in discourses, disseminating human actors, and traveling to other sites. The list of data that I gathered for this project in an eclectic mode of inquiry can be found in Appendix A.

**Wrapping Objects in Discourses**

I talked about objects in discovery mode inquiry, and in particular, how to contextualize objects in order to reveal them as sites of organizing work. This is a way of prying open the black-box to reveal its making. However, in eclectic practice, we are doing something quite different. The analyst is looking to expand the object by gathering different time-space potentialities that speak to the cascading of the object. This is based on the assumption that objects are enacted differentially in different sets of practices, have many strong and partial connections to discourses, practices, and ideologies, and in general, have a politics (Law, 2004). So what does the analyst do in order to make objects multiple and gather new space and time potentialities?

The analyst can begin by “wrapping” objects in discourses. The reason turning to discourse is good for creating object multiplicity is that studying objects in relation to discourses often reveals meanings that may not have been “visible” in situated practice. In addition, wrapping an object in discourses allows the analyst to follow connections that may have only been partial in situated practices. This may lead the analyst to study new and perhaps even unlikely sites of situated practice. How can the analyst engage the creative practice of gathering discourses to wrap an object in discourses?

---

27 The metaphor of wrapping an object is not intended to “bound” the object a priori. Rather, the reason I use wrapping as a metaphor is because I am thinking of eclectic practice as a form of craftwork. Often, in craftwork, you are working with materials. My point is to treat objects as materials that can become very pliable through eclectic practice.

28 Just because they may not have been visible does not mean they were not there. The method of eclectic practice is just a way to ensure that the researcher is making a sufficiently complex object of study.
First, the analyst can look to gather potentialities that make the myth of an object. The reason we are interested in myth is because myths travel and have long ranges of movements over space and time. An object’s myth is a narrative of the object that travels and has significance across many different spaces and times. Making a myth of an object is thus a way to open the object up to multiple meanings that may help to illuminate how and why a particular form of organizing work has occurred. Making an object’s myth is procedurally useful because the researcher can utilize the abundance of information on the Internet to do this work. The analyst can begin link out to different sites of discourses, some of which may even be quite unlikely.

There are important conceptual reasons for creating the myth of an object. Making the myth of an object should perform connecting work to past and concurrent potentialities. This means that the researcher is able to access other times and spaces that may illuminate the meaning of organizing work in situated practices. This may enable the analyst to learn something new about the complex social problem at hand, and how to understand the way in which the response to the complex social problem is materially organized by these other time-space potentialities. Further, this will also help the analyst to understand how the response to the complex social problem is materially organizing the problem itself. However, the researcher should be aware that her own eclectic practice is inevitably distributing and projecting potentialities. It is therefore imperative that the researcher documents her own organizing work.

29 An example of object myth might be the myth of invention occurring in small, crowded spaces where genius arises from the haphazardness of trial and error. For example, the myth of the first Apple computer created in Steve Jobs’ garage is a discourse that cascades out in various ways and performs its own organizing work. How do we make sense of the interference of this narrative with the increasingly “corporate” tendencies of Apple?

30 The method of eclectic practice capitalizes on the universes of discourses on the Internet. My contention is that it is both necessary and desirable that all communication researchers engage with discourse online as active sites of organizing.
as she engages in an eclectic practice mode of inquiry. See Appendix C for a memo of my choices for eclectic practice in this project.

The analyst knows that she is making the myth of an object, but where does the analyst turn to do this work? What are some specific sites of discourse that she can gather in order to make an object’s myth? First, the analyst can gather narratives about an object that circulate widely across different sites. Myth is often generated in stories and this could include looking to media, popular culture, literature, and art. Second, the analyst can gather metaphors operating in these discourses. Metaphors are useful to analyze because they connect two things to produce a new explanation. The connecting work that metaphors do can help to elucidate important aspects of how a narrative travels across space and time. Metaphors can then be compared by the analyst across different discourses. Third, the analyst can gather rituals for understandings of object’s myth. Rituals are actions that are performed with symbolic value. The analyst will want to gather rituals in discourses or situated practices related to the object, but that may be found in unlikely sites.

Second, the analyst can make an object’s multiplicity by wrapping the object in discourses of its design. By the design of the object, I mean the stories about the process of its creation and manifestation into its current form. The analyst is not interested in an object’s design for designer’s intentionality or to understand how a designer’s practice is inscribed into an object, but rather the interest is how the discourses of an object’s design is intertwined with other times and spaces. Procedurally, the analyst can access these discourses online and through interviews with parties relevant to the design of the object.

\[31\] For example, some stories of the origins of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) link the design to 1854 and the work in John Snow who mapped a cholera outbreak in London, using cartographic methods. The point is that there are many design stories, that take us to different spaces and times.
There are important conceptual reasons for wrapping an object in the discourses of its design. This eclectic practice should connect the object to past and concurrent potentialities that may not have been “visible” in situated practice. This means that the researcher is able to access other times and spaces that may illuminate the meaning of organizing work in situated practices. Just like making an objects myth, the researcher should be able to learn something more about the material organization of the response to the complex social problem and the problem itself.  

The analyst knows that she is trying to gather the discourses of the object’s design, but where does the analyst turn to pick up on this? What are some specific sites of discourses that can be gathered to make this object’s design discourse? First, the analyst can gather sites of discourse associated with the materials of an object. By materials, I mean the actual parts of an object that have material form. The analyst would be interested in learning how the ways in which materials were assembled organizes particular space-time relations. Second, the analyst can gather design discourse from people that seem closely associated with the object’s inception and development in its current form. The analyst can gather the visual and spoken discourses that these people produce. Finally, the analyst can gather discourses on institutional regulations and laws that are part of the object’s design story.  

Third, the analyst can make an object’s multiplicity by wrapping the object in discourses of its “hinterland.” A hinterland includes movements or institutionally relevant happenings of an object. For example, Law (2004) studied an organization using a spreadsheet as an inscription device. However, his explanation linked the inscription device to a larger “hinterland” that included a new form of organizational timekeeping called “manpower booking.” A hinterland is

32 Again, the researcher should be aware that her own eclectic practice is inevitably distributing and projecting potentialities. It is therefore imperative that the researcher document her own organizing work as she engages in an eclectic practice mode of inquiry.
different than a myth because it is bound to tighter domains of practice. The analyst would seek to gather discourses about this movement and wrap the object in these meanings. Procedurally, the researcher can access these movements and happening by tapping into discourses online and in the media.

There are important conceptual reasons for wrapping an object in the discourses of its hinterlands. Much like the previous two methods, this connecting work should link the researcher to past and concurrent potentialities that may not have been “visible” in situated practice, making new time-space potentialities visible. Also, newly linked time-space potentialities might lead the analyst to new and unlikely sites of situated practice. The same caution applies as above: the researcher should document her travels as she is gathering.

The analyst knows that she is trying to gather discourses on an object’s hinterland, but where does the analyst turn to do this work? What are some specific sites of discourse that can be gathered in order to make an object’s hinterland? The analyst can look to discourses that situate the object in an institutional frame. By this, I mean discourses that connect the object to structures of meaning that span spaces and times. For example, the analyst may look to discourses surrounding processional associations, social movements, and other systems that circulate the objects meanings. These can be learned about through interviews, texts, and visual documents.

**Disseminating Human Actors**

I talked about subjects in discovery mode inquiry, and in particular, how to disrupt individuals in order to reveal them as sites of organizing work. This was a way of removing the individual as the source of all explanation of social life. However, in the eclectic practice mode

---

33 For example, earlier I claimed that an important myth of Apple computers was its origin story in Steve Jobs’ garage. However, an example of a “hinterland” to Apple Computers would be Microsoft Computers. You almost cannot have one without the other (in their current form of meaning).
of inquiry, we are doing something quite different. The analyst is creating subject multiplicity by gathering different time-space potentialities that speak to how individual subjectivity is performed in a number of heterogeneous relations.\(^{34}\) This is based on the assumption that subjects have many strong and partial connections to discourses, practices, and ideologies, and in general, have a politics (Law, 2004). The goal of eclectic practice is to gather time-space potentialities in order to draw new meanings into organizing work and to further illuminate the meaningfulness of that work. So what does the analyst do in order to make subjects multiple and gather new space and time potentialities?

Following Marcus (1998), the analyst can begin by “disseminating” the subject. This is accomplished by actively connecting people to different spaces and times. Disseminating a subject in discourses allows the analyst to follow connections that may have only been partial in situated practices. This may lead the analyst to study new and perhaps even unlikely sites of situated practice. However, the analyst should also turn to what is not visible and actively try to connect subjects to these spaces of exteriority. How can the analyst engage the creative practice of connecting to discourses and spaces of exteriority to disseminate the subject?

First, the analyst can disseminate the subject by actively working to connect the subject to absence. By this, I propose that we attempt to create a subject’s complexity by assuming that what is not there is really constitutive of what is present. This assumes that what makes a person meaningful is constituted in what is also absenced in that meaningfulness. Procedurally, this is a more difficult task for the researcher. However, if the analyst has studied the situated practices of the subject, she should be able to learn about how the subject operates between sites of order and

\(^{34}\) My inspiration for this view of subjects is clearly formed, in part, from the work of poststructuralist and feminist identity scholars such as Butler and Barad. Because this is only one part of my methodology, I acknowledge that I do not do justice to the complexity of this topic.
disorder. Given this, she can begin to “see” in discovery mode inquiry what is being absenced by the subject. As such, the task in eclectic practice is to try to connect to that absence directly.

The analyst knows that she is working to connect the subject to absence, but where does the analyst turn to do this work? What are some specific sites within and outside of discourse that can be gathered in order to disseminate the subject? First, the analyst can work to make the absent more sayable and visible through specific questioning of subjects. This means that we ask people to reflect on the road not taken, and we dialogue with participants about the possibilities not explored (Marcus, 1998). This can take place through interviews. Second, the analyst can also look at discourse produced by the subject and ask, what is implicit here, or what is not being said (Tracy, 2010)? Finally, the analyst can use her discovery mode observations to locate absent potentialities. Then she can pursue those absent spaces by actively gathering the discourses that those absenced spaces are producing. Depending on how widely absenced this potentiality is, this may require the researcher to travel further than expected.

Second, the analyst can disseminate the subject by actively gathering discourses that connect an individual’s voice to other space and times. Marcus (1998) reminds us that all ethnographic subjects must be studied as always and partially here and there. I draw on his work to suggest that the analyst make connections to understand how subjects are being affected by happenings elsewhere but “without those connections being clear or precisely articulated through available internal cultural models” (Marcus, 1998, p. 119). The assumption is that “voices are not seen as products of local structures, based on community and tradition, alone, or as privileged sources of perspective, but rather as products of the complex sets of associations and experiences which compose them” (Marcus, 1998, p. 66). The basic assumption is that we are always preoccupied by concerns that may never actually exist as “local” to us, but nonetheless play a
major role in making meaning. Procedurally, the analyst can collect discourses that may have been partially connected to in situated practices or the analyst can begin a search for potential discourses to connect to online.

There are important conceptual reasons to disseminate individual voice. It is important to actively connect subjects to different time-space potentialities that may not be “visible” in situated practice. Also, these time-space potentialities may lead the analyst to new sites of situated practice that the analyst can then approach with a discovery-based mode of inquiry. Finally, the researcher should be able to learn something more about the material organization of the response to the complex social problem and the problem itself.

The analyst knows that she is gathering discourses to disseminate individual voice, but where does the analyst turn to do this work? What are some specific sites of discourse that can be gathered in order to disseminate individual voice? Marcus (1998) argues that the analyst can look to subjects’ anxieties as a way to tap into the other time-space relations that may be entangled with individual voice. This means that the analyst seeks accounts from subjects because she needs to understand what anxieties preoccupy the subject. For example, it is not uncommon to find that people engaged in organizing work are concerned about how others are also doing organizing work that is out of their reach. This might manifest itself empirically as anxiety over how the “competition” is doing things. Interviews can be designed to disseminate by attending to these anxieties. However, the analyst can also pursue discourses that she may have seen a partial connection to in situated practice. For example, she might use a person’s membership affiliations in order to pursue discourses into other organizationally relevant spaces.
Traveling and Gathering Different Time(s) and Space(s)

An important function of the eclectic practice mode of inquiry is that it allows the researcher to actively gather realities and literally create “context.” So far I have offered methods to do this in relation to objects and subjects. Now I thematize the eclectic practice of making site multiplicity in order to help the analyst make more time-space potentialities visible without associating it to a subject or object. So what does the analyst do in order to make sites multiple?

The work of making sites multiple involves traveling and gathering different times and spaces. At the literal level, the analyst can travel to different sites to understand how different situated practices differentially enact present meaning. This is largely how Multi-sited Ethnography (MSE) has been interpreted by anthropologists (Marcus, 1998). However, Marcus (1998) would clarify that we are traveling because the world itself is in perpetual motion. The analyst recognizes that meanings take shape through their incorporation across diverse milieu, not just one location (Suchman, Trigg, & Blomberg, 2002). Procedurally, this puts additional demands on the analyst to engage in observations of situated practices at different literal sites. The analyst is traveling to different sites in order to reconfigure the spatial plane on which their object of study has conceptually operated (Marcus, 1998).

There are important conceptual reasons for traveling and gathering other spaces and times. The analyst is actively doing the connecting work to different spaces and times, which fulfills the need for the analyst reach her goal of making organizing topologically complex. This

---

35 Unlike ANT, this methodology does not seek to recover a chain of connections on a route already traveled, but rather to follow the ways of the world as they open up (Ingold, 2010).
means that the researcher should be able to learn something more about the material organization of the response to the complex social problem and the problem itself.  

The analyst knows that she is working to move in and out of different sites of practice, but where does the analyst turn to locate these? What are some specific ways she can connect to other sites? First, the analyst can select a singularly named object, person, or discourse and then trace how that is partially connected to different contexts of practice. For example, Mol (2002) showed us how different sites of practice (clinic, pathology, laboratory) were enacting different versions of lower-limb disease, even though it was treated as a singular disease. After studying the situated practices in the clinic, pathology, and the laboratory she could compare and contrast the disease enacted in these different sites.

Second, the analyst can travel to different sites, but not literally be “going” anywhere. Methods of eclectic practice can create new destinations in metaphorical spaces. Creating metaphorical sites is based on the assumption that some of the most important places in our world are not entirely “real.” This methodology is not bound to describing and reflecting reality, but rather, the analyst is trying to open up new realities, new possibilities through eclectic practice. The goal of creating metaphorical destinations is to try to apprehend multiple worlds (Law, 2004). Procedurally this is useful for the researcher because the investment of time and resources is presumably less than actual travel to multiple sites.

There are important conceptual reasons to travel to metaphorical sites. This connecting work can occur at the intersection of the situated practices of connecting work and distributing work. Thus, the analyst may choose to connect to metaphorical sites that are only partially

---

36 There are many procedures I have offered in this chapter. I attempted to do all of them, but one that I did not do was travel to another literal site. I had plans to do that, and even paid money to do that, but had competing professional pressures that required me to cancel my plans for travel to another site. Fortunately, I was able to access many of the happening’s at this site online. You will see that listed in my project data log under eclectic practice and the community conference.
connected to in situated practice, or those sites that seem to have been distributed in situated practice. As such, this method is conceptually useful for recovering absenced potentialities and enacting new, unseen realities (Law, 2004).

The analyst knows that she is working to create metaphorical spaces, but what does the analyst turn to in order to do this work? What are some specific sites of discourses that can be used in order to create metaphorical spaces? We can gather data that specifically allows us to create an allegory. Law (2004) describes allegory as the art of meaning something other and more than what is being said by holding together two things that do not cohere. The researcher can look to what is coherent in situated practice and then actively seek out time-space potentialities that clash with that and try to assemble those alongside each other. The analyst may turn to popular discourses, art, literature, or examination of other practices. The data selected should purposefully mess with boundaries (Law, 2004). Law (2004) argues that creating allegory is really about creating a space for ambivalence and ambiguity.

**Summarizing Eclectic Practice**

An eclectic practice mode of inquiry allows the researcher to gather data that will create object, subject, and site multiplicity. The goal of eclectic practice is to extend the creative reach of the analyst and enable her to challenge boundaries. The “data” used in eclectic practice should be varied, perhaps even unexpected. The result of using methods of eclectic practice should be a more topologically complex object of study. In problem-centered organizing, this should allow the analyst to say more about the complex social problem itself. In the next section, I detail how a researcher can think about and perform reflexivity using this methodology.

---

37 In stories that use allegory, a character or the action of the story stands for something not explicitly stated. For example, the *Wizard of Oz* is a story that has been analyzed as a story about populist farmer revolt and a monetary allegory.
Reflexivity

Rhodes (2009) posed an interesting question: What is ethics when writing research is no longer based on its adequacy in representing the reality of organizations? I think this is an appropriate question to begin thinking about what researcher reflexivity might look like using the methodology outlined in this chapter. The malleability and fluidity that this methodology makes of the world only heightens the researcher’s responsibility.

My intention in this section is not to detail the many different forms of reflexivity that have been articulated. I draw on Rhodes (2009) to make the claim that reflexivity in my methodology occurs not in relation to epistemology, but in relation to ethics. By this, I mean that the problem of reflexivity is not located in reflecting on how you know that which you are purporting as a knowledge claim. This is a form of epistemological reflexivity to ensure your interpretations are “correct” or “valid.” Rhodes (2009) argued that “accounting” for ourselves for epistemological purposes only strengthens the representational paradigm by assuming you can have mastery over what you study and yourself.

Rather, the researcher using my methodology is reflexive in relation to ethics. Rhodes (2009) argued that this makes the question, “who am I?” important to surface an ethical reflexivity. The question “who am I?” is salient because this brings our own being as a researcher into question (Rhodes, 2009). Rhodes (2009) argues that this helps us to problematize ourselves by looking at how who and what we research shapes us. In other words, we are willing to acknowledge our own fluidity and multiplicity. See Appendix D for a relational account of “who I am” as a researcher at my research site.

I also add the question of “where am I?” as salient to reflexivity in my methodology. The question of location becomes important because our own objects of study travel and so do we. I
offer a few questions that a researcher can use to improve her reflexivity of location. The researcher should ask: what sites contributed to your knowledge and how? What was your entry and exit like at those sites? How did you change from entry to exit? These questions recognize that ethics will always need to be addressed in relation to the situation and its uniqueness (Hassard, Keleman, Cox, 2008).

These questions are important in order to develop reflexivity that relates to ethics. Reflexivity is incredibly important for this methodology because its malleability could potentially lead to the unintended consequence of reinscribing singularity of the knowing subject. Our own research practice is enacting a reality as it documents the process of how reality is enacted in other contexts of practice. The researcher should ask, how have my own practices enacted the distinction between the real, the unreal, and the “making of signal and silence” (Law, 2004, p. 110)?

In order to faithfully address this question, the researcher must document her practices for arriving at her explanation, which is a “double” documentation of sorts. Documentation is not intended for the researcher to “prove” her method was valid, but rather to help the researcher stay grounded. The documentation of eclectic practice methods also adds interest to the project because it will tell the story of the researcher’s travels. The reader of a project using this methodology should expect to see some fragments of this documentation evidenced in the written representation of the project. In spirit of “double” documentation, I have kept a record of my own reflections on the process of doing research and analyzing the data. See Appendix E for some of my reflections. See Appendix F for the questions I used to help me be reflexive about data collection and analysis for this project.
Handling & Interpreting Data

The two modes of inquiry, discovery and eclectic practice, use methods that are designed to be rich and open. As a result, the data that a researcher will collect is varied. The researcher can expect to have detailed fieldnotes of situated practices. She will also have a variety of texts and visual documents that were produced in situated practices. She might even have recorded transcripts of interactive exchanges that occurred in the situated practice of concern. We can also expect the researcher to have recorded transcripts from interviews, visuals, documents, forms, etc. In sum, our data will come in many forms and varying levels of detail. See Appendix A for a log of all of the data collected for this project.

A richness and variation in forms of data is important for a researcher using this methodology. There are different criteria for how the researcher should think about appropriate amounts of data, what data is more or less valued, and how the researcher systematically handles the data in order to arrive at an interpretation of value. In the next sections, I discuss each one of these issues in turn.

How Much Is Enough Data?

There are, of course, no hard and fast rules for how much data is enough. However, because each mode is a different way of “seeing” the world the researcher should have data resulting from both of the two modes of inquiry. In addition, the researcher will need data that “speaks” to both organizing processes: enactment and sedimentation. If she finds that she does not have data that speaks to both organizing processes, then she must actively seek out that data, or data that provides insight into why one of the organizing processes is not becoming visible.

However, because this methodology is not based on a representational ontology, we are not “capturing” the world. Methods that seek to capture the world often see more data as better.
However, the epistemology of this method suggests that rather than collecting lots of data in order to capture the reality, we are more interested in the “moments that matter” in the continuous unfolding of the world. I will describe “moments that matter” in more detail later. However, for now, what is important is that this could involve a great deal of data or a surprisingly small amount. Concern with the “moments that matter” shifts the focus to quality of data rather than quantity.

**What Data is More or Less Valued?**

Deciding what data matters most is largely about detecting the “right” similarities and differences in order to know what data needs to be reduced or amplified (Law, 2004). I will begin with reduction. Reduction of data is a warranted practice in this methodology because deriving representative themes from the “whole cloth” of data is not the end goal. As such, the researcher can reduce the data using a set of provocation questions to facilitate the “read” of the data. See Appendix G for a list of provocation questions. The goal of using these questions to enter the data is to provoke, arouse, and stimulate, such that the researcher can remain in an initially open but interested mode of inquiry. Questions that help us to read data in a provoking manner are both general and specific.

In the process of answering these questions, the researcher should organize and mark her data. Data that speaks to the researcher in her provocative reading becomes important for returning to for more systematic analysis. This process effectively enacts boundaries on the data and guides the researcher to data that she may later want to amplify.

The data that the researcher enacts as outside of the boundaries of systematic scrutiny is not entirely outside of the researchers purview or somehow insignificant to the enacted object of study. Rather, this data can be thought of as manifestly absent data. This means the traces of that
data will always be present, but those traces do not become the focus for the researchers developing interpretation. See Appendix A for the data log for this project. I have marked the data that I made manifestly absent by not further analyzing in this research project.

Now the researcher has enacted a few boundaries on her data. However, it is likely that she still has a great deal of data with which to work. This data should be considered for amplification. Amplification means that the researcher may need to collect more or different data around a particular thread, practice, or site that is seen as potentially important. Amplification can require the researcher to return to both or one of the modes of inquiry. However, this is likely the stage where the researcher will move further into the eclectic practice mode of inquiry. Since this mode of inquiry is really based in the discovery mode of inquiry, it follows from the data collected in discovery mode of situated practices. The point of amplification is to create convergent forms of data that might assist the researcher in creating more time-space relations for analysis. Convergent forms of data are not chosen for triangulation purposes, but for the ability to problematize (Hassard, Keleman, & Cox, 2008).

Through amplification, the researcher should begin to notice and create “moments that matter” in her data. These moments that matter will become important to further systematic analysis. The process of data amplification will also help the researcher begin to make tentative interpretations. All of the choices the researcher makes should be documented as she goes along.

**How Does the Researcher Systematically Handle Data?**

So far the researcher has collected some data and begun to sort through it. Doing this early on in a project is helpful because it keeps the researcher engaged. Doing discovery-mode inquiry, eclectic practice inquiry, and inquiry into the moments that matter in your data at the

---

38 I should note that these boundaries are pliable. The researcher can always return to data she has reduced to rethink its significance.
same time should produce both exhilaration and frustration. These are both appropriate responses
that indicate researcher engagement.\textsuperscript{39}

The data that was illuminated by the provocation reading should serve as fodder for the
next steps, which involves a more systematic analysis process.\textsuperscript{40} This analysis process is called
situation analysis. Adele Clarke, a student of Anselm Strauss, created this method of analysis
by fusing together the insights of a constructivist leaning grounded theory, Strauss’s (1984)
world arenas framework, Foucault’s (1988) approach to discourse, Haraway’s (1991) approach
to situated knowledges, and Latour’s approach to nonhuman agency.\textsuperscript{41} See Appendix H for a
detail of the theoretical foundations of situation analysis.

\textbf{Analysis Procedures: Three Mapping Exercises}

Situational analysis has two distinctive features. First, the situation is defined as the unit
of analysis.\textsuperscript{42} The situation as the unit of analysis is useful for this project because it broadens the
inquiry while also recognizing that all knowledge is situated.\textsuperscript{43} The inquiry is broadened to
include all elements of a situation as important, at least initially. Situations include relationships

\textsuperscript{39} I should clarify that I did not engage in all three forms of inquiry at once. Actually, I began the process
of discovery-mode inquiry first, followed by that by eclectic practice inquiry and making moments that
matter in my data. The reason for this is because I started to collect data before and alongside my
conception of this methodology. As such, I acknowledge that my engagement with my data was not
ideal.

\textsuperscript{40} This is an amendment to Clarke’s (2005) situational analysis, who says you begin the analysis by first
doing an open coding of your data. This comes from her allegiance to grounded theory. However, this
treatment of the “whole corpus” of data would not be suitable for my analytic goals.

\textsuperscript{41} Clarke also acknowledges getting inspiration from Kathy Charmaz. They both share the critique that
grounded theory presents results that are too smooth and rational.

\textsuperscript{42} This is a central difference from grounded theory, which takes as its central unit of analysis “basic
social processes.” “Action is not enough” the analytic focus needs to go beyond the knowing subject and
instead look at the full situation of inquiry more broadly and including the turn to discourse (Clarke,
2005, p. xxviii). Instead of boiling data down to a basic social process, situational analysis attempts to
allow for the multiplicity of social processes and work against the erasure of difference.

\textsuperscript{43} Clarke (2005) draws primarily on Haraway (1997) to argue that we assume the “embodiment and
situatedness of all knowledge producers, and assuming the simultaneous “truths” of multiple
knowledges” (p. 19).
between actors and elements as well as particular spatial and temporal moments. The broadened inquiry matches the researcher’s need to challenge boundaries conceptually. She can include actors, nonhuman actors, collectives, discourses, etc. in her analysis processes. However, the situation as the unit of analysis also situates the analyst’s knowledge claims. Instead of pursuing formal theory, situational analysis sees analytic sufficiency in making sensitizing concepts for “theorizing” (Clarke, 2005, p. 28). As such, this unit of analysis simultaneously meets the researchers need to take boundaries seriously in practice. The claims the analyst makes will be based on consideration of heterogeneous meanings, but her claims will be bounded to arena of the complex social problem she is seeking to understand and address.

The analyst can define the situation very broadly, at least initially. The purpose is to surface the heterogeneity of a situation, which should follow easily from the varied and rich data we have collected in the two modes of inquiry. The analyst considers “the situation qua conditions of possibility and the actions, discourses, and practices in it” (Clarke, 2005, p. 57). Importantly, situational analysis assumes that everything in a situation conditions the possibilities of action.

For the purposes of studying problem-centered organizing, whatever is the response to the complex social problem can serve as our initial situational unit of analysis. To determine this, the analyst can ask: what is the complex social problem of concern? What is the relevant response to the complex social problem that we should study? The goal in taking time to think about these questions is to get the broadest sense possible of the problem at hand. For this project, the situational unit of analysis for the situational mapping procedure is “Heart & Soul community planning of participation in local governance.”
The second distinctive feature of situational analysis is the three main types of analysis procedures: 1) situational maps: “as strategies for articulating the elements in the situation and examining relations between them”; 2) social world/arenas maps: “as cartographies of collective commitments, relations, and sites of action”; and 3) positional maps: “as simplification strategies for plotting positions articulated and not articulated in discourses” (Clarke, 2005, p. 86).

Importantly, the maps will not necessarily become final analytical products. Rather, they are for opening up the data, to allow interrogation of data in new ways. I detail each mapping procedure below and how the analyst uses these to study problem-centered organizing.

**Situational Mapping**

The first analytic process is called situational mapping. The analyst uses the data of interest derived from the provocation reading and data amplification as fodder for this process. To create an abstract situational map, the analyst descriptively lays out all of the important elements in the situational unit of analysis. Clarke (2005) explained that “A situational map should include all of the analytically pertinent human and nonhuman, material, and symbolic/discursive elements of a particular situation as framed by those in it and by the analyst” (p. 87). Clarke (2005) recommends avoiding essentialism and thinking in entities by always using the metaphor of the hybrid or cyborg. See Appendix I for a list of questions used to provoke thinking about what is included on an abstract map.

We will have many more elements on our initial maps than what might appear in our analysis, as many elements will drop away later in the research process. The first map, however, will be messy and we should expect to make several revisions and versions. See Appendix J for an abstract messy situational map from this project.
The analyst will then make an ordered version of her messy maps. Clarke (2005) borrows categories from Strauss’s (1993) negotiated orders approach to help the analyst examine the situation more thoroughly. These categories include: individual human elements/actors, collective human elements/actors, discursive constructions of individual and/or collective human actors, political economic elements, temporal elements, major issues/debates, nonhuman elements/actants, implicated/silent actors/actants, discursive construction of nonhuman actants, sociocultural/symbolic elements, spatial elements, and related discourses (historical, narrative, and/or visual).

The analyst should be able to address all of these categories. If not, she may need to return to discovery-based or creative-practice modes of inquiry to collect additional data. In addition, the analyst should expect to develop new categories particular to her situation. Both of the above maps should assist the researcher in apprehending the complexity within the domain of the social problem. See Appendix K for an example of an ordered map for this project. See Appendix L for a memo about my ordered map.

After elements have been identified, the analyst then uses these maps to conduct a relational analysis among elements of the situation. To do the relational analysis, the analyst takes each element on the map in turn and thinks about how it relates to other elements on the map. She is looking specifically for what elements are connecting to, distributing, or reifying. The analyst memos the nature of that relation. This proceeds systematically for every element on the map. I conducted many relational analysis maps. See Appendix M for a sample of relational analyses from this project.

Relational analysis is useful for problematizing elements within the domain of the response to the social problem. We can use this map to probe for how organizing work is taking
place. We can use the relational analysis to identify where connecting work has taken place and to notice even partial connections. Additionally, we should notice elements that are not connected to begin to see where distribution work is occurring. The relevant questions are: what potentialities are made salient through connecting in the problem context? What potentialities were silenced through distribution in the problem context? Particularly interesting relations can guide any further data collection that may be needed.

After doing this, the analyst will have numerous maps to compare, making it easier to see which elements have fewer and weaker relations than others. Clarke (2005) explains that you know you have a good situational map when you reached saturation. This means you have worked and reworked your map to the point that you have not seen the need for any major changes in quite a while and as such, you think you have most of the important elements.

**Social World/Arenas Maps**

The second mapping procedure is called a social worlds/arenas maps. Clarke’s (2005) approach is Strauss and Corbin’s (1987) social worlds/arenas/negotiations maps. However, Clarke made an important amendment to that style of mapping. Rather than seeing structural conditions as outside of the situation of concern, she sees these as constitutive of the situation. There is no such thing as context.
Clarke (2005) argues that this map is between the modernist assumption of the knowing individual and the postmodern conceptualization of the fragmented. This analytic procedure helps the researcher to take boundaries seriously in practice by asking, how do people try to organize themselves in the face of others trying to organize them differently? How do they organize in response to the broader structural situations they find themselves in? “There are intermediary and relentlessly social spaces and places and social worlds/arenas/discourses analyzes seek to frame them” (Clarke, 2005, p. 110).

Clarke (2005) provides a series of questions to ask to get the mapping started. See Appendix N for these questions. “Specifying the key social worlds is the major analytic task for this map” (Clarke, 2005, p. 112). Social worlds included on this map are based on what is meaningful to the actors themselves and the analyst can expect there will be many arenas, some that overlap and others that do not. Identifying social worlds should help the researcher to identify relevant problem contexts in problem centered organizing. The relevant question is: what problem contexts are most salient to the complex social problem?

Next, the researcher “should seek to specify difference(s) and variation(s) of all kinds within worlds as well as between worlds” (p. 111). The analyst then uses placement on the map and size to indicate relations between social worlds. For example, dotted lines indicate porous boundaries between social worlds. The goal is to make an empirical determination of what collectives or social worlds are in the given arena of interest. See Appendix O for a social worlds/arenas map from this project. Also see Appendix P for a modified version I created called a “problem-context” map.

After creating this map, the researchers task is to describe each major social world in a memo in detail. Questions to guide this include: “What are the commitments of a given world?
How does the world describe and present itself in discourse? How does it describe other worlds in that arena? What actions have been taken in the past and are anticipated in the future? What technologies are used and implicated? Are there particular sites where action is organized?” (Clarke, 2005, p. 115). The mapping is intended to reveal broader conditions that may go unnoticed.

Once the analyst has a familiarity with the different problem contexts, the analyst can compare across different problem contexts by going back and doing a situational map for each problem context of interest. Tacking back to do more focused situational maps will allow the analyst to do an intense focus on the organizing work in a particular problem context. Then, the analyst can ask, how does the interference of potentialities differ across different problem contexts? The goal here is to gain more insight into how organizing works in problem contexts.

We know we have a good enough social worlds/arenas map when no new social worlds have appeared in our map for some time. This means we have pursued sufficient data to be able to explicate the situation. Clarke (2005) reminds the researcher to be aware of any differences smoothed over in this mapping process. We should struggle against smoothing and oversimplification.

**Positional Mapping**

The third and final mapping process is called positional mapping. This map is designed to surface the discursive issues of contestation that surround your object of study. “Positional maps lay out most of the major positions *taken in the data* on major discursive issues therein-topics of focus, concern, and often, but not always contestation” (Clarke, 2005, p. 126). The analyst should use these maps to understand the positions on issues, the sites of discursive silence, and
the differences in discursive positions taken in a situation. The goal is to grasp positions as they are articulated on their own terms, not the terms of the researcher.

The analyst should keep in mind that positions are not associated with persons or groups. Rather, Clarke (2005) specifically seeks to make these positions in discourses, not to represent individual or collective experiences. She argues that articulating positions independently of people, social worlds, and nonhuman actants helps the researcher to see situated positions better downstream. Discourse positions focus on the “space between” actors and arenas (Clarke, 2005, p. 127).

To start the map, the researcher elucidates from the data the points of contestation. Then she arrays these dimensionally as they relate to one another. The analyst can set up a relationship array by creating two main axes and marking each end of those axes with values of more or less. The analyst can then lay out the major positions as they relate to these and other positions in the situation along these two dimensions. Where discursive positions seem to cluster in our situation can be read for how they have persisted. This could indicate important sites for tapping into the reification work taking place. In addition, the analyst can use this process to notice missing positions in her data. Where a position is missing can become an indication of distribution work. I did three positional maps for my project. See Appendix Q for a sample positional map of this project.

Dominant discourses can then be compared with sites of ordering work from the relational analysis in order to get a bigger picture of how organizing work is related to the complex social problem. The point is for the analyst to return to the normative concern of problem-centered organizing. How does the entanglement of time-space potentialities shape the response to the complex social problem?
The analyst knows she has a good positional map when she has reached saturation. This means that no new hot issues are coming up in the data. In addition, the analyst has taken good memos on the positional maps to use for developing her interpretation.

These three mapping procedures provide a way to analyze a wide variety of data with an eye for organizing work of many different forms. Doing these maps should make connections in our data that surprise the researcher. While this method of analysis is far from perfect, it does allow the researcher, in the most transparent way possible, to study problem centered organizing.

**Methodology Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have attempted to “go the distance” with my theoretical framework to offer a methodology that addresses the dual nature of the boundary problem. I articulated a methodology based on two different modes of inquiry: discovery and eclectic practice. These modes position the researcher as a tentative interpreter, active in creating realities. The methods the researcher uses is designed to refine her sensitivity to difference and her ability to tolerate ambiguity and paradox (Hassard, Keleman, & Cox, 2008). This allows her to highlight the process by which discretion emerges in the first place by surfacing as many relations as possible for analysis.45

In sum, my methodology has one primary goal: making complexity. Making complexity is a slight shift from the goal of traditional qualitative research, which, following Lindlof & Taylor (2002) is understanding the complexity of lived experience. Much like traditional qualitative methods in communication, the analyst still observes, conducts interviews, looks at texts, and reduces and shapes her data. However, when we are making complexity, the researcher

---

45 A similar well-known approach is Latour’s “follow the nonhuman actor” mantra in Actor-Network Theory (ANT). However, we should seek to extend beyond the metaphor of the network. We can liken my methodology more to how Austrin & Farnsworth (2005) link Latour and the mutating rhizome of Delueze. They do so in order to offer that we can follow partial connections, so as not to close off the destabilizing force of Otherness.
approaches the empirical in different ways for different end goals, changing the tenor and nature of research practice. These two modes of inquiry are rich and open enough to allow the analyst to challenge boundaries conceptually. However, these methods should also be concrete and specific enough to enable the analyst to notice how boundaries work in practice.

In the following chapter, I answer the research questions posed in chapter four using this methodology. I present my analysis of Heart & Soul community planning as problem-centered organizing. I will reflect on my use of this methodology more in the final conclusion chapter of this dissertation.
Chapter Six

Heart & Soul Community Planning as Problem-Centered Organizing

The entry point for the study of organizations in problem-centered organizing is a response to a complex social problem. In this section, I set up the rest of my analysis through a brief description of the social problem in my analysis: citizen participation in local governance. Following this brief description, I will describe the response that I analyzed, Heart & Soul community planning, in detail. Finally, I will introduce the two Heart & Soul problem contexts that comprised the focal points of my analysis, The Circle Foundation and the City of Mesa.

Citizen Participation in Local Governance

Many U.S. cities struggle with low levels and lacking quality of citizen participation in issues of local governance. There are many different reasons given for these challenges. On the one hand, government structures and practices preclude quality interaction with citizens. Scholars have argued that bureaucratic structures of government organizations creates a condition where governments have difficulty letting go of control (Ghose, 2005; Head, 2007). Local governments with hierarchical models of organization have been critiqued as problematic because the interaction that the organizational structure encourages does not “fit” with citizenship activities today (Head, 2007).

On the other hand, the source of the participation problem can be attributed to the citizens themselves. Scholars have cited that citizens often have a lack of awareness or knowledge of opportunities to be involved in local governance matters (Ghose, 2005). Poorer individuals might not have the time or resources to participate. Even when citizens do participate, their participation is contingent on their capacity to engage with the structured and technical
government systems. Citizens often find that meetings and public hearings are limited to one-way communication (Innes & Booher, 2004).

Given these challenges, efforts are growing to build bridges between governments and citizens to create more government-citizen collaborative models of interaction (Head, 2007). The attempt to connect citizens and governments has spawned new organizational forms and partnerships. In order to build capacity, non-governmental organizations are often the mediators between government and citizens (Head, 2007). This ultimately means more community based organizations and public-private partnerships (Ghose, 2005). Collaborative, partnership-based local governance is becoming the new space for creating stronger citizen engagement (Ghose, 2005).

**Heart & Soul Community Planning**

Heart & Soul community planning is an organizing practice and philosophy that has the specific aim of improving citizen engagement in matters of local governance. In particular, organizers of Heart & Soul community planning are interested in citizen participation as it relates to community land use planning. The Heart & Soul philosophy attributes a direct link between lack of citizen participation in local governance and the problems communities experience with growth creep, or “Anywhere USA.” Growth creep refers to the increasing development of cities, and in particular, big box development that is nonlocal. The Heart & Soul philosophy asserts that if citizens were more engaged in local land use issues, they could steer their communities away from rapid development and towards what the citizens valued for their desired future.

As a practice, Heart & Soul community planning attempts to bring citizens and city planners together through place. In doing so, the goal is to overcome the planning procedures that have infused places with zoning, laws, and regulations that privilege economic interests.
Local land use planning is seen as having a rationalistic bias that alienates people from the places where they live. To make matters worse, much land use planning often occurs behind closed doors. By the time citizens become aware of a major land use change, it is too late to stop the development.

In order to change these planning practices, or “business as usual” planning, Heart & Soul brings together local planners with local citizens to talk about the meaning of place outside of the overly regulatory planning discourses. Specifically, citizens are engaged through Heart & Soul techniques to talk about what they value about place, their community, in order to establish a “community voice.” The community voice, expressed through a set of values, is then incorporated into city planning documents and procedures. The idea is that once the community has voiced what they value about their community, city planners are obligated to consider the wishes of the community when considering land use proposals. The ultimate goal is that communities will be able to preserve and protect their “unique character” and effectively combat “business as usual” planning and the “Anywhere USA” development phenomena.

**The Circle Foundation**

To foster a community dialogue about place and ensure that local planners have the capacity to hear the community voice, non-profit and for profit organizations act as bridges between city planners and citizens. For my analysis, I examined one of these bridge organizations called the Circle Foundation. The Circle Foundation is a non-profit bridge organization that operates in the Rocky Mountain West and New England areas of the U.S.

The Circle Foundation is known for the development and growth of Heart & Soul community planning. Here is an excerpt from the Circle Foundations website describing their philosophy:
“The Circle Foundation is set apart by our unwavering belief in the power of citizen engagement, and the proven ability to harness this power to guide positive change. Every town has authenticity, character, spirit—its own heart and soul. The Foundation is developing a new way to energize people to play an active role in shaping their community’s future—a new way to plan that changes the conversation and gives community members a voice that leads to action. We believe that engaged citizens drive innovation, take action and create enduring successes—that they are the key to healthy, enduring communities. Through Heart & Soul Community Planning, the Circle Foundation encourages broad citizen engagement and offers ways for townspeople to contribute their energy, talents, stories and legacies to planning for their future” (Circle Foundation Website, 121).

The Circle Foundation supports the process of Heart & Soul planning through grants awarded to towns with populations of less than 30,000. Selected communities receive financial support, training, and technical assistance for two years. Heart & Soul grants are fairly new offerings for the Foundation, and so far there have only been a handful of project towns.

**Mesa Project Town**

One of the first towns to be awarded a Heart & Soul community planning grant was the Rocky Mountain West town of Mesa. The population of Mesa is just under 18,000 with an area of about 9 square miles. The Heart & Soul project began in Mesa in 2008 and ended in 2010. For my analysis, I examined the Heart & Soul community planning practices in the project town of Mesa.

The focus of the Heart & Soul planning effort in Mesa was to develop a vision statement that reflected the communities desired future for Mesa in the year 2030. The project was called
“Mesa Vision 2030” by the Circle Foundation and Mesa residents. Using Heart & Soul methods and practices, this vision would be based on the community voice, expressed as what community members valued about Mesa. The community vision would then be used to update Mesa’s city plans, and in particular their comprehensive plan and neighborhood plans.

The process in Mesa included several different events. These were community engagement events where Mesa planners and government officials asked Mesa residents to talk about what they valued about Mesa. Talking about values took place at neighborhood block parties where residents were encourage to share their “stories” about Mesa. Hundreds of stories were digitally recorded and then viewed by Mesa residents at later events called “story listening” focus groups. At these focus groups, Mesa residents were directed by a facilitator to listen for what people valued about Mesa in their stories. This process resulted in several hundred “value statements.” The value statements were then sorted and grouped by Mesa residents at later events called “community summits.” The sorting process resulted in eleven “value themes” that comprised Mesa’s Vision for 2030. See Appendix R for a list of the eleven Mesa Heart & Soul values.

**Heart & Soul Community Planning as Problem-Centered Organizing**

Now that you have a sense of Heart & Soul community planning and the process that took place in Mesa, I will present my analysis. I set out in this analysis to understand Heart & Soul community planning through the problem-centered organizing framework. I wanted to know if problem-centered organizing would lead to any new insights about Heart & Soul planning and if this could be useful for organizational communication and organizational technology scholars. As such, I asked the following research questions:
RQ1: How did problem-centered organizing occur in Heart and Soul community planning?

A: What connecting work occurred and what meanings did this enact?

B: What reification and distribution work occurred and what meanings did this sediment?

C: How did potentialities interfere in the organizing process?

In answering these questions, I was able to make some valuable insights about Heart & Soul planning and problem-centered organizing. I will share these insights with you in the following sections.

In the first section, I show how the “outcomes” of the Heart & Soul process in Mesa appear to match the normative goals of the bridge organization, the Circle Foundation, despite my analysis of practices in Mesa which showed the opposite. I make sense of this “mismatch” between the normative goals of participatory governance and the actual practices of participatory governance as a deconstructive interference. In the two sections following that, I shed light on this deconstructive interference through a detailed analysis of the practices that occurred in the Mesa project town and the Circle Foundation. I specifically explain how the deconstructive interference took place at particular moments that I call distributive meaning-organization sites. I then discuss how these findings can be used to communicatively theorize relationships between organizations through an awareness of how other spaces and times materially impact the process of organizing.
**A Wave and a Trough Meet**

A problem-centered organizing framework uses the logic of waves to explain how things relate. When two waves or two troughs meet, there is an increase in amplitude. When a wave and a trough meet, there is a decrease in wave amplitude. Both are called an *interference*.

I found through my analysis of organizing that a *deconstructive interference* occurred between the Heart & Soul organizing practices in the project town of Mesa and the Heart & Soul discourses of the bridge organization, the Circle Foundation. In other words, a trough met a wave and essentially cancelled each other out. When I examined Heart & Soul practices in Mesa, sedimented meanings actually reified “business as usual” planning. In other words, I found the process in Mesa actually produced the opposite of Heart & Soul’s normative goal. If we follow out the logic of wave interference, this means that the normative goals of Heart and Soul community planning go nowhere and the status quo, “business as usual” planning prevails. But how did this happen? If these two problem-contexts cancelled out each other’s efforts, then what did this mean for the participatory governance process?

You are probably thinking that this finding is really not that surprising. It is just another failed effort to make change. However, I had reason to be more concerned. Now, I will explain why this “mismatch” between the normative goals of Heart & Soul and the Heart & Soul practices in Mesa deserved further investigation.

First, I could not attribute the “failure” of the process to a problem with Mesa’s practices. Mesa faithfully used the tools and techniques of the Circle Foundation to execute, for the most part, a seemingly successful Heart & Soul process. Mesa connected to the values of people and places, had all of the Heart & Soul events, and seemed to embody the Heart & Soul ethic. The city faithfully performed the Heart & Soul process.
Second, I became even more concerned when I saw the values that became part of the vision 2030 in Mesa. I wondered how practices that reified “business as usual” planning could produce discourses that aligned almost perfectly with the normative goals of Heart & Soul community planning. After the two-year long Heart & Soul process two “guiding principles” became the main values of Mesa’s Vision 2030. Take a look at these guiding principle values here:

We value:

I. Responsive Government

*Our city government is responsive, approachable, good at listening, welcomes participation and involvement, is fair to all parts of the city and is accountable.*

II. Controlled and Directed Change

*Our community values require that we direct and manage change, assure smart growth (transportation & development), affordable housing, and sustainability. As a community, we expect sustainability that preserves the small town look, feel and character.*

Principle one speaks to Heart & Soul’s goal to change unresponsive government (business as usual). Principle two speaks to Heart & Soul’s goal to change uncontrolled growth (Anywhere USA). It appears, based on these guiding principles, that Heart & Soul filled its normative goal in the project town of Mesa.

How could I make sense of my analysis showing that “business as usual” was reified through Mesa’s practices? I returned to think about the two different dynamics in problem-centered organizing: potentialities (meanings) and the organization (enactment and sedimentation) of potentialities. Could it be that the practices in Mesa were connecting to the wrong potentialities to enact meaning? Or, maybe there was a past potentiality in Mesa that was
haunting them? Perhaps the problem was not with enactment of meaning at all. Maybe the problem was how meaning was sedimented. Were their practices distributing potentialities they should not? Or was a past potentiality silently carried all the way through the process without notice until the end? These were all legitimate possibilities.

To shed light on this deconstructive interference, I will now “zoom in” (Nicolini, 2009) to investigate practices of the Heart & Soul process in Mesa more thoroughly. In the next section, I provide details of the practices of Heart & Soul organizing in Mesa. I found that using the problem-centered organizing lens allowed me to locate a *distributive meaning-organization site* that began to inform the deconstructive interference between the discourses of Heart & Soul and the practices of Heart & Soul in the Mesa project town.

**A Distributive Meaning-Organization Site**

One of the unique features of problem-centered organizing is the combined attention to organizing and space-time potentialities. *Meaning-organization sites* are where two things occur at once: organizing work (connecting, distributing, and/or reifying) and potentialities acting as sites of meaning. In Mesa, a particular meaning-organization site illuminated the relationship between practices in Mesa and how those practices were being organized by the Circle Foundation.

Before I detail the practices at this meaning-organization site, I will give some background on the actors at the site. I zoomed in on the practices of the Local Advisory Committee (LAC) in Mesa in order to locate this meaning-organization site. This “problem context” was comprised of people from the Circle Foundation, the Planning Commission in Mesa, for profit consulting organizations, citizens in Mesa representing various task forces and committees, and residents of Mesa.
Now I can begin to detail this particular meaning-organization site. The meaning-organization site in Mesa was a *distributive* site. Specifically, this was where a distribution of meaning into absence was occurring. This particular site was important for several reasons. I address in this section how the distributive organizing work that occurred at this site enacted many of the meanings of “business as usual” planning.

The example of the distributive meaning-organization site I share comes from the second community summit event that occurred in the last 6 months of the Heart & Soul process. The entire community was invited to this summit to “test” and “refine” the values. Here is a general description of the site to set the scene:

“We walk inside and there are three or four older women signing their names on the sign in sheet and making nametags. Sara and I wait our turn. Meanwhile about 6 people have showed up and are now lining up behind us. I take this moment to scan the room. It is the large airy space of the cafeteria. I see 5 TV screens set up, two on one side, one at the very back of the room and then another two on the far side of the room. I notice some men sitting at the table in the middle of the room. This table has a bunch of PA system equipment and laptops on it (Field Notes, 6.10.10, 33).

Here are a few pictures from the location of the summit to give you a sense of the community summit site:
An excerpt from one of my fieldnotes highlights what a distributive meaning-organization site looks and feels like. In this excerpt, we are “refining” values by applying them to a hypothetical scenario of land use. We are seeing the hypothetical scenarios in a 3-D visualization and using keypads, or clickers, to vote. There are three different scenario “stations” set up at the summit that we were rotating through. I am at the station where we are asked to think about values to apply to a scenario about a light rail station in Mesa. Notice in this excerpt how there was a great deal of confusion about meanings, but a forced decision:

“There are about 25 of us crowded around the screen. Sandler is trying to adjust the screens to reduce the sunlight coming in on them through the skylight, but without much luck. At this point Sandler seems exhausted and ready for this to be over. Dan is at his computer messing with the visual image of the light rail station on the screen, but not saying much. Then someone from Citizen Results stands up and starts explaining the process. We are supposed to be connecting value themes to this scenario on the screen. Then, a woman in the group points out that the value themes have multiple ideas in them
and that some even contradict each other. Someone else points out that the value of “controlled change” is contradictory.

We hear the voice of the Animate consultant over the microphone, who cuts into our conversation, inform us that we have 5 minutes left in our groups. Sandler encourages us to discuss the scenario in small groups at our tables. People at my table are saying that the value they want is not even on the list. Others look frustrated and are now having loud conversations in small groups. Most people are saying how they think the light rail would be bad for Mesa. I notice that one group is doing a process of elimination to see which values are most important to the scenario. That is one of the few examples I saw of people actually working with the values in a detailed manner. Most folks had their conversations without talking about the values at all. Instead, they were quite fixated on the scenarios themselves, which was not really the point of the exercise. I overheard a man come up to another man behind me and ask him “So what do you think of this whole process?” And before the other man replied, he said, “I think it is kind of confusing.” I could not help but agree with this sentiment.

The voice of the Animate consultant comes over the microphone again and asks us to vote for the top three values that are most important to the scenario. It gets very quiet as people are voting. The Animate consultant warns us to not even try voting for the same value three times because the keypad software will prevent us from doing that. It was as if she was letting everyone know they cannot get around “the system.” Then before we even get a chance to see the results of our votes on the screen, she orders us to move to a new table to start on a different scenario” (Field Notes, 6.10.10, 33).
In the above excerpt, I wanted you to notice the confusion, followed by a forced decision. Confusion and frustration followed by forced choice show the distribution of meaning in this particular instance. Namely, any meanings that might complicate the process, like discussion about contradiction, were distributed.

The distribution of meaning also occurred when the results of our participation were unclear, but presented to us as if they were crystal clear. Here is another excerpt from the end of the same event that shows this:

“The activity comes to an end and Sandler goes to the mic and encourages us all to move up to the front so we can see the keypad results displayed. Sara and I move to the front area of the room. Sandler then says that community activity is “messy,” referring to everything we did tonight. They first showed the results of the initial scenarios. The results are not at all intelligible. I cannot read or understand the graph, even at the front of the room. However, “controlled change” appears to be the number one value chosen. Then, the computer screen projecting the results came up with an error that took the keypad people at least a minute to fix. People are groaning and I notice several people leaving at this point” (Field Notes, 6.10.10, 33).

To give you a sense of what it was like to see the “results” of the value refinement, here is one of the result slides displayed at the event:
We have several things here working to distribute meaning. First, unintelligibility combined with no acknowledgement of that unintelligibility. Second, unintelligible “results” are presented as a window on the reality of the collective decision of participants.

The practices of forced decision and unintelligible results at this event actually distributed more than just meanings into absence. Here is a reflection from an LAC member on the event that describes some of the distribution work I have already noted, but adds the distribution of certain people (“AP” is me, “D” is the LAC member):

AP: What did you think about the keypads stuff?

D: It was a disaster. And I really wanted the results. I really wanted to see the results. I just think the presentation of it was not relevant.

AP: Yeah. Do you think that people understood what they were seeing?

D: Not at all. The second summit, no. It was very convoluted. And there was a blind guy in the audience for the second summit.
AP: Oh, really…

D: And so he couldn’t see the numbers so they had to go through and read them and then the numbering system was off so the keypads went zero to ten but the values were numbered one to eleven, very confusing. I think a lot of the results I would say were even skewed because there was not that match up. So, it’s like, I think it would have been great if it worked differently. I would have liked to have seen what eighty people in the room thought. I think it was the last one that I really wanted to see, which was how you would rank the values in terms of importance, like you know, what is the number one value? We never found out” (Darlene, Interview, 68).

If participants did not understand the procedures or the technologies, they were left behind.

I observed this distribution of meaning occur in two community summits. What I began to notice was how the techniques of forced decision and the decision support technologies worked in concert to distribute meaning. I began investigating the decision techniques and tools as sites of meaning in their own right. A conversation with one of the Mesa Planners peaked my interest in the decision techniques and tools as potentialities that needed to be investigated. I asked him what he would change about the Heart & Soul process if given a chance. This was his response:

“My biggest regret is all of the crap at the summits. All of the technology crap – even if it had worked I’m not so sure I would have loved it“ (Sandler, Interview, 67).

This comment raised my curiosity. I asked some follow up questions to try to learn more about this. Where did the technology come from?

AP: So what was the purpose of using the technology that you did in this process, how did you see it playing a role?
S: Part of it is because the Circle Foundation – part of our obligation to them was to experiment. And to try “stuff.” And they are very much into “stuff.” They’re into you know, keypad polling isn’t new in anyway but you know, a couple years ago it was newer than it is now and then there is the community visualization. So a big chunk of it was because they wanted us to try things. And our obligation for the money was actually to look for new ways to engage and to do things (Sandler, Interview, 67).

Analyzing this distributive meaning-organization site became important because I found a potentiality that I needed to investigate further. I became curious about how much the Circle Foundation was organizing the way in which meaning was distributed in Mesa. I knew that the Circle Foundation was an important potentiality in Mesa, but now I knew I needed to learn more about this relationship. Could I learn something about where these decision tools and techniques came from?

In the next section, I “zoom out” (Nicolini, 2009) to follow the Circle Foundation potentiality. I found that examining the enactment of potentialities in the problem context of the Circle Foundation allowed me to connect new meanings to the distributive meaning-organization site in Mesa’s practices. The result of theorizing potentialities in meaning-organization sites is what I call giving “weight” to meaning. I detail what giving “weight” to meaning looks like in the next section.

**Giving “Weight” to Meaning in Mesa**

So far I have shown distribution work taking place in situated practices at Mesa. However, a unique aspect of the problem-centered organizing framework was how it focuses the analyst’s attention equally with how situated practices are themselves organized by other meanings in different spaces and times. In this section, I follow out the potentialities of the Circle
Foundation, that I made a tentative connection to in the previous section, to show how the
distributive practices of Mesa were being organized by other space-time potentialities. I call this
creating “topological complexity” of situated organizing practices.

I zoomed out from examining decision tools and techniques as organizing meaning in
Mesa, to becoming curious about these as sites of meaning themselves. Creating topological
complexity of the situated practices in Mesa allowed me to do two things. First, I was able to
learn something new about the site of situated practice in Mesa. I call this connecting back to the
meaning-organization site in Mesa giving “weight” to meaning. Second, following out
potentialities of interest allowed me to learn how Mesa and the Circle Foundation were in a
deconstructive interference entanglement.

When I began to follow out the Circle Foundation, I was performing active connecting
work. To follow the Circle Foundation, I joined an online community that interacts around Heart
& Soul planning, with the Circle Foundation operating at the center of this activity. I began to
notice the enactment organizing work taking place in this problem context. I found that the
enactment of Heart & Soul community planning was accomplished through a strong connection
to technological past. Decision support technology was a founding partner of the Foundation.
See this history of the Circle Foundation from their website:

“Under the leadership of Don Fetzer, the Foundation’s first President, the Foundation
began to explore the development of tools and resources to help citizens make better,
more informed land use decisions. Over the ensuing eight years, the Foundation invested
in the development of Community Biz, its flagship GIS-based 3D visualization and
decision-support tool. In communities across the US, Community Biz came to represent
the Foundation’s vision for how innovative technology could help elevate and inform the
planning process while assisting communities in imagining new possibilities for the future” (Circle Foundation, 121).

Heart & Soul community planning was enacted through a strong connection to this technological imperative. The Foundation even referred to its project towns as “early adopters” (Circle Foundation, 121).

The Circle Foundation’s founder envisioned decision support visualization technology as “leveling the playing field” between expert planners and citizens. He explicitly talks about technology as leveling the playing field through clarity. See this description from a book chapter written about the decision support software by the founder: “The software was intended to produce graphically vivid output that could make clear, to anyone interested, what the result of a given set of community land use and planning policy choices might be” (Envisioning Futures, 130). Later in the same chapter, he argues the tool is able to build a “common language” through visualization.

I also began to investigate how the decision support techniques and tools were used in contexts similar to Mesa. I found that decision tools and techniques were integral to the sedimentation of meaning in public engagement meetings in the region. A technology consultant, who has a for-profit bridge company that contracts with the Circle Foundation, explained how he uses decision techniques in his project towns:

“Some of the questions we ask is, you know, is this plan representative of the public input that you’ve seen? And of course we demonstrate all the public input and how these things fit, so it’s kind of a self fulfilling prophecy. Ninety percent plus of the participants end up agreeing that the plan is an embodiment of the values manifested in the choices made through this whole process” (Sam, Interview, 60).
The same consultant talked about how the decision-making techniques he used are connected to the technology:

“Enabling decisiveness – that’s what a lot of this technology does. People can make firm choices ’cause they understand the implication of each of the scenarios, and you know, they might be a tree hugger or they might be a developer or anything in between, but they can relate to the implication of all of these plans and they can make choices based on it” (Sam, Interview, 60).

He explained how he used the results from keypads to drive consensus. “You literally use their weighting and you club them over the head you know, with these are your values.” The decision tools and techniques were used to demonstrate the “fit” of the vision or the plan, as illustrated by this slide that the technology practitioner uses to explain his public engagement process. Notice the image of the keypad in the upper right corner”

I began to see how technology for-profit bridge organizations were enacting a similar technological imperative as the Circle Foundation.

In the process of zooming out, I also discovered a new world where my understanding of these decision tools and techniques as sites of meaning expanded. I found the Heart & Soul
community planning social movement. Once I located this problem context, I could see how the Circle Foundation operated between project towns like Mesa and a broader community planning social movement. This is a description of the Heart & Soul movement:

“A movement emerges around values-based planning that: unites the diverse disciplines and efforts of this work, fostering connection and accelerating learning; defines the practices that comprise heart and soul community; identifies and applies ways to achieve and measure success; and promotes heart and soul values in the land use and community planning worlds” (Circle Foundation, 121).

This connection between the Circle Foundation and the social movement was a new problem context that I could investigate.

I found that the technological imperative was enacted in the current practices of the broader Heart & Soul planning movement. The Circle Foundation had built a social movement around a network of people and technologies. In order to give you a sense of the connecting work that was done to the technological past, I will take you to look at the social movement more closely.

The broader social movement describes itself as “an innovation-action network for people imagining, driving, and creating community change” (Community, 119). Hearing some of the voices of the Community conference that this social movement holds annually gives you a sense of how the technological imperative is enacted. In a keynote speech at the Heart & Soul conference, the Circle Foundation’s President opened with a speech about the “power of visualization technology.” He followed this with an announcement of a new technology exchange called “PlanX,” that is designed to become a central repository for sharing
technologies across the practitioner network. The technological imperative was enacted as central to the meaning of this social movement.

Enactment of the technological imperative was also evident in the conference activities. The “tools and techniques” of community planning were featured at the movement conference, complete with decision-making technology “sandboxes” where conference attendees could come “play” with the visualization tools. A quick look at the conference program provides an indication of these activities: “8:30 AM – 10:00 AM Gov. 2.0; 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM Visualizing Better Futures; 2:00-5:30 PM Mapping Your future” (Community, 119).

The practices that enacted the technological imperative of the Circle Foundation told practitioners in the network how to be a Heart & Soul practitioner. The Heart & Soul practitioner should have a particular ethic of experimentation with technology. This ethic is quite different from the traditional planner of business as usual who operated behind closed doors. A tweet from a conference attendee gives a sense of the experimental ethic that technology would enact in this gathering: “🍻 ear Twitter friends. About to do a flash Twitter demo in 10 minutes. Please send a hello to the folks at CMConf!” Heart & Soul practitioners enacted their meanings as practitioners, in part, through the technological imperative.

I was able to connect the technological imperative of the Circle Foundation and the broader social movement to the distributive meaning-organization site and the decision tools and techniques at that site in Mesa. I realized the presence of decision tools and techniques at Heart & Soul events at Mesa was an enactment of the Circle Foundation. Decision tools and techniques in this context embodied the Circle Foundation and so I had to think differently about how to understand the distribution work these tools performed in that context. Project towns were themselves sites of enactment for the Circle Foundation’s technological imperative.
I was able to connect the meanings of the Heart & Soul practitioner to the practitioners at the distributive meaning-organization site in Mesa. After an examination of the enactment of practitioner identity around the technological imperative, I was able to notice how different Heart & Soul planners were from traditional planners. Planners in Mesa working on the Heart & Soul project were actually absent potentialities within the professional planning world. In other words, within the traditional planning problem context, Heart & Soul planners were largely unrecognized. After realizing this, I returned to a conversation we had with one of the Mesa planners about the difficulties he experienced. Notice that there is an “internal conflict” between a Heart & Soul planner and the rest of the planning staff who identify as traditional planners (“SM” is Sara and “S” is the Mesa planner):

S: You probably picked up that Nela had conflict with the rest of my staff.

SM: Yeah I did.

S: It was very sad, I liked her so much, and I hired her specifically because she would put the effort into this plan, this effort. ‘Cause when we got – we started the project she was my planner, and this was her project and then she went over to sustainability. So, because of personality conflict... so that’s a lot of the struggle. I pretty much had to order them [rest of the planners] to be heavily involved in the first version of the summit. Right after that I get a call at 8:15 in the morning she tells me “I’m sorry, Sandler, I’m leaving.”

After noticing the connecting work between the technological imperative and the enactment of Heart & Soul practitioner’s ethic, I was able to think differently about the planners in Mesa.

Following out the Circle Foundation and discovering the social movement enabled me to see how a strong past potentiality with technology was enacted in the current meanings of Heart & Soul. In doing so, I was able to connect back to the meaning-organization site in Mesa and
think about their organizing practices more deeply. I was able to give “weight” to the meaning-
organization site. Now I was learning more about the entanglement between the Circle
Foundation and Mesa. In the next section, I return to the interference that concerned me in the
beginning of this chapter to highlight what I have learned about the relationship between
problem contexts.

**Implications of the Deconstructive Interference**

So far, a problem-centered organizing framework allowed me to locate a distributive
meaning-organization site and zoom in and out from that site. In zooming in, I have shown how
practices in Mesa worked to distribute meanings into absence and reify “business as usual”
planning. In zooming out, I showed how the very tools and techniques that participated in the
distribution of meaning were central potentialities to the meanings of the Circle Foundation.
Now, what can we say about the relationship between these two problem-contexts?

In this section, I discuss the meaning, organization, technology configuration that
worked to bind people and things into a relationship of deconstructive interference. Binding
configurations have implications for practice. Namely I have found that practices can have
deconstructive interference potentials built into them. Interference, as built into potentialities, has
implications for how theorizing relations between problem contexts and the social problem the
context is trying to address.

When I zoomed in, I found decision tools and techniques that worked in concert to
distribute meanings. These techniques and tools created confusion and then forced decisions,
produced results from participation that were unclear, but presented those results as if they were
crystal clear, and marginalized people who could not work within the system. I found the
enactment of many of the hallmarks of “business as usual” planning in Mesa’s practices.
When I zoomed out from the distributive meaning-organization site, I found a broader social movement connecting to a strong history of technological imperative to enact meanings. I could connect the meanings in that problem context to the meaning-organization site in Mesa to give “weight” to meanings there. I noticed how the decision tools and techniques at the summits were an enactment of the Circle Foundation’s technological imperative and how Heart & Soul planners were absent potentialities within the traditional planning context.

What do these findings reveal about the interference I found? How can I make sense of the deconstructive interference between discourses of Heart & Soul organizing and the practices of Heart & Soul organizing in Mesa? I can only say a few things about the uncanny alignment between the Heart & Soul discourses and the two top “guiding values” that came out of Mesa’s Heart & Soul practices. I now know the alignment should not be attributed to the Circle Foundation’s Heart & Soul practices that Mesa used during the summits. An insightful comment from the Mesa Heart & Soul planner, Sandler, summed this up well:

“I have a lot of personal credibility with council and the community. I lost some in those summits, yeah and I gained it back but it was in spite of the second summit we got good stuff out of this. But the – I take that back. The concept of the guiding principles, the values that rose to the top was…not earth shaking. But it was big. In spite of everything, the results that came out of it were very big and I think right on. Right on exactly. So I don’t know what that says (laughs) that – maybe it says that you can screw up the process quite a bit if you – I mean if you have good information and committed people, you can still get good results” (Sandler, Interview, 67).
Perhaps the investigation could be expanded to learn more about this. Maybe there was a constructive interference along the way that I have yet to identify? Regardless, interference is a useful logic to notice and explain things that don’t seem to “add up.”

However, I do have some new insight into how Mesa’s practices ended up reifying “business as usual,” in spite of the fact that they followed the Heart & Soul practices faithfully. My initial concern about this problem is both explained and expanded. I have found that the very decision tools and techniques the Circle Foundation enacts as central to their meanings, and asks project towns to use for engagement, could be undermining their own efforts. This finding suggests that Circle Foundation’s practices may have a disseminating interference potential built into them. Since the Foundation is in the business of designing potentialities, this especially problematic. Would it be possible to keep the status quo, “business as usual”, at bay using tools that may help to reify it?

My finding also expands my concern. When I zoomed out, I was able to trace the distributive meaning-organization site to a strong past in the Circle Foundation of a technological imperative. The decision techniques and tools that participated in reifying “business as usual” in Mesa were, for the Circle Foundation, enacted as a “natural” path. These decision tools and techniques were further legitimized in the enactment of meaning connecting to the technological imperative in the social movement. Prying this problem context from their decision techniques and tools would be difficult.

Reading my analysis of the distributive meaning-organization site in Mesa through my analysis of the deconstructive interference between Heart & Soul practices and Heart & Soul discourses has enabled me to see a meaning, organization, technology configuration that works
to bind people and things into a relationship of deconstructive interference. What does this entanglement mean for the social problem that Heart & Soul seeks to address?

I found that a problem-centered organizing framework helped me to be concerned about the social problem as well as the dynamics between problem contexts. Namely, in using this framework, when I learned about entanglements between problem contexts, I actually learned something about the complex social problem itself. There are practical implications for this. Namely, the problem-centered organizing framework can begin to show how the response to the complex social problem materially organizes the problem itself. Based on this, I argue that organizational researchers can shift the analytic lens from formal organization to relationships between problem contexts to gain an opportunity to speak about the movement of complex social problems.

The problem of citizen participation in Mesa was materially organized by the decision techniques and tools of the Circle Foundation. Rather than distribute “business as usual” into absence and recover community voice, these tools participated in perpetuating the participation problem in local governance. However, my analysis shows that this occurrence in practice extends beyond this single meaning-organization site. Rather, the decision techniques and tools run deeper into other time-space potentialities, such as the technological imperative of the Circle Foundation. The Circle Foundation enacted a great deal meaning through decision techniques and tools that perform a deconstructive interference with the Foundations normative discourses.

The implications of even this one “case” in Mesa has reach from a problem-centered lens. Mesa’s Heart & Soul process reified a “business as usual” meaning. This finding has implications for Mesa and their community. However, using a problem-centered organizing framework, it becomes possible to see that Mesa is also a concurrent potentiality. As one of the
Circle Foundations project towns, Mesa was featured at the Heart & Soul conference and as such, will be a potentiality that other Circle Foundation project towns will connect to. Even if the problems that occurred in Mesa at the distributive meaning-organization site are framed to other projects towns as “lessons learned,” there is a deeper link between the problems in Mesa and the Circle Foundation that still need to be addressed before Heart & Soul can begin to distribute “business as usual” into absence.

In sum, I have used the problem-centered organizing framework to make some valuable insights about Heart & Soul planning and problem-centered organizing. I have shown how a meaning, organization, technology configuration bound these two problem contexts, the Mesa project town and the Circle Foundation, into a relationship of deconstructive interference. My overall analysis shows that the re-entanglement logic extends existing approaches to theorizing the relationship between communication, organizations, and materiality. In the next conclusion chapter, I reflect on the implications of this analysis further.
Chapter 7
Conclusion

I have argued that organizational communication and organizational technology scholars are grappling with a dual problem of boundaries. On the one hand, scholars are challenging boundaries to show how communication is more than epiphenomenal to our understandings of organization and how organizational dynamics are more than epiphenomenal to our understandings of technology. On the other hand, scholars are also taking boundaries more seriously to show how the materiality of organization and technology matters.

I have offered a solution to this dual problem of boundaries in my project. I have combined a variable ontology and an epistemology that theorizes a central role for boundaries in practice. I have translated this into a framework for studying organizations called problem-centered organizing. I then provided a methodology that scholars can use to address the dual nature of the boundary problem and study problem-centered organizing. Finally, I have analyzed a community planning project using my framework to show how problem-centered organizing occurs.

In the next sections of this conclusion, I focus on offering my reflections on this project and suggestions for future directions for other scholars. I offer these reflections and suggestions for theory, practice, and method. Finally, I address some of the limitations of my project.

Theoretical Reflections

I argued that my analysis shows how the re-entanglement logic extends existing approaches to theorizing the relationship between communication, organizations, and materiality. I now want to expand upon this by discussing what I think was particularly useful in my analysis. I have found that theorizing communication as organizing has some distinctive features that
builds on existing approaches to theorizing the communicative constitution of the organization and materiality in organizational communication and organizational technology studies (Ashcraft, Kuhn, & Cooren, 2009; Bruni, 2005; Cooren & Fairhurst, 2009; Cooren, 2004; Kuhn, 2008; Leonardi, 2007; Leonardi & Barley, 2008; Orlikowski, 2007; Orlikowski, W., & Scott, S. V., 2008; Orlikowski, 2010; Taylor & Van Every, 2000).

First, I was able to analytically separate out meaning from the organization of that meaning. The concept of potentiality versus connecting, distributing, and reifying, allowed me to do this work. I found through my analysis, and the concept of the meaning-organization site (where the above distinction manifests), I could see both how organizing occurred in practice, and how those practices were being organized by other meanings elsewhere, in a different space and time. My analysis showed how a meaning-organization site can be used to see relationships between organizations, or problem-contexts, in terms of the logic of interference. In my analysis, I found that the distributive organization-meaning site that connected Mesa and the Circle Foundation explained, in part, the reason why Heart & Soul practices could cancel out the normative goals of the Heart & Soul discourses. This logic [meaning-organization site + interference] is essentially the core logic of re-entanglement.

As a result, I was able to say something more about how situated practices are materially organized by other spaces and times. This is slightly different than theorizing how organization spans space and time through materiality (Cooren & Fairhurst, 2009; Cooren, 2004). In my analysis, this other space and time was another organization (Circle Foundation) a social movement (Community Making) and a tool-technique combination (Decision Support Technology), and a past of technology (the Technological Imperative of the Circle Foundation). I was able to theorize how different organizational types, material objects, and history created a
configuration. The configuration, or re-entanglement logic, is distinct from other scholars addressing the boundary problem and as such, offers an additional way to think about the issues of CCO and materiality.

An additional concept from my framework that I want to discuss further is the concept of interference. I have shown how a deconstructive interference can be analytically determined by moving from practice to discourses and back to practice. I believe the notion of interference may be useful to scholars who want to study new organizational forms or inter-organizational relationships. The concept of problem-contexts, and their relationships through interference and organizing in response to complex social problems, is a way to get at the complexity of these organizational dynamics. A shift from organizations, to studying organizing as the consumption and production of time-space potentialities, positions organizational scholars to say more about complex social problems in our world.

**Theoretical Future Directions**

I have promised a great deal in this project and delivered on a few things that I think are valuable. However, some questions are left unanswered by my analysis and I will discuss these issues now, with an eye for future directions. I did not address in my analysis my promise to offer a prospective explanation, to theorize absence as Otherness, and finally, I did not analyze the consumption and production of space-time as it unfolds in real time across one process. These are all important aspects of my framework that future studies could address.

First, I argued that the value in a re-entanglement explanation of social life is that it has a prospective element that is important to its explanation, rather than just a deconstructive explanation. This type of prospective, future-oriented explanation is needed when trying to tackle complex social problems. Unfortunately, I was unable to offer a prospective explanation that
could be used by the practitioners in my context of study. However, I want to talk about how a scholar might do that in the future using my framework.

My analysis highlighted the meaning-organization site. This site was an actual site in practice and a conceptual tool for the analyst to navigate to other spaces and times. The meaning-organization site fulfills the re-entanglement logic goal to navigate and enable both movement and location. What an analyst can do to offer a prospective explanations is to try to detect meaning-organizations sites as she is observing a process unfolding. As soon as the analyst notices, for example, distribution work occurring, she can investigate the spaces and times materially organizing that work and use her investigation to bring awareness to the occurrence of the distribution.

This is possible in my framework by attending to affect. Affect played a major role in my detection of the distributive site in Mesa. People were feeling distributed, and so was I. Perhaps different emotions are associated with connecting and reifying, but the point is that the framework can enable the analyst to notice “moments that matter” as enacted through emotions and forms of communication that may appear and then disappear quite quickly.

Second, my framework argues that organizing will always distribute meaning into absence. Part of this distribution is also the distribution of meaning into Otherness. I argued that scholars could use my framework to notice this. This aspect of my framework was noticeably missing from my analysis. I would like to discuss the implication of this and suggest possible future directions to work on this.

Future studies will need to address absence more fundamentally to capitalize on the problem-centered framework. Namely, addressing absence will enable a great deal more to be said about the complex social problem. In my analysis, I found that manifest absence was fairly
easy to see. These are meanings that are being distributed, but still have a form that is recognizable to the context of distribution. In fact, as I theorized in chapter two, manifest absence is literally everywhere when presence becomes the new intellectual problem. However, Otherness would be unrecognizable to the context of distribution. This requires that the analyst uncover, or recover, the Otherness purposefully. I found it is difficult to do this type of analysis when looking at the problem-centered organizing process as a whole.

Rather, what an analyst might do in the future is focus on the site of distribution and reification. The focus would need to “layer” practice and discourse in a much more sophisticated way than I have in my analysis. I zoomed in and out between one context of practice and one set of discourses about that practice. This is a form of layering that says a lot about situated practice and how it spans out across problem contexts. However, to say something about Otherness would require a deeper form of layering practice and discourse that focuses in on, perhaps, a single potentiality of interest.

The fact that I ended up with an analysis that spanned across problem contexts, rather than deeply within a single potentiality, is a reflection of who I am as a researcher. However, my point is that an analyst with a different research agenda could use this framework to do more than I have been able to accomplish.

Finally, I see a great deal of promise for using the problem-centered organizing framework to analyze a single process through time. My analysis only highlights one aspect of the meaning-organization entanglement. I have chosen to highlight the sedimentation of meaning in one practice and relate that to the enactment of meaning in a different discourse and practice. However, there is also a processual logic built into the organizing framework that could be utilized for a single process type of analysis.
I argue that organizing is the consumption and production of potentialities. The logic of consumption followed by production implies an order. A scholar employing the problem-centered organizing framework could very well choose to forego zooming in and out and simply look at how connecting, distribution, and reification took place through time in one process. For example, a scholar could employ this framework with the explicit aim of tracing a single problem contexts’ connecting, distribution, and reification work as it occurs through time.

**Reflections and Future Directions for Practice**

Problem-centered organizing is concerned with complex social problems. I have shown in my analysis of Heart & Soul planning, that the response to the social problem can materially organize the problem itself. Future studies should seek to link practices across problem contexts in order to say more about the social problem.

I addressed the relationship between the Circle Foundation and Mesa Planning. However, there were many other problem context operating that were relevant to Heart & Soul planning. Scholars using the framework in the future should address more direct links to other problem contexts to open up new avenues for investigation. For example, what might I understand about the problem of “Anywhere USA” if I had linked the practices of these social worlds with the stories of place told by Mesa community members?

Another example of a way to connect more problem contexts would be to follow the potentiality that was projected in a situated practice to how it becomes connected to other potentialities. For example, the Mesa Vision 2030 Heart & Soul process produced a Vision 2030 Statement. This was a document that was designed to act as the guide that planners in the city used to update the other city plans, such as the comprehensive plan and the neighborhood plans. I could have examined these other plans after they were updated to look for how the vision
organized the meanings in the new plans. Or, I could have observed the practices of planners as they discussed and deliberated the strategies for updating the new plans based on the Vision. This might reveal how the vision plan disrupts or reifies other meanings important to land use and the practice of planning. The question scholars in the future should ask to learn more about practices include: How do the projected meanings from a situated practice get infused into actual events, places, and objects?

**Methodological Reflections and Future Directions**

I was pleasantly surprised by how useful I found my methodology. I will highlight what I found useful about this method with an eye for what this means for future research. First, I made an effort to be as transparent as possible about the practices of my analysis and interpretation. I found that without trying, my method revealed itself if my analysis section. I think that is a promising indication of the utility of my methodology.

This utility I have found in my methodology points to the fruitful convergence that can occur between theory and method. Scholars that employ this method in the future would be well advised to extend their reflections about the use of the theory/method combination I have offered here. The logic of my approach would say that I have enacted a new reality through my research that is a very real reality. What is going to happen to the reality I have enacted? What will the people in Mesa and the Circle Foundation have to say about this reality I have enacted? These are questions that weigh on my mind, but I have yet to fully understand their implications.

A second point that I found useful in regards to methodology was how the method helped me to vocalize the choices that I made with regards to data. I think being explicit about choices in regards to data is of growing importance. Perhaps even five years ago, data collection was performed under something that looks more like the “scarcity model.” Data is hard to get, it takes
a lot of effort, you may only have one shot to get it, etc. This model is changing. We are now, in
the communication discipline especially, swimming in data. Because of this, I think something
needs to change in how we talk about our methods. I think my method helps a scholar begin to
do this work.

First, I found that using these methods were not as ambiguous as some of my descriptions
depicted. In fact, I was already doing much of what I included in this chapter in my own past
research, but now, I could be cognizant of it. I found it useful to use the category’s I provided in
my method as a check list of sorts to make sure I had data that spoke to each aspect. I was close
to reaching that goal in this project, though I also fell short in some ways. I will discuss those
more in the limitations section.

Now, I want to say a few words about the situational method of analysis I used from
Clarke (2005). I found that situational analysis and relational mapping is extremely useful
analytic tool because it allows the researcher to notice connections between potentialities that
actors make themselves, but also connections that the researcher notices. I found this very
helpful for being able to access the relationship between doing organizing work and being
organized by someone/something else. The Social Worlds Arenas mapping was not fine-grained
enough for my analysis, hence the modification to the problem context map, which aligns with
my framework. As Clarke specifies it now, this map is only based on what actors talk about in
the data. I think this is a limitation of the map, and like the relational analysis, the researcher
should be able to include social worlds on the map that she sees and connects to the arena under
study. Finally, I found that positional maps were an excellent way to begin to “look for” sites of
distribution and reification work taking place.
Limitations

I recognize that my project also has some limitations. I would like to acknowledge those here. One limitation of my study is that I only examined one “site,” or project town. A future research project using this framework should seek to investigate the practice of concern across multiple sites. A multi-sited study will yield the most fruitful results because it will allow the analyst to say something more about the complex social problem.

My study also has methodological limitations. The method of analysis I employed, situational analysis, is useful for getting a broad sense of what is occurring in the situation of concern. However, this broad view has to be supplemented in order to provide an analysis that is communicative and process-oriented. I made modifications to my analysis process as I learned this while doing my analysis. Future studies should seek to use situational analysis in combination with other analysis methods to yield the most fruitful and insightful results.

Finally, I want to acknowledge that there are theoretical limitations with my study. One of the problems of attempting to theorize complexity is that circular logics can and will occur. While I have made an attempt to show my logic and keep it “steady” conceptual slippage is inevitable. I have some areas in my theory that certainly look slippery. For example, what is my definition of meaning, how will my approach resist inadvertently reducing space and time to objects, and finally, how I am going to theorize power? I leave these as limitations to consider remedying in future iterations of my theory.

In conclusion, I have offered an approach to address the dual boundary problem that includes a framework for studying organizations and an accompanying method. This study compliments and extends existing approaches theorizing the communication, organization, and materiality relationship. Re-entanglement is a unique logic that, when combined with problem-
centered organizing, enables scholars to make theoretical insights through the analysis of complex social problems.
References


Veletsianos, G. (2010). *Emerging Technologies in Distance Education*.


Appendix A

Project Data Log

I. Discovery Mode Inquiry

A. Events & Participant Observation [All names are pseudonyms]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Authors/Parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Preliminary Meeting</td>
<td>Jan 28th, 2009</td>
<td>Fieldnotes</td>
<td>Attended by Sara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>LAC Meeting</td>
<td>Feb 3rd, 2009</td>
<td>Fieldnotes (2 hrs.)</td>
<td>Attended by Sara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>LAC Meeting</td>
<td>Feb 26th, 2009</td>
<td>Fieldnotes (2 hrs.)</td>
<td>Attended by Sara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2030 Kickoff Event</td>
<td>March 11th, 2009</td>
<td>Fieldnotes (2 hrs)</td>
<td>Watch Video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>LAC Meeting</td>
<td>April 7th, 2009</td>
<td>Meeting minutes</td>
<td>Attended by Sara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>North Block Party</td>
<td>May 2nd, 2009</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Not Attended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Circle Meeting</td>
<td>May 7th, 2009</td>
<td>Fieldnotes (2 hrs.)</td>
<td>Attended by Sara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>LAC Meeting</td>
<td>May 13th, 2009</td>
<td>Fieldnotes (2 hrs.)</td>
<td>Attended by Sara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>North Block Party 2</td>
<td>May 16th, 2009</td>
<td>Survey Responses</td>
<td>(2 hrs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>LAC Meeting</td>
<td>June 10th, 2009</td>
<td>Fieldnotes (2 hrs.)</td>
<td>Attended by Amanda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>East Block Party</td>
<td>June 13th, 2009</td>
<td>Survey Responses</td>
<td>Attended by Amanda &amp; Sara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Bev Block Party</td>
<td>June 27th, 2009</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Not Attended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>LAC Meeting</td>
<td>July 8th, 2009</td>
<td>Fieldnotes (2 hrs.)</td>
<td>City audio recording</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>South Block Party</td>
<td>July 11th, 2009</td>
<td>Survey Responses</td>
<td>(2 hrs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Heritage Block Party</td>
<td>July 25th, 2009</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Not Attended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Story Focus Group</td>
<td>July 29th, 2009</td>
<td>Slides &amp; Handouts</td>
<td>(2 hrs) audio recording</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Heritage Block Party</td>
<td>Aug. 8th, 2009</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Not Attended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>LAC Meeting</td>
<td>Aug 12th, 2009</td>
<td>Transcript (2 hrs)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Hills Block Party</td>
<td>Aug 22nd, 2009</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Not Attended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>LAC Meeting</td>
<td>Sept. 9th, 2009</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Not Attended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>LAC Meeting</td>
<td>Nov., 11th, 2009</td>
<td>none</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Community Biz Demo</td>
<td>Dec 15th, 2009</td>
<td>Fieldnotes (2 hrs.)</td>
<td>Also hear recording</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Story Focus Group</td>
<td>Dec 17th, 2009</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Not attended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Story Focus Group</td>
<td>Jan 12th, 2010</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Not attended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>LAC Meeting</td>
<td>Jan 13th, 2010</td>
<td>Fieldnotes (2 hrs.)</td>
<td>Attended by Amanda &amp; Sara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Authors/Parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Story Focus Group</td>
<td>Jan 26th, 2010</td>
<td>Feildnotes (2 hrs.)</td>
<td>Attended by Amanda &amp; Sara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Story Focus Group</td>
<td>Feb 2nd, 2010</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Not Attended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>LAC Meeting</td>
<td>March 10th, 2010</td>
<td>Fieldnotes (2 hrs.)</td>
<td>Attended by Amanda &amp; Sara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Community Summit I</td>
<td>March 23rd, 2010</td>
<td>Fieldnotes (3 hrs.)</td>
<td>Watch Video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Community Summit I</td>
<td>May 11th, 2010</td>
<td>Fieldnotes (3 hrs.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>LAC Meeting</td>
<td>May 12th, 2010</td>
<td>Fieldnotes (2 hrs.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Community Summit II</td>
<td>June 10th, 2010</td>
<td>Fieldnotes (3 hrs.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Joint LAC/ Planning Commission Meeting</td>
<td>July 21st, 2010</td>
<td>Fieldnotes (2 hrs.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Joint LAC/ Planning Meetings</td>
<td>Aug 18th, 2010</td>
<td>Notes 3 hrs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Vision 2030 Open House</td>
<td>Sept 16th, 2010</td>
<td>Fieldnotes (3 hrs.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Joint LAC/ Planning Meetings</td>
<td>Sept. 22nd, 2010</td>
<td>Fieldnotes (2 hrs.)</td>
<td>see recording</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**B. Meeting Transcripts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Authors/Parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>LAC Meeting</td>
<td>June 10th, 2009</td>
<td>Transcript (46 pgs.)</td>
<td>Recorded Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>LAC Meeting</td>
<td>Aug 12th, 2009</td>
<td>Transcript (36 pgs.)</td>
<td>Recorded Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>LAC Meeting</td>
<td>Jan 13th, 2010</td>
<td>Transcript (28 pgs.)</td>
<td>Recorded Meeting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**C. Digital Stories Transcripts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Authors/Parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Meadows Block Party [Did not Analyze]</td>
<td>May 2nd, 2009</td>
<td>13 interviews</td>
<td>Conducted by volunteer for City of Mesa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Elementary Block Party [Did not analyze]</td>
<td>May 16th, 2009</td>
<td>11 interviews</td>
<td>Conducted by volunteer for City of Mesa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Bev Block Party [Did not analyze]</td>
<td>June 27th, 2009</td>
<td>16 interviews</td>
<td>Conducted by volunteer for City of Mesa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>South Block Party [Did not analyze]</td>
<td>July, 11th, 2009</td>
<td>10 interviews</td>
<td>Conducted by</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### D. Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Authors/Parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>May 16th, 2009</td>
<td>Transcript &amp; Recording</td>
<td>Conducted by Sara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Bell</td>
<td>June 8th, 2009</td>
<td>Transcript &amp; Recording</td>
<td>Conducted by Sara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Bass</td>
<td>June 10th, 2009</td>
<td>Transcript &amp; Recording</td>
<td>Conducted by Sara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Jacob</td>
<td>June 10th, 2009</td>
<td>Recording</td>
<td>Conducted by Sara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Betty</td>
<td>June 10th, 2009</td>
<td>Recording</td>
<td>Conducted by Sara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Clay</td>
<td>June 10th, 2009</td>
<td>Recording</td>
<td>Conducted by Sara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Nell</td>
<td>June 11th, 2009</td>
<td>Recording</td>
<td>Conducted by Sara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Wally</td>
<td>June 11th, 2009</td>
<td>Recording</td>
<td>Conducted by Sara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Tammy</td>
<td>June 11th, 2009</td>
<td>Recording</td>
<td>Conducted by Sara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Dillon</td>
<td>June 12th, 2009</td>
<td>Recording</td>
<td>Conducted by Sara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Alyssa</td>
<td>Dec. 11th, 2009</td>
<td>Transcript &amp; Recording (43 mins.)</td>
<td>Conducted by Amanda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Dan</td>
<td>Mar. 16th, 2010</td>
<td>Transcript &amp; Recording (75 mins.)</td>
<td>Conducted by Amanda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Stan</td>
<td>April 30th, 2010</td>
<td>Transcript &amp; Recording (41 mins.)</td>
<td>Conducted by Amanda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Amanda</td>
<td>Sept. 28th, 2010</td>
<td>Transcript &amp; Recording (85 mins.)</td>
<td>Conducted by Amanda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>Tammy</td>
<td>Dec. 3rd, 2010</td>
<td>Transcript &amp; Recording (60 mins.)</td>
<td>Conducted by Amanda/Sara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>Jacob</td>
<td>Dec. 3rd, 2010</td>
<td>Transcript &amp; Recording (50 mins.)</td>
<td>Conducted by Amanda/Sara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Betty</td>
<td>Dec. 3rd, 2010</td>
<td>Transcript &amp; Recording (48 mins.)</td>
<td>Conducted by Amanda/Sara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>Janice</td>
<td>Dec. 3rd, 2010</td>
<td>Transcript &amp; Recording (36 mins.)</td>
<td>Conducted by Amanda/Sara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Dec. 4th, 2010</td>
<td>Transcript &amp; Recording (43 mins.)</td>
<td>Conducted by Amanda/Sara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>Sandler</td>
<td>Dec. 4th, 2010</td>
<td>Transcript</td>
<td>Conducted by Amanda/Sara</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### E. Documents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Authors/Parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>City of Mesa Resolution to create LAC</td>
<td>Dec 4th, 2008</td>
<td>This is the official resolution that the mayor signs that designates the role of the LAC.</td>
<td>City Clerk of City of Mesa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>Vision 2030 FAQ’s</td>
<td></td>
<td>Documents that lists 11 FAQs about Vision 2030</td>
<td>City of Mesa Planners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>Mayor Sam’s Blog</td>
<td>Jan, 2009 March, 2010 May, 2010</td>
<td>Post by Mayor Sam describing 2030;</td>
<td>Mayor S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>Neighborhood Definition Map</td>
<td></td>
<td>It is a “save the date” flyer for the neighborhood block parties. It is a visual map of the city.</td>
<td>City of Mesa Planners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>LAC Network Gap Analysis</td>
<td>Feb 26th, 2009</td>
<td>This document lists all of the groups at this meeting. The goal was to identify individuals missing from the visioning process.</td>
<td>City of Mesa Planners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>Kick Off Event Flyer</td>
<td>March 11th 2009</td>
<td>Invitation to Event</td>
<td>City of Mesa Planners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>Sites Map &amp; Kick off Event Summary &amp; Images</td>
<td></td>
<td>City of Mesa points of interest. A map of the city with writing and marks on it by citizens about important place in Mesa Kick off Image</td>
<td>Mesa citizens and city planners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>Block Party Postcard</td>
<td>May 2nd 2009</td>
<td>Invitation for citizens to attend the block party</td>
<td>City of Mesa Planners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>Block Party Postcard</td>
<td>June 13th 2009</td>
<td>Invitation for citizens to attend the block party</td>
<td>City of Mesa Planners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>LAC Meeting Agendas</td>
<td>All meetings</td>
<td>Agenda for the meetings purpose</td>
<td>City of Mesa Planners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>Story Focus Group Flyers</td>
<td></td>
<td>Informational flyer about focus group dates and locations</td>
<td>City of Mesa Planners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>CBiz Demo Meeting Agenda</td>
<td>Dec 15th 2009</td>
<td>Agenda for Meeting</td>
<td>City of Mesa Planners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>Community Summit Output</td>
<td>June 10th 2010</td>
<td>Keypad Polling Results for Scenarios</td>
<td>Citizen Results Consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Authors/Parties</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>Community Summit Facilitator Handout, March 23rd 2010, Training document for focus group facilitators- There is a document and a visual slide.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>Community Summit Flyers, Informational flyer about summit date &amp; location</td>
<td>City of Mesa Planners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>Mesa LAC Vision 2030 Report First Draft, July 19th 2010, This is the first draft of the Vision 2030 Statement (23 pgs.)</td>
<td>City of Mesa / LAC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>Mesa LAC Vision 2030 Report Second Draft, Aug 11th 2010, This is the second draft of the Vision 2030 Statement (21 pgs.)</td>
<td>Mesa City Council/ LAC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>Mesa LAC Vision 2030 Final Report, Aug 19th 2010, This is the final version of the Vision 2030 Statement (21 pgs.)</td>
<td>Mesa City Council/ LAC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>Media Coverage on Mesa 2030, Aug. 23rd 2010, Invites citizens to comment of the vision statement</td>
<td>Your Hub</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>Open House Flyer, Sept. 15th 2010, Invites citizens to comment of the vision statement</td>
<td>City of Mesa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>Public Hearing Flyer, Oct. 6th 2010, Invites citizens to a public hearing for input on the Vision 2030 Report</td>
<td>City of Mesa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>Mesa Citizen Blog, Blog Post from a Mesa Citizen about Vision 2030-</td>
<td>Mesa Citizen Running for Public Office</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>115</td>
<td>Animate Consultant Presentation, This is the powerpoint and the associated forms the consultant provided for value extraction.</td>
<td>Animate Consulting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F. Video Recordings/Audio Recordings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Authors/Parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Mesa Vision</td>
<td>March</td>
<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/">http://www.youtube.com/</a></td>
<td>Mayor Sam’s Speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Authors/Parties</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>Mesa Vision 2030: What is it?</td>
<td>April 1st, 2010</td>
<td><a href="http://www.youtube.com/">http://www.youtube.com/</a></td>
<td>Promotional and explanatory video. Used to set the stage for the community summit. Made by the City of Mesa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**G. Websites**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Authors/Parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>105</td>
<td>Mesa Vision 2030 Website</td>
<td>This is the City of Mesa Website for the 2030 Project.</td>
<td>This is the official Mesa website for the project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>106</td>
<td>Circle Family Foundation Mesa Project Page</td>
<td>Mesa Project Page:</td>
<td>This is the official website of Circle, the funder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>107</td>
<td>Mesa Heart &amp; Soul Community Almanac</td>
<td>July 23rd - Oct 4th, 2009</td>
<td>15 entries into an online photo book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121</td>
<td>Circle Family Foundation</td>
<td>Official Circle Website</td>
<td>This is the official website of Circle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>108</td>
<td>Home Based Technology</td>
<td></td>
<td>This is the website of the technology consultant that provided tools for Mesa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>114</td>
<td>Neighborhood Web Pages</td>
<td></td>
<td>Webpage for each neighborhood in the block party circuit.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**H. Surveys**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Authors/Parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>111</td>
<td>Block Party</td>
<td>July 11th, 2009</td>
<td>25 survey responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112</td>
<td>Block Party</td>
<td>May 16th, 2009</td>
<td>30 survey responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>113</td>
<td>Block Party</td>
<td>June, 13th, 2009</td>
<td>36 survey responses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## II. Eclectic Practice Mode

### A. Websites/Twitter Feeds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Authors/Parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>118 Community Making Twitter Feed-</td>
<td>Starts June 3(^{rd}), 2010</td>
<td>Regular Twitter Feed for Organization</td>
<td>As of 4/29/11: 300 Tweets, 108 Following; 405 Followers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>119 Community Making Website</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Project of the Circle Foundation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120 Community Making Facebook</td>
<td></td>
<td>Community Making Facebook Page</td>
<td>As of 4/29/11: 240 people liked this page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>109 Open Space Initiative</td>
<td></td>
<td>They did a petition to get more protection for open spaces in Vision 2030</td>
<td>This is a website for people in Mesa who support open spaces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110 Citizens for Mesa</td>
<td></td>
<td>A website that references Mesa Vision 2030 in relation to other citizen initiatives.</td>
<td>Website for interested Mesa citizens to organize.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121 Home Base</td>
<td></td>
<td>A website for community technology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### B. Documents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Authors/Parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>122 Placemaking tools for community action</td>
<td>Fall 2003</td>
<td>This is a guide to new placemaking tools and techniques (47 pgs.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123 Community Making Conference Calls Notes</td>
<td>Nov. 3(^{rd}), 2010</td>
<td>Conference Call on Government 2.0 Notes (4 pgs.) Blog Post Review of Call (1 pg.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>124 Community Making Conference Calls Notes</td>
<td>Jan. 27(^{th}), 2011</td>
<td>Conference Call on Open Government</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125</td>
<td>Community Making Conference Calls Notes</td>
<td>Feb. 24th, 2001</td>
<td>Conference Call on Making the Case for Open Government (7pgs.) Blog Post Review (1pg.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>126</td>
<td>Community Making Conference Calls</td>
<td>March 24th, 2001</td>
<td>Conference call of Code for Community Notes (6pgs.) Blog Post Review (1pg.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>128</td>
<td>Putting Democracy Front &amp; Center: Technology for Citizen Participation</td>
<td>July 2006</td>
<td>This is an article about using technology for citizen participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>Comprehensive Community Planning Phasing Diagram</td>
<td></td>
<td>This is the planning philosophy from Stan consulting. This is a visual document.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>Land Survey Form</td>
<td></td>
<td>This is the form that Stan consulting uses to learn about the land features of a community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>Process Poster</td>
<td></td>
<td>This is a visual of the three public meetings that comprise the community involvement process for Stan Consulting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Value Survey Form

This is the form that Stan consulting uses to learn about what a community values.

**Author:** Stan Consulting

### Sustainability Triangle

This is a standard model to the practitioners in the arena of participatory governance use.

**Source:** Wired Magazine

### “GPS: Power up. Get ready for a new sense of place”

This is a short snippet about GPS technology.

**Source:** Wired Magazine

### Using Innovative Software for Community Planning

This is an article written that describes how he came to see technology as important to planning.

**Source:** Wired Magazine

### Video & Audio Recordings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Authors/Parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Making Conference</td>
<td>Oct. 5th-8th, 2010</td>
<td>Conference Welcoming Remarks (17 min. video)</td>
<td>Founder of the Circle Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Making Conference</td>
<td>Oct. 5th-8th, 2010</td>
<td>Circle Family Foundation History (8 min. video)</td>
<td>CEO of Circle Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Making Conference</td>
<td>Oct. 5th-8th, 2010</td>
<td>An Intro to Twitter (8 min. video)</td>
<td>Consultant &amp; Author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Making Conference</td>
<td>Oct. 5th-8th, 2010</td>
<td>Conference Keynote Speech (32 min. video)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Making Conference</td>
<td>Oct. 5th-8th, 2010</td>
<td>Conference Keynote Speech (25 min. video)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

Interviews Mesa

One of the stated goals of this whole process was to be engaging:

1. What is stakeholder engagement to you? What does it look like?

2. To what extent do you believe the process succeeded in being inclusive in its approach to stakeholder engagement, and why do you believe this is the case?
   a. What were the challenges of engaging people in this process?

3. What strategies or tools do you believe were most helpful engaging the public? What were some techniques or methods that you were considering using and decided not to?

This was a very long and involved process:

4. At what point do you think the vision of Mesa really began to come through and take shape?

5. Do you feel like there were any people or values that were left out of the process?

6. How important was consensus in the process of coming to a vision for Mesa?

7. How is the Mesa Vision 2030 report a good reflection of the process? How does the report not reflect the process?

Technology played a role in some aspects of this process:

8. What do you think was the purpose of using technology in this process?

9. Which technology seems to stand out to you the most?
   a. What did you think about the visualization technology used at the second summit?
   b. What did you think about the key pads used at the summits? What was good or bad about that?

10. How do you feel about where we are in the process today?

11. What role do you believe the Mesa Vision 2030 process will play in future city planning decisions? (follow up: how do you see this playing out/working?)

12. If you could go back in time and change one thing about the Mesa Vision 2030 process, what would it be?
Appendix C

Memo Analysis: Eclectic Practice

An eclectic practice mode of inquiry is a form of “zooming out” or studying practices as “always immersed in thick textures of interconnections,” which requires “moving between practice in the making and the texture of practices which causally connects this particular instance to many others” (Nicolini, 2009, p. 1407). The point of zooming out is to expand the analysts understanding of particular organizing work that was interesting by arranging it alongside relevant, but perhaps not entirely obvious, potentialities that exist in other times and spaces.

I have chosen to follow out several threads that caught my interest in my discovery-based inquiry:

1. The national network of practitioners and communities that gather and create meaning, coming out of the Circle Foundation Heart & Soul initiative. This led me to the community conference, blogs about the conference, twitter feeds, and videos. I also looked at industry standards like the sustainability triangle.

2. The technology-enabled processes of participatory governance. This lead me to talk with other technology experts not involved in Mesa, like Stan consulting, popular culture discourse about GPS and decision making technology. This also lead me to the open government series of conference calls hosted by Community conference

3. The noticably absent groups in Mesa. I followed out the Open Space initiative that formed in dissent of the Vision 2030 document. I also followed out groups that seemed to connect the vision to many other initiatives in town like the Citizens for Mesa.

Other places I want to go:
- More unlikely sites- pop culture, etc.
- Are there any laws or institutional regulations or regulatory agencies??
- What absences do I want to connect subjects to?
- Look for space compression in regards to being “organized” in the eclectic practice data.
- What are some times and spaces that clash with the coherence in my situated practice that I can actively try to assemble alongside that? Perhaps the “private property” folks- they are almost the antithesis of the community based folks. Maybe any discourses about individualism? I need to purposefully mess with boundaries some.
- What Iconic art or literature can I connect to?
Appendix D

Relational Reflexivity

As Rhodes (2009) reminds us, in a post representational paradigm, reflexivity is relational. We need to address how we become a researcher in relation to what we “study.” I will begin with accounting for the identities I was ascribed by the site I studied. The people and objects that I interacted with over the course of the year that I was studying this site recognized me explicitly in three ways: as someone getting their PhD, a friend of my co-researcher, Sara, and as the “tech person.” These are the identities I assumed in my relation to others at the site of study. All three identities were comfortable at some points and uncomfortable at others.

First, I learned a great deal about how people outside of academia perceive the academic. I have noted in my fieldnotes multiple occasions where my role as an academic created anxiety for people and was expressed in the form of a joke. For example, at one meeting the group was discussing a problem they were having with a plan, and the city planner looked right at me and said, “I bet you analyzing us now, huh?” Yet, at the same time, the fact that I was an academic created a comfortable boundary for everyone. They perceived that I was at least partially neutral.

Second, I was a friend to Sara, my co-researcher. Sara arrived to the site at least six months before I did. In fact, she was the one that brought me onto the project. This was comfortable for me because I did not have to “negotiate access” to the site. I was able to use her credibility to form my own instant credibility. However, this was also uncomfortable for me because my credibility was always tied to Sara’s. This made me uncomfortable because I like having some sense of control and wanted to “be my own person.”

Fortunately, I was able to work through that over time. In part, this occurred in relation to my third identity at the site, which was inevitably, the “tech person.” People at the site knew I
studied technology and associated pretty much anything even remotely technological with me. This turned out to be great. I was able to distinguish myself from Sara, and people would offer up their thoughts and feelings about technology to me without me even having to ask. Yet this was also uncomfortable because there were a lot of misconceptions associated with the “tech person” identity. One is that you love technology, and by association, the rationalistic discourses associated with technology. This was uncomfortable because my project was not geared towards figuring out how they could use more technology. I can still provide them with my “findings” and hopefully improve their understandings of my role as a technology researcher.
Appendix E

Data Collection Reflections

Diary: Distributing Place in my Research Process 4/10/11

In chapter three I talk about how ordering practices can “distribute” time and space into absence. I talk in chapter five how it is doubly important that a researcher using the method I lay out be reflexive and document her process. I had one of those moments today that brought these two ideas together.

I am preparing to fly out of the country this Saturday and I needed a folder to put all of my travel documents in, I have already printed out my flight and hotel information in the excited suspense of my impending travel. I sorted through my many drawers full of “gently used” office supplies and could not find the kind of folder I was looking for. Then as I perused the top of my desk the glint of a gold folder caught my eye. I picked it up and noticed immediately it was the folder I used when I was collecting data at my site in Mesa. I looked inside and there were a few pages in the pockets, a few blank consent forms, but nothing really important. The folder was so sparse, I decided it was time to become the travel folder instead. I ripped the carefully placed label that read “Mesa” on the front of the folder right off, slightly satisfied that it tore off cleanly in one swift motion. But in that moment I had a thought about this process of research that I am trying to articulate. I realized something about my own “ordering practice” in my research. I have all but distributed the Mesa site into absence in my preoccupation with outlining my theory and trying so hard to create a rigorous method. At this point I just feel something wrong with that, but I am not sure what it is. Will I ever “recover” Mesa in this process of analysis that I am about to embark on. Or does Mesa simply just have to transform into something different? If so, then how do I reconcile my memories of Mesa with this transformation?

Diary: Perceptual Lens and Research Teams 3/8/11

Peshkin (2009) makes an interesting case for how qualitative researchers can switch perceptual lens’ during observation. He describes how a researcher might, for example, use a lens of positionality to understand what he or she was observing. In that case, you would look at how your role was impacting that which you “see.” Another lens is power. You can use a power lens to “see” your scene of interest differently.

On the way home from events where Sara and I had observed together, we would often discuss how we saw those events unfolding. We both had very different lens.’ This did not mean that we did not agree on what we saw, but rather, how we arrived at those conclusions emanated from very different lens.’ These differences helped me to check my assumptions.

Analysis Reflection: Timing in the Project 4/25/11
Part of being a reflexive researcher is honesty and admitting when you feel you might be in a bind (Tracy, 2010). One problem I realized about my study is that I “collected the data” at the same time I was formulating this methodology. This means that not all of the resulting data “maximizes” what my methodology seeks to accomplish. I think that acknowledging this is actually productive for the practice of research. We often have situations where we have to collect data, knowing that it is important in the moment, without a clear understanding of our purposes and end goals. This is just part and parcel of the “ethic” of any good researcher. Fortunately, I kept detailed records of my observations and interviews and maintained memos on my process as I was attending events and making decisions.
Appendix F

Questions To Guide Reflexivity

1. Reflect on my location. Why did I choose the sites to gather and assemble that I did? Where in the world am I?
2. Reflect on my relationship with people I encountered. How did they shape who I am?
3. What was my entry and exit like at different sites?
4. What does the process of data reduction feel like? What do I seem to be absencing in that process?
5. Why did I choose to amplify a certain connection in my data? What did following those paths to other spaces and times feel like?
6. How did the situational map make me see things? How did it help me to be curious? How did it help me to be lead to other times and space?
7. What made me uneasy about the situational mapping? How should I modify my use of it?
Appendix G

Provocation Questions for Data Reduction and Amplification

**Discovery Mode of Inquiry**

What are the regularly scheduled events?

What seem to be important standardized forms?

What do people describe as “fact” or common knowledge?

What sorts of specialized language do people use?

What were moments of conflict in interactive exchanges?

What seems to be labeled as “deviant”? 

What seemed to be “calling out” sources of authority?

What objects seemed to “clash” with the surroundings?

What ironies seemed to come up in peoples spoken discourses?

When did people talk about temporary solutions?

What improvisation occurred around technology?

How do objects structure space?

How do objects connect to other objects?

How do objects connect to subjects?

How do people talk about objects?

What objects seem to be important to routines?

What objects seem to be important to work flow?

How do objects label, name, and count things?

What seem to be important decisions made?
Who appears to have an authoritative voice?

Who appears to be voiceless?

When did the mood shift suddenly?

What seem to be important emotions that people are experiencing?

What are the plans that people are making?

Who seems to have a leadership role around a plan?

What kinds of texts seem to be an instantiation of a plan?

What sorts of statements are people making about what things “should” look like?

What sorts of statements are people making about goals?

How do plans in practice compare to plans voiced in interviews?

What seem to be some contradictions and paradoxes?

What are people’s anxieties?

What texts or visual representations seem to point to the past?

What objects appear to be marked by time?

What markers of the past appear in plans for the future?

**Eclectic Practice Mode of Inquiry**

What stories and narratives are circulating widely about this object?

What are the metaphors operating in the discourses that circulate widely about objects?

What rituals are associated with this object?

What discourses seem to be associated with the materials of the object?

Who seems close to the inception and development of the object and what are their discourses and visual representations about the object?

What institutional laws and regulations are part of the object’s design story?

What discourses connect the object to meanings that seem to span space and time?
What systems seem to be circulating the objects meanings?

What did participants say about the road not taken or possibilities not explored?

What is implicit or not being said in discourse produced by subjects?

What absent potentialities do I see in situated practice and how do I recover those discourses?

What anxieties preoccupy the subject?

What are the subjects membership affiliations?

What other literal sites are connected to my object of study?

What was absenced in situated practice? How can I create a metaphorical space from that absent?

What does not cohere with the coherence of situated practice. How can I seek that out and arrange it alongside the coherence of situated practice?
Appendix H

Theoretical Underpinnings of Situational Analysis

Clarke (2005) begins with Strauss and grounded theory, highlighting how symbolic interactionism and pragmatism were two important traditions that informed Strauss’ thinking on grounded theory. Importantly, she argued that these traditions were always already nearing around the postmodern turn. The groundedness of grounded theorizing is not only in the data per se, but also in the analysts’ commitment to represent all knowledge, understandings, and action as perspectival. Following Mead, this notion of perspective assumes partiality and situatedness. She also argues that interactionist constructionism has always been materialist. The material world and the sociality of things were central to symbolic interactionism, but it was assumed rather than theorized. Symbolic interactionism can also be viewed as deconstructive in its open coding mode of analysis. Clarke (2005) argues that this form of analysis was not in the pursuit of truth, but to critically analyze possible “truths” as interpretations and representations of social phenomenon. Further, grounded theory has always been concerned with process and contingency. Finally, she argues that the ecological bent of symbolic interactionism is a form of relational theorizing that is also compatible with postmodern concerns of difference. Clarke (2005) specifically seeks to further develop this approach through her situational mapping.

However, the extension of grounded theory into postmodern thought required some significant revision to traditional grounded theory assumptions. Clarke (2005) specifically acknowledges these issues as “recalcitrancies of traditional grounded theory” (p. 11). She recognizes the lack of reflexivity about research processes and products and oversimplifications that emphasize commonalities and coherence. She is proposing that instead we complicate our stories and represent differences, contradictions, and incoherencies in our data. Clarke (2005) is
making an important move by turning away, in part, from the central analysis of traditional grounded theory: “basic social process” (p. 16). Instead of boiling data down to a basic social process, situational analysis attempts to allow for the multiplicity of social processes and work against the erasure of difference. The search for purity and objectivity is not possible or desirable from within situational analysis.

To push grounded theory around the postmodern turn, Clarke (2005) enrolls the work of Foucault, Haraway, and Latour. She is specific about how she enrolls these scholars’ thoughts and what that does to grounded theory. First, she draws primarily on Haraway (1997) to argue that we assume the “embodiment and situatedness of all knowledge producers, and assuming the simultaneous “truths” of multiple knowledges” (Clarke, 2005, p. 19). We are immodest witnesses that seek to represent heterogeneity of perspectives.

Drawing on the situatedness of all knowledge, Clarke (2005) proposes the situation as the unit of analysis. She draws on Mills, Haraway, Thomas, and Mead to create a sense of situation as conceptually rich. Situations include relationality and particular spatial and temporal moments. Thus, the root metaphor for theorizing shifts from basic social processes/action to social ecology/situation. Her third strategy to push grounded theory around the postmodern turn is to focus on complexities/differences/heterogeneity. This understands that the boundaries/margins produce the center. “My argument is that we need to conceptually replace modernist unidimensional normal curves with postmodern multidimensional mappings in order to represent lived situations and the variety of positionalities and human and nonhuman activities and discourses” (Clarke, 2005, p. 25). The concern here is not so much frequency, but the distribution of positions and to represent the heterogeneity of positions in a given situation. One of the main goals of situational analysis is to enhance difference for empirical study. Clarke
(2005) argues we need to explore the meanings and consequences of difference in concrete social practices.

Instead of pursuing formal theory, situational analysis sees analytic sufficiency in making sensitizing concepts for “theorizing” (Clarke, 2005, p. 28). Here we can see that situational analysis ascribes to a view of the world as constantly changing. This makes it impossible and undesirable to write grand theory. Doing situational analysis recognizes that contextual elements are not outside of a situation, but rather inside the situation itself. This is an important amendment Clarke makes to Strauss and Corbin’s (1987) social worlds/arenas maps. The point is to use situatedness to improve the quality of research.

Clarke’s final move is to turn towards Foucault and attend to discourse. Clarke (2005) argues that Strauss and Foucault meet in related conceptualizations of practices. She argues that Foucault’s discourse/discipline aligns with Strauss’ social worlds/arenas because the field of organizing practices/conditions of possibility aligns with Strauss’ negotiated ordering/situations. Here, Clarke (2005) is arguing that Strauss and Foucault meet on middle-range ground of theorizing. She also highlights similarities between the gaze and perspective. Both are focused on the ongoing “how” of practices. Foucault focuses on conditions of possibility and Strauss focuses on negotiations, but according to situational analysis, both deserve analysis. This is what the concept of situation seeks to capture, “the situation qua conditions of possibility and the actions, discourses, and practices in it” (p. 57). This tries to capture the gaze and the perspectives of other entities in that situation. Clarke (2005) argues that this can work to disrupt the hagiographic moment without abandoning analysis of the gaze.

Importantly, social worlds are universes of discourses and there can also be implicated actors in social worlds/arenas. These implicated actors include those that are silenced or only
constructed by others for their own purposes. There can also be implicated actants, following Latour. “Like humans, implicated actants can be physically and/or discursively present in the situation of inquiry” (Clarke, 2005, p. 47). Thus, one of the other important roots of situational analysis is Actor Network Theory and the notion of nonhuman agency. Clarke argues that it is essential to take nonhumans in the situation into account explicitly and in considerable detail.

Relations between all elements are important and we should recognize the boundaries between categories of human/nonhuman as “leaky” and more like hybrids. She thus tries to problematize the human/nonhuman distinction and argue that discourses too have lives of their own. Importantly, situational analysis assumes that everything in a situation conditions the possibilities of action. Clarke makes the insightful argument that the “macro/meso/macro distinctions dissolve in the face of absence/presence” (p. 72). We have to design our research from the outset to learn about all of the heterogeneous actors and those that may be invisible or silenced. We can use maps and sensitizing concepts from theory to help us see this range of actors (Clarke, 2005).
Appendix I

Questions to Guide Items Included on Abstract Situational Map

1. Who and what are in the broader situation?
2. What material thing were involved?
3. How were various technologies involved?
4. What discursive constructions are circulating?
5. What cultural symbols and discourses were evoked by the situation?
6. What social institutions were involved?
7. What were the controversial issues?
Appendix J

Messy Situational Map
Appendix K

Ordered Situational Map
Appendix L

Analysis Memo: Ordered Situational Map

I am surprised to see my list of nonhuman actors in much longer than my list of individual human actors! I am starting to see a relationship between time and space that may be relevant here- heart & soul community planning is about redressing temporal elements, histories, that impact spatial configurations. In order to do this, they have to project a future.

I found the need to add in a category to the situational map- called affective elements. After i completed all of the categories, I first went back to my situational map to see if any elements had not made it into any category. I noticed that emotions on my map were not categorized, so I created the category of Affective elements.

Other elements with no category included:
Community Spirit- put under discursive constructions
Voting
Community Commitment-put under discursive constructions
Procedures
Unknown- I think the fact that there really is no category for this is great- in fact, I am going to create a category for the unknown.
Failure

The elements that do not seem to “fit” in the ordered map category’s are all related to practices of actions. I think it makes sense that these are left off because the situational map is characterized by elements. So, there is no category for actions. This is interesting to me. For now I am going to put them into the unknown category. Since my framework- organizing- pre-specifies the action, and that is what my research questions asked, I am hoping that the situational map will assist me in making sure I am including all of the elements that are entangled in each organizing process.

The elements that appear to have the most categories include:
Neighborhood Plans
Growth Pressure
Stories
Marginalized Citizens
Business as Usual
Light Rail
Sacred Places
Not in my Backyard
I think it is very telling that the category’s that have the most elements in them are “nonhuman elements,” “temporal elements,” “Spatial elements,” and political/economic elements.” I think this speaks the value of my research questions for pulling out elements that are important to my research framework “material entanglement of space and time.” I also think this reflects the situation I have chosen. It is a political topic. It is also a topic very concerned with the future and specific spatial elements like places and natural landmarks.
Appendix M

Relational Analysis Map
Questions to Guide Items Included on Social Worlds Maps

1. What are the patterns of collective commitment and what the salient social worlds operating here?
2. What are their perspectives and what do they hope to achieve through their collective action?
3. What older and newer/emergent nonhuman technologies and other nonhuman actants are characteristic of each world?
   a. What are their properties?
   b. What constraints, opportunities, and resources do they provide in that world?
4. What are the meaningful commitments of the social world and how are these collectively acted upon in the situation?
5. What is happening between particular worlds?
Appendix O

Social Worlds/Arenas Maps

[Diagram showing relationships between different social worlds and arenas, including City Governments, Communities, The U.S. Local Participatory Governance Arena, etc.]
Appendix P

Problem Context Map

Note: The circles with gray borders are problem contexts that are relevant but not centrally featured in the analysis I have presented in this project.
Appendix Q

Positional Map Use of Technology for Engagement

Entertainment & Attraction Reasons

Missing Position

It is fun and different

Decision Making Reasons

Missing Position

It helps to level the playing field

Information Reasons

The data output still needs to be interpreted - confusing.

It gives people access to more information; more efficient / faster

Social Reasons

Missing Position

It connects people that might not otherwise get to be connected; it allows...

Use of Technology for Engagement

Less --- More +++
Appendix R

Mesa Vision 2030 Guiding Principles and Community Values

Guiding Principles

These two structural principles are the foundation upon which the Mesa community intends to act and make decisions:

**Responsive Local Government**
*Our city government is responsive, approachable, good at listening, welcomes participation and involvement, is fair to all parts of the city and is accountable.*

**Controlled and Directed Change**
*Our community values require that we direct and manage change, assure smart growth (transportation & development), affordable housing, and sustainability. As a community, we expect sustainability that preserves the small town look, feel and character.*

Community Values

The Heart & Soul values comprise a set of community elements that are consistently very important to Mesa residents in most or all situations. These values are to be a substantial consideration in all major community decisions. As defined in this document our community values include:

A. An accessible and walkable community  
B. Active outdoors and the environment  
C. Safe, clean and quiet neighborhoods  
D. Support for local business and downtown  
E. Convenience and community amenities  
F. Support for our history, culture and education  
G. A family and kid friendly town  
H. Friendliness and appreciation of our neighbors  
I. Our sense of community  
J. Belonging/volunteerism