Title page

How learning, unlearning, and power contribute to sustained change: a case study of an EMS company in Trinidad and Tobago

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Doctor of Business Administration

September 19, 2019

Approval page

A thesis titled:

How learning, unlearning, and power contribute to sustained change: a case study of an EMS company in Trinidad and Tobago

By

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We hereby certify that this Thesis submitted by Paul Anderson conforms to acceptable standards and as such is fully adequate in scope and quality. It is therefore approved as the fulfillment of the Thesis requirements for the degree of Doctor of Business Administration.

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The University of Liverpool

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September 19, 2019

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

I hereby certify that this paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that the appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions or writings of another.

Signed

Paul J. Anderson

Abstract

This case study inquiry in a high-change environment examines the barriers to sustaining change. The company where the case study was conducted is an emergency medical service enterprise in a small island, autonomous Caribbean state situated in the West Indies. The company was formed in 2005 to manage the national emergency ambulance service component of the National Health Service (NHS); it is the only aspect of the NHS to be fully outsourced to the private sector. The stated rationale for outsourcing the service was broad dissatisfaction of outcomes and the need for accelerated improvement to this essential service. Since its inception, the company was charged to enact dramatic improvement to the performance and reliability of the emergency ambulance service; consequently, episodic and continuous change is germane to the company strategy.

Although the company generally enacts and sustains change with durability, the company leadership detected an occasional and unpredictable phenomenon where the company failed to sustain change. This problem is typified by actors reverting to original displayed paradigms of organizational function, portraying a mediocre state that is less than the organization's true performance potential. As the problem's emergence is unpredictable, company leaders experimented with various strategies to reenact change once the reversion to displaced paradigms was detected. Because the company was formed to enact change as its very essence, the company requires a durable change methodology to sustain continuous and episodic change.

AIM – The aim of the research is to determine what causes the company to occasionally fail to sustain change and what causes actors to abandon enacted change and revert to the pre-change state of organizational function. The research seeks to inform company to sustain change.

LITERATURE – The research draws from relevant works on learning and unlearning, complacency and mediocrity, and power; works from these topics that are produced in the context of change factor prominently to frame the inquiry.

METHOD – The study was conducted as a single case, case study, employing insider action research from semi-structured interviews and focus groups.

THEORY – The most prevalent management theories integrated into the study pertain to learning, unlearning and power. The study especially considers the theoretical framework of unlearning that follows destabilization and interruption of established routines from both an intentional and unintentional context, and how informal power influences the formation and perpetuation of beliefs and routines.

OUTCOMES – The research produces actionable knowledge to holistically enact change that is durably sustained and resistant to the intention of actors to revert their company to the pre-change state.

FINDING – The study found that reverting from change is most commonly pursued to preserve sources of informal power; actors do so with both noble and deviant intention, exploiting perceived complacency in others to revert to the pre-change state of the company.

UNIQUENESS – The research proposes simplicity to enact sustained change from a complex paradigm of intentional and unintentional learning and unlearning at the individual, group and organizational layers of company, through the attachment and detachment of beliefs, routines, and artefact.

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1.0 Chapter One – Introduction

This chapter introduces the reader to how the thesis is structured and provides context for the organization where the research was conducted. This chapter also covers problematisation and the aim of the study. The chapter concludes with a presentation of the research questions that emerged from problematisation.

1.1 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is presented in five chapters. Chapter one is an introduction, where the company, in which the study was conducted is presented. A framework of the company is provided to provide context for the thesis. Problematisation is covered in this chapter.

Chapter two reviews the literature. There are three central themes to the literature review; learning and unlearning, mediocrity and complacency, and change. Several sub-themes emerge from these categories, principle among these is the relationship of power to the primary themes.

Chapter three presents the research methodology and research method. This thesis engages case study to investigate change in an emergency medical service company. This section includes discussion of how the literature on qualitative inquiry informed the methodology and concludes with a schema to illustrate interpretive action research methodology.

Chapter four covers data analysis and interpretation. Primary data was obtained through semi-structured interviews with volunteer participants who are members of the organization. Intentionally, there were no study participants external to the company. Study findings are presented in this chapter, including findings in the context of the organization, the process to interpret findings collaboratively, and an interpretation of the findings.

Chapter five provides a framework for resolution of the organization problem, implementation of a renewed change process for the company that is informed from the study, and a discussion of how the study informs company generally.

The thesis concludes with a summary of the research, recommendations for company and additional research.

1.2 Introduction of the problem

As will be further elucidated, the organization occasionally and unpredictable emerges from episodic or continuous change to find actors in the company have soon reverted to following an original displayed paradigm of understanding organizational function, impeding the sustenance of change. Centrally, this thesis is about how change occurs in an organization and investigates forces that cause change to either be sustained or to revert to displaced processes. A good example of the problem is depicted in the rooted belief among actors in the company of what occurs at the completion of care and transport of a patient to hospital. Historically, under the prior regime, workers would return to some fixed station and await their next assignment. However, from its experience in more efficient operating locations, the company instituted operating methods such that at the completion of an incident, deployed resources are assigned to cover the geographic area where the next response was most likely to originate – analysis of historical response patterns renders the identification of a high probability immediate future response location reliable. Although resources were assigned to cover a specific geography, many would disregard the location instruction and relocate to their fixed abode, resulting in being poorly positioned to provide immediate ambulance response to the next request for service.

The problem is important to the researcher as a management practitioner and the topic intellectually intrigues the researcher. The aim of the study is to interrogate this problem and develop a durable change process model.

1.3 Background of the Company

The company where this research was conducted is an emergency medical service (EMS) operation in Trinidad and Tobago. This company was created as a joint venture (JV) with Trinidadian and American parentage. The Trinidad and Tobago parent is a large, Caribbean regional security firm with significant presence in Trinidad. With thousands of employees spread across numerous island states, this firm is demonstrably larger than most indigenous Caribbean firms. The American parent is a large, predominantly United States-based healthcare corporation that itself has undergone sustained change, with several iterations of cycling from private to public ownership, existing as a subsidiary of a larger entity, then independence, but with a retained focus on the emergency medicine segment of the healthcare service vertical. The company is branded as its American parent and outwardly appears as a subsidiary of the American corporation; despite the American parent owning a minority position, governance of the JV is heavily influenced by covenants in the shareholder agreement that state the American parent has operational control and power to appoint the JV's chief executive.

The company was specifically formed in 2004 to respond to a competitive public tender from the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to outsource the EMS component of its National Health System. In this tender, Government specifically sought rapid development of its EMS system, which it had viewed as being inadequate and lacking experienced leadership to enact transformational change. There has been a change impetus from the very beginning of the company's conception and existence – the company is founded on the presumption that it was to radically change an essential service in the organization environment. Compared to other entities within each parent organization, the JV operates with significant autonomy. Although the chief executive of the JV is employed by a subsidiary of the American parent and leased to the JV via a management services contract, s/he is structurally accountable to the JV's Board of Directors, comprised of one Director from the American parent and two Directors from the Trinidadian parent, of which one is non-executive Chairman. There are no independent Directors nor any external influencers to the governance of the JV. The shareholder agreement stipulates that sensitive matters receive consensus from both shareholder entities and prevents either party to shed its partner to pursue the core enterprise independently. The Board acts in a clear non-executive capacity; the chief executive is a largely free decision-maker on operational matters, how the company is structured, and its strategy to achieve the deliverables to all stakeholders, especially the performance criteria of the JV's contract with Government.

On most any measure – as a service provider, an employer, and as an investment – the company is demonstrably successful. End-user client satisfaction, measured monthly since inception of the company, reveals greater than 96% of clients to rate their experience from the company to be 'satisfactory' or 'very satisfactory' on a sustained basis. Employee satisfaction is mixed, with most employees portraying a neutral opinion of job satisfaction in employee surveys and demeanor; the company has very low turnover, with annual employee retention of 95-98% sustained throughout the company's life. The primary customer, the Ministry of Health of Trinidad and Tobago, reflects unconditional satisfaction of the company as an essential service provider. There has been no overtures to displace the company as the EMS provider to the national health service (NHS). The company routinely and reliably exceeds the performance requirements of its contract with the primary customer and is occasionally referenced as a success story of outsourcing essential services to the private sector. The service provided by the company is free to end-user clients; the company is paid directly by the Ministry of Health via a scheme that is based on the volume of clients served. The company has produced accrete returns to both shareholders that have exceeded proforma expectations on a sustained basis, likely perpetuating the autonomy of the chief executive. Results are obtained via a lean organization that has had an emphasis on all attributes of performance since inception. Its lean structure distinguishes the company in the local environment, creating visible separation from the labor-laden, mediocrity-abound paradigm of public-facing organizations that dominates its local environment (Punnet, 2006).

Perhaps the indicator most demonstrative of the company's performance is the reaction to the service provided. As above, Government was dissatisfied with the service, leading to its decision to outsource to the private sector. Upon commencing operations, the organization was faced with the prospect of an agency with a very poor public reputation. However, the company was to maintain the public facing appearance to the artefacts of the service. Undeterred, the company immediately pursued the enactment of its plan to improve the reliability and performance of the service. Results improved in all categories and the company gained momentum to improve the service. At the time of its start, the EMS system was providing service to clients at a rate of approximately 30,000 patient encounters per annum. With no advertising or promotion, the volume of clients dramatically increased in year one, totally approximately 45,000. By the end of year two, patient volume exceeded 60,000, gradually levelling to the current sustained annual volume of 78,000 patient encounters. It is believed that there was no sudden and widespread deterioration to the health of the populace, rather expansion to the use of the EMS system was public recognition of increased reliability and responsiveness.

Company employees are largely drawn from the indigenous workforce. As the organization environment lacks reliable vocational training for persons seeking employment in this segment, the company must provide initial and ongoing credentialing of front-line clinical personnel. Initially, this was achieved through an arm's length, quasi-partnership with a third party. Over time, the external training provider continued to be challenged to produce trainees with competencies to meet the organizational requirements. The company eventually resorted to internalizing its own training capability for newly hired workers. The American parent of the company maintains the largest EMS care-provider training and credentialing academy in the English-speaking world, permitting the organization to launch a satellite campus of this college with relative ease, using internal resources to comprise faculty. Once the company committed to standing-up a training capability, it further pursued long-discussed intentions to provide enhancement of select clinical staff to an advanced level. This move proved to be a significant advancement to the career path trajectory of company personnel and demonstrative improvement to the company's clinical sophistication in its care of clients. For many company workers, the opportunity to achieve advanced professional credentials represented a coveted career objective. Throughout the organization, even among personnel who did not opt into the advanced training, there was an observed direct and vicarious sense of accomplishment and distillation of professional pride.

True to the overriding intent of the Government to enhance the performance and reliability of the public EMS system, the organization has undergone continuous, evolutionary change – punctuated with periodic, episodic change initiatives for key organizational developmental milestones – since its inception.

As the initial workforce was largely drawn from a former public service, in the local paradigm, trapped in a change-resistant perpetual state (Farrell, 2016), the rate of change imposed by the formal organizational hierarchy created friction and discomfort. Farrell (2016) has investigated the phenomenological aspect of the company's external environment, limited to the context of Trinidad and Tobago, extensively, questioning if the society can lift itself from its complacent and mediocre stasis. Eventually, many company actors have inured to the constant nature of change in the company, although there remains stalwarts to the paradigm of the national public service, despite nearly universal admonishment that the organization, as it was constituted in the public service, was largely ineffective. As the study will delve into, the actors that look back favorably on the public service time of existence of the company are not merely idle romantics of 'days gone by'; rather, a minority of the company actors actively attempt to rekindle conditions of the company's ineffective predecessor.

1.4 Operations technicalities

This section will add further context to the environment in which the study is conducted. There are technicalities to the operating environment of the company that I find to be relevant to the study. I view these technicalities as the hidden complexity of EMS provision. I restrict discussion here to that which I deem to be directly relevant to the study and not a comprehensive summary of the complexity of modern EMS.

The contemporary thinking in EMS management departs from a 'traditional' view of emergency services. From their inception until the mid-1970s, most emergency services deployed in a static environment – that is, a resource deployment contingent is determined by public policy decision makers and resources are distributed throughout the community being served. This is effective for such measures as fire suppression; the respondents for a fire service are buildings, which are obviously stationary. Approximately 30 years ago, EMS leaders realized that respondents for the EMS system are people, not buildings, which are mobile. It was found that human movement occurs in rather predictable patterns – the emergence of 'bedroom communities' causes a daily migration of workers to dense urban centers from more sparsely populated suburban enclaves in the morning, and a reverse migration in the evening; weekday human movement differs from weekend movement, and day differs from night (Dean, 2004).

A natural evolution of this thinking led to the mobilization of EMS resources to mimic human patterns of movement. The most efficiency-minded EMS agencies – the company studied herein epitomizes this concept – pursue a 'dynamic' or 'fluid' resource deployment strategy. In fact, the company has a separate resource deployment plan for each hour of the 168-hour week. Consequently, when not on a response, resources in the company are constantly in motion to be repositioned to the next most likely geography of a future request for service. This change, switching from static to fluid deployment, demonstrative in significance to actors in the company from its outset, was abruptly imposed on the company.

While it can be said that no two EMS responses are alike – owing to the exigencies of how an acute episodic illness crisis or traumatic injury may emanate – all responses can be truncated into same patterns of call progression: pre-alert resource positioning, request reception, response assignment, response initiation, emergent response, patient contact, patient transport, patient handover to receiving clinician, and resource recovery. In the company, these processes are finitely measured via a Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) resource management system and incident archive database, perfected to achieve optimization, and replicated iteratively. All resources and patient treatment adjuncts are standardized in form, par level, and location, rendering each deployed resource identical to eliminate specialization of personnel and artefact to optimize efficiency.

Collectively, the above measures require skilled transactional leaders and agents. The overriding strategy is to seek optimization of each element of an ideal response, decompose the response into its discrete components, maximize efficiency, then replicate an optimum reconstructed response across thousands of requests for service. When pursued to maximize efficiency and effectiveness, EMS is a transactional system that is subject to continuous and episodic change as sub-process transactions are optimized and replicated. Tucker (2004) argues that actors adept in transactional leadership are rarely ambidextrously transformational. To a degree, this can be said about the company. Company area leaders that are selected to oversee the processes that obtain efficiency optimization demonstrate keen transactional orientation. They are not specifically sought to be transformational. As a consequence, these leaders covet their processes; it is likely that they – consciously or subconsciously – preserve paradigms of organizational function and emit reinforcement of established methodology.

Direct patient care is structured into explicit treatment protocols. Depending on the clinician’s scope credential, finite, sequential treatment modalities are reduced to generic protocols with fairly narrow decision trees. At a decision node in the treatment sequence, the clinician is commonly confronted with a bi-nodal or yes/no bifurcation, leading to predictable treatment patterns that are tested for conformity and continuity. Despite what appears to be heavy standardization, the EMS clinician actually enjoys a high degree of autonomy, albeit within a narrow scope, yet they too are predominantly transactional in organizational activities. Again, the structure of the organization intentionally and strongly reinforces established paradigms, becoming rote for experienced practitioners

1.5 Profile of the primary researcher

As primary researcher, I am a Doctor of Business Administration candidate. I am also the chief executive of the company being studied, its first employee, and came to the company on assignment as a tenured executive of one of its parent companies in the pre-organization phase of a proposed joint venture between the parents. I was the leading architect and author of the proposal the joint venture parents submitted to the Government entity to which the company is primarily accountable. During this pre-organization phase, I was the logical choice to serve as the company’s initial chief executive and to implement the numerous new systems, technologies and methods to fulfil the various deliverables to which the company committed in its proposal to Government. As the company continues to evolve under perpetual change, I have forgone opportunities to bring my company chief executive tenure to closure, choosing to remain with the company and nurture its development and sophistication. My personal investments in this thesis reflect my evolution as a scholar practitioner – as chief executive of the company where the research is conducted, I have interest to resolve the complex problem being studied; as an emerging scholar, I am intellectually intrigued by the relationship between learning, unlearning and power on the topic of change.

Professionally, I have greater than 30 years of experience in the emergency medical service industry, starting as a paramedic after separation from the United States Marine Corps, and being progressively promoted through operations and executive leadership, financial management, and organizational development roles with the American parent company. Concurrently to initiating my doctoral studies, I took on additional responsibilities with the American parent, gaining responsibility to provide executive leadership to the firm’s growth-oriented international company. Additionally, for the past ten years, I have served as adjunct faculty in the graduate business school of the prominent Caribbean regional university, where I facilitate courses on strategy in the International Master of Business Administration curriculum and on healthcare leadership in various degree and diploma programs. I am routinely asked to speak at industry conferences.

1.6 Key terms employed in this thesis

Except where otherwise attributed, the definition of these key terms was derived by the researcher and are offered in the context of this thesis. It is accepted that there may be a degree of controversy surrounding some of these terms, hence making clear here, how these terms are engaged in this thesis.

Agent – human and non-human elements of any organization system.

Artefact – any non-human, tangible input into the company.

Belief – individual and collective truth, both in the context of the organization and generally, held by actors in the company.

Complacency – the tendency for actors in company to accept outcomes that are less than natural potential.

Learning – segregated into intentional and non-intentional acquisition and transfer of knowledge at the individual, group and organizational layers of the organization.

Mediocrity – the expected state of individual and organizational proficiency; neither exceptional nor deficient.

Paradigm – the practitioner's formed understanding of the organization, loosely bounded by his/her determinants of organizational function, such as experience, education, and culture.

Paradigm reversion – the tendency of actors in the organization to revert from change to displaced paradigms of understanding of organizational function.

Routine – patterned behaviors and methodology employed by actors in the organization.

Unlearning – segregated into intentional and non-intentional detachment of association of organization beliefs, routines and artefacts (Akgun et al, 2007).

1.7 Problematisation

1.7.1 Rationale and objective of the study

The information provided to frame the background of the company might indicate an organization that is ostensibly healthy. This is largely true, although there are acute challenges in many areas. To enact large-scale and transformative change, several pursuits of episodic and continuous change were necessary, yet it is argued that the company is not an exemplar of change.

For further context, one considers the transformational nature of the enacted change. Prior to the EMS system being the responsibility of the company, it was an element of the public service. Public services in Trinidad and Tobago are characterized as lethargic, bureaucratic, and resistant to change (Farrell, 2016). Outcomes are rarely a consideration as there is heavy emphasis on process, oftentimes processes that are so dated that they harken the colonial era of national maturity. In instances where automation may have been introduced, dated, manual processes were retained. Many of the actors that transferred to the company were former members of the public service, bringing to their role in the company a displayed paradigm of understanding for order and function of key company activities that is rooted in the public service. The lean organizational structure of the company and the desire to enact transformational change requires the company to first eradicate mindsets from the public service to introduce new process – all the while, underlying routines and activities remaining similar to what is being changed. Secondly, for change to be transformational, substantial change initiatives were decomposed to a series of linear changes – changing change.

The transformational nature of organizational change requires all actors in the company to enact change (Tucker, 2004). In its initial composition, members of the company can be categorized into three groups. The largest group are former members of the public service; these actors largely perform roles as care providers, dispatchers, and front-line operational leaders. Their learning is performing familiar tasks with new routines and artefacts; artefacts are all non-human inputs into the company, explained in greater detail further in this thesis. The second – and much smaller – group are locally recruited departmental leaders and administrative staff. These actors bring familiarity with the local context, but learn company methodology of a lean environment, with significant automation as substitute for labor-intensive routines. The smallest group is comprised of three American expatriates (since reduced to two, as a Trinidadian national has been developed to fill one of these roles) from the American parent company – I, as chief executive, am one of these expatriates. These actors are proficient in intended organization methodology, but learn local culture, customs, the regulatory environment, and new constraints from operating in an emerging economy, isolated small-island state. Early on, it was recognized by the chief executive that learning was applicable to all members of the company, albeit in different dimensions.

In time, a discernable pattern from change emerged. I recognized the pattern by closely monitoring change adhesion and instances when change was not sustained. Frequently, whether change was episodic or continuous, company activity would revert to routines and methodology that was intended to be displaced with change. I have captured this phenomenon as 'reversion to an actor's first displayed paradigm of understanding of organizational function.' It became evident that the company needed to change its change process – for episodic and continuous change – to sustain change with greater velocity, reliability, and permanence. This study seeks to determine what forces in the organization perpetuate reversion to dated paradigms, how the change process can be improved, and inform the company of the methodology to sustain change.

1.8 Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of this study is threefold: to investigate the business problem of actors reverting to dated paradigms of understanding of organizational function, to inform the company of how change is sustained and to provide improved change methodology in the company, and to develop actionable knowledge of the relationship between learning, unlearning, and sustaining change.

The objective of the study is to produce a durable change process for the company and to enact change in a manner to deliberately promote sustenance.

1.8.1 Paradigm reversion

Throughout this thesis, in the interest of economy of expression, the phenomenon of actors reverting to original or dated paradigms of understanding of organizational function is termed 'paradigm reversion'; it is conceded that this terminology potentially suggests that it is the paradigm that reverts rather than the actors' displayed understanding, yet the terminology 'understanding reversion' is perceived to be unnecessarily confusing and while literally perhaps more accurate, misleading. I coined the term, 'paradigm reversion' even before developing the proposal for this thesis. Its origin in my lexicon is borne from my doctoral studies, reflecting on the paradigms of my company, and my need to create a tidy descriptor of a problem that has plagued my company. The 'original paradigm of organizational function' is meant to capture the understanding that actors form, obtain, or 'borrow' (to be addressed in subsequent sections of the thesis) upon joining the company. As above, in some cases, because the company emerged from a public sector predecessor agency, the original paradigm was formed prior to the company even being conceptualized. The study intends to discover the source, attractiveness, and 'stickiness' of the original paradigm and to inform practice of the measures to inoculate change from paradigm reversion. As stated, the company has perpetually existed as a change-rich entity. Although the tendency for some change to revert to dated paradigms, there are numerous continuous and episodic change initiatives that have been sustained. The tendency for the company to revert from changed paradigms exists with a degree of unpredictability. Paradigm reversion has occurred sporadically and without readily identified predictive indicators.

1.8.2 Sustained change methodology

On reflection of the company's history with change, the company's change methodology has been fluid, as observed by the researcher. Frequently, exigencies of the change circumstance in the company force rush to immediate change enacting. Actors in the company possess a high degree of autonomy within corridors of permitted decision-making. Autonomy of company is present at all levels of the organization. The nature of the company renders it infeasible for front-line actors to be under constant supervision and direct monitoring. Subsequently, monitoring systems are commonly retroactive, such as review of incident documentation; it is here where change noncompliance is detected. As an emergency service, the company places actors in high-risk circumstance, requiring a high degree of freedom for actors to react from their interpretation of a given circumstance. With high delegated decision-making, the company mitigates risk through a system of structured decision criteria, drilled, repetitive process, and the use of protocols. Front-line actors, managing critical and potentially dangerous situations where time is of the essence, reasonably revert to familiar routines and protocols. Front-line, mid-level, and organization-area leaders also enjoy a high degree of autonomy. As previously described, in the local context, the company portrays a lean organizational structure. As a consequence, change may be managed under less than optimal circumstance and may be enacted separate to the intent of the organizational hierarchy. For this intent of the study, the objective is to inform change methodology and create a change process that is commonly understood, both in practice and in rationale.

1.8.3 Develop actionable knowledge

I believe that the problem being interrogated in this study to be familiar to many organizations. Anecdotal dialog with other practitioners reveals commonality to the problem. The chief executive of the company and primary researcher of this study is also a member of the senior executive leadership of the American parent company. As that larger company evaluates change, a recurring challenge is the tendency for change to occasionally and unexpectedly not be sustained and for the phenomenon of paradigm reversion to be a familiar routine. The intent of this objective of the study is to strip findings of the extant context of the company where the case study is investigated and to produce actionable knowledge.

1.8.4 Resolving the organization problem

Conducted as action research, this study does not simply seek to interrogate a problem or research question. A desired outcome is to construct a durable resolution to the organizational problem. I articulate this problem as:

> *"As an impediment to sustaining change, actors in the company portray an unpredictable tendency to revert to their initial displayed paradigm of understanding of organizational function."*

From Churchman's (1967) seminal work, I interpret the problem to unquestionably present as a 'wicked problem'. Its solution is elusive, despite tremendous and diverse attention devoted to eradication of the organizational phenomenon it represents. Further, the company requires, for its very existence and success, for actors in the company to retain *some* method familiarity from their initial understanding of company function, and to largely perform the same core routines that comprised their initial paradigm. A significant portion of this thesis is devoted to how the study informs practice and offers a durable solution to the organization problem.

The case study is conducted solely by current members of the company, representing all levels of the formal organizational hierarchy. As the company exists on the premise to enact broad change, the case study informs the company's emergent strategy (Anderson, 2009). It is conducted in the company's natural environment (Anderson, 2009), drawing from the collective histories and interpretations of company members who serve as voluntary insider researchers, including the chief executive who initiated the study in pursuit of his Doctor of Business Administration degree, and will inform future change enactment as the company executes an adaptive strategy. Additionally, the Ybema et al (2010) model for ethnographic elements of participation in action research; the study vacillates between realist ethnography, comprised of the primary researcher's interpretation of observed behaviors, and constructivist ethnography – the socially constructed understanding obtained through collaboration with research participants.

1.9 Research Questions

The research questions reflect my initial thinking about the problem. Problematisation led to a clear and close relationship between change and learning. Problematisation suggests change is dependent on learning. Problematisation is less certain about unlearning and change. While I find unlearning to be an intriguing and useful concept to sustain change and to protect against reversion to paradigms the organization seeks to change, I question if it is a legitimate phenomenon.

Research Question 1: How do actors in practice relate learning to unlearning?

This question seeks to investigate the prevalence of unlearning as recognizable phenomenon to practitioners. It seems most all educated adults have an interpretation of learning as a legitimate phenomenon. While there may be nuance between and among practitioners, the study assumes it to be rare to encounter a practitioner who has never contemplated the concept of learning. The study seeks to explore, in comparison to learning, practitioner interpretation of unlearning.

Research Question 2a: Is unlearning a precursor to learning a new paradigm?

Research Question 2b: Is unlearning a co-cursor to learning a new paradigm?

Question two considers that if unlearning is a valid phenomenon in practice, how it functionally relates to learning. Either learning and unlearning are unrelated, or if they are related phenomena, the study seeks to explore if the relationship is linear, that is unlearning precedes learning, or the two exist simultaneously as practitioners enact change. Although it is unstated, these questions are asked in the context of change and will be interrogated in this context.

Research Question 3a: How are beliefs, routines and artefacts attached to a displayed paradigm of understanding of organizational function?

Research Question 3b: To change understanding of organizational function, do actors unlearn any or all beliefs, routines, or artefacts?

Research Question 3c: To change understanding of organizational function, do actors learn any or all beliefs, routines, or artefacts?

Question three parts ‘a’ through ‘c’ are predicated on the construct offered by Akgun et al (2007) that associates unlearning to actors’ attachments to the ‘beliefs, routines, and artefacts’ of practice. I seek to discern if actor engagement of change is an alteration, through learning, unlearning, or a varied mix of the two phenomena, as the basis for actor attachment to organizational function as expressed in these three dimensions. If there is tidiness to actor understanding of organizational function expressed by a pattern of association between beliefs, routines and artefacts – such as belief is cast upon artefact and routines emerge thereon – I find this to be insightful to the order of change, yet the study does not depend upon such order being determined.

Research Question 3d: How do actors in practice form a new displayed paradigm of understanding of organizational function?

The fourth component of question three is inserted to discover an alternative logic, if the study determines that there is no actor attachment to beliefs, routines and artefact to form understanding of organizational function. As this study seeks to solve a business problem – sustaining change – it will be necessary to inform the organization from an alternative logic.

Research Question 4a: How do actors in practice relate learning to sustained change?

Research Question 4b: How do actors in practice relate unlearning to sustained change?

Question four can – but isn't required to – obtain momentum from the first three questions. The core purpose of this study is to inform the company to sustain change. I believe there to be a relationship between learning and change. I further believe that this needs to be validated in practice through research. I'm intrigued to discover if and how unlearning relates and if this is integral to preventing the occurrence of actors in practice reverting to earlier paradigms of understanding of organizational function.

Research Question 5a: How do actors perceive mediocrity?

Research Question 5b: Do perceptions of internal (self) mediocrity and external (group, organization) mediocrity differ?

Question five, in two parts, addresses mediocrity as a means to characterize the state of organizational function to which actors have been perceived to revert. In the first part of this question, I explore if the actors in practice perceive mediocrity. I find this essential, as otherwise my assessment would be a judgement of practice that is rendered upon the practitioners. In part two, I seek to explore if there is differentiation to actor perceptions of mediocrity, as I consider this to be informative to practice.

2.0 Chapter Two – Literature Review

This chapter presents the literature engaged to provide a foundation for the inquiry. The literature review is structured around the major themes of the inquiry: power, change, learning and unlearning, and mediocrity and complacency. The conclusion to this chapter relates how the study is positioned in the context of established works on the major themes of the inquiry.

The literature is evaluated to determine consensus and dissenting arguments from published works in the context of the major themes of this thesis. Assessment of the literature recognizes common themes between works and is synthesized to extract common points of view and contrast opposing positions. When the opportunity presents, I borrow concepts from one topic and synthesize these concepts in a different context. For example, as the reader will see, I consider the fitness of accepted aspects of mediocrity as an apt descriptor of complacency. Frequently in the review of the literature, I extract underlying relation to the major themes of the study, namely power, change, and unlearning.

2.1 Change

There is an abundance of literature coverage of change. Here, I am intentionally quite selective, first considering works that facilitate change in organizations (Beer et al, 2008; Denis et al, 2001; Hammersley, 2017; and Josserand et al, 2006), then contrasting this scope with works that address forces to impair change (Alexander et al, 2014; Battilana and Coasciero,2012; Liu et al, 2012; Walton, 1985; and Ready and Conger, 2008). The emphasis of this study is the socio-psychological aspect of change. Equity theory is thought to be relevant and an apt framework to provide scaffolding for my thinking. In the context of change, equity theory mainly interrogates perceived fairness; Liu et al (2012) relate perceptions of fairness to change promotion. Again, questioning if the company is being innovative may be an indicator that change is being fostered from the company rather than imposed by the hierarchy. These works provide insight into where actors in organizations derive motivation to initiate and accept change.

Some level of understanding of human physiology is essential to understanding change and how change is perceived by actors in organizations. Hammersley (2017) proposes that perceived challenge evokes a positive adrenalin response and increased physiological capability; whereas, a perceived threat evokes a negative adrenalin response and diminished physiological capability. An actor's perception of newness – threat or challenge – impacts their human ability to respond, potentially deriving capability impairment from perceived resource inadequacy. Alexander et al (2014) provide interesting work on actor interpretation. Using advanced magnetic resonance imagery, Alexander et al (2014) were able to observe a neural response to interpretations of perceived fair and unfair inequity. This work indicates that equity theory has a neural basis in the human brain reward system, people distinguish fair and unfair inequity, and may be explanatory of the seemingly fickle stickiness of change. If change creates inequity where equity previously existed, or poses inequity that is perceived to be unfair, the human brain resists change irrespective of an actor's desire to conform to change (Alexander et al, 2014).

Battilana and Casciaro (2012) propose change to be a social influence, relating to the connectivity of actor networks. The more 'structural holes' in the network, the more receptive the network is to change. This work challenges conventional intuition that cohesion is essential to change acceptance; conversely, Battilana and Casciaro (2012) argue that less cohesion – more structural holes and fewer or weaker tethers between the network and the actors – improves change acceptance. Arguing that innovation is either exploitation or exploration, Marin-Idarraga et al (2015) and Martins et al (2015) extend a resource based view in the context of exploitation and dynamic capability in exploration. These works suggest that loosely connected, free actors may be change seekers. Deci and Ryan (2000) introduce Self Determination Theory (SDT) in the context of goal pursuit and motivation. High Commitment High Performance (HCHP) firms radiate trust, engagement, a focused agenda, and collective leadership (Beer et al, 2008). Collectivism appears to be important. Feldman (2014) proposes that innovation occurs in clusters. van der Heiden et al (2012) relate sensemaking to sustained change, leading me to consider how sensemaking occurs, as an individual endeavor, or as a collective pursuit. Steering my query of the literature more closely to the centrality of my research, Stoughton and Ludema (2012) provide a linkage between unlearning and sustained change. In the context of the study, these works relate to the formation of beliefs.

In consideration of what may impair the acceptance or sustenance of change, works that consider bias and organizational structure inform the inquiry. Eidelman and Crandall (2012) emphasize the status quo bias. Lebaron (2010) proposes bias as inevitable 'baggage' to weight interpretation and understanding. Still yet, bias itself is subject to interpretation. It is said that change is difficult to detect from its midst (Walton, 1985); this provides for an alternative interpretation of the tendency of the status quo – perhaps change is active, yet our understanding of order in the paradigm of the status quo impairs our ability to detect change. This order is likely influenced by the structure of the organization. Josserand et al (2006) argue that the bureaucratic organization impairs change. As previously stated, the exigencies of the company's core purpose have reinforced the emergence of a company order that is transactionally efficient. Here, the structure of the company and the autonomy of actor clusters is influential. Segmentation in autonomous groups renders the group effective, yet interferes with change (Denis et al (2001). Although change and united leadership are found to be associated (Denis et al, 2001), leadership 'couplings' are fragile, exhibiting discontinuity and disconnectedness. Yet, Sarkees and Hulland (2009) challenge a paradigm that innovation and efficiency cannot coexist. Even though this thesis does not directly seek to determine a strategy for the company, as change is deemed essential to the company's strategy, I interpret works and factors related to strategy formation to be inseparable to change in the context of this study of this company.

2.2 Culture of the study location

A thorough search of the literature does not produce an abundance of published works depicting the culture of Trinidad and Tobago. However, there are works, albeit limited in number, which go to length to describe the local culture. Hofstede's (2016) country profile, along his standard dimensions of power distance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, uncertainty avoidance, long/short-term orientation, and indulgence provides thorough coverage. Added to this are the work from Browne (2014) on cultural tendencies, Farrell (2016), a deep critique of cultural factors germane to the study, such as productivity, complacency, and mediocrity, and Punnet (2016) on the dominant management style in the Caribbean region.

2.3 Mediocrity and complacency

Initial problematisation found the phenomenon described as mediocrity to be prevalent in the company. Informed by the literature, subsequent interrogation of the problem led to a reinterpretation of mediocrity and consideration of complacency to be a more accurate depiction of the problem.

2.3.1 Mediocrity – Theory

To interrogate the phenomenon of mediocrity, a framework emerged that first considers a theoretical perspective, followed by works that are deemed to possess practical connectedness from the literature. I interpret there to be a dominant view of mediocrity that places it in a negative connotation. This view is countermanded with an alternative viewpoint that provides mediocrity as a point of centrality between incompetence and exceptionalism. Berman and West (2003a) provide a framework for mediocrity, citing organizational and actor traits of purposefully ignoring the 'big-picture', emphasis on a rules orientation, 'brown-nosing', coasting on appearances, and a pattern of low exceptionalism. Ruark (2017) relates mediocrity and 'learned helplessness'. It appears that although mediocrity can exist within an individual actor, mediocrity as a social construct is what matters to organizations. The literature is informative. Center (1971) introduces the contagion effects of mediocrity. Compromise is a backdrop to mediocrity (Vasilescu, 2013). Hermanowicz (2013) and Newell and Stone (2001) share a common view of mediocrity as an organizational phenomenon that 'marginalizes the adept' and punishes excellence. Kerfoot (2009) cites organizational practices that reinforce mediocrity. All of these characterizations of how mediocrity emanates in organizations are perceived to be relevant to the extant environment of the study and are observed in the company where the study occurred.

Mediocrity needn't be restricted to a boundary that carries a negative connotation. Greve (1999) provides an early view of mediocrity as regressing to the mean. Mediocrity is an essential companion to excellence (Marren, 2004). Bluntly, Vasilescu (2013) proposes that mediocrity is a state between 'stupidity and excellence.' Perhaps, to have exceptionalism, there must be mediocrity to provide contrast. Excellence in business is as rare as in any other field (Marren, 2004). From the seventeenth century, Locke promoted a philosophy that man is feeble and fallible; Wilson (2016) argues that this natural state is mediocre. Mediocrity can be stripped of its negative connotation and be viewed as 'ordinary', rather than 'bad', (Marren, 2004). Considering mediocrity as both an individual and group state of being, one can observe how individual actors comprise groups and how these agents coexist paradoxically – there can be mediocre actors in an exceptional group; exceptional actors may only achieve mediocrity as a group. One might consider a context where actors pursue individual exceptionalism at the expense of group mediocrity. Yet, pleasure seeking is not weakness, it is innately human; human will creates needs and wants, both for pleasure and necessity (Wilson, 2016).

2.3.2 Mediocrity – Practice

From a practical point of view, the literature leads to querying if mediocrity as an organizational phenomenon that deserves attention, intervention and eradication. In a highly practical piece, Coldiron (2009) offers a consideration to prevent 'relapse' to mediocrity. Harari (1995) relates mediocrity as a barrier to change, emphasizing 'assets, routines, and organizational structure' – curiously omitting actor beliefs – yet considers sacred tradition and habit. Dupper et al (2014) argue for the necessity of engaging learned change to influence behavior change. Continuing their work on mediocrity, Berman and West (2003b) offer tactics to eradicate mediocrity, including increases to managerial commitment – conceding that commitment can be feigned – and the institution of consequences. These works suggest combating mediocrity to be a management imperative in organizations, leading to consideration of how a company might attack mediocrity. It may be that common practices to achieve increased managerial and actor commitment paradoxically invite mediocrity. Standards impair individuality (Newell and Stone, 2001). Benchmarking can potentially invite mediocrity (Heffes, 2010). Conformity to a rules-laden company results in mediocrity (Vasilescu, 2013). This may not to be an imperative to combat mediocrity – the literature informs that mediocrity is a common and rationale state (Greve, 1999; Marren, 2004; and Vasilescu, 2013) – rather an imperative to address change. The dominant culture in an organization resists change, determining what knowledge that dissents with the status quo to gain notoriety and prominence (Newell and Stone, 2001).

2.3.3 Complacency

2.3.3.1 Complacency – Theory

Using the same framework for mediocrity, the literature pertaining to complacency is organized into theoretical and practical realms. If mediocrity is accepted as the most predictable state of company and the actors that compose it, yet one remains dissatisfied with the progression and sustenance of change, there must be a phenomenon to explain the company from achieving its full potential. Work on complacency may be explanatory. The literature is assistive to construct a framework of understanding. Complacency can be broadly defined as overestimation of outcomes, misplaced or unwarranted self-satisfaction, insufficiency in desire to improve, and inappropriate motivation toward effort (Kawall, 2006). Complacency is neither apathy nor indifference (Kawall, 2006). Smith (2013) argues that complacency initiates with slow momentum, spreading to a pervasive state by the time it can be interpreted and detected. Consideration is given to how complacency rises in the company. It seems complacency may be a natural occurring phenomenon in practice, similar to mediocrity and conscripted by other organizational phenomena. Citing Berle and Means, (1932) Clarke (2004) defines agency and the separation of ownership and management. Clarke (2004) further proposes that complacency is most likely to manifest during periods of high confidence. Best (2001) argues that the 'paradox of perfection' invites pessimism upon failure to achieve perfection; whereas, the 'paradox of proliferation' invites the recognition of further problems via social progress.

2.3.3.2 Complacency – Practice

From a practical point of view, complacency manifests as a deeply harmful organizational phenomenon. As a force, it can constrain organizational achievement and is likely to emerge when the organization is ostensibly performing well, yet beneath its full potential (Best, 2001 and Clark, 2004). Complacency does not cause mediocrity (Kawall, 2006). Among other phenomena, complacency – or perhaps the fear of inviting thereof – potentially causes a downgrade of progress toward a new vision (Best, 2001). Ready and Conger (2008) propose that the dialog that accompanies the progress pathway – often perceived as simple 'lip-service' within the organization – is what causes most visions to fail.

In this context, the social and formal structures of the organization matter. Hackman (2009) argues that a successful team requires ruthlessness in membership determination, authoritarian leadership, and a compelling direction to captivate members, yet a deviant is needed to disrupt homogeneity and uproot complacency. The formers of a group are likely to portray in-group consensus bias; to mitigate this, group governance ought to include formal procedures that explicitly state inclusivity of outsiders (Lofland, 1997), yet informal groups rarely portray such intentional organizational structure and attributes. Deviants question paradigms, process, and purpose – oftentimes doing so at great personal cost (Hackman, 2009). Still yet, there is reason to be optimistic; the literature offering a potential remedy. Although the future cannot be truly predicted (Moorcroft, 2007), developing generic competences in learning and adaptation may protect against complacency arising from the unknown.

2.4 Learning and unlearning

After visiting the literature, a protagonist/antagonist distinction emerged in the association between learning and change. The protagonist/antagonist classification was derived by me to provide mental framing of the literature and my thinking about learning, unlearning and change. From there, I take my focus to unlearning and the relation between the phenomenon of unlearning and change.

2.4.1 Protagonist

I interpret the literature to reveal that learning is, in the main, a protagonist to change (Allen and Pilnick, 1973; Calvin, 2015; Forrest, 1991; and Stoughton and Ludema, 2012), although a concession that change antagonism can also be a learned pattern is conceded. The centrality of the inquiry considers what stimulates learning as an emergent phenomenon in the organization, as opposed to learning that is imposed by the hierarchy, and how emergent learning manifests and materializes as change. In organizations, learning tends to intensify at the outset and culmination of a business cycle; the relative stable period in between these poles concedes to a planning-centric approach to the organization (Siren and Kohtamaki, 2016). This indicates connectivity to patterned business cycles and emergent learning. Learning involves the alignment of new routines to normed patterns (Allen and Pilnick, 1973). This is perceived to directly relate to the centrality of the problem and the rationale to conduct the study to resolve the problem.

2.4.2 Antagonist

Learning is not solely a company-beneficial phenomenon. In addition to actors potentially learning behaviors and routines that are detrimental or at cross purpose to the very function of the company, learning may also foster distortion and ambiguity. Learning is not a panacea for organizational improvement; learning often produces undesirable outcomes (Starbuck, 2017). All learning is not good (Brook et al, 2016). The phenomenon is not simply that actors may learn the 'wrong' routines. Learning may foster organizational rigidity and blindness, rendering the organization to miss critical changes in the environment (Starbuck, 2017). Further, learning does not exist in isolation. Snell and Clark (1998) reiterate the existence of single, double and triple loop learning, but argue that a learning organization only enhances the 'ruling court' of an organization. I question if this is a manifestation of power, rather than an aspect of learning – legitimate, power-rich groups will likely dominate any aspect of the organization where they choose to exert power; the fact that this occurs in a learning organization possibly speaks more to the pervasiveness of power and the weakness of learning to neutralize power.

2.4.3 Learning to resolve the problem

The literature informs problem resolution. From the literature, I derived that the problem being investigated is addressed via learning and leveraging power in the organization, to influence actors to adopt, accept and sustain change. First, I further consult the literature to inform learning.

Allen and Pilnick (1973) introduce the concept of duality in organizations – the formal and informal. Tension between these domains is resolved through organizational learning. Calvin (2015) identifies a similar tension, attributing its creation to the collision of old and new thinking in an organization. Calvin (2015) proposes that the organizational culture will dictate if the tension leads to learning. Learning and action are viewed as inseparable. Nielsen (2014) introduces the relation between performance feedback and learning. Learning occurs at the individual, group, and organizational level (Argyris and Schon, 1996). This is important in the interest of comprehensive problem intervention, yet as groups and organizations learn through the actors that comprise them, emphasis is placed on the individual. Actors learn what they live; people learn from action (Allen and Pilnick, 1973). The former speaks to the individual, the latter to social constructs of human actors – a subtle but important distinction. This leads one to consider individual learning as both a biological and social phenomenon. Learning is knowledge conversion (Al-adaileh et al, 2012). Understanding is a process of discovering meaning (Forrest, 1991); yet understanding is only a sense of comprehension. While learning and understanding can be individual and social phenomena, understanding is oftentimes a shared social phenomenon – we may learn individually (and collectively), understanding advances from social interaction. To understand learning at the individual layer, it is important to be informed by literature devoted to the understanding of how the human brain learns in a neurophysiological context (Senkbeil, 2016). From a neurophysiological point of view, all learning is the formation of memory (Howard, 2017). There have been recent changes in understanding how the human brain stores and retrieves information (Dispenza, 2007). The human brain is malleable (Senkbeil, 2016). Recent scientific findings in human brain science affirm that plasticity occurs in the brain's cortices; this has altered understanding of human brain function from a paradigm such that understanding follows interpretation to new knowledge and that brain stimulation causes plasticity in the cerebral cortex (McGann, 2017). From his research of the function of the human brain, Howard (2014) argues that all learning is the formation of memory and that humans must convert learning to memory for knowledge to be acquired. Merzenich (2017) affirms McGann (2015) that neuroplasticity occurs at stimulation; borrowing knowing from the study of physical agility, Merzenich (2017) applies the science to how organizations function, proposing that all organizations benefit from more adept and faster thinking. It is proposed that Merzenich's (2017) organizational agility relates to emergent strategy; in the context of the study in this company, with change as a foundational core element, the company need be adaptive and adept at change.

2.4.4 Unlearning

As this review ventures into the literature interrogating the phenomenon of unlearning, it first considers if unlearning is a legitimate phenomenon in organizations that is distinctly detached and differentiated to learning. There is hardly unanimity in this consideration. Howells and Scholderer (2016) reject that unlearning is a valid psycho-social phenomenon. While Hislop et al (2014) argue that unlearning is a neglected topic in the study of organizational science.

Tsang and Zahra (2008) provide the essentials of unlearning as it is presented by organizational theorists, yet unlearning does not reside exclusively in a theoretical realm. In a related work, Tsang (2008) presents unlearning in the context of the formation of a joint venture. Although Tsang (2008 and 2017) has been a leading voice of unlearning in the context of organizational science, it can be interpreted that he is overtly and unnecessarily critical of other theorists and points of view; at times, one may view he is downright petulant. In an effort to counter an argument that unlearning is an aspect of learning, as opposed to a distinctly autonomous phenomenon, Tsang (2017) proposes that integrating unlearning to learning creates unnecessary complexity (Tsang, 2017).

It may be in routines and in the context of individual versus organizational dimensions where unlearning potentially draws legitimacy. There are individual and organizational knowledge archetypes (Fan, 2012). In this context, Reese (2017) provides a tidy example of converting theory into a pattern for organizations. Once again, patterns are relevant. However, this may be difficult to directly examine. The ostensive aspect to a routine is difficult to observe (Fiol and O'Connor, 2017a). Suggesting that unlearning is a phenomenological precursor to learning, Solovy (1999) proposes that to learn, the old logic in organizations must be unlearned.

2.4.4.1 Unlearning – Process

Having not yet discerned if unlearning has legitimacy as a distinct phenomenon, I interpret the literature to inform that if unlearning is legitimate, one should be able to isolate unlearning as process and practice. Consultation of the literature allows the exploration of this thinking. I first consider unlearning as a process. Here, the lack of unanimity among theorists is evident. I segregate works into those that consider unlearning in the context of objects of practice, those that propose unlearning as a rejection of prior learning, and those that offer a serial model for unlearning. Akgun et al (2007) propose that unlearning occurs through action on beliefs, routines, and artefacts. The Akgun et al (2007) framework for the detachment of beliefs, routines and artefacts to obtain unlearning is highly influential to frame the study. In the context of unlearning, Martin de Holan (2011) emphasizes the cognitive relationship between actors and the assets, routines and structure of the organization; curiously, this view omits the relationship between beliefs and practice.

Fan (2012) emphasizes the cognitive and behavioral aspects of unlearning, describing the phenomenon of unlearning as discarding and active forgetting. This point of view leads to subsequent consideration of the notion of 'intentional forgetting', a concept explored in later passages of this review. Suggesting a degree of unity between the theorists who emphasize actor engagement of routines and those who view unlearning as sequential, recent work proposes to sew these concepts together. From their study of routines, Fiol and O'Connor (2017a) propose a model that suggests a serial sequence to unlearning; I question this finding in context beyond the conceptual. Reinforcing this point, Reese (2017) provides a three-phase construct for unlearning: destabilization-interruption-unlearning. For those that adhere to this point of view, destabilization is an essential element to trigger unlearning (Fiol and O'Connor, 2017b).

2.4.4.2 Unlearning – Practice

Steering the literature to closer proximity of this inquiry, consideration is given to learning in the social context of practice. Here, a view that learning is more broadly defined than a simple exchange of information between parties, exists as a social human compact, and requires a context that must consider other social phenomena that implicates how organizational activities emerge. Solovy (1999) describes a 'dominant logic' that dictates social phenomena in organizations. Fiol and O'Connor (2017b) concede a social aspect – peer commitment and powerful actors – that potentially derails unlearning. This dominant logic determines how, what, and to what extent learning and unlearning take place. Additionally, as a social institution, an organization is comprised of actors of varying capability and interest. As there is heterogeneity to ability, there is heterogeneity to learning (Martin de Holan, 2011). Consequently, we observe actors learning at varied pace and competency. Learning is not a neutral environment (Solovy, 1999). Howard (2014) is informative, offering a construct such that learners must be motivated to learn, have access to learning, and neurophysiological transfer of learned information from the brain's cortices to long term memory centers of the brain.

Some theorists project the phenomenon of unlearning to be a form of intentional forgetting (Martin de Holan, 2011). Others term this as active forgetting (Niri et al, 2009). Given Howard's (2014) physiological framework to understand learning, though a legitimate question emerges to ask if the human brain is capable of a 'reverse' function to actively or intentionally forget. Still yet, learning and unlearning are precedence and cocedence to change (Rampersad, 2004). Reese (2017) helpfully offers that in organizations, there is a necessity to identify the need for unlearning early (Reese, 2017). Srithika and Bhattacharyya (2009) present appreciative inquiry as a method to unlearn. Retaining focus on practice, it is necessary to consider context beyond the individual – it may be that unlearning is achievable at the group and organizational layer, but not among actors. Fiol and O'Connor (2017b) place a heavy emphasis on rewards and punishment to alter routines. This emphasis contrasts to the work of Deci and Ryan (2000) in the context of intrinsic motivation and extrinsic incentive, leading to questioning if what Fiol and O'Connor (2017a and 2017b) propose to be unlearning is actually more related to power and influence. Unlearning may differ in social constructs – groups and organizations – than the human actors that comprise these constructs. To excise learning from a group or organization – a form of intentional forgetting – the composition of the group or organization can be changed. Starbuck (2017) proposes organizational unlearning requires the replacement of top management.

2.5 Power

When not in the forefront, power has remained in the backdrop of this inquiry. Power is ever-present. Power, its significance to the problem and to problem resolution, emerged from the thesis. Although power was not contemplated in the research questions, it became a central theme of the study. According to Russell (1938 in Lucas and Baxter, 2012), power is the most important element in any community of actors. Boyatzis (1971) introduces power as influence. The research considers how power is classified and manifests in organizations. Power is formal and/or informal (Mechanic, 1962). Additionally, there is a distinguished and important differentiation between felt power and position power (Bombari et al, 2017). Irrespective of how it forms and presents, the literature provides a framework to consider power in organizations. The bases of authority are legitimacy, position, competence, and social being (Peabody, 1962). The factors of power are expertise, attractiveness, location, position, coalitions, and rules (Mechanic, 1962). Power increases as role specificity increases (Palumbo, 1969), seemingly reiterating the force of expertise as a source of power, important in the context of influence.

The initial context for power centered on how power might impair insider action research and successfully gather primary data with legitimacy, where the primary researcher holds high position power and participants were lesser-powered members of the company. Role duality prohibits the chief executive of the company, and the formal power this role accrues, from not carrying this power into the research. A stated reservation is concern that the power imbalance between the chief executive/researcher and other participants, derived from organizational roles and transferred to the inquiry, would manifest as a form of organizational silence (Knoll and Dick, 2013). Silence is likely implicated in the company's ability to change. Organizational silence can be a form of change resistance and a barrier to change (Morrison and Milliken, 2000). This leads to consideration of how actors in the organization obtain power; the literature is informative. Especially for low-position power actors, power is the ability to control access to persons, resources, and artefacts (Mechanic, 1962). Formal authority is derived from legitimacy and position; functional authority from technical competence and human relations (Peabody, 1962). It is interesting that professionalism is inversely related to role specificity, centralization, formalization, and morale (Palumbo, 1969) – items that may relate to an actor's sense of control and subsequently, power.

The literature influences thought about power beyond the strict confines of how position power either promotes or impairs the ability to conduct meaningful research in the company. This further leads to consideration of how power – namely felt power among actors – implicates the ability to sustain change. There is room for caution here; organizational behavior cannot be reduced to a single variable (Palumbo, 1969). This train of thought also influences consideration of how gaining a better handle on power, and its relationship to sustaining change, matters. The presence or absence of innovative thinking is potentially indicative of where and how change emerges from the internal company environment. Seeking rarity, firms innovate to differentiate (Lecher and Gudmundsson, 2014). It remains an open question if this venture is genuinely innovation-seeking. Returning to a focus on power, the literature informs. Brass and Burkhardt (1993) introduce power as an actor's betweenness in context of other actors in the organization; the lesser distance between an actor and other actors – in the context of others' distance in the same setting – determines greater influence and higher power. It is possible to compute a power coefficient for each actor in an organization, determined by his/her betweenness. Yet this is hardly benign; power can be both an enabling and stifling force on actor behavior. Bombari et al (2017) introduce 'felt power' as a mitigating force to obtain via informal power, perceived power, especially among actors in low (formal) power circumstance and position. When positive, felt power exudes happiness and serenity; when negative, fear, anger and sadness are expressed (Bombari et al, 2017). Additionally, for understanding of power to be actionable in the company, there is interest in the realm of actor interaction. At once, Reed (2001) proposes that trust and control are related through power diffusion, yet challenges reciprocity as a trust inducing phenomenon. Boyatzis (1971) introduces the power to influence, via informal power accumulation, for low power actors. The study detected the presence of informally powerful influencers to be a fundamental source of the problem's emergence and permanence, prompting an expansion of the investigation of published works on power.

2.5.1 Power implications in problem resolution

In the context of problem resolution, power is a crucial consideration. This is essential to the company's realized strategy and a form of competitive advantage. The process to form strategy may be more influential to competitiveness than the actual strategy (Mintzberg et al, 1998). Here, in the interest of problem intervention and sustaining change, there is less interest in position power and change that can be invoked by the organizational hierarchy by edict, and more interest in the power of influence that is possessed by actors in the company as members of social groups. Position power is unemotional; felt power mediates the relationship between position power and emotional state (Bombari, et al, 2017). Goals may be judged to be 'good' or 'bad' – power is neither (Boyatzis, 1971). Townley (2002) considers what influences choice, citing Foucault (1970) to argue that an actor's group membership influences what s/he determines to challenge as true or false; the study seeks to determine how this relates to belief formation. According to Social Identity Theory, actors in organizations have numerous social identities (Lucas and Baxter, 2012). Actors' social group membership is essential to how they influence and are influenced. From a critical realist point of view, trust and control emerge as influential forces, constantly mixing and remixing (Reed, 2001). Actors in a social construct influence most aspects of practice, including the formation of habits, leading to consideration of how the learning of habits relates to sustaining change. Howard (2017) explores recent changes in the field of neuroscience in the context of learning. Neuroscience has advanced its knowing of how habits are formed (Dispenza, 2007). Hill et al (2016) propose to change the approach to teach actors in organizations. In an interesting investigation into the formation of habits, Lally et al (2014) found that repetition increases habit-forming and that there is high variation among actors (from 18 to 254 days) for a habit to form. From what is newly known about neuroplasticity, when actors are taught to repeat by rote memorization drills, not only is the information stored, but also the manner in which the brain receives information is imprinted. Conversely, Hill et al (2016) found that when actors are taught varying perspectives, the brain also learns to assess possibilities, improving criticality. Relating this back to power, we are reminded that Reed (2001) challenges reciprocity as a trust inducing phenomenon. In the context of felt power as influence, we question if habit formation is dependent on a reciprocal exchange between actors, occurring separate to the organizational hierarchy of power where reciprocity may be more essential to form trust.

2.6 Conclusion

The literature demonstrably framed the inquiry; it informed the research questions and themes of questions to integrate into participant interviews. While this literature review is consolidated, there were three significant ventures into the literature to investigate the major themes of the study: power, change, learning and unlearning, and mediocrity and complacency. The first consultation of the literature was conducted as a broad search of these terms. As that search narrowed, I conducted a search of the themes in context of each other; for example, I searched for works on 'change', then narrowed this with a search of those results that included a context for another term, such as 'learning'. Recognizing that each of these topics are deeply and widely covered in published works, I found it beneficial to be quite selective for works that spoke to more than one theme of the study.

The second and third broad visits to the literature – with several additional forays of specific interest throughout the study – were prompted by a paper on one theme prompting queries on another, such as a paper on learning raising a new context in which to consider unlearning. Upon perceiving power to factor significantly in the study, this theme earned its own literature search, again considering power in the context of the other themes of the study. In each case, the online repository of the University of Liverpool library was the literature search platform. Searches were not controlled for any specific period of time, nor were any specific authors sought nor excluded. The only control of these searches was for peer-reviewed, published works. Reference lists of particularly interesting textbooks were also consulted for influential works. Occasionally, by happenstance, in activity unrelated to this study, I would come across a published work that I found to be relevant. These were retained and integrated into the literature review.

Although I interpret the literature to have broad coverage of change, learning and power, I perceive that there is narrow coverage of unlearning and an opportunity to look anew at complacency and mediocrity. I perceive the literary coverage of unlearning to exist in silos, as the theorist community has not yet coalesced around a common language to examine the phenomenon of unlearning (Becker, 2019). Akgun et al (2007), Becker (2010), Fan (2012), Fiol and O'Connor (2017a and 2017b), Hislop (2014), McGill and Slocum (1993), Rampersad (2004), Starbuck (1984 and 2017), and Tsang (2008 and 2017) have laid the groundwork and initial framing for unlearning. To this, Becker (2019), Cegarra-Navaroo and Wensley (2019), Klammer and Gueldenberg (2019), and Kluge et al (2019) separately, have called for further empirical research into unlearning, stressing the need to investigate more deeply, beyond survey methodology. This thesis considers the established groundwork from founding theorists on unlearning and answers recent calls from theorists to conduct empirical research. The approach to this thesis proposes novelty in the conceptual combination of foundation works to examine unlearning as it manifests in practice.

To conclude this literature review chapter, I address how the literature review influenced the inquiry, research questions, and interview themes. As the following summation reveals, the literature review provides a theoretical foundation to research the problem and establishes a basis of published knowing to initiate the study.

2.6.1 Power

Initially, the influence of power was underappreciated in my framework for the study. It is noted that I did not enter the investigation with power figuring prominently in the research questions. Power emerged from the investigation, specifically from the interviews, to be captured in the investigation and to figure prominently in the problem resolution. Literary works on power especially informed the disruption of informal power sources. As is noted in other themes, literature addressing power also led to considering human neuroscience to thoroughly understand the problem. Key concepts from the literature distinguish formal power from informal, establish the foundation for the accumulation of informal power, and how power perpetuates or restrains change.

2.6.2 Change

Change is the essence of the study and is queried in the research questions and interview themes. Key concepts from the literature informed how change occurs and what impairs change. Literature on change provides the foundation of study as it considers how change is influenced, enacted, and perpetuated and impeded. The literature also led to my thinking beyond change resistance and to question if there is a physiological as well as psychological basis of change acceptance and resistance. As change is essentially the company's strategy – change is the rationale for the mere conception of the organization, the literature on change influenced my thinking that this study was not solely and investigation of a problem, but also an examination of the organization's strategy.

2.6.3 Learning and unlearning

Key concepts of the literature on learning substantially influenced the formation of a framework to understand the relation between learning and change. Literature on learning presented a foundation to structure the study and to influence its direction. From the literature on learning, a sub-framework to segregate learning that is protagonist to change to that which is antagonist emerged. This led to consideration of learning that is detrimental to the organization's stated intent and to further parse learning to that which occurs intentionally and unintentionally, informing participant interview themes. Again, this literature revealed a relatedness to neurophysiology, expanding the literature scope.

Early into conceptualizing the study and the thesis proposal, the literature on learning led me to unlearning, which emerged as a major component of the study and emerged as important to problem resolution. From the literature, where some contributors question the validity of unlearning, the research questions and interview themes sought to investigate if unlearning was recognized in the company environment and if it could be distinguished from learning as a valid phenomenon. Further, the research questions and interview themes queried that if unlearning is real, are learning and unlearning sequentially related or do they occur simultaneously? The literature also influenced me to consider learning as a process and as a practice. As a process, can constructs from the literature be identified in the study outcomes? As a practice, are constructs offered for learning useful to investigate unlearning?

2.6.4 Mediocrity and complacency

Established literature on mediocrity provided the foundation for the study to reinterpret mediocrity and how it relates to and coexists with complacency. This led to a reinterpretation of the language employed to describe mediocrity as more aptly describe complacency. The initial search of the literature provided context to query mediocrity in the research questions and the interview themes. The content of the interviews led me to consider complacency as a superior expression of the state to which the organization was perceived to revert when change was not sustained. Subsequent searches of the literature sought context to frame complacency. Between the interview content and the literature, I was influenced to perceive mediocrity and complacency differently: 'mediocre' being redefined as the benign, middle state between lackluster and exceptional; and, complacency being central to the problem, with much of the literature-provided parameters to explain mediocrity superiorly providing context for complacency. From the literature, both of these phenomena are presented as works framing theory and practice, separately.

2.6.5 Literature framing the study

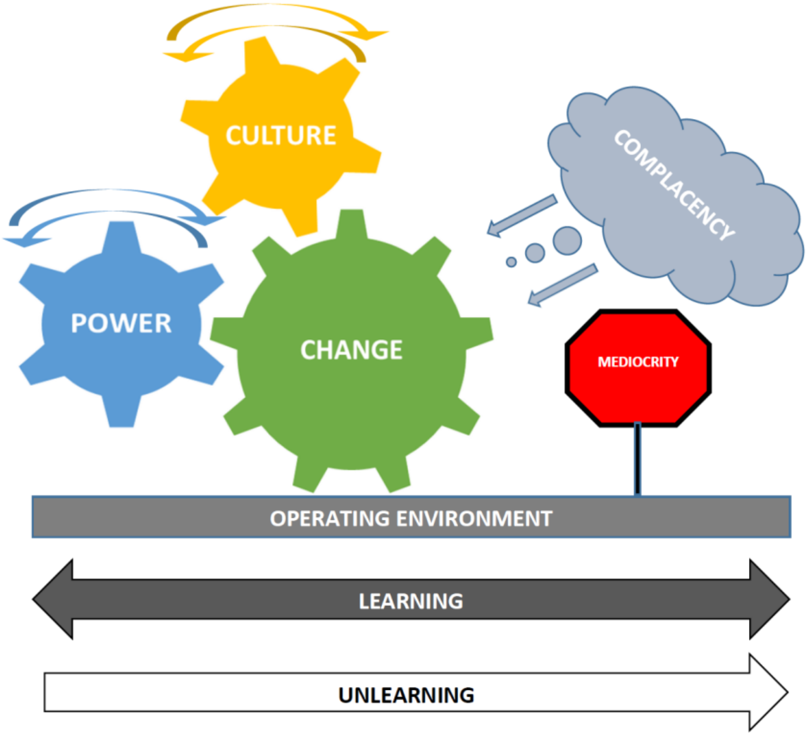
All consultations of the literature provided framing for the study. This occurred initially to frame the research questions and interview themes, but continued throughout the study as my emergent understanding of the problem deepened. From the literature, the following questions emerged as relevant to the thesis:

- How do cultural dimension of the study location influence the manifestation of change,
- If unlearning is a valid psychosocial phenomenon, how does it relate to learning,
- Can learning be interpreted in the same context as learning, following a framework of individual, group and organizational layers,
- How ought one consider mediocrity, as a force to be expected or eradicated; how do mediocrity and complacency relate, and
- What are the implications on power in the context of change?

Examining change in the company throughout the study, and seeking answer to the above questions, this thesis will produce a significant and substantial contribution to managerial practice in the context of enacting and sustaining change.

Analysis and synthesis of the literature led me to derive a conceptual model for change, integrating the major themes of the literature review and the thesis in general, and as depicted in the following graphic.

Conceptual Change Model


CULTURE
COMPLACENCY
POWER
CHANGE
MEDIOCRITY
OPERATING ENVIRONMENT
LEARNING
UNLEARNING

Engaging the model to summarize, change traverses the operating environment; it can be continuous or episodic. Power and culture can perpetuate change; power and culture can also inhibit change. Complacency exists in the organizational atmosphere and nearly always manifests as an antagonist to thwart change. Mediocrity serves as impediment to change potential and range. Learning and unlearning occur continuously; while learning can perpetuate and inhibit change, unlearning most often facilitates change enactment.

3.0 Chapter Three – Research Methodology and Method

This chapter addresses the research methodology and methods to interrogate the problem. How the literature informed the research methodology and the various methods considered for the study are addressed. The research method is presented and described in detail. The chapter concludes with a schema to depict the action research process employed in this study.

3.1 Research Methodology

Before leaping into my research method and process, I present my approach to ensure rigor to the research methodology. I consulted relative works on qualitative inquiry to form a framework to investigate the research questions. The literature informed framing the methodology in the complexity of the organization. I go on to consider the paradigm of the company where the research was conducted and explore research archetypes.

3.1.1 Literature informing the research methodology and process

The research process was heavily influenced by the literature. The literature informs the framework of the research process to ensure validity. Works cited in this section of the thesis reveal those influences deemed most helpful to conceptualize the research process. The process desired to investigate change process in the organization, doing so with qualitative methods of discovery. Barley (1990) and Garcia and Gluesing (2013) validate qualitative research on the realm of change. Further, Brander et al (2012) affirm a linkage between ethnography and cultural change. Although change is examined from a context that is not strictly constrained to organizational culture, culture and change can be inseparable phenomena in practice. Hasu (2005) advocates the use of ethnography to detect the invisibility of change phenomena. Jacobsen (2014) validates the use of interviews to collect qualitative data. A framework for the construction of the inquiry was guided by Sangasubana (2011), especially as it relates to the engagement of participants for data collection and interpretation and the sensitivities surrounding the reactivity of the researcher's presence to alter data coding and meaning. This research is pregnant with conditionality that is germane to insider action research. Coghland and Brannick (2014) provide that insider action research is complicated with 'role duality, pre-understanding, and organizational politics'. These complications remain at the forefront throughout the investigation. From Ybema et al (2010), both realist ethnography – observing behavior – and constructivist ethnography – socially constructed meaning from the researcher and participants – are employed in this study. Coghlan and Brannick's (2014) insider action researcher complexities are especially prevalent in the constructivist form of ethnography in this case study, namely the role duality and pre-understanding of all participants, including me.

Thinking on change visits related organizational phenomena, including leadership, strategy, power and outcomes. Change is an element of a company's realized strategy. Views on strategy within this research align to an epistemology that reflects the influence of Porter (1979) and Mintzberg (1978). The patterns that form between an organization and its messy environment reveal the actual strategy of the organization (Mintzberg, 1978) and that strategy formation is an emergent process, providing the essential linkage to change. Anderson (2009) links ethnography to the formation of strategy in practice. On leadership, Tucker (2004) reveals both positive and negative aspects of transformational leadership, proposing that transformational leaders create organizational newness that evades transactional leaders. The formal leadership hierarchy of the organization, especially the rungs that exist beneath its senior-most leader is dominated by transactional leaders. There is a logic to this, in that the purpose of the company requires the optimization and replication of recurring events. Yet this may explain the force that influences the organization to resist sustained change and revert to known paradigms of doing. The chief executive may be the sole leader in the organization that expresses and exercises a transformational leadership psyche. Despite the attractiveness of Raelin's (2003) concept of 'leaderful' organization, this may be unrealistic, given the need for the organization to be resolutely transactional to thrive as a valuable concern. There is a recognition that change is rooted in learning. Learning is essential for an organization to create or obtain new organizational capability (Roth et al, 2007). There also is need to learn about change – and to learn about second and third order considerations, such as learning, thinking, and knowing – beyond the mastery of doing.

3.1.2 Research paradigm and domain

I employ this section to address the research paradigm in which this study is conducted. It is here where I reveal the key assumptions in the research approach. Where applicable, the challenges anticipated and encountered to devise the research methodology are also discussed.

Assumption one – Interpretive research is superior to positivist research to dissect a pernicious and elusive organizational problem

Considering this broadly, I could have pursued either a positivist or interpretivist approach to the study. I elect to engage an interpretive paradigm to interrogate the problem. Although I respect positivist research to discover absolute truths, I question if positivism is the superior approach to deeply examine complex organizational phenomena. My belief is that as finite aspects of organizational phenomena are uncovered, a focused positivist investigation can be engaged to isolate succinct truth, but that interpretivist methods are superior to tackle a broad phenomenon, such as an organization's ability to sustain change. I believe it would be difficult to isolate finite aspects of the problem presumptively, before first examining the problem broadly with interpretivist methodology. Further, as this study is conducted as action research, the scope remains contained toward resolution of the problem, yet the problem resolution itself is intentionally malleable and adaptive in a live organizational environment.

Assumption two – Participants can be critically reflective about their practice

Study participants are asked to be reflective to generate primary data for the study. Initially, I was uncertain the extent to which participants could be critically reflective on their company. By the nature of their work, participants act reflexively to a great extent, although there is a reflective aspect to their company activities. Emergency medical workers constantly interpret various stimuli as they engage each case. The profession is built upon a common refrain of 'look, listen, and feel' to describe how a clinician examines each patient's illness or injury. This is so commonplace as to be engrained in each clinician's iterative approach. Reaction of stimuli that is looked at, listened to, and felt informs treatment plans and activities in a highly reflexive manner. Followed by another refrain of 'start the breathing, stop the bleeding, protect the wound, and treat for shock' the complexity of a clinician intervening in thousands of traumatic injury presentations and disease manifestations is reduced to simple mantra. Having performed this role myself in my distant past, I know that emergency medical workers do not engage in extensive reflection upon completion of a single case. Such clinicians are with their patients for very brief periods, home in on succinct problems to be solved, intervene, and then quickly move on to a new case with unrelated, unique complexity. There isn't much time nor inclination for reflection on past cases.

Given this, I found reason to question how reflective actors in such a company would be. I approach the study with an interpretivist epistemology and a social constructivist ontology. The participants may be positivist; my knowing of their paradigm as a clinician – having lived it myself – certainly suggests deep positivism in the pedagogical framework of their training and practice suggests reinforced positivist paradigms for actors in frontline clinician roles. The life of an emergency medicine clinician is an iterative series of 'what's the problem?' and 'did that work?' followed by 'problem solved…' or escalation of a tiered protocol of intensifying interventions. This proved to be an unnecessary concern. The participants demonstrated deep and contemplative reflectivity of their individual practice and their perspectives of the organization generally and succinctly on matters of interest. The fact that we were to socially construct an interpretive truth about the organization was for some an intriguing intellectual curiosity, but they needn't approach participation with personal inquiry to be beneficial contributors.

The realization of the reflectivity of the participants affirms my early decision to conduct this research as qualitative inquiry. Having completed it, I can plainly attest that neither I nor anyone else could have presumptively determined what knowing, that is extracted from this study, to interrogate from a positivist paradigm of organizational factors. The data obtained from interpretive inquiry and the socially constructed knowing derived from that data is richer, more informative, and superiorly instructive to resolve the organizational problem than if I were to employ quantitative analysis of broadly sourced survey data or if I were to have conducted auto-ethnography from first-person perspective alone.

Assumption three – Known conditions of insider action research will figure prominently in the study

Coghlan and Brannick's (2014) role duality, pre-understanding, and organizational politics figure predominantly in the research paradigm. Part of my rationale for the reservations I harbored above resides in my recognition that the participants all express essentially no experience with research, yet feature a wide range of company experience, with most volunteer participants being at the upper end of company tenure, given the company's maturity. I view participant pre-understanding, including my own, as paradoxically beneficial and detrimental to the study, consistent to the Coghlan and Brannick (2014) framework for insider action research. Lastly, as findings from the study emerged, organizational politics – namely formal and informal power – proved essential to the research paradigm.

Assumption four – The determination of the research methodology needs to address the needs of the study, to include the aims and objectives.

The foregoing subsection 3.1.3 and its content address this assumption.

3.1.2.1 Research domain

The research domain encapsulates all phenomena involved in the enactment and sustenance of change. It considers the inter-relation of learning, unlearning and power for continuous and episodic change to be sustained.

3.1.3 Methodologies considered for this study

3.1.3.1 Research archetypes

Having identified the organizational problem to interrogate and solve for this thesis, I approached the selection of a research framework that obtained two broad objectives: to form the study so as to conduct rigorous research that would inform practice locally and generally, and to solve a compelling business problem in the extant organization where the research was to be conducted. Providing equal billing to each of these objectives proved to be influential in my selection of a research archetype to serve as a framework for the study. My first assessment was to select from quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research archetypes. Although my professional career trajectory has ridden a strongly quantitative arc, my doctoral studies have contributed to my realization that I have a dominant interpretive and constructivist epistemology. Especially as it relates to the organizational sciences, I question strictly positivist ontology that derives a singular truth of an influential factor of practice. This thinking led me distantly from quantitative methodology and proximal to qualitative research. I struggled with mixed methodology, determining at the outset that if the study encountered an especially vexatious question, I would consider quantitative methodology to augment the qualitative inquiry. I believe, as the forgoing discussion will tease, that there is a form mixed methodology in this study, albeit a mix of qualitative methods of inquiry. Creswell (2013) was informative to discern the relative merits and perceived fit of various frameworks for qualitative inquiry. Additionally, Coghlan and Brannick's (2014) 'general empirical method' and 'developmental action inquiry' informed the study, although I did not strictly adhere to either framework, owing to my admonishment to be sensitive to exerting position power of me, researcher and company chief executive, and the company members who voluntarily participated in the study. My early thinking about power led me to approach the study with a loose framework, providing the participants a degree of felt power to mitigate the structural power imbalance. In retrospect, these early research decisions proved to be prescient; participants were not strictly constrained in their approach to participate in the study. Coghlan's (2011) reference to action research as a 'family of practices for insider research supported my decision to allow the research framework to be emergent from and adaptive to the activity of the study. As chief executive of the company where the research was to be conducted, I enjoyed exemplary access (Barratt et al, 2014); an intriguing avenue for my role duality to be leveraged in benefit of the study, without being domineering. As company chief executive, I possess near absolute formal power, including the power to delegate formal power to company actors as I alone see fit.

The literature provides further guidance to select a framework, consistent to my epistemology. Eisenhardt (1989) argues that new theory is derived, or existing theory is advanced from the convergence of related constructs for knowing, joining my desire for an emergent framework and objective to obtain generalized organizational knowing. Conceptually, knowing arising from action (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014) further supports my approach to the study. In the context of solving the problem, I perceive an adaptive model for inquiry to reflect the work from Vogus and Sutcliffe (2007) on high reliability organizations, specifically the concept of 'fragility of an unchanged model', lending credence to adaptation. I believe the company to be a high reliability organization; for it to remain so – and for this study to support that intent – I interpret adaptability and adaptive change to be essential for the company to remain highly reliable to its stakeholders. Again, a successful strategy for the company is predicated on the notion that the company must enact change.

Through reflection on qualitative research archetypes to serve as a framework for this study, I eventually settled on three methods to consider: the case study, appreciative inquiry, and ethnography. Here, I relate the factors of my decision-making thinking and the rationale to arrive at my selection. I present these archetypes largely in the order in which they were considered; for each, I discuss the archetype in the context of the scaffolding of the framework and my perceived fit for it to be suitable to the two main objectives of the study.

3.1.3.2 Case study

Throughout my doctoral studies, I have perceived the organization, how it came to be and how it has evolved through complexity to its current state, to be a rich environment to conduct a case study. As a framework to develop and expound theory, the case study is a legitimate scientific method (Easterby-Smith et al, 2012). Case study research is capable of building theory (Christensen and Carlile, 2009). The research paradigm supports case study methodology for this study; single-case methodology suits a constructionist perspective – consistent to my stated epistemology – while the multiple-case platform aligns to a positivist point of view. Interrogating multiple organizations is beyond the scope of this study and I am not seeking positivist findings. As this study does not contemplate examination of multiple organizations, the case study framework begins to establish rationale. I interpret the single-case paradigm to be fertile ground to elaborate theory (Ketokivi and Choi, 2014). Stepping outside the organization to validate findings, the context is stripped (Christensen and Carlile, 2009), with internal validation building precision of findings (Belanger, 2012). Yet the single-case method is a known weakness of case study to generalize knowing (Rule et al, 2011). My supportive rationale for the case study method perhaps reveals my confirmation bias (Lebaron, 2010). In addition to the extraordinary access to the company as above, I have been with the company since its inception – in fact, I contributed to its conception. It's natural for me to perceive that the company is a rich platform to conduct case study research.

As I consider fitness of case study for all research objectives, case study is attractive in its ability to inform practice and build theory (Cooper and Morgan, 2009; and Evans, 2010); important to problem resolution. Notwithstanding my stated potential for bias, I perceive the organizational environment to be richly open and a unique context (Barratt et al, 2011) to influence policy (Rule et al, 2011). Yet my concern is that although the data collection can be constructed in a collaborative paradigm, I perceive case study to be condemned to limited points of view in terms of interpreting meaning. In my view, there is no doubt an intriguing narrative can be extracted from the evolutionary change of the organization – I dare say there may be no other person so uniquely positioned to extract this narrative, given my principal role in the company's evolution – yet I question if my narrative of the organization will provide insightful problem solving. I concede a strong argument can be made that if a durable solution to sustaining change can germinate from my case study of the organization, such resolution would have already emerged from my leadership.

3.1.3.3 Appreciative inquiry

According to Barratt et al (2010) 'inductive inquiry' can extrapolate context-specific phenomena to create or test theory. Appreciative inquiry is distinguished from non-specialized case study through a process to emphasize aspects of practice that are perceived to be effective (Bushe, 2010). The use of appreciative inquiry as a research archetype for the study would require an alteration of the central question – rather than asking what interferes with the organization to sustain change in some instances, the study would ask, when the organization sustains change, what characteristics distinguish change that is sustained? As an actor that tends to be optimistic about the company, this sentiment appeals to my ideal for company. From this vantage, the study obtains democratic participation in both the collection and interpretation of data to obtain meaning, appealing to a tenet of the study that I perceive to be essential to mitigating the power imbalance between the researcher and the participants. Additionally, the appreciative inquiry framework can be an effective mechanism to democratic social change (Greenwood and Levin, 2007 and Coghlan, 2011).

In terms of fitness to achieve study objectives, my interpretation of appreciative inquiry is mixed. According to Bushe (2010) appreciative inquiry emphasizes not which is 'broken', but which 'works'; the organization evolves to its most asked questions. As above, the emphasis on optimism is attractive and could be inspirational for participants of the study and the broad organizational population. However, I question if 'our ability to sustain change' is among the most asked questions in the company. Appreciative inquiry leverages insider knowing; during data collection, all participants were able to recount numerous instances of change they interpreted to be positive and to be sustained. It is possible for the study to inventory all change, isolate that which is sustained, and perhaps identify emergent themes. However, there is a tendency for change that has not sustained to standout; I concede that this may be bias in my interpretation, as the study is based upon instances of reversion from change to original paradigms. Additionally, I question the effectiveness of appreciative inquiry to explore 'what we don't know that we don't know' in the context of the company. My rationale is that is there is related phenomena that is valuable to the study and problem resolution, reflecting solely from positive experience in the company may fail to detect influential phenomena.

3.1.3.4 Ethnography

I interpret the ethnography research archetype to be an additional, specialized variation of the case study method. Further, my paradigm for ethnography includes the framework for appreciative inquiry, yet with the freedom to not be constrained to accentuate the positive, and open to the entirety of practice knowing – that which is perceived as effective, but also that which carries negative connotation – and greater capacity to explore what is unknown in practice. Ybema (2010) offers further framing for ethnographic research, providing realist ethnography – observed behavior, and constructivist ethnography – socially constructed understanding obtained by researcher and participants. To construct a framework for this ethnographic research, the literature informs. Anderson (2009) advocates to observe and listen in natural environment in non-directed way; he further relates ethnography to strategy formation. Informing the company's strategy relates directly to resolving the organizational problem, given the correlation between sustaining change and fulfilling the company's strategic imperative. This study will engage first and second person inquiry to obtain shared knowing of the company; Barden (1991 in Coghlan and Brannick, 2014) adds importantly to avoid debate with change resistors. For data validation, Sangasubana (2011) advises for the inquiry circle back to participants, with sensitivity to bias and reactivity – the researcher's presence alters data meaning, especially at coding.

I perceive the ethnographic case study research archetype to provide exceptional fitness to obtain the study objectives. As insiders, the researcher and the participants have deep understanding of the organization, although there will be relevant pre-understanding, role duality, and exposure to the political dimensions of the organization carried into the study as a result. Using straightforward interview techniques, there is no concern that findings will be unsuitable to the organizational problem (Greenwood and Leving, 2007); the study will determine the generalizable scope of study findings. As interpretive inquiry, ethnography is perceived to be an effective research archetype to wade through the messiness of organizational complexity (Lincoln and Lynham, 2011), yet participants bring to the study a sense of order for organizational complexity. With freedom to interrogate organizational effectiveness and circumstance that has been vexatious to the company, I interpret ethnographic case study to be the most effective framework to identify what is unknown. Perhaps the greatest concern of engaging the ethnographic framework is the expected burden of time to gather and interpret data, retain context to solve the organizational problem, and context-strip to inform practice generally.

3.1.3.5 Determined archetype for research framework

After extensive reflection, I decided to engage the case study research archetype to provide the framework for the study informed and borrowing from frameworks for appreciative inquiry and ethnography. I perceive case study to be the most reliable framework to achieve all objectives of the study. Additionally, I believe case study affords the most democratic framework, engaging participants to collect and interpret data to obtain findings. Further, my perception is that aspects of ethnography and appreciative inquiry mitigate the power imbalance between researcher and participants, allowing for richness of participant contribution. Of concern are the expected conflicts of insider action research – role duality, pre-understanding, and exposure to organizational political dimensions – and the heavy burden of time to complete the study. I have less concern that the study will be unable to inform problem resolution, although I concede that this aspect of study outcome is likely influenced by confirmation and attribution bias.

The case study method will effectively deliver the aims and objective of the study. To address 'paradigm reversion', the case study will examine the phenomenon in the company and dig into the forces and causes in the organization for this phenomenon to occur. Through action research, the case study will inform the company to develop a new approach to change enactment methods to obtain sustenance. The case study will produce actionable knowledge about change in the organization. Most importantly, the case study will examine the organization holistically to deliver on the objective of the study and resolve the organizational problem.

Additionally, the case study method is an apt platform to interrogate the research questions. While the research questions are not frontally posed to research participants, the case study permits the examination of these questions through observation, interviews, and focus groups.

3.2 Research method and process

3.2.1 Rationale for research method

The research methodology was the topic of extensive reflection as I contemplated this study and developed an intellectual framework for my inquiry. Simultaneously, I considered the research paradigm and my acute familiarity with the organizational setting where the research was to be conducted. The problem being investigated exists at the cultural layer of the organization where actors form understanding. Centrally, this inquiry considers change, further pointing to a cultural phenomenon in practice and indicating suitability for qualitative inquiry (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014). I initially considered appreciative inquiry, case study, ethnography, and auto-ethnography, settling on case study research. As a member of the company, I live its existence, providing necessary emersion for ethnographic case study (Dressler, 2016). The resolution of the organizational problem associated with the research manifests as change in culture; ethnography is an effective platform to understand cultural change (Brander et al, 2012 and Garcia and Gluesing, 2013), accentuating why aspects of ethnography ought to be included. The framework used by Hasu (2005) provides contextual similarity and validation of my chosen method.

I wrestled with methodology. Perhaps with prejudice, I have long envisioned using a mixed methods approach to conduct action research in my organization and with my organizational problem. However, I had difficulty maintaining an intellectual commitment to a quantitative aspect to my research. My initial position was that an inclusion of a quantitative element would be strictly a result of pandering to reviewer expectation, not in the interest of improving the rigor and/or validity of my research. I further concluded that quantitative methods that are dis-genuine dilute or weaken the research. My concern was that a quantitative finding may reject or marginalize findings that may be distant to the mean, yet these findings actually represent the very insights that will lead to a new displayed paradigm of understanding about change. I propose that if quantitative analysis seeks the central tendency of meaning, then the research is paradoxically moved distally away from a new organizational change paradigm.

Having settled upon a case study, my next framework consideration addressed purely qualitative inquiry, how quantitative inquiry fit into the research methodology – if at all, and mixed methodology. I struggled with this aspect of my research framework. I do not have strong positivist leanings, yet I continued to perceive the need for quantitative inquiry to augment qualitative methods. Schensul and LeCompt (2012) provide a practical framework for mixed methodology and Dressler (2016) provides quantitative methods to support qualitative research. However, I continued to question the authenticity of my evolving framework. I harboured beliefs that I was including quantitative inquiry in my mixed methods, not to serve the legitimacy of the research, but to satisfy some perceived need for quantitative rigor. I eventually resolved my intellectual conflict that satisfies my interests of authenticity, legitimacy, and rigor. The literature provided insight. There is no requirement for quantitative inquiry in ethnographic case study research (Fetterman, 2009 and Jacobsen, 2014). I sought collaboration with fellow thesis research colleagues on the purely qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methodology dilemma, many also confronting the same question. Being at the same stage of our doctoral studies, with similarity in practice, and facing the same research framework problem, critical action learning led us individually and collectively to a well-reasoned conclusion. Though collaborative interaction, we were successful to apply the thinking from published qualitative works and a shared, socially constructed conclusion that mixed methodology need not include quantitative inquiry.

As I further developed my framework to investigate this problem, I considered the use of appreciative inquiry from action research (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014). Srithika and Bhattacharyya (2009) provide a descriptive investigation to explore unlearning through appreciative inquiry, yet I found their work to lack rigor and provenance. Consequently, although I believe appreciative inquiry has utility to derive cascading understanding, I also considered an ethnographical approach in the company to fill a gap in knowledge about learning, unlearning, and sustained change, and to solve my organizational problem. I needed to confront the ethical implications of asking actors in the organization who have lived through change that did not purposefully integrate unlearning, to reflect on new change initiatives where unlearning earns equal prominence to learning. Reflecting on the study, this concern proved to be irrelevant.

I have consulted the literature for a framework for research modelling and for context. Brandon et al (2012) and Kajamaa (2012) report from a healthcare context, yet after reflection I think seeking a similar organizational context does not increase relevance or practicality. Brandon et al (2012), Garcia and Gluesing (2013), and Jacobsen (2014) provide supportive arguments for the use of an ethnographic case study approach to organizational change research. This validates a prior assumption I carried into the formation of my research methodology, allowing me to conclude that a case study is a good fit framework. Barley (1990) provides further support for ethnographic case study. Seeking greater precision, the literature has informed that interviews – as opposed to observation solely – provide the richest case study data collection (Brandon et al, 2012 and Jacobsen, 2014). Jacobsen (2014) proposes that interviews actually facilitate 'context-stripping' of qualitative data; Hasu (2005) proposes that interviews bridge the insider-outsider disconnect, allow 'patterns of doing and interacting' to emerge, and neutralize asymmetric power relations – concerns that I recognized for research in my company. Gacia and Gluesing (2013) propose that qualitative data collection is necessary to test theory and validate constructs for understanding of organizational change.

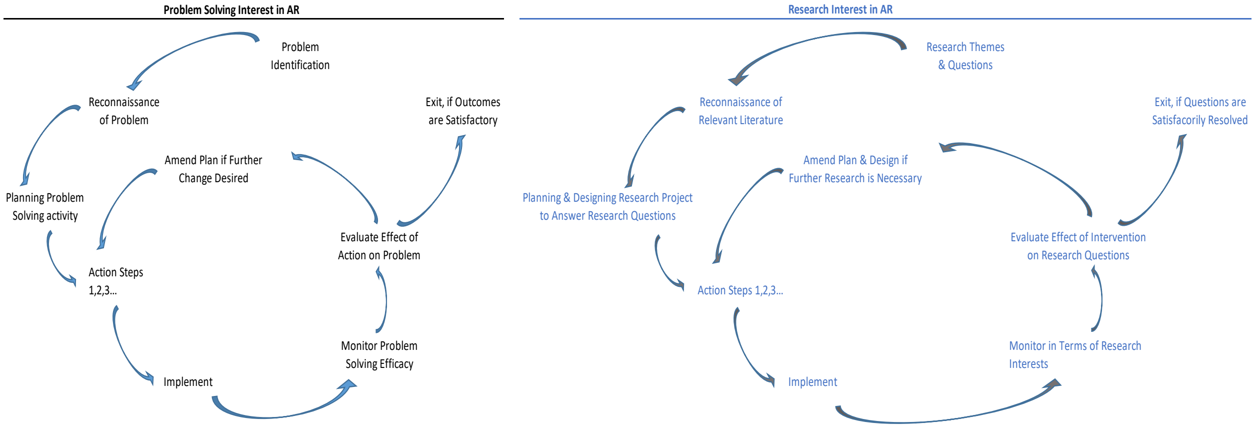
Perhaps most importantly, I formed an intellectual position that qualitative inquiry is essential to gaining a deep understanding to solve the organizational problem (Garcia and Gluesing, 2013). It is difficult for me to move away from quantitative research methods; I consider myself a 'quantitative person' with a predilection toward quantitative methods, yet I conclude that including quantitative methods for their own sake does not enrichen the research.

With framework and methodology determined, my attention shifted to practical strategies for data collection. My methodology employed observation and unstructured and semi-structured interviews to gather data. Jacobsen (2014) argues strongly and effectively for interviews as an ethnographic case study data collection construct. However, the implications of insider action research – role duality, pre-understanding, and organizational politics (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014) factor prominently in my research. As the chief executive of the company, it is impossible for me to separate my formal role from my identity in the company. Brass and Burkhardt's (1993) work on power inside organizations is especially informative. My plan was to use interview both for primary data collection and to validate observations (Jacobsen, 2014). First, I perceive collaborative data collection to increase the democratic nature of executing the research. Further, including study participants in the interpretation of the data improves the depth of the interpretation and add richness of broad thought and elucidation (Sangasubana, 2011). Lastly, if only I interpret the data, I am exerting power that I don't intend and objectively seek to avoid.

3.2.2 Action Research in Practice

Looking forward to the production of study findings, I consider how the study will produce results. As this study is action research in practice, it is required that the study forms qualitative actionable knowledge, with linkages between theory and practice. To inform the research method and process to adhere to this requirement, I find the McKay and Marshall (2001) 'Two Action Research Cycles' model to depict the action research method of this thesis.

Schema to Reveal the Two Action Research Cycles to Produce Study Findings (derived from McKay and Marshall, 2001)


Problem Solving Interest in AR
Problem Identification
Reconnaissance of Problem
Exit, if Outcomes are Satisfactory
Amend Plan if Further Change Desired
Planning Problem Solving activity
Evaluate Effect of Action on Problem
Action Steps 1,2,3...
Monitor Problem Solving Efficacy
Implement
Research Interest in AR
Research Themes & Questions
Reconnaissance of Relevant Literature
Exit, if Questions are Satisfacorily Resolved
Amend Plan & Design if Further Research is Necessary
Planning & Designing Research Project to Answer Research Questions
Evaluate Effect of Intervention on Research Questions
Action Steps 1,2,3...
Monitor in Terms of Research Interests
Implement

Using the McKay amd Marshall (2001) construct for the 'dual impaeratives of action research', the discussion of study findings reveals how the problem solving and research interest imperatives evolve simultaneously from the study and under constant intersection.

From action research, the findings will inform the problem resolution in the problem solving interest loop depicted above, and will also answer the research questions in the research interest loop. These loops continuously intersect throughout the study. Theory informs practice in the problem solving interest; action research in practice informs theory in the research interest.

The methodology for action research in this study closely follows the Mertler (2009) 'cyclical and iterative action research processes.' With iterative loops of 'planning, acting, developing and reflecting' phases repeated several times throughout the study, action research examines the prospectively posed research questions in the research interest cycle, while simultaneously zeroing in on resolution to the problem in the problem solving interest cycle. This approach allows the study to answer the presumptive research questions, but will also ensure interrogation of unanticipated interests that emerge from the process of discovery.

3.2.2.1 Access and sources of information

It is here where my role duality of researcher and chief executive of the subject company is beneficial. So long as anonymity is maintained, the shareholders of the company have extended me free reign to conduct the study in the company. Information for the study exists in my pre-understanding of the inner working of the company, rendering the problem to be well-defined. The sources of information are the participants' perceptions of the organization and my observations as an actor in the organization.

3.2.3 Selection of Research Participants

The criteria to select participants in the research was rather narrow. The literature provided soundness to this approach (Fetterman, 2009; Jacobsen, 2014; and Schensul and LeCompte, 2012). First, participants had to be current members of the company. Intentionally, I did not qualify prospective participants in any other organizational attribute, such as length of service or role played in the company. Secondly, participants needed to unquestionably volunteer to be interviewed or to participate in a focus group. My role duality, as primary researcher and chief executive of the company alerted me to be cognizant about the underlying power imbalance between me and voluntary participants. Power was a cognizant sensitivity as I approached this study; power also emerged as a significant theme in the findings from the study, albeit not as I initially predicted. To an extent, an extenuating outcome of this study reveals how felt power can be an apt antidote for a low formal power position to an actor in practice (Bombari et al, 2017). In the memoranda I generated to recruit voluntary participants, I was explicitly clear that participation was unrelated to other organizational circumstance, that participants could modulate how they participated – or whether or not to participate at all, and could join or leave the study on their own volition. I didn't realize it at the outset, but I subsequently recognized that these admonishments to recruit participants elevated their felt power, and to an extent, leveled the power imbalance that is derived from our organizational roles.

With this said, I am certain that I did not fully neutralize the power imbalance. My connectivity to the study participants is via our organizational roles and I strongly doubt that any actor in the company fully divorces his/her identity of me as chief executive, irrespective of any admonishments I may offer. Through various avenues that are based on a participant's organizational role, I as chief executive occupy the uppermost position in their upline of the formal organizational hierarchy. I interpreted this to be more profound when meeting with a small, focus group of participants, as opposed to a one on one interview setting. In a group setting, participants would routinely preface their thoughts with (paraphrasing), "Not to be disrespectful…" or, "This is just what I think…" before going to offer critical interpretation of an aspect of practice. Whereas, in an individual interview, the discourse was more dialogic and there didn't appear a perceived need to proactively admonish their insights. I believe this is as much a portrayal offered to their peers to assert that the participant is not 'stepping out of their crease' as it is deference to the power imbalance. I find this observation to underscore the criticality of the organization as a social community to its members.

One of the participants alluded to an aspect of his decision to participate that I found intriguing. This person has benefited from an internal program that afforded him the opportunity to substantially upgrade his professional credentials. To a great extent, my organizational persona is attributed as being the driving force to bring this opportunity to fruition. As our interview session had come to its end, and as I thanked him for his participation, he remarked, "You provided me my educational opportunity, I felt I should contribute to yours." I find this to be an interesting expression of reciprocation and possibly the source of trust to mitigate power imbalance. In retrospect, I reflected that this participant had been especially expressive during his interview, providing grounded criticality. Expanding my expression, I note that other actors in the organization that benefited from this program comprise overrepresentation in the actors that opted to participate, based upon their quorum as actors in the organization. These participants were among the most alliterative during the interview sessions. I find this minor emergent phenomenon in the study underscores the essentiality of reciprocity to form trust, and for trust to be an influential litigator of power.

In the end, eighteen actors in the organization volunteered to participate in the study. Two persons were late-comers, recruited by other participants to volunteer when data collection moved from semi-structured interviews to focus groups.

3.2.4 Interview questioning themes

The primary data collection methods employed in this study are semi-structured interviews and small, focus groups to validate initial interpretation of the data and to further explore emergent queries. Additionally, as an active member of the organization, my interpretation of the data is heavily influenced by the casual observations that I continuously make of the organization.

In this section of the thesis, I present the themes of the interview questions. These themes are framed to interrogate the research questions, but are loosely constructed to allow unplanned findings to emerge, encourage dialogic discourse in the interview, and to encourage critical reflection from research participants. As I contemplated the formation of the interview questions, I considered the essence of what was being asked of the research questions and forming interview questions that would facilitate dialogic data collection. The form of the question reflects my perception of how the themes are expressed in the organization. The themes are heavily influenced by the Akgun et al (2007) framework for unlearning via attachment/detachment to the beliefs, routines and artefacts of practice and the work of van der Heiden et al (2012) and Walton (1985) on sustaining change.

To a great extent, I endeared to follow the same order of inquiry with each interview participant. I suspected that discourse from an early interview subject influenced participant thinking and reflection on subsequent interview topics. My concern is that if I randomly juggled the order of each interview, I would overtly influence the data. Reactivity is a known weakness of ethnography (Sangasubana (2011). Additionally, although my communiques to recruit volunteer participants indicated that the study was to investigate change in the organization, I did not reveal these themes until the participant arrived for his/her interview.

The themes, in order of exploration are:

- Reflection on an organizational change that the interviewee perceives to have been well executed.
- Reflection on forms of change resistance techniques in the organization.
- Perceived organizational attachment to beliefs, routines, and artefacts of practice.
- Perceived individual attachment to beliefs, routines, and artefacts of practice.
- Reflection on the tendency for the organization to revert to paradigms of organizational function that are intended to be displaced through change.

As I conducted the interviews and facilitated the focus group sessions, I was cognizant to be an engaged and active listener, providing non-verbal cues to encourage a participant to fully express their thought freely, and to allow participants the time they needed to ventilate their point of view. At the conclusion of each interview, I provided each participant to raise a theme that they perceived to be related to the inquiry, but was omitted from my framework. For the most part, when invited to expand the framework of inquiry, participants elected to either query a specific company issue, request my mid- and long-term horizon of the organization, or ask for my rationale for pursuing my doctoral studies. The latter is most intriguing to me. The former queries seem to reinforce the power divide and either a return to formal organizational identities (if we ever departed them), while I interpret the latter to suggest the preceding discourse to have added a new dimension to our interaction.

3.2.5 Researcher observation

Concurrent to conducting the interviews, my observations as researcher and organization member formed part of the data collected in this study (Ybema et al, 2010). At the end of each interview, I composed a reflective piece in my own voice, commenting on the interview and chronicling my observation of the company and the interview questioning themes that were stimulated by the interview. Additionally, while engaging normal company activities while the data collection phase of the research was underway, I found myself nearly constantly reflecting on the company characteristics that were being investigated in the study. To capture my reflection, I kept a journal of my thought from and about the study. This journal also recorded my periodic conversations with my thesis supervisor.

3.2.6 Reflection on practice change

The rationale for this theme is provide context for the interview and to ease the participant into reflecting on change in the organization. The underlying logic is that when asked about past change for which the participant has favorable interpretation, the participant will consciously recognize the essentiality of change to improve one's circumstance. Further, anticipating that some participants may be reluctant to initially be critical of the organization, owing to the power imbalance between us arising from my role duality, I intentionally opened the interaction to frontally allow the participant to steer their narrative. To a person, the participants associated positive change to a company circumstance from which they derived direct personal benefit. In retrospect, perhaps I could have worded this inquiry as, "How has change benefited you?" This would be presumptive, but it would be interesting to engage an actor in the company that didn't interpret any direct benefit from prior change, although I doubt such actors would have volunteered to participate in the study.

3.2.7 Reflection on change resistance

Participants were first asked if they interpreted change resistance to occur in the company; all did. I intentionally asked them to reflect in the second or third person context, as opposed to first person. I interpreted that by frontally querying first person change resistance, this would be overtly and excessively confrontational, resulting in the participant being defensive rather than reflective. To encourage reflection, I commonly asked participants to engage in storytelling about a specific company event to alliterate their interpretation of change resistance. I interpreted sincere and critical reflection on resistance exercised by others. The purpose of this theme was to interrogate if the phenomenon I perceive to be reversion to a dated paradigm is in fact a form of change resistance, potentially resistance to change, but also resistance to learning and unlearning.

3.2.8 Organizational and individual attachment to beliefs, routines and artefacts

To interrogate this theme, I devised a simple activity to be replicated with each participant. I presented three small, square slips of paper with the words 'beliefs', 'routines', and 'artefacts' printed on each one. After verifying a shared meaning of each term – I interpret there to be immediate shared meaning of 'beliefs' and 'routines', whereas 'artefact' required me to provide that this is in reference to any non-human input of the organization, such as vehicles, equipment, systems, and forms – I first asked each participant to order each term from the least to most difficult for the organizational generally to detach. After a discourse on the participant's rationale for their order, I then asked the participant to re-order the terms in the same fashion, but based upon their individual difficulty to detach. I found this to be an effective means to lead the participants to be deeply contemplative as I observed each to consider the order with focused concentration. The participants did not know that their personal order would be requested after they provided an order for the organization generally and none indicated or expressed that they had been manipulated with my technique. In a demonstrated offer of reciprocity, I volunteered my personal order and my interpretation of the order for the organization generally. This method proved effective to investigate a core interest of the study and produced sincere criticality.

3.2.9 Reversion from change to mediocrity

To interrogate this theme, I first offered my interpretation of the phenomenon of the organization undergoing continuous or episodic change, then seemingly reverting to a dated paradigm that is characterized by mediocrity. After sharing my perspective, I first inquired if the participant interpreted the same or a similar phenomenon – all did – and then their perception of the cause of such reversion. I was comfortable leading the questioning at this point, as the previous four themes had established what I perceived to be equanimity in the discourse. Had I perceived that the discourse wasn't genuinely dialogic at this point, I was prepared to approach the theme differently and with less leading questioning on my part; these preparations proved to be unnecessary.

3.2.10 Engagement of focus groups

Participants self-organized into four focus groups, each session had a duration of 90 minutes to two hours. I purposefully did not allocate specific participants into specific groups, rather I offered sessions at various times of one week, allowing participants to select a time of convenience or to propose a time to be offered to other participants. The only rule I established was that a session required at least four participants to be confirmed. The focus groups attracted two additional study volunteers; I believe these participants were recruited by their work shift partners (personnel in the company are assigned into permanent pairings to form a crew). The new participants completed the ethics documentation and joined a group. The new participants were not oriented to the material covered in the interview data collection; I do not believe this impaired their participation as the subject matter of the discourse would be relatable to any organization member.

To facilitate the discourse, I prepared a discussion primer on the themes I determined to require further interrogation and/or validation. This was provided to the participants as they arrived to each session. Save one exception, where a junior manager was dominating the discourse at the expense of others' contribution and I had to steer the discussion to obtain dialogic engagement, I provided light facilitation in each session. Each session visited all items on my primer document and each group delved into matters of collective interest, lightly touching others.

The focus groups were engaged to further interrogate the data, validate any initial understanding drawn from my initial interpretation of the data, and affirm my coding and classification of the meaning of the data into my initial themes. I was prepared to capture any new primary data that emerged from the focus group sessions, although that proved to be unnecessary. Checks with each focus group to determine if vital information relevant to the thrust of the inquiry was omitted from the initial data collection were met with confirmation that the data thoroughly depicted their understanding of the problem.

3.3 Self assumption and bias

To this point in my discussion, my emphasis of Coghlan and Brannick (2014) role duality has featured on power, notably the power disparity between the researcher and the participants. While this is an area worthy of close attention, it is not the sole concern arising from role duality. Coupled with Coghlan and Brannick (2014) pre-understanding, from insider action research, there is likelihood that all actors from the company involved in the research approach the study with a degree of bias. I first consider the bias that I perceive to be pertinent to the participants. It may well be that the status quo bias (Eidelman and Crandall, 2012) is at the very root of the problem being studied. In the company generally, I perceive a significant preference for maintenance of the status quo and resistance to change that is rooted in status quo bias. More than one participant revealed that compliance to change in procedures is feigned, only to revert to the status quo when not being observed or monitored. Another participant offered that preference of the status quo is an aspect of national culture. This observation is consistent with the Hofstede (2016) cultural parameter of high uncertainty avoidance for the company location. Although raised in differing contexts and interpretations, more than one participant related status quo bias to low self-esteem; in this interpretation, the fear of failing at new/changed methodology reinforces actor affinity to the status quo. Consistently from most all participants is an assertion that the national culture of the company location includes an immediate reaction to any change that opposes change, solely for the sake of being in opposition. I don't find this view of national culture to fit cleanly into Hofstede (2016) cultural dimensions, but my observation of the national culture – broadly, and not confined to this study – tends to agree.

Approaching the study, I harboured concern that the participants might be swayed by a recency bias (Lebaron, 2010). This proved to be unfounded. While some participants related near-term historical company events in their reflection on change, I perceive this to be more related to the circumstance being a good fit to the subject being discussed, as other participants expressed events distant in the organizational history.

3.3.1 Ethical considerations

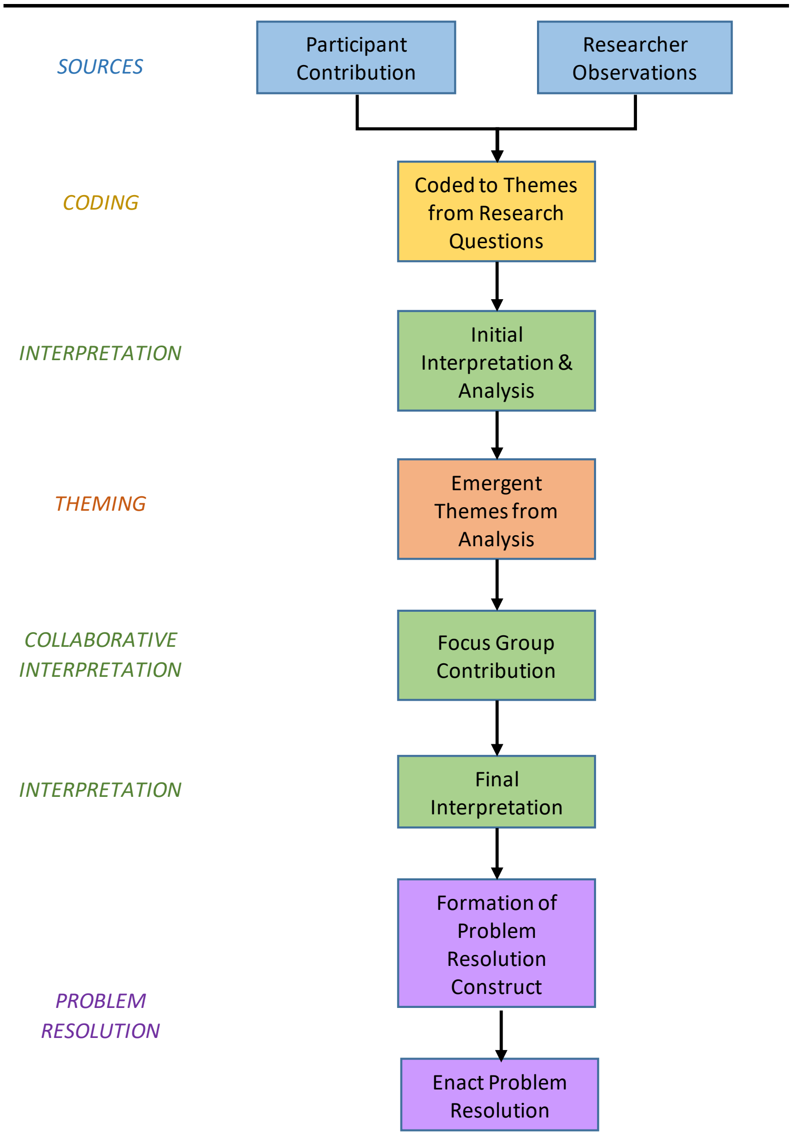
I start this discussion with a review of my role as practitioner-researcher. I perceive role duality to figure prominently for me, largely because my role as the primary researcher structurally mimics my organizational role as chief executive – in each role, I am positioned at the apex of the pyramid of actors and participants. Like all persons involved in this study, I enter it with a heavy burden of pre-understanding; not only am I at the apex of the organizational hierarchy, I designed the organization from its inception and have had a hand in every organizational process and policy. As it relates to organizational politics, I perceive this to be a potential area of blindness for me. As chief executive, the politics of the organization tend to swing in my favor. Other participants are likely to have a different read on politics.

I turn to my own bias from my role duality and pre-understanding of the organization. I do not perceive my thoughts to be burdened by neither status quo nor recency. If anything, I am perhaps the strongest force in the company to alter the status quo. When I was engaged by the shareholders to start this JV nearly 14 years ago, I did so with the understanding that I had a mandate to enact change. This gives me a predilection for continuous change and may be egocentrism on my part. Perhaps in the same manner that the national culture of the organization tends to oppose change, I tend to encounter phenomena in the organization with a belief that it needs to be changed, although I do not perceive that we routinely change for change's sake. I find it necessary to concede that an inherent personal bias resides in my need to complete this thesis in pursuit of my doctoral ambitions, and to solve a vexatious organizational problem. While I do not ultimately conclude that the former to be a predilection of the latter, it is a valid concern. Additionally, while I entered the study with recognition that all learning is not always 'good', I also entered with a stated prejudice that in the main, learning offers more organizational benefits than detriments. Reflecting at the end of the study, I perceive to have obtained greater appreciation for the organizational detrimental outcomes from learning. I had no bias on unlearning, leading me to conclude that my perspective on unlearning to be substantially informed from the study.

3.4 Schema for the action research process

At this juncture of the thesis, nestled between the description of the research methodology and presentation of data analysis, I find it useful to provide a graphical depiction of the research process to orient the reviewer to the action research activity sequence employed to conduct the study, interpret findings, and resolve the organizational problem. The Action Research Activity Sequence Model depicts the process to generate and analyze data into information. Data collection occurs in the section of the model referenced as 'sources'. The 'coding', 'interpretation', and 'theming' sections establish initial organization and first interpretation of the data, followed by deeper interpretation obtained via collaboration, and concluding with information to inform problem solving and enactment of the problem resolution.

Action Research Activity Sequence Model


SOURCES
Participant Contribution
Researcher Observations
CODING
Coded to Themes from Research Questions
INTERPRETATION
Initial Interpretation & Analysis
THEMING
Emergent Themes from Analysis
COLLABORATIVE INTERPRETATION
Focus Group Contribution
INTERPRETATION
Final Interpretation
PROBLEM RESOLUTION
Formation of Problem Resolution Construct
Enact Problem Resolution

4.0 Chapter Four – Data Analysis and Interpretation

Following the schema presented immediately above, this chapter of the thesis covers the process to analyze and interpret the study data. The chapter presents the primary data and describes the process to code the data, leading to the iterative process to interpret the data and arrive at the study findings. The chapter concludes with a presentation and discussion of the study findings. The goal of this chapter is to reveal the analytical process from which study findings are obtained.

Readers are reminded of the initial research questions:

1: How do actors in practice relate learning to unlearning?

2a: Is unlearning a precursor to learning a new paradigm?

2b: Is unlearning a co-cursor to learning a new paradigm?

3a: How are beliefs, routines and artefacts attached to a paradigm of understanding of organizational function?

3b: To change understanding of organizational function, do actors unlearn any or all beliefs, routines, or artefacts?

3c: To change understanding of organizational function, do actors learn any or all beliefs, routines, or artefacts?

3d: How do actors in practice form a new paradigm of understanding of organizational function?

4a: How do actors in practice relate learning to sustained change?

4b: How do actors in practice relate unlearning to sustained change?

5a: How do actors perceive mediocrity?

5b: Do perceptions of internal (self) mediocrity and external (group, organization) mediocrity differ?

Additionally, questions considering how power implicates learning, unlearning, and change, and how power – especially informal power – dictates what is learned and unlearned, and how these phenomena contribute to the sustenance of change emerged from the study.

4.1 Primary Data

As depicted in the Action Research Activity Sequence Model presented at the end of the previous chapter, labelled as 'sources', the data from the study exists in two forms: contributions from study participants, captured in the quotations provided immediately below; and, researcher observations captured during the study. For the purpose of presentation, the primary data is organized in categories drawn from the interview questions; added to this are the categories of 'power' and 'reversion', representing the essence of the study. The data is anonymized and aggregated, blending data from each participant under each initial category.

Table 1 – Primary Data

Belief	"There is a desire for more meritocracy."
	"The nationalism aspects of *advanced program* are poorly recognized."

	"Beliefs are hardest to change."
	"Belief is the foundation of how people look at things; influenced by how a person was raised."
	"New introductions challenges beliefs."
	"My routines are dictated by my beliefs. I live this kind of life and do things a certain way."
	"Being involved [in workplace activities] helps to create a sense of belonging."
	"Being an EMT is a calling."
	"Hindsight provides rationale to change beliefs."
	"Your standard will always suit you."
	"If there is a change in routines, beliefs will follow."
	"I feel my morals and organization values will not clash."
	"There is need for clear opportunity to obtain change in attitudes and behavior."
	"Belief is the only thing you have. Discipline to routines does not benefit someone in the Third World; commitment to routine leads to success in the First World."
	"People have beliefs since inception of organization *name*."
	"I am open to new beliefs, but I am firm in my beliefs."
	"Some people are so entrenched in their belief they cannot let go."
	"Change at *company name* does not impact my core beliefs."
	"People are emotionally attached to what they believe, even though that may not be factual."
	"For many people, they are just here to collect a salary; they just need to adjust and adapt."
	"I have a good understanding of right and wrong. My beliefs are never challenged by *company name*."
	"A belief is the product of all life experiences and influences. If I abandon a belief, I must admit I was wrong all along."
	"It's easy for me to adapt."
	"Core beliefs remain when all else is gone."

Adopted Belief	Referencing a new employee relating a problem to a labour strike that preceded the company's existence by five years, "I asked her, 'why has someone else's memory become your reality?' She couldn't answer."
	"Drinking 'bush-tea' for someone else's fever."
	"For some, their negativity toward *company name* is sourced from someone else's experience."
	"I can take my beliefs and inject them into a new employee; that employee is looking for someone to provide him beliefs."
	"People are picking up other people's history."
	"If a new employee has a strong personality, he is not influenced; if he has a weak personality, he is easily influenced."
	"There is a need to satisfy a collective cultural aspect."
	"Behaviour is not equal to belief."
	"Some people are easily persuaded."

	“Most new employees are led in the right direction; some are led astray.”
Artefact	“Acceptance of new things is based on a person’s ability.”
	“I am waiting on management to call on me to use it.”
	On a new piece of equipment that simplified a routine process, “Dumbing the job down.”
	“The artefact is the ‘chicken’; the belief is the ‘egg’.”
	“They can properly operate it, but intentionally improperly operate it to cause damage.”
	“I can function with limited resources and can function when there are changes.”
	“Routines are ties to artefacts.”
	“Some don’t care; this is manifested in poor care of equipment by some employees.”
	“Be destructive to taint the organization’s experience with change.”
	“Some employees arrive to work early to have access to old equipment. They do not want new to avoid being blamed for damage. They have adapted to preserve familiar artefacts.”
Change/Routine	“Address the problem. Don’t impose a solution; introduce the problem, not a ready-made solution.”
	“Provide advance notice of change.”
	Referencing acceptance of change, “Attitude has plenty to do with it.”
	“Just bash change to preserve the way it is.”
	It’s childlike – react to change by lashing out in another area.”
	“You need to avoid being seen as resisting change, but cause other problems. Can’t rebel against new change; will get caught.” When asked if this was effective, “Yes. Temporarily.”
	Oddly stated verbatim by two participants in separate interviews, “Practice makes permanent.”
	“It’s a ‘[national] cultural thing’ to resist change.”
	When asked if people resist change, “Yes. At initial stages. People do not like new… will watch as bad thing, then embrace… people bluff, ‘bump their gums’, ask, ‘why this happen?’ but this does not mean to invoke harm.”
	“People need to see benefit of change to embrace.”
	When asked about the tendency for people to speak negatively about change, “For majority… a cultural thing... based on background.”
	“If new equipment is designed differently and cannot be used in the old way, people adopt faster.”
	“Constantly remind people to practice the right thing.”
	“People like to stick with what they know.”
	“People ask, ‘what is the benefit; what’s in it for you?’”
	“Some people interpret all change as more work.”
	“Eventually, resistors comply, but it takes time.”
	“Routines are easiest to change because I can adapt, once I am not asked to do the wrong thing.”

	“It is part of the national culture to resist change when more effort is required.”
	Fear of, “Will I change with the organization?”
	“Some employees fear failure from being exposed to new measurement.”
	“Certain employees complain of ‘excessive workload’, but ignore that the service was ineffectual under the old regime.”
	“People require some convincing to obtain their buy-in.”
	“I view change differently. I need to see the positive.”
	“Some people resist change to their own detriment.”
	“People want to do it the way they like to do it and don’t like to be told.”
	“People want to do it the way they want to do it.”
	“People have fear of change; they think about all the unknowns and what else changes or is impacted.”
	“A common method is to join a clique and resist change collectively.”
	“Peoples’ lives are set up in routines; they are accustomed to a certain way.”

Learning/ Unlearning	In criticism of coworkers and contrasting own ideal, “People do not equate beliefs to education… easy to change belief if educated to an alternative. There is low education ambition.”
	“Need to educate everyone.”
	“*Advanced program* is motivation to learn.”
	When asked about applying familiar routines to new artefact, “Happens in initial stages… their method is to bring old way into new way. After time, use is appropriate.”
	“When people perceive accomplishment, this provides motivation… it is meaningful.”
	In the context of the advanced program training, “Need to manage the learning-curve of [foreign] instructors to local culture… local people learn with difficulty… pre-reading of assigned material is non-existent. There is a cultural emphasis on ‘passive learning’… tertiary education is different than secondary; tertiary is self-taught… students have unrealistic expectations, ‘you are supposed to teach me – make me understand’… people are not self-motivated.”
	On others’ comfort with incorrect procedures, “whose standard are your holding to?”
	“Sometimes change disrupts some persons’ comfort with a realization that they are not really performing.”
	“People are motivated to minimize work.”
	“People need to see the bad outcome to accept change, but if the bad outcome does not involve them, they will slip back.”
	On *advanced training* program, “It is dream to reality.”
	On *advanced training* program, “People thought the credential was worthless outside *company name*. They were slow to adapt.”
	“High visibility, public criticisms of *company name* have a negative effect.”
	“It takes a long time for things to take hold.”
	On a new, internal communications platform, “There is no distortion of information and messages are not influenced by the carrier’s bias.”

	“I like puzzles. I like to be challenged.”
	“Zero in on true problem and not take a blanket approach.”
	“There is a possibility of being embarrassed by ignorance. This is why some people will never ask a question inn a group.”

Complacency/ Mediocrity	“Management drops the ball… people in the field dropping the ball already.”
	“If it’s not broke, don’t fix it.”
	“We are too complacent.”
	“There are many bad habits; *department* is a source of bad habits.”
	When asked why reversion occurs, “Complacency.”
	When asked about the source of mediocrity, “Shortcomings of national pride and poor self-actualization.”
	Referencing indigenous people, “We are highly flamboyant people with low self-esteem. Pride comes from flamboyance. Pride may be diminished after poor performance, but we turn to flamboyance to restore pride.”
	“Mediocrity is doing enough to get by.”
	“Content with doing less.”
	“Lack of accountability creates space for people not to comply.”
	“At times, people pretend they do not know and get accustomed to using this as an excuse.”
	“Some are, ‘I am miserable; let me make those around me miserable so that my misery becomes normalized.”
	“When there is low compliance among staff, this indicates that supervisors are not managing outcomes to expectations.”
	“*Company name* should purge the organization of malcontents. We don’t have time for you to hold everyone else back.”
	“We could get away with performing at 15% of our potential. Our staff sees this and questions why we require them to give and perform as much as we do.”

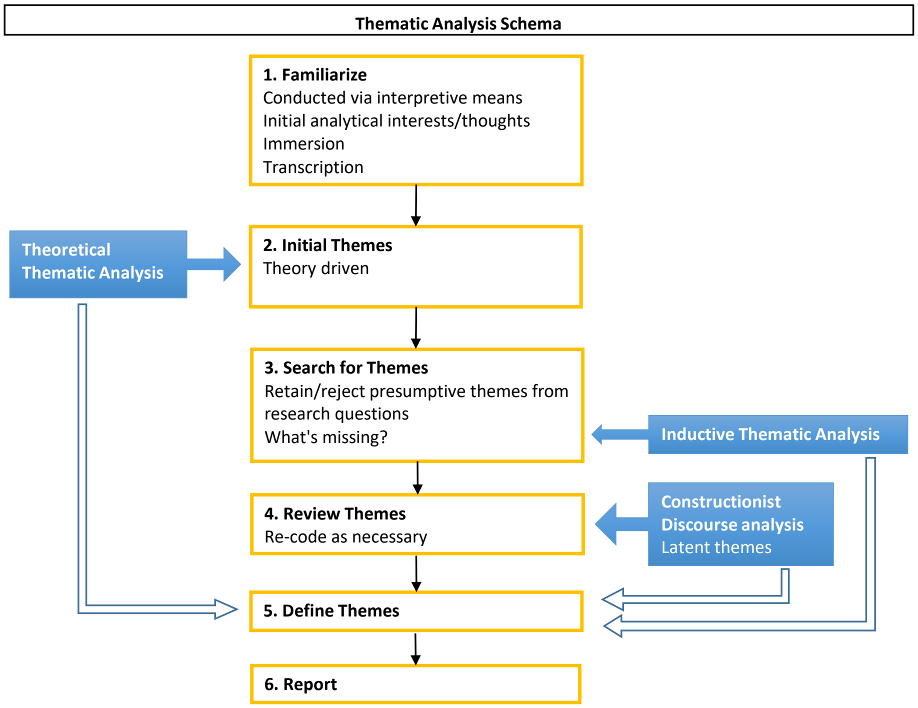
Power	On taking and accepting advice from peers, “Not all advice is good.”
	For new organization members, “Don’t listen to the negatives… there are many malcontents… some people don’t like *company name*… some have nothing good to tell you.”
	“It’s easy to join and belong at *company name* by bad-mouthing *company name*.”
	In the context of an internally-offered advanced certification program, “People who don’t put in effort, because has more tenure, received a higher raise. Penalizes people who put in extra effort… no point in studying to practice a difficult exam because low effort students will always get a second chance.”
	When asked about seeking direction on the announcement of change, “It’s easy to follow the crowd.”
	“People spread misinformation.”
	On rejecting someone’s poor advice, “She wanted to prove me wrong.”

	In context of local culture, “It is not common for people to express appreciation for each other.”
	“Enthusiastic new EMTs are impressionable.”
	On a new, internal communications platform, “Messages used to get distorted. The initial message from senior management was, ‘We need to get a handle on using sick leave for non-illness absences.’ The supervisors’ response was, ‘punish people who call in sick.’”
	“People need policing to do the right thing.”
	“Change that does not come from high enough in the organization is not taken seriously.”
	“The resistance from mid-managers is conducting from not enforcing change.”

Reversion	“Complacency is the reason for reverting to old ways.”
	“10-15% of the workforce meander back to the old method. Management does not pick up on slippage. Supervisors and management must detect slippage.”
	“Nip it in the bud.”
	“Everyone eventually settles back to the old way.”
	Predicated with a Biblical reference, “Have mercy on people who stray and come back.”
	When asked about reversion, “It’s not malicious.”
	“There is lack of accountability and balance.”
	“People stopped completing *a required process* and were not immediately held accountable.”
	“Bring your wicked ways of the old onto the new.”
	“Will change if there is no way to use the old method on the new system. Looking for easy way out.”
	“Employees will always look for a way to make job easier/more familiar.”
	In the context of preserving process, “If someone or something gets between me and my patient I get mad.”
	“For some, it’s ‘this is how I used to do things; I am here to pollute and perverse new employees.”
	“Familiarity is attractive.”
	“There will be a period of determination if a change in rules is really happening.”
	“The organization runs itself. People become accustomed to routines.”
	“People won’t slip back if they think someone is watching.”
	“We shouldn’t have to monitor and punish.”
	“Have built other routines around what is being changed, so will attempt to hold on.”

4.2 Thematic Analysis

As depicted in the following schema, a thematic analysis approach was used to code, analyze and interpret the data. Influenced by Braun and Clark (2006), the thematic analysis engaged theoretical thematic analysis to derive initial themes represented in the research questions, with inductive thematic analysis and constructionist discourse analysis to extract latent themes that were not presumptively identified in the research questions, allowing for emergent themes from the analysis.



Thematic Analysis Schema

1. Familiarize
Conducted via interpretive means
Initial analytical interests/thoughts
Immersion
Transcription
Theoretical Thematic Analysis
2. Initial Themes
Theory driven
3. Search for Themes
Retain/reject presumptive themes from research questions
What's missing?
Inductive Thematic Analysis
4. Review Themes
Re-code as necessary
Constructionist Discourse analysis
Latent themes
5. Define Themes
6. Report

Derived by author from Braun and Clark (2006)

4.2.1 Coding to Themes of Research Questions

For purpose of advancing the analysis of study data, the initial themes to present the coded research data are obtained from the themes of the research questions. This is my process to walk the data collected from the interviews, plus my journaled observations, into an initial framework from which themes interpreted from the findings eventually emerged. Obtaining initial organization from the research question framework ensures that the objectives of the study are retained. While this provides a degree of organization, when confronting an intellectual conflict of under which initial theme a finding ought to align, I did not labor to rationalize if my alignment is perfectly correct. My primary intention is to express the data in some framework; I view the precise distinction of any single data point under one initial theme or the next to be an unnecessary and unproductive distraction from the research. Precise theming and categorization will occur through interpretation of the data. Through the process of categorization of data, the importance of power emerged, prompting generation of that additional theme.

The data presented herein are a combination of participant contribution from the interviews and focus group sessions, and my independent observation of the organization as a member. Here, I endeavour to separate my interpretation of the data – be they a participant contribution or my observation – and will cover my interpretation and meaning in practice in the subsequent section of this thesis. In an effort to constrain my observations from premature interpretation, the observations that I present are prompted from my participation in the interview data collection. Undoubtedly, these observations remain influenced as an insider of the company, yet I find it improbable – if not impossible – to mentally divorce my organizational knowing from what is gathered during data collection. Throughout the data collection, I journaled my observations of the themes as I perceived the organization.

Theme – the relation between learning and unlearning

The participant interviews provide two key findings from the research. These are:

1. In the local context of where the research was conducted there is a tendency for learners to adopt a 'teach me' as opposed to 'I learn' paradigm for learning.
2. Also in the local context, there is a heavy emphasis of vicarious experience. This phenomenon pertains to the paradigm for learning, but extends to numerous dimensions of organization and social life. In the delightful creativity of West Indian soliloquy, this is perhaps best captured via the contribution of one research participant, anonymously identified as 'S, a paramedic' of, "Drinking bush tea for someone else's fever."

Addressing the former first, this phenomenon is perhaps rooted in the rote approach to formal education in the local environment and is something I have observed in practice and as an educator in my role as adjunct faculty at the graduate school of business for the prominent regional university. For many local actors, learning is a passive process that assumes an all-knowing 'instructor' commanding a 'class' of learners. Further to my observation, participants are easily coached to accept a more broadly defined paradigm of learning to consider any process to acquire knowing.

As to the second finding from participant contribution, my observations reinforce the quoted contribution of 'S, a paramedic', who provides tidy and meaningful alliteration of a pertinacious local and cultural phenomenon. In practice, I routinely observe actors arrive at knowing, seemingly bypassing learning. In this sense, the learning is a process to decipher what knowing one opts to adopt, in the absence of individual knowing or until individually derived knowing forms.

As I discern learning from unlearning, I journaled further observation during data collection. Unlearning is best considered into the accepted framework for learning – individual, group and organizational. Engaging participants during interviews, oftentimes introducing these actors to the concept of unlearning for their first time, I observed dissonance to the need to distinguish learning from unlearning. Individuals can unlearn, but unlearning occurs via involuntary forgetting; this phenomenon is unintentional. I observed that actors in practice, as represented by the contributions of the study participants, have little to no need to discern learning from unlearning. While intrigued by the notion of unlearning, there is no practical need to distinguish the phenomenon of obtaining knowing as a process to unlearn versus a process to learn. For actors in practice, learning is suffice.

Theme – serial order of unlearning as a precursor to learning

Given my observation above regarding the usefulness to distinguish learning and unlearning, I am grateful that my study had the foresight to further interrogate learning and unlearning as I do here in the two parts of question two and in subsequent research questions.

Dealing with the notion of unlearning being a precursor to learning, the study findings include a mix of participant contribution and my observation. For this theme, there are three findings.

1. Participants expressed a reluctance to surrender beliefs to form a new belief. In their perspective, expressed by many study participants, altering beliefs requires the denial of life experience to that

point. During interviews, I observed great consternation among participants at the prospect to abandon a belief in favor of a new one.

2. Combining participant contribution and my observation, the need to be motivated to learn is apparent; one must be especially motivated to alter beliefs and change the routines derived therefrom.
3. From my interaction with participants, I observed a force that is best captured in an argument that there is no such thing as intentional, individual unlearning in the context that is offered by the literature.

These findings lead me to observe that if unlearning is a distinct and separate phenomenon to learning, there is no evidence of a linear process where unlearning precedes learning.

Theme – unlearning and learning occur simultaneously

Turning to an alternative explanation, where unlearning and learning occur simultaneous, participant contributions richly inform this research question. I present the findings in the context of this theme as four findings provided by the participants, and a fifth finding from my observation. These findings indicate that beliefs may not need be suspended in order for change to occur.

1. Changed routines can lead to involuntary unlearning. In this perspective, the unlearning is formed as unintentional forgetting as past paradigms become increasingly distant.
2. Offered separately by two study participants, another West Indian colloquy emerges, "Practice makes permanence." My observation is that this expression appeared parroted, as if these participants had been exposed to the same prior influence, yet each offered an individual context of how the expression captured the essence of their thinking.
3. Old routines may be retained, redundant to new ones, as new routines are adopted.
4. When actors do not have a belief to align to change, they tend to borrow others' beliefs until an individual belief can be developed internally. If the borrowed belief is appealing, it may be adopted without a process to establish a personal belief. I observe that this finding is perhaps the most compelling evidence that learning and unlearning are relationally simultaneous.
5. I observe that individual unlearning needs to be segmented into intentional/involuntary and unintentional/involuntary.

Theme – beliefs, routines and artefacts attachment to a displayed paradigm of understanding of organizational function

This theme is heavily influenced by the framework provided by Akgun et al (2007). Significant findings of the study are captured within; this may well be considered the heart of the study.

As established above, I present findings here, separating my observation from participant contribution; the former succeeding to the latter. Participant contributions comprised the following study findings.

1. Actors in practice accept change when it conforms to a belief. Participants argued that for many, change that is consistent to belief may not be perceived as change at all.
2. Core beliefs are retained. There may be acquiescence to change, yet formative beliefs are not erased, even with change conformity.

3. Behavior is not equal to belief.
4. Actors commonly act contrary to beliefs as beliefs frequently co-exist paradoxically.
5. Organization routines are coveted due to the entanglement of practice and personal routines.
6. Actors gravitate to novel artefacts – unless these artefacts are pristine; when this condition presents, actors gravitate away, so as to avoid being accountable for damage or defacement of the artefact.
7. Adequacy of artefacts promotes satisfaction.
8. In practice, there are no sacred artefacts; however, beliefs may be sacred. I observe this may be influenced by a strong external cultural force.

My observations provide the balance of findings to this research question.

1. Understanding of neuroplasticity indicates that the brain can rewire, but ‘intentional forgetting’ runs contrary to this knowing. I routinely observe actors in practice change their mind, but I cannot recall observing any actor intentionally erasing knowing to allow new knowing to control thinking.
2. When actors in practice are directed to intentionally forget, the mere suggestion of what is to be forgotten reinforces its neural pathway in the memory center of the human brain. I fabricated a simple experiment to investigate this phenomenon. In casual conversation, I ask the other person to intentionally forget what they had for dinner the past evening. Most people admit to not entering our conversation thinking of last night’s dinner. However, when I ask them to intentionally forget this information, my inquiry forces recall that most often does not naturally recur, rewiring this memory and potentially strengthening the neural pathway for what otherwise would be forgotten, to be retained.
3. There is a commonly shared meaning of ‘routine’ and ‘artefact’; however, the depth of an interpreter’s faith influences the meaning of ‘belief’. I observed participants who proclaim a deep faith to hold all beliefs more dearly than persons who do not self-identify as being of deep faith.
4. Persons who reflect deep faith interpret belief as a foundation of their ‘moral code’; whereas, persons who interpret belief without the context of faith interpret belief as a simple truth.
5. Organization beliefs may be better described as preferences. Beliefs appear to exist in degrees.
6. Passion – a perceived positive – is a force related to the stickiness of initial organizational paradigms.

Theme – unlearning beliefs, routines, or artefacts to change understanding of organizational function

Here, and in the next theme, I further interrogate how actors derive understanding using the Akgun et al (2007) framework. Additionally, this theme and the next further explore the presence or absence of a distinction between learning and unlearning.

1. Participant reflections contributed significantly to this research question. As above, few participants entered the research with a clear recognition of unlearning, potentially limiting their ability to reflect and contribute as well as they do in other areas.
2. Association to artefacts has a dependency on ability with the artefact. I observe actors who demonstrate expertise to form a stronger attachment to a given artefact.
3. Artefacts in practice are easiest to abandon when actors did not participate in its selection.
4. In a meritocracy, adherence to and optimization of routines forms tangible reward; whereas, in a plutocratic, emerging nation, persons adhere to beliefs, as there is little perceived benefit from

exercising routines and perfecting artefacts – the reverse is also true. This contribution came from more than one thoughtful participant. As an actor not indigenous to the organization environment, it is difficult for me to relate in the first person, yet I observe this to be deeply intuitive.

5. Emotional attachment renders beliefs difficult to relinquish.

I add to these findings with my own observations.

1. The organizational hierarchy can facilitate involuntary unlearning by removing the ability to retain a routine or to replace artefacts. The observation led me to consider unlearning in the individual, group, and organizational context.
2. Using a new artefact with old methods may be a clear representation of the phenomenon being studied.

Theme – learning beliefs, routines, or artefacts to change understanding of organizational function

As above, but in the context of learning, these findings further examine the problem within the Akgun et al (2007) framework. Again, I lead with findings from participant contribution, followed by the findings from my observation.

1. People adopt beliefs to satisfy a cultural norm of collectivism; many people will surrender beliefs or act against a stated belief if group membership acceptance, in a high-collective culture, is at stake. I observe this to be the rationale for contradicting beliefs to present as a paradox.
2. Senior, informal leaders can lend beliefs to new, impressionable actors. It is here where I recognized the importance of informal power in the perpetuation of beliefs.
3. A strong, external force can overpower a belief as expressed by the routine being practiced, suggesting that all belief contradiction is not voluntary.
4. If the design of the new equipment prohibits old methodology, adoption is more immediate. This illustrates the linkage between beliefs, routines and artefacts.

Adding to this are my observations on beliefs and learning.

1. Beliefs can be changed through learning.
2. Beliefs form the stickiness of legacy regimes.

Theme - forming a new displayed paradigm of understanding of organizational function

Findings captured under this theme are central to informing the extant problem being studied. In this section, I capture findings related to change resistance in addition to those that articulate how paradigms are formed.

As per the establish pattern, I present findings provided by research participants, followed by my observations.

1. Change resistance is a passive process of emplacing barriers; there is experimentation of erecting barriers until discovery of one that is effective.
2. Collective change resistance is perceived as safer and more effective than acting as an autonomous agent.

3. Resistance is the initial response to any change; rules are invoked and hardened until the rules eventually erode resistance and compliance occurs.
4. Resistance to change may be expressed as attacks on areas of the company that are unrelated to the context of the change.
5. When actors perceive stagnancy in their organization area, while other organization areas are advancing and achieving, there is an impetus to change. I observe this to represent an interesting form of rivalry.
6. Perceived bad outcomes can lead people to accept change and adapt, but unless the bad experience is a personal account, the deleterious nature of the bad outcome is eventually diluted and reversion occurs; new understanding is limited to the first person and is vicariously experienced on a limited basis. Adopted truth exists without understanding.
7. If there is a perception that organizational requirements do not conflict with personal beliefs (values), then the actor rarely even adjudicates organizational process with the personal belief system.
8. There is a need for a heavy handed approach to enforce change adoption. Taken with finding number three immediately above, these observations counter altruism in change implementation.
9. Again, a research participant provides vivid alliteration; in this instance with respect to forming new organizational paradigms. In the words of 'V, an emergency medical technician', "The artefact is the 'chicken'; the belief is the 'egg'." In this instance, the inference is that the chicken/artefact lays the egg/belief, while in the same context, chicken/artefact understanding hatches from egg/belief.

I add to these findings with my observations.

1. In this organization, change is tainted with negative connotation.
2. Feigned ignorance is stalling technique to retain old routines and to revert from change to the original paradigm.
3. The tendency for actors to react to change with immediate resistance deprives actors the opportunity to interpret change on its merits and opportunities; change interpretation is consequently insincere.
4. Control of information is a source of power; when carriers of information are displaced with direct and unfiltered information proliferation, power and influence are reduced.
5. The creation of specialization within a group creates opportunity for expertise to emerge and form a new source of informal power.
6. The reversion observed in the context of the problem is reversion to established knowing.

Theme – relation of learning to sustained change?

This theme ensures the study fully interrogates the problem, retaining the underlying investigation into the role of learning and unlearning. I present the findings offered by research participants followed by my observations.

1. Actors avoid being observed in active resistance to change; learning may be learning to be deceptive.

2. Change resistance can be feigned; actors may actually comply, but express resistance to comply with important group norms. It is important to not allow compliance to get lost in expressions of resistance.
3. People adopt others' histories – sometimes permanently – where their experience is lacking or until the actor obtains his/her own experience in the given realm – this is a recurring theme from the participants.
4. Conveying relevance to beliefs is important to obtain change acceptance.
5. One method to reconcile conflict between beliefs and organizational requirements is to accept that an organization will have rules; the related belief is to believe that rules are a given.
6. The rationale for change is essential to its adoption in practice.
7. Learning that occurs internally promotes organizational solidarity.
8. Actors that self-select out of voluntary, formal learning opportunity risk becoming irrelevant.
9. A changed routine can be inspirational.

My observations add to these findings.

1. Power is inseparable to change.
2. Feigned compliance is more harmful than change resistance.
3. Paradigm slippage is not always malicious.
4. When beliefs are changed, there is less likelihood of paradigm reversion.
5. Perceived opportunity provides a motivation to learn.

The findings in this section are dominated by my observation, with participants providing a lone contribution.

1. Fear of failure is a cause of change resistance; fear causes learned interpretations to be retained.

In my interpretation, because the research participants don't commonly possess a paradigm for unlearning, they are not especially contributive to this aspect of the theme.

1. Formal power exertion rarely changes beliefs; however, formal power can alter routines and change artefacts, leading to organizational unlearning.
2. Organizational unlearning is obtainable via fiat, elimination of what is to be unlearned as a viable option, or changing the members of the organization.
3. If the system does not allow reversion, it does not matter if beliefs change or remain the same.
4. Actors will change if old methods cannot be forced into the new; once old methods can be exercised, actors will revert.
5. Unlearning can be obtained through replacement of actors that retain beliefs and routines that the organization desires to change.
6. Unlearning at the group layer can be readily achieved through change in group membership and/or composition of the group.

Theme – perception of mediocrity?

The study presumptively labeled the state to which the organization tended to revert after change as mediocrity. However, the study resulted in a reinterpretation of mediocrity, finding complacency as a superior, actionable description of the phenomenon. The study arrived at this general finding via contributions of the participants and my observations form the interviews.

First, the participant contributions are presented.

1. A sense of comfort can be dangerous; it breeds complacency.
2. Being intentionally destructive is thought to be a method to sully the organization's experience with change; complacency, masked as carelessness, leads to deleterious outcomes.
3. Complacency is expressed in routines.
4. Complacency allows reversion to take place.
5. Being mediocre does not always violate organizational norms.

Secondly, I provide my observations.

1. By the fifth participant interview, complacency emerged as a superior substitute for mediocrity and rationale for the phenomenon being studied.
2. Mediocrity is misinterpreted.
3. Complacency is the real problem.
4. Complacency is simple to interpret in the second- and third-person with first-order thinking.
5. Self-satisfaction is reflected in the standards actors accept of themselves.
6. Complacency is mediocrity being tolerated in a highly-performing organization.
7. An actor comfortable in his/her position will attempt to limit others' ability to elevate status and create separation, especially if the original actor is unable to keep pace with change.

Theme – distinguishing perceptions of internal (self) mediocrity and external (group, organization) mediocrity

From the preceding theme, the study evolved to reinterpret mediocrity as complacency. Consequently, the investigation evolved to consider complacency. Findings under this research question consider complacency in the first-, second- and third-person.

Participant contributions are presented first.

1. Coasting on appearances has positive attributes; although it is related to complacency, the emphasis on outward image can support change.
2. Complacency is contagious.
3. Senior employees are intimidated by new employees who perform superiorly.

My observations complete the presentation of findings.

1. Prior work to frame mediocrity is applicable to complacency.
2. Complacency is an actionable, organizational phenomenon.
3. Complacency is difficult to interpret in the first-person with first-order thinking; to interpret first-person complacency, one must engage in second- and third-order thinking.

Theme – power and the exertion of power

The study revealed findings that did not categorize into a theme derived from a research question. Many of these findings pertain to power and how power is exerted in the organization. As has been my custom, I present the participant findings first.

1. Negativity in the external culture invades the internal culture.
2. The performance-oriented reputation of the company casts a negative identity externally.

3. A common form of change resistance is to attempt to slow the transition process.
4. For change by fiat to have adhesion, it has to come from a point in the organizational hierarchy perceived to be high (enough).

My observations complete the findings from this study.

1. Failure to reinforce change among leaders is a form of change resistance.
2. Avoidance of confrontation presents as change resistance.
3. The sources of informal power can be elusive.
4. Persons who possess informal power will endear to protect its source and will resist change that undermines the source.
5. Expertise presents in organizational-beneficial and organizational-harming form.
6. Organization -introduced measures to elevate actor status can displace sources of informal power.

4.3 Initial Interpretation and Analysis

4.3.1 Strategies to interpret study data

To interpret the study data, the process engaged both realist ethnography and constructivist ethnography (Ybema et al, 2010). My rationale for approaching the interpretation both realistically and constructively is derived from the meta-objectives of this thesis project – first, as the person pursuing the Doctor in Business Administration degree, I have a moral and ethical obligation to be the researcher and to not delegate research responsibilities to participants; second, I perceive a similar ethical obligation to engage the study participants beyond the simple provision of primary data and to contribute to the interpretation and obtaining meaning from the data. Furthermore, I believe that there is a third ethical burden – resolving the organizational problem – that is best served through collaboration of the parties that deeply interrogated the problem. At times, these priorities may compete. To resolve a dilemma of individual and collective interpretation, I structured data interpretation as follows:

1. Before coding the data, I disaggregated the primary data from the research questions. This is the first of iterative steps to disaggregate the data, doing so to allow interpretation to be unbiased to the source of the data and early classification of findings into a predetermined construct.
2. As the researcher, I solely coded the primary data, categorizing each finding into a theme,
3. After coding, I individually interpreted the primary data and identified linkages to the literature; these linkages to the literature were instrumental to bridge the study findings into the problem resolution and provide rationale for the resolution,
4. From the coding, I reevaluated the emergent themes from the data for fitness, assessing if my initial themes retained legitimacy. I then drew preliminary conclusions, identified apparent paradox, and formed subsequent questions that either remain unanswered from my interpretation or emerged from my interpretation,
5. Upon forming a framework for my interpretation, I reengaged the study participants into focus groups; although I facilitated the focus group sessions, I purposefully allowed the participants to explore the study data that they interpreted to be contributory to knowing, and
6. The focus groups discussed the data, my interpretation of the findings, and interrogated my interpretation of the data.

Ultimately, the strategy to interpret the study data progressed from my individual analysis, into a framework of themes, and concluded with a socially constructed interpretation of the data into findings. This follows the Sangasubana (2011) model to reengage participants to mitigate bias that may have seeped into my coding and initial interpretation. In retrospect, it is clear to me that the objectives were achieved and that the analysis benefitted from diverse interpretation.

In the interest of thoroughness, I will address each tier of the above process in greater detail. The discussion starts with my coding.

4.3.2 First interpretation

To get to my first interpretation of the study findings, I expanded the list of findings to include a column to record its coding theme, and sorted the findings by theme. At this step, the findings were fully disaggregated from the interviewee and interview question and fully anonymized; there is no attribution of each quote to a participant. Additionally, the company remains anonymous; where the company or an individual is identified in a quote, I substitute a generic reference. The substituted text is identified in italics font. Where necessary to provide context, I have done so. In some instances, West Indian colloquy is used; this language is preserved.

4.3.3 Interpreting meaning from the data

From this, I interpreted meaning from the data. Once organized by theme, I critically reflected on the data, leading me to form my initial interpretation of the data and to obtain study results in the context of the research, problem, and practice, and framed by the dominant themes I previously derived. The results of this analysis is provided in Appendix 1. It is here where the initial inferences are obtained from the data; I would build on these inferences to extract findings from the study.

My process to obtain my initial interpretation mimicked the methodology to identify emergent themes; I conducted three iterative interpretations, separated by time. I did not identify a great deal of difference from one iterative interpretation to the next, although my sensitivity to the possibility that the exigencies of practice would impact my interpretation informed me to conduct multiple interpretations in the event something from practice influenced my thinking. After completing this analysis, I did not expect to, nor did I attain complete understanding of how the study informed the problem.

To complete the interpretation, I reflected on my interpretation, asking what questions lingered, and what queries emerged from my interpretation. I would take these queries to focus groups.

4.4 Emergent Themes from Analysis

During each interview, I kept meticulous notes of the discourse, predominantly paraphrasing the interviewee's point of view and checking for understanding; additionally, I captured what I perceived to be especially illustrative quotes, obtaining the interviewee's consent to attribute the quote with anonymity, using the first initial of their given name and organization role. After each interview, I reflected on the session, recording my observations in an electric file. Subsequently, I transcribed my interview notes, taking care to expand any abbreviation I may have employed so that after the passage of time, the participants' expression would be wholly preserved. My notes were captured in the context of the interview questions, although these questions purposefully did not query the stated research questions, rather interrogated my initial framing of the problem and the study. After completing the interviews, I consolidated all interview notes into a single electronic file, conducted anonymization, and context-stripped the finding from the interview question. In total, the study produced 108 unique findings. At this point, there was no purposeful order to the findings, although chronological order from questioning during the interview and chronological order from the first interview to the last would unintentionally remain.

The first cut of the coding considered emergent themes (Ybema et al, 2010). My approach was to read the 108 findings without interruption and record a list of emergent themes. I then allowed a passage of time, and repeated this exercise so as to reduce recency bias in my interpretation. Here, I find it interesting in my observation that as this study was conducted by an insider research, in an active organization where the phenomenon being studied remained an active force, I began to conduct second-order thinking, contemplating if the exigencies of practice influenced my interpretation and subsequently the emergent themes I identified. After three iterations of reviewing the data for emergent themes, the following categories emerged from the data:

1. Belief
    a. Adopted belief emerged as a noteworthy subset
2. Artefact
3. Routine
    a. Change emerged as being closely associated with routine
4. Learning
5. Unlearning
6. Complacency
    a. Mediocrity emerged as a secondary concern to complacency
7. Power
8. Reversion

The Akgun et al (2007) construct for unlearning via detachment of belief, routine, and artefact, which has been a dominant framework throughout the study clearly influenced my interpretation. I found it useful to employ this framework to provide order to distinguish significantly distinct energies among agents of practice in the context of learning, unlearning and change. Significant interrogation of belief emerged from the study, prompting me to include a category of 'adopted belief' as a subset of this category. As the findings distilled from the coding, the interpretation produced an understanding that it is in the category of routine that change becomes visible, perceptible, and actionable. Reiterating this point, my interpretation of mediocrity and complacency evolved throughout the study; by the time of coding, my understanding of mediocrity had evolved to consider mediocrity as an expected, median state, and complacency as an apt descriptor of the diminished state the organization regressed after not sustaining change; this thinking clearly influenced my interpretation of the findings. Power, in its full consideration and not strictly the power dynamic between me and the participants from our dual organizational roles and identities, emerged as a dominant theme. As the phenomenon of reversion to a dated paradigm of organizational function is central to the study, manifestations of reversion in study findings materialized as a major theme.

In retrospect, if this case study was conducted in a context other than a doctoral thesis, I advocate for collaborative coding to broaden the thinking of context for each study finding and to increase precision. As above, at times the meta-objectives pursued from the study compete. Ultimately, I do not think that my sole individual coding of the data impaired interpretation; rather, I believe collaborative coding improves validity and is an efficient means to place the small number of study findings that appeared ticklish to categorize, into a theme category.

4.5 Focus Group

4.5.1 Contribution of focus groups

Although tangentially related to the study, I find it relevant to reflect on the power dynamic in the focus group sessions and how it differed in interpretation to the interviews. I perceived my position power to be vibrant in the focus group and in the reaction from the participants. I believe this to be reflective of the social contract between organization members. The organizational norms seem to suggest that in a one-on-one interview, formal power can be ceded and mitigated. Whereas, organizational norms dictate how members appropriately engage the company chief executive and in a group setting, organization members will not violate what is collectively accepted as normative behavior, despite any effort or admonishment I may make to the contrary. Additionally, the role of the researcher in a focus group is familiar to me; I perceive it to mimic any other assemblage of actors in the organization to interrogate a matter. I believe this to relate to the power dynamic and norms of order in the organization.

Although juggled in order, the themes I brought to the focus groups reflect the emerging understanding of the organization. This is done mainly for my benefit to distill study findings into understanding and to inform problem resolution. Largely, I formed the focus group agenda into open questions; although some appear to be posed as 'yes/no' polarity, the discourse that was stimulated was alliterative and dialogic.

Theme 1 – Beliefs

What is more prominent? "See what I believe." Or, "Believe what I see."

Can we be frontal and tell actors, "Here is what you need to believe?"

Is there such thing as 'coasting on beliefs?'

Observed 'choosey adaptation' (discriminate adaptation). Observe others experience, then adapt when perceived safe. Is this an adjustment period to changing beliefs?

External criticisms: Do these reduce internal self-image of the organization? Does this reduce the self-image of individual actors?

It is important to know where belief-absence exists; is this where belief adoption occurs?

How important is congruence to common (collective) belief?

Does accreditation and credentialing breed complacency?

Theme 2 – Power

What are sources of informal power other than expertise? Can we intentionally disrupt these other sources (influence, access to resources…) to shift informal power to actors that are aligned with the organization's change agenda?

What are the power sources of 'senior malcontents?'

Formation of collectives to resist change: Are these collectives fluid (dependent on what is being changed; membership changes topically), dormant and reactivated as necessary in response to change (membership is constant), or permanent?

Can a negatively persuaded (counter-organization deviant) be redirected with stronger persuasion?

Theme 3 – Routines

On artefacts and routines… what receives adaptation? Adapt old routine to fit the new artefact; or, adapt the new artefact to fit the old routine?

The organization seems dysfunctional (penance of role duality); how do we get anything done?

Do rules foster complacency?

Anything involving a confrontation will be resisted, avoided, and not held accountable.

Reconcile 'feigned ignorance' (change resistance tactic) with shame from ignorance.

Theme 4 – Change

Is there a generational aspect to accepting/rejecting new/old beliefs, routines and artefacts?

Does constant reinforcement and neutral reminding facilitate change acceptance?

How can we take the 'sting' out of repetitive reinforcement? Not, "Do it or else…", but with emphasis on altering routines. Can this be done without consequence; what are alternative consequences?

Is consequence consistent?

Is there a cultural/social basis to low connection/affinity/loyalty to artefacts?

4.6 Final Interpretation

4.6.1 Final interpretation leading to study findings

Following the focus group contribution, I perceived three emergent understandings of the study, each relating to the problem being interrogated:

1. The problem was finitely defined,
2. The problem was rigorously investigated, and
3. I was highly confident that a thorough and evidence-based solution of the problem would develop.

The interpretation process also affirmed that this was genuinely a 'wicked problem' (Churchman, 1967), rich in complexity, recognizable paradox, and elusive to solution.

To complete the process to interpret the study findings, informed by the collaborative interpretation of the focus groups, I returned to my individual interpretation to achieve finality. At this point, the process compelled me to revisit the literature. The process retained the major themes of learning/unlearning, change – although there are pieces of literature that are specific to change, much of the literature devoted to other topics is in the context of change, complacency/mediocrity, and power. To this, the focus group prompted me to consult the literature on the culture of the external organization environment. Further, I was inspired to revisit the literature on my chosen research methodology to affirm that my process was sound.

The triangulation of evidence to corroborate a finding consisted of knowing emerging for multiple sources independently, evidence emerging from the study that typifies a theoretical position from established literature, and my intellectual linkage of evidence from the study to broadly accepted theory.

Data was critically analyzed to extract evidence from the study and to inform problem resolution. For the most part, the evidence supports initial expectations that learning and unlearning at the individual, group, and organizational levels both support and inhibit sustaining change. Although not initially expected, the process to transform data into evidence permitted power – especially informal power – as a significant factor to sustain change. The foregoing describes how the literature supports the evidence; the next section of the thesis reveals the evidence in the discussion of study findings.

4.6.1.1 Learning/unlearning

Because I interpret it in the context of individual learning, I address neuroplasticity in this theme. Interpretation of the findings and reflecting on the study prompted me to investigate neuroplasticity of the human brain. I endeared to constrain my investigation of this topic to that which compliments the study and my understanding, focusing on works that consider neuroplasticity in the context of an organizational paradigm. Initial framing was obtained from Dispenza (2006). McGann (2015) provides through association to learning; Merzenech (2017) to organizational learning. Alexander et al (2014) relate neuroplasticity to equity theory; Hill et al (2016) to management practice. As I began to conceptualize my own framework for learning, Nantha (2013) relates intrinsic motivation to initiate learning and change.

Upon engaging the literature on unlearning, I came to realize that reinterpretation of the works on hand, with new perspective obtained from the study, was more effective to distill my interpretation into understanding than to search for additional works. From engaging the study, my perspective on unlearning had evolved demonstrably, leading me to extract fresh perspective from the literature.

Fan (2012) provides a thorough overview of current works on unlearning, albeit perhaps at the cost of obtaining depth. Brook et al (2016) relate unlearning to my prior argument that the problem being investigated is indeed wicked, helpfully doing so in the context of critical action learning. Perhaps the most complete coverage on organizational unlearning comes from Fiol and O'Connor (2017a and 2017b) and Starbuck (2017). Reese (2017) provides a highly practical argument for unlearning, yet I find more theoretical works from Solovy (1999) on unlearning and change, and de Holan (2011) on agency to superiorly inform my interpretation of the study findings. Although he does not address unlearning directly, much of Harari's (1995) work on change is relatable to the problem and informative to interpretation.

4.6.1.2 Complacency

Reiterating for emphasis, the study has led me to reinterpret mediocrity and complacency, arguing that complacency is the organizational inaction that allows practice to revert from change to displaced paradigms. I have reinterpreted works on mediocrity (Berman and West, 2003a and 2003b), and Vasilescu

(2013) to apply established understanding of mediocrity into the context of complacency. Marren (2004) was influential to the progression of my thinking.

4.6.1.3 Power

The process to interpret the findings of the study recognizes that understanding of power is instrumental to the extraction of knowing from the inquiry and to inform practice from the study results. Reflecting on the findings, individually and in the focus groups, led me to revisit literature on power, its form, manifestation, and influence in practice. On form, Boyatzis (1971) presents power as influence and articulates types of power formed in an organization. Mechanic (1962) thoroughly covers informal power, discovered in the focus groups as an arbiter of change in the practice. Peabody (1962) covers position power, relating power to competence.

To consider the manifestation of power, the process to interpret study findings includes the formal and informal organization and how actor identities in practice emanate from these domains differently (Chisholm and Vansina, 1993). Bombari et al (2017) proposes a concept of felt power, derived from actor emotional state, to mitigate perceived power deficits in the formal organization. Brass and Burkhardt (1993) propose a concept of 'organizational betweenness' to relate how formal and informal power emerges based upon how the actor positions him/herself in the organization or is positioned in the organizational hierarchy. Palumbo (1969) argues that organizational role specificity reduces power; study findings relate specificity and expertise to the accumulation of power.

In the context of how power influences actors in practice, Tucker and Russell (2004) address transformational leadership. Although the organization engages transactional leadership principally, study findings reveal an importance of inspirational leaders in the context of change. Study findings reveal how actors in the organization are able to influence from low-power positions. Lucas and Baxter (2012) relate influence to change resistance. Allen and Pilnick (1973) address low formal power influence from the informal organization. Newell and Stone (2001) relate this phenomenon to mediocrity and the ability to influence information in the organization.

4.6.1.4 Culture

The study findings indicate the influence of the external culture on internal change in the organization. Browne (2014) provides through coverage of the culture of the external environment; Farrell (2016) addresses complacency and mediocrity specifically in the external culture. Punnet (2006) relates the external culture to the dominant management paradigm in the external environment. Providing context for the organization, Vogus and Sutcliffe (2007) cover high reliability organizations.

4.6.1.5 Complex adaptive systems (CAS)

Study findings prompted interpretation to consider the organization as a CAS, leading to the substitution of 'agent' for 'artefact' and providing a framework to interpret findings in the complex organization environment (Stacey, 2011). Schneider and Somers (2006) relate CAS environments to organizational research.

4.6.1.6 Affirming research methodology is thorough to investigate the problem

To ensure rigor, the interpretation process revisits the literature to validate soundness to the research framework and identify any insufficiencies in the research methodology. To provide structure to the literature that informs this aspect of the interpretation process, I start broadly with qualitative inquiry, and narrow my focus to action research, case study methodology and finish with framework contribution from ethnography.

Considering the framework broadly, Creswell (2013) and Easterby-Smith et al (2012) inform interpretation from qualitative research. Lincoln and Lynham (2011) link theory to interpretive inquiry. As the study progressed, the time intensity of qualitative data collection and interpretation became apparent, Yu et al (2014) provide framing to mitigate this burden. Rigg and Trehan (2008) reiterate the complexity of critical reflection from insider research.

On the process of action research, Greenwood and Levin (2007) provide further framing. To guide the organizational execution of insider action research, Coghlan (2001; 2011; Coughlan and Coghlan, 2002; Coghlan and Shani, 2005; and Coghlan and Brannick, 2014) richly inform the complexity of action research in the context of practice, aforementioned role duality, and ethics.

Case study methodology is informed broadly by Bushe (2010), Ketokivi and Choi (2014), and Christensen and Carlisle (2009). Recognizing that the interpretation of findings must inform the problem and produce generalized knowing, building theory from case study methodology is informed by Barratt et al (2011), Cooper and Morgan (2008) and Eisenhardt (1989).

4.6.1.7 Ethnography

Rounding out the process to interpret study findings, the literature lastly informs ethnography. Sangasubana (2011) provides practical guidance. Ybema et al (2010) frame the transition between interpretation of observations from realist ethnography, to socially constructivist ethnography, and back to the realist ethnography of my final iteration of interpretation. Anderson (2009) links ethnography to the formation of organization strategy.

Collectively, these works inform my final interpretation of the study findings and provide guidance to solve the problem and inform practice, generally, with rigor. From these works, I have extracted a sound framework to interrogate study findings. On reflection, I find it profound how the study findings evolved from my initial interpretation, through collaborative interpretation in the focus groups, and from my final iteration. Although the process is laborious and time-consuming, I find the richness of the interpretation to have substantially benefited from this framework. The process adds rigor, but more importantly extracts deeper knowing from the study findings, concentrated problematisation of the problem being investigated, and thoroughness to both the conceptualization of a solution to resolve the problem and to generalize the findings to inform practice. I further find it profound the harmony between theory informing practice, and practice informing theory.

The process to interpret study findings produces the final framing to extract knowing from the investigation. This framework evolved through my initial interpretation, the focus groups, and into my final interpretation. The framework has remained largely intact through these iterations, providing the scaffolding necessary to obtain order and thoroughness. The themes to frame the interpretation are:

Belief – depicting beliefs formed independently by actors in practice and those beliefs that are derived from the phenomenon to adopt the beliefs of others.

Artefact – to include the complex and simplex artefacts of practice and the relation between artefact and beliefs and routines.

Change and routine – inseparably linked, routine is understood to be the practical expression of change and the determinant of change enactment and adhesion.

Learning and unlearning – stratified at the individual, group and organizational layers of the organization.

Mediocrity and complacency – where complacency supplants mediocrity as the undesirable state to which the organization reverts and a causative factor in paradigm reversion.

Power – formal and informal manifestations of power in the formal and informal organizational domains of the organization.

Reversion – the tendency for actors to revert to displaced paradigms of organizational function.

4.7 Discussion of Study Findings

4.7.1 Interpretation of the objectives of the study

For the purpose of organization and presentation, I present the findings in blue text and follow with a discussion of each finding. I have elected to retain the Akgun et al (2007) framework of unlearning in the context of beliefs, routines and artefacts to open discussion of study findings. From there, I delve into learning and unlearning, complacency and mediocrity, and power to lead into the problem being studied: the phenomenon of actors of reverting from change to original paradigms of understanding of organizational function. It is in this section where I tie together the findings into a cohesive position on sustaining change in practice. In the next chapter, I present the resolution of the problem.

4.7.2 The Akgun et al (2007) construct of unlearning via detachment of beliefs, routines and artefacts is an effective platform to relate unlearning in an organization seeking to sustain change.

4.7.2.1 Belief

From this study, I question if the singular term ‘belief’ is expansive enough to capture the full range of meanings when ‘belief’ is used by actors in practice to describe the energy that drives their thinking. The study informs that ‘belief’ exists in vastly varied degrees. To some actors, beliefs are sacred, with morally-based, strong resistance to alteration. I found actors who self-identify an expression of deep faith to associate their beliefs as foundational to their moral code, whereas other actors, with less depth or even absence of faith, may also hold deep beliefs, associate belief to morality, but do so with greater transience. Indeed, most or all actors possess core beliefs that they are reluctant surrender in the absence of new rationale.

I find the study to reveal the strength to which emotional attachment renders beliefs exceedingly difficult to relinquish resides in the phenomenon that (doesn’t) occur when change does not affront individual nor group value systems. In such occurrences, the change doesn’t challenge the value system and may not be interpreted as change at all, rather a nuance in practice. More so, when change aligns to beliefs – especially in the circumstance where the established status quo caused dissonance to beliefs – change is embraced. Contrasting the phenomenon just described, with change that presents as challenge to the value system, it is the emotional attachment to belief that change is attempting to break that causes dissonance. Yet not all beliefs have deep roots in moral foundations. For all actors, some beliefs exist in the shallow paradigms of knowing. Many actors don’t interpret such as ‘belief’, rather preference. Although the study revealed preferences are derived from belief, it also revealed that we don’t routinely negotiate our belief system when considering our preferences – especially in practice. We expect our organizations to have constructs and frameworks for conduct. Actors behave in some ways because their beliefs dictate their behavior, yet also in ways that are contrary to belief, but are required for organizational survival. For this reason, we cannot always derive belief from displayed behavior. In this circumstance it remains to be belief that is driving behavior, but one belief – the need to be accepted in a collective – is stronger and overrides a belief that might otherwise dictate contrary behavior (Beer et al, 2008). For this reason, beliefs needn’t always be suspended or altered for change to occur.

This study revealed a specific category of belief that I interpret to warrant particular focus. While I do not find this to be unique to the organization environment, I interpret this phenomenon to be prevalent in the organization and influential to the adaptation to and sustenance of change. For the most part, actors derive beliefs from within their psyche. However, for some actors and some instances, the beliefs of others are taken as one’s own. I find this to manifest in two dimensions. In the first, the actor encounters a circumstance for which s/he has no belief or nominal paradoxical conflict between two shallow beliefs. To fill a perceived void in the actor's belief system, the actor adopts the prominent belief of other actors in the organization or the belief of another actor to whom s/he has bestowed significant informal power.

Secondly, actors may adopt the experience of others and form a belief from that experience as if it were lived. I view this as 'vicarious experience' yet I find it profound how quickly and deeply actors weave vicarious experience into their consciousness and even articulate histories that they do not actually hold. I believe that new understanding exists in the first person, leading me to question the veracity of true vicarious experience. Further, I find it important to note that in some instances – in the case of the organization environment, high collectivism (Hofstede, 2016) – the adoption of belief and/or experience is done to obtain group acceptance and inclusion. In my interpretation, this means that the belief of collective acceptance outweighs other belief that one might otherwise find instrumental in an actor's moral framework.

I believe beliefs are adjacent to knowing. Beliefs exist at the intersection of our ontology and epistemology – beliefs are not simply what we know, but how and why we know it. Beliefs – or a singular belief – represent our paradigm of understanding of the organization. To lead actors in practice to a new paradigm of understanding, we must either form this paradigm to represent a superior existence of held belief, activate a belief that superiorly impacts knowing, or lead actors to modify their belief or adopt a new one.

4.7.2.2 Artefact

The involvement of artefact into the ability to sustain change did not feature prominently in this study. Study participants report a low-affinity to artefacts in the local culture of the organization setting (Farrell, 2016). As an actor in practice, I have observed this to be true in a number of manifestations. Unlike beliefs, and more closely in similarity to routines, there is a common, shared meaning of 'artefact' – with the caveat that 'artefact' has to be first explained as any non-human object of practice; the terminology is not germane to the organization setting – among study participants. There are no 'sacred' artefacts identified by study participants, although I observe that expertise can lead to attachment to 'legacy' artefacts and that attempting to retain 'old' methodology with new artefacts perhaps captures the essence of the problem. It is with a degree of irony that a context that depicts the problem vividly, coincidentally has such low perceived importance to study participants so as to render it an ineffective context to interrogate the problem.

From the study, it became apparent to me that change in artefact – especially material change to artefact – presents a rich opportunity to initiate and sustain change in p. From a practical point of view, material changes in artefact are infrequent. If the organization is to incur the burden – financial or otherwise – of implementing new artefacts, it ought to consider what in the organization that exists in the orbit of such artefact is desirous of change. New artefacts can render dated beliefs and routines impracticable to continue. A changed artefact is, among other elements, change by fiat and a rare opportunity for organizational unlearning.

It is from my reflection on artefacts that I consider the term 'agent' in the context of Complex Adaptive Systems Theory (CAS) (Stacey, 2011) to be a superior approach to examine how the elements of an organizational system interact to sustain change. I believe the organization is a CAS – it is indeed adaptive, its elements are complexly integrated and inter-related, and emergent order quickly forms from chaotic events. Actors in the organization express a preference to be governed by simple rules, and when confronted with rule-complexity for multifaceted organizational interests routinely reduce complexity to simplicity. Using CAS to understand the organization allows for the analysis to consider how the human and non-human elements interact to form a system, giving ‘artefact’ meaning beyond its strict physical characteristics.

4.7.2.3 Change/Routines

The final frame of the Akgun et al (2007) construct considers the role of routines to unlearn. When I reflect of routines, my understanding leads to a recognition that routines represent the practicality of change. While we can consider and discuss beliefs, beliefs cannot be observed and we cannot be certain of the originality, veracity, nor evolution of another actor’s belief. From above, the study informs that belief can be irrelevant to change. It is the new routine that we seek to influence via change. Beliefs may or may not be changed and it may or may not matter if beliefs are changed. As to artefacts, I conclude that it is the routine expressed via the artefact that matters in the context of change. Further to what matters in practice, routines can represent as methodology, how order emerges, behaviors, protocols, rule conformity, norms, and group function – the aspect of organization that we seek to change and change we seek to sustain. It matters not if beliefs are changed (or not), nor if a new artefact invokes change, what matters is the change we seek.

The study reveals changed routines that are relevant to unlearning. In this organization, change is tainted with negative connotation. Study participants universally admit that the initial reaction to change is negative among most actors – even when such actors immediately recognize the benefits of change. Yes, when actors perceive change to be relevant to their beliefs there is greater likelihood of change acceptance, yet actors have plurality to their thinking. With negative connotation in the air, change that outwardly appears belief-congruent will prompt actors to search for negative connotation in another dimension of practice. Reckoning this phenomenon, it is instructive to consider change (routine) resistance. While change resistance presents in multivariate form, the essence of resistance is the erection of barriers to change. Aspects of the organization matter; in this organization, there is no social penalty for being ignorant. Ignorance is a useful method to enact passive resistance to change. Deviant actors may weakly feign ignorance to resist change, knowing that the method is effective, and the fact that other actors know the ignorance may not be genuine, elevate the status of the actor as a crafty resister. In fact, I interpret feigned compliance to be more detrimental to the company than outward change resistance, as I perceive this creates a predictable reversion to dated paradigms at some future time when it is perceived to be safe to revert. Actors may also feign resistance to obtain group acceptance and inclusion. For this reason, it is essential to observe change (or not) to routines, and less so the expressions associated thereof, to determine if change has been enacted.

Irrespective of form, the process of change resistance is frequently careful experimentation to determine what form of resistance is effective. Resisting as a member of a collective is perceived to be more secure than acting as a vivid, lone resister. Actors may feign resistance or compliance, experiment with resistance techniques, and/or direct their resistance to a tangentially related organizational area as a stalling technique to re-order beliefs, rationalize new beliefs, or search for a belief to be adopted, as essential precursor for change adoption. In the interest of sustaining change, I view it to be worthy to allow these processes to percolate, knowing that rarely will change present as belief-congruent to the vast majority of actors in the organization. In my view, such pattern is preferable to immediate change accordance that has not altered beliefs and is unlikely to be sustained.

The organization isn’t entirely change resistant. There are aspects of change derived from the study that carry a positive connotation and deserve attention herein. For some actors, a changed routine is inspirational. I find it interesting that such inspiration need not always arise from belief-congruent change in routine. For personal and professional growth, actors reflect change that has inspired them to question beliefs and alter routines that have become rituals. Additionally, changes to routines can lead actors to alter and reject long-held beliefs, enabling them to pursue tangential change. In the organization, perceived stagnancy in one's organizational area, amidst perceived progress in other organizational areas triggers healthy rivalry to stimulate related and unrelated change.

I close this topic with a discussion on the relation between artefacts and routines in the context of change. I have found artefacts to be powerful change initiators and the 'glue' for the stickiness of new paradigms of organizational function. As above, my view of this is so compelling that I admonish practitioners to critically review desired change whenever new artefacts are introduced to the organization. In a circumstance such as the extant problem of this study – sustaining change through the prevention of reversion to old paradigms of organizational function – the design of new artefact integration into organizational routines can be contemplated to prevent the continuation of methodology the organization desires to unlearn, facilitating adhesion of new methodology. The study finds that actors will change if old methodology cannot be forced onto the new artefact.

4.7.3 Considering unlearning as a sequence such that unlearning follows periods of destabilization and interruption (Reese, 2017) establishes structure to how unlearning occurs in the messiness of practice.

4.7.3.1 Intersection of learning and unlearning

If unlearning is a variation of what we know as learning, there doesn't appear to be sufficient rationale to add this complexity to the array of knowledge already established surrounding individual learning – for individuals, unlearning in this context is simply and unnecessarily synonymous with individual learning. Unlearning could be viewed as a co-cursor to learning, but learning is already well-articulated in theory and practice – there is no void being filled with unlearning. Although some learning initiates from a point of pure ignorance; however, actors – aside from newborn infants (this is an unnecessary distinction, but is made to emphasize the point) – routinely approach learning in practice with beliefs and truths within or in relation to the context of such learning. Yes, there are times when actors approach learning from complete ignorance; however, when the context is learning to change practice, it is exceedingly rare for actors to approach change with pure ignorance. Even new actors in a practice approach learning about practice with existing beliefs, routines, and understanding of artefacts. In many instances, it may be preferred to start with a 'blank canvas' upon which we desire to imprint an actor's understanding of the organization, yet this is equally unlikely to occur, as existing members of the organization have undoubtedly already formed a paradigm of understanding of practice.

4.7.4 Borrowing the Argyris and Schon (1996) framework for learning in individual, group and organizational dimensions, and applying this to the phenomenon of unlearning permits the negotiation of the discreet differences of how unlearning occurs among individuals, as compared to actors assembled into groups and organizations.

4.7.4.1 Distinguishing unlearning for individuals, groups, and organizations

Unlearning for the individual is questionable. The evidence from neuroscience suggests that the healthy human brain (free of injury and/or derangement) has not evolved to support that successful active forgetting can occur (Howard, 2014). However, unlearning can occur at the group and organizational level of learning. It may be never known if organizational beliefs genuinely exist. Can an inanimate object, such as an organization, possess a belief? It is common to speak of organizational values. Conversely, I argue that what is labeled as belief is actually the collective or consensus belief of the actors that comprise the organization. There is evidence that individual beliefs are malleable and/or contingent. This means that beliefs can change and evolve.

Routines can easily be altered at the group or organizational level. To change a routine, or enact change such that the routine being displaced is no longer a viable option; these routines are effectively 'forgotten'. I offer an example from practice. Recently, the company implemented a significant change to the timekeeping system to record staff hours worked. Previously, staff members recorded daily hours worked on a timecard; these time cards were accumulated and used to compute monthly remuneration for hourly-paid staff members. The change eliminated the written timecard and replaced it with a biometric timeclock. To record hours worked, staff members had to leave a handprint – at the appointed time and location – on the biometric reader. The underlying system records work arrival and departure, computing remuneration in much the same manner as the manual system. Immediately, staff members had to discard their known routine to record time; retaining that routine served no benefit to the actors – it would be pointless for an actor to continue to produce a written timecard as that artefact had no input into the computation of remuneration. It could be said that the old routine was forgotten in the company.

Conceptually, artefacts can be changed and unlearned to the group and organization. However, this is rarely practical – it would result in potentially material stranded investment anytime there was a desire to enact change. The key observation here appears to be that when the company is changing artefacts, it recognizes the opportunity to unlearn the routines associated with the artefacts that are being replaced. The study indicates that if actors can retain routines and modify the intended use of the new artefact, many will do so to retain their paradigm of understanding about practice. Change enactment needs to contemplate this and purposefully structure change so that old routines are not offered as viable alternatives. Change initiators should offer what new beliefs ought to be adopted – this will reach some, but not all actors, and may start a momentum toward redirecting the collective belief. Doing so lessens the burden of the organizational leaders to alter beliefs and to prevent old paradigms of understanding to survive the change.

Relating back to the problem being studied, Becker (2010) context of unlearning for new implementations and introduction of change and Tsang and Zahra (2006) unlearning to alter the status quo were uncovered by participant interpretation of practice. Although the participants did not enter the study with conception of unlearning as an organization phenomenon, when oriented to the concept, the participants did not interpret the need to discern unlearning from learning as a paradigm to explain how they perceive change to occur in the organization. This reiterates my earlier assertion that for individual actors, unlearning is not an observable and relatable phenomenon that is not already well-covered in broad understanding of learning in practice. While the participants did demonstrate comprehension of unlearning as an approach to counteract commitment to established routines (Fiol and O'Connor, 2017b) and the dominant logic of the organization status quo (Solovy, 1999), they did not embrace the related concepts for individual unlearning. The study did reveal support for the phenomenon of changes to sensemaking to enact change in practice (Srithika and Bhattacharyya, 2009), the participants did not interpret established sensemaking to be 'erased' to make way for new sensemaking, rather actors in practice learn to expound upon established knowing, notably without outward rejection of past knowing, even if new knowing proves past knowing to be false.

This study challenges how individual unlearning is explained in the literature. I find the notion of 'active forgetting' (Brook et al, 2016; Fan, 2012); and Niri et al, 2009) to be inconsistent with what is contrastingly known of neuroscience and human brain function (Senkbiel, 2016 and Howard, 2014). Although the human brain is understood to have plasticity to rewire (Senkbeil, 2016), asking the brain to intentionally forget reinforces the neural pathways that one is attempting to dispense. More accurately, because of neuroplasticity (Senkbeil, 2016) the notion of unintentional 'discarding' of learned practice (Brook et al, 2016 and Fan, 2012) is validated by the study. In my view, there is an important distinction between 'intentional forgetting' and 'unintentional discarding'. First, the former is inconsistent with current knowing of neuroscience, whereas the latter conforms to knowing of neuroplasticity. Secondly, and more importantly to practice, the study reveals that the latter is organizational activity that can be influenced to sustain change. The study finds that if unlearning exists, it manifests as a co-cursor to learning; there is no evidence that unlearning and learning are linear processes that occur predictably and sequentially (Rampersad, 2004). The study finds that 'unlearning as unintentional discarding' occurs as actors learn replacement or enhanced routines, eventually abandoning dated routines that no longer benefit practice. Some actors may forget these routines or join the company long after such routines had prominence.

4.7.5 Distinguishing mediocrity as the expected state of most actors and organizations for most actions and abilities from complacency – actors and organizations being mediocre when able to be exceptional – establishes actionable intervention by management practitioners.

4.7.5.1 Mediocrity

It is sometimes said that our thinking on a topic has come 'full circle.' For many, this is indeed a misnomer; what we actually mean is that our thinking has traveled 180 degrees, to a state opposite to our original position. In my case, in the context of mediocrity, my thinking has come full circle – albeit to a different rationale and under new logic. At the outset of my research – an examination of a perceived phenomenon of an organization that traverses evolutionary or episodic change, only to revert to the actors' original displayed paradigm of understanding of organizational function – I sensed mediocrity would factor largely into my research and its findings. At the risk of prejudicing my research outcome, I used mediocrity to describe the undesirable state to which the organization reverted. Further, at this outset, I perceived that the body of published research, adequately represented by the seminal work of Berman and West (2003a and 2003b), addressing 'managerial mediocrity' did not accurately capture the essence of a general organizational malaise I perceived in my organization and that I characterized as mediocre. As I engaged the research further, and addressed mediocrity through research participants in the data collection of my thesis, I found myself first adapting my thinking to find that the 'flavor' of mediocrity I perceived in my organization to align quite succinctly to the literature. Further interrogation of the subject, and engagement of the literature, has since led my thinking to return to its original position, yet I have formed a new logic that challenges a significant pretext upon which I perceive the body of work in the context of mediocrity to rest.

Berman and West (2003a) provide a framework for managerial mediocrity; their work provides context, such as failing to grasp 'big-picture' context intentionally, strict adherence to rules-laden governance, and 'coasting on appearances' to depict mediocrity in practice. Center (1971) speaks of a 'contagion of mediocrity' that infects many organizations. Reading these works rendered a perception that the authors were holding a mirror to my practice as I interpreted their depictions to accurately describe my organization. My thinking began to evolve to question if my perceptions of the organization weren't indeed a reflection of managerial mediocrity. Aligning mediocrity more centrally to the theme of my research – sustaining change – Kerfoot (2009) addressed organizational forces that reinforce mediocrity, again prompting striking familiarity to my own interpretation of my organization. Greve's (1999) coverage of mediocrity of a phenomenon of mediocrity being a regression to some mean, aligned to my perceptions of change slippage in my organization. Wading deeper into the theory of mediocrity, my thinking had nearly rejected my earlier rejection of managerial mediocrity being applicable to my company. Coldiron (2009), reporting from a healthcare context, spoke of a need to prevent a 'relapse' to mediocrity, approaching the essence of my research, while Harari (1995) associated mediocrity to a barrier of change. Newell and Stone (2001) describe a mediocrity that 'punishes excellence' through a 'dominant culture'; Ruark (2017) raised a 'learned helplessness.' Collectively, these works formed a framework that I found useful to construct scaffolding to depict and understand mediocrity in my company. I thought, we aren't that unique; our mediocrity is what is commonly understood to be 'managerial mediocrity' – my perceived phenomenon is adequately covered by the literature. I then discovered an enlightening piece from Marren (2004). My scaffolding weakened; my framework lost solidity.

Marren (2004) proposes that in order to have excellence, there must be mediocrity; furthermore, excellence in the practice of business management ought not be any less rare than exceptionalism in any other pursuit, be it music, sport or any human endeavor. Marren (2004) introduced a new context for mediocrity – mediocrity, as mediocre, as 'middle of the road.' Common. Ordinary. The company – its actors, managers, even me, its chief executive – is bound to be mediocre most often. It's unrealistic to reason that this company – or any other – will be exceptional at all things. Yes, we have exceptionalism, yet the company is likely to mediocre at most functions, save the rare exception. Vasilescu (2013) provides additional context, pitting mediocrity bluntly as some midpoint between 'stupidity and excellence'; again the need to have mediocrity for the exceptional sibling to have relevance. Scott (2006) daringly proposes that all healthcare in the USA is mediocre – yet as my thinking evolves, I contend that by virtue of millions of healthcare interventions across millions of caregivers and recipients, he's right. This evolution to my thinking provided a tincture to my growing unease over what the theorists provide as remedies for mediocrity. Berman and West (2003b) speak of the need to elevate 'managerial commitment', yet I perceive actors to feign commitment with common frequency. Consequences (Bermand and West, 2003b) and benchmarking (Heffes, 2010) appear shallow, if not hollow, remedies to ineffectively punish actors from acting in their natural state – mediocre on the main, exceptional on occasion and in specialty. Is it that the mediocre state to which I perceived my company to revert, is not a reversion at all? In reality, this 'mediocre' state is indeed the state where it 'ought' to be, or at least where I ought to perceive it. Still yet, I'm left feeling insufficient. As it goes, my answer lay before me in the reams of notes gathered from interviews with my research participants.

As I waded into mediocrity with my research participants, a common theme emanated from their perceptions of the company. When queried about this tendency for the company to revert to mediocrity, post-change – a perception that most, if not all participants shared without prompting from me – a single term was almost universally engaged to describe the cause of the phenomenon: complacency. Kawall (2006) provides highly useful work on this topic; offering a framework of 'over-estimation, self-satisfaction, insufficient desire to change, and inappropriate motivation to spend effort' to thoroughly distinguish complacency from other, non-exemplary paradigms. Moorcroft (2007) argues that actors' inability to predict the future prompts complacency. I find complacency to superiorly depict the characteristic of the company where my displeasure resides. My evolved thinking on mediocrity has led me to accept the company being mediocre in many aspects, yet I cannot – I should not, in agency of the company owners as its chief executive – form any safe harbor for complacency. Furthermore, returning to the literature on mediocrity, I boldly propose that the phenomenon being addressed there is not mediocrity, rather complacency. Revisiting the Berman and West (2003a) indicators on mediocrity, mainly 'intentionally rejecting the big picture, coasting on appearances, and emphasis on rules', I conclude that these factors more aptly describe complacency than mediocrity.

4.7.5.2 Complacency

As a scholar practitioner, there are two redeeming arguments for me to consider complacency as a worthwhile problem to tackle. For one, the literature and my reflection on practice leads me to conclude that mediocrity to be the most expected state of an organization and the actors that comprise the organization. Mediocrity is a necessary companion to exceptionalism in order for excellence to be recognizable in its existence. Stripped of its negative connotation, mediocrity is where I expect most actors and most organizations to be on the main, reserving exceptional for those dimensions that actors genuinely exceed. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, I find complacency to be an actionable management imperative. While we can accept mediocrity as a natural state, our agency must endear to eradicate complacency as this phenomenon potentially results in an organization portraying mediocrity where it possesses the potential to be exceptional. Here, I find it important that I caution against simply substituting complacency in place of what to this point is described as mediocrity. The actionable element of complacency is more than a subtle nuance to my point of view; agency compels management intervention in complacency.

With that said, I find that much of the work conducted to form the body of knowledge in the context of mediocrity to be applicable to my interpretation of complacency. Berman and West (2003a) characterization of mediocrity as 'purposefully ignoring the big picture', 'emphasis on rules', 'coast on appearances', and 'patterns of low exceptionalism'. Are apt descriptors of how complacency emanates in practice. I find that Heffes' (2010) proposal that benchmarking invites mediocrity, Newell and Stone's (2001) argument of standards impairing individuality, and Vasilescu's (2013) objection to a rule-intensive organization can be removed from the context of mediocrity and be applied to a framework of understanding of complacency. Kawall (2006) helpfully adds that complacency is neither apathy nor indifference, suggesting an active or intentional effort to sub-optimize organization outcomes in favor of some other agenda. Completing a framework to express the phenomenon, I add elements of Kawall's definition of complacency, 'overestimation of outcomes', 'insufficient desire to improve', and 'inappropriate motivation toward effort.' Still yet, I do not believe that complacency solely is an intended organizational routine. From my observations of practice, I interpret there to be a habitual aspect to complacency; Harari (1995) relates this to tradition, suggesting a social aspect to complacency in an organizational community. Farrell (2016) argues that the extant organizational environment is saturated with complacency.

Remaining in the context of practice, I consider how complacency forms and takes hold. Where Center (1971) reports a contagion aspect of mediocrity, I interpret the same phenomenon to be applicable to complacency. Of significant concern to me are aspects of practice that are ostensibly implemented to achieve organizational outcomes may perpetuate complacency. Best (2001) proposes that complacency inhibits progress to a laudable vision – fear of being complacent slows progress to preserve a sense of momentum. Along this path, 'lip-service' arises as a substitute to genuine progress (Ready and Conger, 2008). Introducing two phenomena, both as paradox, Best (2001) proposes the paradox of perfection – pessimism as a consequence of not achieving pure perfection – and the paradox of proliferation – progressive organizational achievement illuminants new problems as initial challenges are conquered – invite complacency that impairs an organization from achieving its true potential. Adding Smith's (2013) argument that complacency starts as a slow burn before it rages to the point of detection, and Center's (1971) contagion effect, an apparently noble practice agency environment (Berele and Means, 1932 in Clarke, 2004) seems to foster complacency. Clarke (2004) further proposes that complacency is apt to form when the organization exhibits high confidence. As I alluded to earlier, I interpret there to more than solely agency risk for complacency to form. I believe there to be a social collective aspect to the phenomenon of actors gaining the comfort and satisfaction that is ripe for complacency formation. Again, there is paradox to the phenomenon. Whereas successful teams require rigor in the selection of members devoted to a central direction (Hackman, 2009), yet to protect against consensus bias, group formation governance requires purposeful dictum to recruit new members (Lofland, 1997), and new members need to be deviant to disrupt group homogeneity (Hackman, 2009). I interpret membership in a collective to reinforce the status quo; here, I believe to be where complacency first forms.

In addition to the agency and collective risks for complacency formation referenced above, I believe there to also be a practice-centric force that encourages complacency. Potentially, this may be captured in Heffes (2010) benchmarking and Newell and Stone (2001) standards, yet I find it to be adequately prevalent to warrant devoted attention. As related elsewhere in this thesis, the organization being studied has an imperative to highly achieve in the processing of transactions. Essentially, all determinants of organizational achievement – efficiency, effectiveness, and client and stakeholder financial performance – requires deft transactional management and leadership. The company thrives when its transactions are efficient and effective; in the past, organizational optimum success was described as perfecting a generic transaction, then replicating this perfect transaction with as little variation as achievable. To obtain perfection and replication, there is heavy standardization, devotion to lofty, yet attainable targets, minimized variation, and rules and protocol laden methodology. To perpetuate this approach, the company has pursued and obtained difficult international accreditation. While these measures comprise key determinants of success, they also encourage and reinforce complacency – so long as the company is achieving its targets, conforming to controls, and maintaining external accolades, the company is deemed to be successful. Conversely, it can be said that the company is 'coasting on appearance' (Berman and West, 2003a) and portraying 'insufficient desire to improve' (Kawall, 2006); in a word – complacent.

From my interaction with study participants on their interpretation of complacency – it should be noted that many attributed the organizational drift backward to a state characterized by mediocrity – that a detectable trend became apparent. While most actors recognized complacency within the organization, none detected complacency in the first person nor with first order thinking. Participants were able to relate complacency generally at the organizational layer of interpretation, but needed to be led to second- and third-order thinking to recognize complacency in self. On reflection, I find the same to be true for me. I readily identify complacency in the company, but I need to think about my own thinking to be able to recognize where I am complacent. Engaging in third-order thinking permits me to interpret that I repress first person, first order thought on complacency from the innocuous nature of the pattern for complacency formation (Smith, 2013) – it has seeped into my individual practice by the time I give it recognition – and the tendency for complacency to reside in misplaced self-satisfaction (Kawall, 2006) – I don't adjudicate my satisfaction to be misplaced until it no longer satisfies, but in truth, I had been complacent long before this realization.

4.7.6 Recognizing that formal and informal power are leveraged to preserve the status quo directs management practitioners to alter sources and accumulation of power to facilitate the sustenance of change.

4.7.6.1 Power

As stated previously, power was presumed to be significant in this study. However, the study revealed several new dimensions of power that were not originally contemplated. As expected, the study validated the differentiation of formal and informal power in organizations (Mechanic, 1962); participants readily identified how power is distributed by the organizational hierarchy and how actors obtain power informally. The study revealed an interesting perspective on the magnitude of power. Participants considered types of power, such as positioning (Boyatzis, 1971), trust (Reed, 2001), and competence (Peabody, 1969), interpreting that exigencies of a given situation determine the relative magnitude of power, suggesting that power magnitude is fluid. Further, the study finds that power of differing types possessed by a lone actor is not necessarily cumulative. The transformational leader may be charismatic and bestowed significant position power (Tucker, 2004), yet these sources are not summative; this hypothetical actor's power is obtained via formal *or* informal dimensions, yet it is not as if s/he has doubled possessed power. The study also reiterated the power of influence – obtaining both formal and informal power – as significant in the organization. Additionally, the Brass and Burkhardt (1993) construct of power derived from 'betweenness' was found to be applicable for both formal and informal power accumulation. The study considered if the notion of 'felt power' had any impact on perceptions of power (Bombari et al; 2017), concluding that while felt power may provide solace to a low formal-power actor, it had no dictum on the actual power of this actor to influence others. Interpreting formal and informal power in the context of the formal and informal organizations of the company, the study found that although informal power could traverse the formal organization, formal power possesses virtually no currency in the informal organization. This finding is informative to the ability of the formal organization to implant belief to enact and sustain change.

From the study, an emergent finding is the prominence of informal power in the context of sustaining change. While formal power stores can enact change, and influence beliefs and routines via structural change, the study revealed the sway of informal power to regulate if change is to be sustained or if there will be reversion to dated paradigms of organizational function. Initially, it did not appear that in this company, expertise was a source of informal power – contrary to an accepted understanding (Peabody, 1962). In the organization, actors that shunned opportunity to hone expertise were perceived to possess influential informal power. Importantly, this is not found to be a phenomenon where an actor obtains specialization, and through a reduced, specialized scope the actor dilutes influence and subsequent informal power (Palumbo, 1962). Rather, these are actors who have self-selected out of opportunities to build expertise and professional competency. Such actors are vested in the original paradigms of organizational function that the company desires to change. After iterative interrogation of this phenomenon, the study discovered that these actors possessed deep expertise; they were experts in the ability to navigate the underbelly of the organization – to game the system – to preserve the dated paradigm in the interest of maintaining their felt power and tangible informal power. Their expertise – oftentimes at odds with stated organizational intent – wielded such power, the recalcitrant actors obtained trust (Reed, 2001) and followership (Tucker, 2004) to influence peers to revert from change to the dated paradigm the organization sought to alter. This aspect of the study informs two findings: the clout of informal power to provide beliefs when impressionable actors are seeking beliefs to adopt; and, the length actors will go to perpetuate beliefs and to prevent new beliefs from emerging, in the interest of retaining informal power.

4.7.6.2 Formal power

The study finds that it is within the context of formal power that the organizational hierarchy exerts change in four broad dimensions.

- First, high-power (formal) actors can enact change by fiat, altering schemes to render dated routines impractical, or replace dated artefacts with new, to obtain organizational unlearning and to stimulate learning. The study found that in some instances, organizational unlearning is instantaneous.
- Secondly, high formal-power actors can alter practice paradigms so as to neuter high informal-power actors and eliminate the sources of informal power in the organization.
- Third, high formal-power actors can change the composition of groups to obtain unlearning at the group layer of the organizational hierarchy.
- Fourth, taken to its extreme, high formal-power actors, with varying degrees of restraint, can eliminate actors from the organization altogether to obtain group and organizational unlearning with immediacy (Starbuck, 2017).

4.7.6.3 Influence of power on unlearning

I entered this study with an appreciation for and sensitivity of the role of power in change. However, my initial views of power centered on the power imbalance in my role duality as researcher and chief executive of the company and the contrasting power of study participants in their role duality as actors in the company and participants. I was purposefully careful to be minimalist in my approach to be overbearing in data collection interviews and focus groups. However, the study led me to consider power in new dimensions, providing rationale for how informal power in the company facilitates the stickiness of legacy routines that the company seeks to change and the tendency for actors to revert to dated paradigms of understanding of organizational practice after change had been enacted. Discussed in greater detail subsequently, the study finds that formal power (McGill and Slocum, 1993) seldom changes beliefs, but can alter routines and artefacts in such a manner as to lead to organizational unlearning. To some extent, a charismatic leader (Raelin, 2003) can inspire actors in practice to adopt a proposed belief. Transformational leaders can leverage built trust to motivate actors to learn and alter beliefs (Tucker, 2004). Simultaneously, informal leaders, especially those vested in preserving the status quo to retain the sources of their power, can derail organizational unlearning (Fiol and O'Connor, 2017b).

4.7.7 Learning and unlearning occur simultaneously; the study did not find a tidy, linear relationships where unlearning precedes new learning. The study found learning and unlearning to occur intentionally and unintentionally for individuals and groups/organizations. Recognition of these phenomena allows management practitioners to consider how learning and unlearning implicate the acceptance and sustenance of change.

4.7.7.1 Learning and Unlearning

I found that learning is continuous in all organizational activities; actors in practice are constantly learning – the routines of the organization, dominant and collective beliefs, and written and unwritten rules of organizational citizenship – in all organizations of all sizes and purposes. I further found this to be true, irrespective if the organization deems itself a 'learning organization', nor if actors in practice interpret their organizational being as learning. The exigencies of practice pose continuous perceived opportunities to provide the motivation to learn. To be clear, not all learning is organization -beneficial (Brook et al, 2016) in the same context that not all actors are perfectly aligned to organizational objectives, yet the study found that collectively interpreted learning can lead to organizational solidarity, where the learning is not restricted to the task at hand, but through this learning, actors are also learning to more fruitfully coexist. I also find that learning is significantly responsible for the stickiness of paradigms of understanding. The study revealed that once actors obtain understanding of the organization and its paradigm of function, such understanding is feverishly defended. I found that many psycho-social forces, including fear at being at odds with the dominant paradigm in the organization, influence learning, what is learned, and how learning occurs to relate to the problem. It is established that actors learn from doing and actors learn to align routines to normed patterns (Allen and Pilnick, 1973), yet there are multiple pathways to understanding (Forrest, 1991), resulting in complexity that I find evasive for organizational leadership to purposefully control. The organization can influence what is learned in practice, yet cannot do so with exclusivity.

I observed that individual unlearning is best described as learning, where new knowing displaces dated knowing (Fan, 2012). As participants describe their individual process to learn, I observe that the knowing that they carry into learning is perhaps displaced, or set aside, but is not voluntarily forgotten. It is from these observations that the inquiry was led to consider the function of the human brain.

Unlearning, proposed as 'active forgetting' (Fan, 2012) appears to be in conflict with what is known about human brain function. The paradigm suggests 'de-learning', where learned paradigms are erased. Yet when we insist actors actively forget paradigms, the mere mention of what we are asking to be forgotten reinforces neural pathways, and potentially reignites pathways that otherwise would have gone dormant (Howard, 2014). In truth, if it is our desire to enact change through some form of forgetting routines or relations to the artefacts of practice, it may be more readily available to ignore a routine and allow unintentional forgetting to de-amplify established neural pathways, rather than to attempt to invoke 'active (intentional) forgetting' and invite mental reckoning that will reinforce the memory associated with the routine.

Before getting into my interpretation on unlearning, I offer two constructs for learning. This study has produced an understanding of the succinct difference between intentional and unintentional origination of organizational phenomena. These constructs are offered for individual intentional and unintentional learning, although I interpret that the framework also fits learning at the group and organizational layers. I first address intentional learning and have conceptualized a simple model.

4.7.7.2 Intentional learning

- A learner has to be motivated to learn
- There needs to be some system of learning
- This activity has to result in understanding

Motivation to learn

Here, in the interest of simplification, my model is not perfectly accurate. In truth, in the context of 'motivation', I generally mean both intrinsic motivation and extrinsic incentive (Deci and Ryan, 2000). The point is that the potential learner has to possess some rationale to learn. This rationale can be either the learner's own desire to obtain understanding, or the learner interprets some positive or negative consequence to obtain learning for some ostensive benefit or to avoid detriment.

System of learning

My context for a system of learning is intentionally broad. Such systems can be either complex or simple. A learner may enter a course of study, watch internet videos of the desired understanding, observe others perform the desired understanding, or practice iterative cycles of the desired understanding. In any of these systems, the learner has perceived the platform to be a place to obtain understanding and has accessed it for this purpose.

Understanding

In my learning construct, understanding is essential to distinguish learning from some other mental or physical exercise where there is an exchange of information or proficiency. Understanding is an essential validation that the actor has formed a personal interpretation of the desired learning. By contrast, rote memorization is not learning. The learning of language is an apt context to express this point. I, or anyone, could find a translation of a phrase in a foreign language and memorize how to recite this passage phonetically without obtaining understanding of the foreign language. Further, if my interaction with the foreign language leads to the development of proficiency such that I can intake the foreign language, translate the vocabulary in my mind to my native tongue, I am approaching learning. Once I obtain fluency, where I am intaking the language, interpreting meaning in the foreign language without first translating to my native language, then I have obtained understanding and it can be said that I have learned a second (or third, fourth…) language.

4.7.7.3 Unintentional learning

All learning is not intentional as people learn from action and in action (Allen and Pilnick, 1973), and all action in practice is not the consequence of intentional pursuit. Under this rationale, I offer a second, simple construct for unintentional individual learning. As above, although this construct is framed for individual learning, it fits most circumstance at the group and organizational layer.

- Occurrence
- Receptiveness
- Reckoning
- Understanding

Occurrence

Some event needs to occur; this is the action from which actors obtain understanding. For unintentional learning, I propose that this event was unplanned and unanticipated to the actor(s) that will eventually learn and understand from the action.

Receptiveness

I propose that for unintentional learning to occur, there must be actor awareness of the event. In my construct, this is in-moment reflexivity of the event and the actor action that is prompted by the event.

Reckoning

I further propose that for this event and action to produce unintentional learning, affected actors undergo a reckoning process. Frequently, this is after the fact reflectivity of the totality of the event and what learning can be extracted from it. In some regard, this can be interpreted as a reverse sequence to my construct for intentional learning; reckoning is after the fact motivation to learn from the event.

Understanding

Much like intentional learning, I argue that for learning to have occurred unintentionally, the learner need interpret understanding from the event. To a great extent, the learning is context-stripped from the extant event.

Whether learning is intentional or unintentional, in my framework, learning must lead to understanding for learning to be genuine. Rote memorization, without understanding, is a valid phenomenon, yet I argue it is not learning. While both learning as I have defined it herein and memorization involve the formation of memory in the human brain (Howard, 2014), I view understanding as more than subtle nuance, rather a key differentiation.

4.7.8 The study found that the tendency for actors to revert from change to their previous paradigm of understanding organizational function to be rooted in a in a phenomenon to not only retain the familiar, but to preserve an organizational setting from which they have obtained equilibrium of inputs and outputs of their organizational activity.

4.7.8.1 Reversion

I view the study's interrogation of the observed phenomenon of actors in the company reverting from change to initial paradigms of organizational function to be the heart of this thesis. The preceding provides scaffolding to understand this phenomenon. In this section of the thesis I present the phenomenon of reversion in two contexts: study findings of how the reversion occurs, and findings to inform company to prevent reversion.

Broadly, the study finds that reversion occurs to preserve the status quo. For various reasons, actors in practice are vested in the status quo. For some actors, reverting to established paradigms is an intentional interference and dismantling of change to exert and preserve the sources to gather and accumulate informal power (Mechanic, 1962); typically, this activity derives from actors occupying lower rungs of the formal organizational power hierarchy. Bombari et al (2017) offer that actors occupying such position covet sources of informal power; their motivation to obtain informal power increases their felt power quotient. The study validates this argument, adding that this motivation is not solely organizationally deviant. Paradigm slippage is not always malicious, as actors in practice may obtain self-determination in their organizational identity (Deci and Ryan, 2000) from their perception of felt power. The study further finds beliefs to be instrumental in the tendency for the reversion phenomenon to occur, and the ability for the company to sustain change. Beliefs form the stickiness of legacy paradigms. Additionally, as an important aside, the study finds organizational characteristics that are commonly interpreted in a positive connotation – such as passion – provide stickiness. The strength of belief matters; following rational intuition, the study finds the strength of a belief and the strength of belief connectivity to original paradigms of understanding significant to the tendency for actors that possess such belief to attempt to revert to the familiar paradigm.

The study revealed conspicuous feigned behaviors that are related to the phenomenon of reverting to original paradigms. Actors may feign commitment to the change – Berman and West (2003b) relate this to mediocrity – while interpreting if the organization is itself is committed to the change. Additionally, actors may feign ignorance to changed routines and methodologies so as to stall change and provide space for the actors to explore viable avenues to revert to the old paradigm, yet we need also recognize that stalling may be pursued to 'buy time' for new belief formation, where the new beliefs are change congruent. Lastly, actors may feign resistance – doing so in the interest of sustaining social capital in the informal organization (Allen and Pilnick, 1973); for this reason, it is essential for the organization to monitor what routines are actually being exercised and not simply what utterances are being expressed, as change may have occurred and is on the path to being sustained. Within the established knowing of learning organizations, Snell and Chak (1998) propose a rogue sentiment that learning only benefits the formal hierarchy. To an extent, there is a faction in the organization that portray and articulate this belief, potentially giving rise to the perceived social benefit to be seen as a resister, even while being a compliant participant in change. Further in the context of deviant behavior, the study revealed an aspect of expertise that is associated to paradigm reversion. It is found that expertise exists in organizational-beneficial and organizational-detrimental forms. Actors seeking to preserve the status quo, for reasons cited above, develop expertise in gaming and manipulating organizational systems, oftentimes doing so to preserve informal power. In the informal organization, these actors are afforded high informal-power status; if conducted with charismatic, informal leadership, the actors accumulate tremendous influence within the organization to repel change. However, expertise that is interpreted to be organizational-beneficial is also found to be related to the problem. Hermanowicz (2013) proposes that in order to retain status in the organization, rogue actors may marginalize adept actors so as to narrow the perceived gap in expertise among actors in practice. Newell and Stone (2001) propose a similar phenomenon, going a further distance to propose that excellence is punished for the same rationale. The study detected these phenomena in the organization. I interpret this to be related to efforts to retain the status quo and stifle expertise that may challenge or counter a rogue actor's ability to leverage expertise at gaming or manipulating the system to retain influence through informal power.

In the context of ineffective leadership, the study revealed the potential for a related phenomenon that I interpret to be a form of managerial mediocrity, even though this manifestation of mediocrity does not fit neatly into the Berman and West (2003a and 2003b) framework for managerial mediocrity. I perceive this to be 'garden variety mediocrity' – tepid commitment emanating from the formal hierarchy – which I relate to organizational rigidity (Starbuck, 2017). In this aspect, the organization is unwilling to fully change; the formal hierarchy, in conflict to its stated intentions of change, silently signals its desire to revert to old paradigms of organizational function.

Finally, the study determined that actors are enabled to revert to original paradigms of organizational function through the exploitation of complacency. I argue that complacency throughout the organization allows reversion to take place. Farrell (2016) proposes that the extant organizational environment of this study is a complacent society. I propose that the Berman and West (2003a and 2003b) construct for mediocrity mislabel organizational phenomena of 'coasting on appearances', 'emphasis on rules', and purposefully ignoring the 'big picture'; these phenomena are more accurately indicative of complacency. Further, the study finds that when actors perceive complacency, they interpret practice to be richly prone to resisting change – through waiting, stalling, feigning, and manipulating – and malleable to revert from change to restore original paradigms of organizational function.

The study additionally explored how practice can prevent reversion to original paradigms – solving the business problem is a purposeful objective of the study. The reversion expressed in the problem is reversion to established knowing. Therefore, the study finds that change has to engage the basis on knowing – for most actors, this exists in beliefs. However, the study further finds that it is unlikely that any company intent, exercised by the formal hierarchy, will legitimately alter beliefs on sudden notice. The Akgun et al (2007) construct of beliefs, routines, and artefacts is informative, as it points to aspects of practice that the formal hierarchy can influence. Although deep beliefs may be impervious to external alteration, the actors that possess them are changeable; admittedly, changing actors is likely not practicable to sustain all change, the study finds merit to this tactic. Perhaps more realistically, change of routines and artefacts by organizational fiat is available to the formal hierarchy. Allen and Pilnick (1973) offer that actors learn what they live; study participants validate this theory. Further, the study finds that when the routine of the paradigm the organization is seeking to replace is eliminated as a possibility, unlearning is practically akin to instantaneous – individual actors may eventually involuntarily unlearn dated routines from ceased iteration. Lally et al (2010) propose that habits will form from reiteration of new routines, although there is broad variance to the quantum of reiterations required among individual actors for repeated routines to coalesce into new habits. The study finds that changed routines can form new beliefs, although such is not essential to sustaining change. The study also finds that a degree of patience is necessary. The organization should allow for new sensemaking to form (van der Heiden et al, 2012). Elsewhere, I have argued that artefacts are not easily and routinely changed in most organizations; I find it unrealistic to propose the sustenance of change requires wholesale exchange of organizational infrastructure. This is impractical and itself unsustainable. However, the study finds such strong association between artefacts and the formation of routines that I argue whenever an organization plans to change artefact – from the simple to the complex and costly – it should be compelled to comb the organization to identify routines that it is desirous to change and link changed routine to changed artefact. Some actors may attempt to fit old routines into the new artefact, the study detected this tendency, yet the implementation of the new artefact should be engineered to displace the preservation of routines that the organization seeks to sustainably change.

The study finds that not all beliefs are held deeply in actors' value systems. In some instances, organizational beliefs are more accurately depicted as preferences. Furthermore, many actors in practice accept that the organization will have rules, and that so long as there is a perception that the company's rules system does not conflict with deep beliefs that form the actors' value system, there is confidence (belief) that the company's intended routines ought to be followed. The study found that many actors simply want to be told unambiguously what the organization expects of them; it is important that the organization not get caught in a needless exercise of generating new belief when its actors are (literally and figuratively) expressing, "Just tell me what you want me to do." Still yet, there will be circumstance when belief alteration is necessary to sustain change. In addition to learning following doing (Allen and Pilnick, 1973) and belief following routine (Lally et al, 2010), actors can be inspired to form new belief (Tucker, 2004). A bold vision, especially when delivered from a point in the organizational hierarchy that is perceived to be powerful, with acknowledged expertise, and trusted, can be a vision for change in the company and change to organizational beliefs (Ready and Conger, 2008). Additionally, purposeful design of the organization will add to the malleability of beliefs. The study found that groups unlearn when membership is transitional (Denis et al, 2001). The intentional design of groups to contemplate regular reformation and insertion of new members (Lofland, 1997) can provide the disruption necessary to trigger group unlearning (Reese, 2007). The purposeful resistance to instill hardened routines in every corner of the minutia of practice creates 'structural holes' to allow belief alteration and group unlearning to emerge (Battilona and Casciaro, 2012). These 'structural holes' were found to provide the sense of autonomy for actors to explore and experiment with changed routines (Marin-Idarraga et al, 2016) and conceptual combination reasoning of established routine and new thinking (Martins et al, 2015) to break and unlearn paradigms at the group layer of organizational function. This is found to be a psycho-social phenomenon to unlearn (Howells and Scholderer, 2016) to enact power arousal (Stoughton and Ludema, 2012); the study found the power arousal alters patterns of informal power accumulation and opens actors to new belief formation.

5.0 Chapter Five – Conclusion and resolution of the organizational problem

In this chapter of the thesis I address how the study informs resolution of the problem. Here, the emphasis is theory informing practice. I take into consideration how the literature and study findings are interpreted to deliver a solution to the organization. In this regard, the context is specific to the organization being studied. Subsequently, I will consider how this study produces actionable knowledge; practice informing theory to complete the thesis.

The problem centers on the organization being able to sustain change and resist reversion to old paradigms of organizational function. Consequently, the problem resolution establishes a new logic for the organization to enact change and provides argumentation of how the new logic was derived from the study findings and related literature. The problem poses the key questions of the thesis; the problem resolution is derived from the empirical evidence produced by the study, obtained by the two cycles of action research, to formulate actionable problem resolution methodology.

I have structured the problem resolution around three sections: the formation of a construct for change, revision to the organization's change process, and the rationale. I reiterate that not every change enacted by the organization is subject to reversion to discarded paradigms of organizational function. So therefore, there is an interest to augment – rather than displace – existing change enactment methodology employed by the organization. This solution will consider the themes of mediocrity and complacency, learning and unlearning, the realized strategy of the organization, and power in the context of change.

5.1 Change framework

To develop a construct to enhance change in the organization, I draw heavily from the literature. It is from emergent knowing emanating from the study that initial knowing from the literature is reinterpreted in the context of the problem (Eisenhardt, 1989). As revealed previously, I find it instructive to reinterpret actors and artefacts as agents in a complex adaptive system (Stacey, 2011) so that there is caution to avoid displacement of existing order in the organization that effectively sustains change presently. Within the construct of the organization as a complex adaptive system, a new order emerges from the existing organization agents. Initially, I turned to the work of Berman and West (2003b), offering a proposed solution to combat mediocrity. However, from the study, it is found that simply professing increased managerial commitment under-represents the complexity of the organization and the problem – if it were as simple as magically increasing managerial commitment, there would be little rationale to conduct the study in the first place. Commitment was actually found to be a manifestation of the problem; it is managerial commitment to established organizational understanding that contributes to displayed paradigm reversion. The study informs that what Berman and West (2003b) fail to ask is, "what if managerial commitment is perceived to be high, yet complacency (mediocrity where it shouldn't belong) abounds?" Additionally, the study didn't find a relationship between commitment and complacency; highly committed actors also succumb to complacency. I find it disingenuous – if not offensive – to suggest complacency indicates low commitment. The study finds that a solution for durable change resides in the strategy of the company; specifically the strategy for internal organizational function. It is thought that although the focus of the problem resolution is directed to the internal environment, the company's strategy to engage the external environment tangentially benefits, as an organization that can sustain change is capable of learning and repositioning itself in its competitive environment (Mintzberg et al, 1998). This study identified emerged patterns in the organization, revealing how the realized strategy is formed (Porter, 1979). Through interpretation of study findings, it is discovered that these emergent patterns reveal organizational learning in the strategy formation of the organization (Mintzberg, 1978). Additionally, the study found how unlearning relates to change (Stoughton and Ludema, 2012), affirming that strategy formation of the organization is a fluid process of learning and unlearning, rather than a strict, prospective activity that is richly planned (Mintzberg et al, 1998).

The framework for the problem resolution must consider the extant circumstance of the organization. Again, the literature and the study findings are informative. I find integrating the literature to be important to maintain objectivity in the formation of the problem resolution. First, as the study participants are all insiders, there is a degree of exposure to bias (Lebaron, 2010). Additionally, Rigg and Tehran (2008) question the ability for practitioners to be critically reflective of their own practice. Yet a significant aspect of the company's organizational identity is that of a High Commitment High Performance organization (Beer et al, 2008), yielding a strong sense of demonstrated reflectivity among practitioners who participated in the study. I believe the literature mitigates any blind spots of the participants' reflection and study contribution.

I find it important to consider aspects of the organizational paradigm in the framework for the problem resolution. As the problem centers on the unpredictable tendency for the organization to fail to sustain change, there is real possibility that as the organization seeks to change the methodology of change itself, it could revert to its approach for change enactment that created the problem. Here, the study's investigation of mediocrity and complacency informs. First, the framework considers mediocrity in the form in which the study has led to my reinterpretation of mediocrity – mediocrity as the 'middle road' between excellence and inanity (Vasilescu (2013), or mediocrity as regression to the mean (Greve, 1999). I argue that complacency is the greater problem; complacency being the phenomenon that allows the organization to be mediocre when it genuinely has the opportunity to be beyond mediocre, if not excellent. This perspective perhaps conflicts with Kawall (2006), who argues that complacency does not cause mediocrity. I believe my study-derived interpretation is a nuanced position; I am not arguing that complacency causes mediocrity, rather complacency permits mediocrity to displace superiority. I find reason to be cautious here, as my reinterpretation of mediocrity to be a rich plane for complacency to have harmful effect. Center (1971) reports a 'contagion of mediocrity' and Harari (1995) argues mediocrity to be a barrier to change. I believe these arguments can be made for complacency. Clarke (2004) reports a tendency to be complacent during confident periods; as the company is largely successful in many dimensions, there is perceived risk of this phenomenon. The contagion aspect of complacency is found to be relevant to the tendency for actors in the company to adopt beliefs. The organizational environment is rich in tradition (Browne, 2014), sacred traditions can lead to mediocre habits (Harari, 1995), and complacent mediocrity can be perpetuated in the belief adoption system (Center, 1971). Learning and leadership in the context of the organization are also important. Not all learning in the organization is beneficial to the company (Starbuck, 2017). This characteristic to learning was validated in the study. Additionally, as there is heterogeneity to learning as there is to ability (Martin de Holan, 2011), the study found there to be heterogeneity to unlearning, especially in actor attachment to beliefs. To integrate unlearning into the problem resolution framework, I first reject the Howells and Schrolderer (2016) argument that unlearning is not a valid psycho-social phenomenon. The study validates that unlearning exists as a phenomenon in practice, albeit distinguished from how unlearning has been described by the literature (McGill and Slocum, 1993). Borrowing framing from Argyris and Schon (1996), the study found unlearning to be distinguished on individual, group and organizational planes; the framework for problem resolution therefore considers differing tactics to sustain change via unlearning on each of these planes. Here, the framework is influenced by Rampersad (2004) to determine if/when unlearning is precedent or co-cedent to learning. Reese (2017) provides a three-phase construct for unlearning: destabilization – interruption – unlearning. Calvin (2015) informs that the organizational culture dictates if the novelty of proposed changes triggers sufficient tension between old and new paradigms to destabilize and interrupt; together these works scaffold the framework for resolution.

An option to be considered is a change to organizational leaders (Starbuck, 2017) especially under a suspicion that complacency results from low managerial commitment (Berman and West, 2003b). Further on company leadership, the framework needs to consider formal and informal power. In the company environment, autocratic leadership is the norm (Punnet, 2006), lending to the ability for the company to unlearn via fiat (Tsang, 2017), and employing this form of unlearning to sustain change (Stoughton and Ludema, 2012). With respect to informal power, its sources are relevant to the resolution framework (Mechanic, 1962), especially in the context of which sources the formal hierarchy bestows currency within the company. While the formal power hierarchy does not dictate which actors accumulate informal power directly, the hierarchy has input into the centrality of influence between actors, structuring the company to provide change advocates greater influence and to diminish the influence of change antagonists (Brass and Burkhardt, 1993). In this regard, the framework is informed to increase functional authority (Peabody, 1962) to alter the origins of informal power.

This leads to formation of a construct to resolve the problem. This construct draws from the preceding and is depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1 - Construct of Problem Resolution

	Destabilization	**Interruption**	**Unlearning**
Belief	Disrupt informal power	New sources of Informal Power	Individual
Routine	Displace/Eliminate	Forced obsolescence	
Artefact	Replace	New Routine Formation	
Belief	Change-Supportive Deviants	Disrupt Status Quo	Group
Routine	Alter Roles	Redistribute Power	
Artefact	Replace	New Routine Formation	
Belief	Replace Actors	Extraction	Organization
Routine	Inspiration	Transformational Leadership	
Artefact	Replace	New Routine Formation	

This construct depicts a framework for unlearning following periods of destabilization and interruption (Reese, 2017), considers unlearning in the individual, group, and organization dimensions, and contemplates unlearning as the detachment of beliefs, routines, and artefacts (Akgun et al, 2007). Within the construct, practice unlearns to sustain change, doing so differently at each dimension. At the individual layer, disruption to the informal power hierarchy alters the belief creation and attainment of belief. Routines are displaced or eliminated through an action of forced obsolescence. New routines are attached to replaced artefact. At the group layer, purposeful change to group composition disrupts the status quo and in-group belief formation. Intentional alteration of roles redistributes power in groups and triggers the formation of new groups with new power hierarchies. Organizational fiat enacted from the organizational hierarchy eliminates routines and artefact at the individual and group layer, and extracts beliefs at the organizational layer through the elimination of the actors that possess burdening belief. The organizational hierarchy has the authority and legitimacy to replace artefact at all levels; this is addressed in greater detail in the ensuing discussion of the change process.

5.2 Change process

With the framework for the problem resolution in place, the discussion turns to how the study informs the change process for the organization. The intent of the change process model is to inform the practice to sustain change, through the introduction of a new approach to enacting change in the company. The revised approach to enacting to change is sustained through the exercise of formal power from the organizational hierarchy, itself triggering intentional, organizational unlearning until such time as new habits are formed from organizational learning and the new approach to enact change becomes germane to the company. I continue to adopt the framework of Akgun et al (2007) to consider change via learning and unlearning through detachment of beliefs, routines and artefacts, and consider learning and unlearning at the individual, group and organizational dimensions (Argyris and Schon, 1996). Formal and informal power (Mechanic, 1962) figure predominantly in the process.

When considering individual actors, the process recognizes the difficulty – if not the biological impossibility – for actors to actively or intentionally forget (Howard, 2014 and Niri et al, 2009). The study validates this and informs the process to address individual unlearning through the belief system. For some actors, on some issues, there is a desire to simply be told what to believe. However, the study found that actors who are recalcitrant toward change, are unlikely to be receptive to proffered belief. For these actors, the process may not include unlearning, rather to provide motivation, incentive, or consequence to adopt an alternate belief (Fiol and O'Connor, 2017b); this is a process of learning. The formal power hierarchy has the ability to provide inspiration from transformational leadership (Tucker, 2004) for actors to adopt new beliefs, and the power to induce or invoke force that in the organization setting, is more robust than the belief that resists change. More discreetly, the study found that actors require varying degrees of time to adopt new beliefs, and may need several iterations of recurrent activity to form new habits (Lally et al 2010). When change presents to be interpreted as challenge, human actors undergo a positive adrenalin response, physiologically improving ability; whereas, when change is interpreted as threat, actors have a negative adrenalin response and physiological ability weakens (Hammersley, 2017). So therefore, there is reason for the approach from the hierarchy to be delicate, inspirational, and challenging as to lessen resistance and allow beliefs to adapt. Actors who alter beliefs, may eventually unlearn, yet this is involuntary unlearning as the previously held beliefs become more distant to current organizational beliefs. The study found that instructing actors to forget a belief, routine, or paradigm only solidifies that energy within the actor – especially among actors who have some reason to retain or revert to that paradigm (Howard, 2014).

For groups, the process to sustain change adopts much of the above presented for individuals, but in a collective context. Further, the process of change considers group formation, membership, and roles. The study found that whether groups are emergent or intentional, there is need for the process to integrate regular change to group membership into group design (Lofland, 1997). Groups commonly have a tendency toward in-group consensus (Lofland, 1997) and require the insertion of new members to destabilize the status quo. Deviants are needed to disrupt group homogeneity and prevent complacency (Hackman, 2009). For the change process, the hierarchy can constitute or reconstitute groups so that change-supportive deviants are inserted to disrupt group activities and stasis. Ideally, the company desires a self-designing organization (Hedberg et al, 1996), although initial overtures to introduce this concept into the organization were met with a tepid response. Rather than push a culturally incongruent paradigm that would be forced rather than emergent, the organization opted for a less ambitious strategy of fluidity to group formation. The study revealed that routines are commonly rationalized at the work group level of the organization. This finding informs the change process of the opportunity to obtain malleability of routines through groups. The study found that it is routines where change is expressed and where reversion to dated paradigms can be detected. Fiol and O'Connor (2017b) argue that the ostensive aspect of a routine can be difficult to observe, yet the study found the opposite to be true. Perhaps this is due to study participants being insider researchers, yet there is interest that the process consider ostensive routines, as it is also found that actors may feign resistance to earn social capital as an 'obstructionist' despite ostensibly complying to change. What matters to the organization is that change is sustained – it has already been established that beliefs may not be immediately altered, or altered at all. Further, the study affirms that learning occurs from action (Allen and Pilnick, 1973); when routines change, behaviors can be led to change in tandem or succession (Dupper et al, 2014) and repetition forms new habits (Lally et al, 2010), leading to durable change that replaces dated paradigms.

The study found reason to question the existence of unlearning as precedence to change, concluding that, at best, unlearning is co-cedence to learning (Rampersad, 2004). Actors in practice rarely unlearn – learn in a linear fashion; organizations rarely enjoy unfettered freedom in a competitive environment to suspend activities to unlearn, then learn, and rejoin organizational activities. The change process therefore needs to recognize the messiness of unlearning and learning, owing to the heterogeneity to learning and ability (Martin de Holan, 2011), and group segmentation that creates the paradox of effectiveness competing with adaptability (Denis et al, 2001). Regarding change directly, Liu et al (2012) found a relationship between change promotion and fairness, bringing equity theory into consideration of change in a collective organizational environment (Greenwood and Levin, 2007).

Figure 2 provides a summary of the revised change process to solve the problem and lead to sustained change in the organization.

Figure 2 - Process of Problem Resolution

		Current Paradigm to be destabilized	**Change** form of interruption	**Sustain New Paradigm** methodology
Individual	*belief*	Learned Belief Adopted Belief	Proffer New Belief	Learned Belief
	routine	Patterned Routines Tangled Routines	Displace Routine Fiat	Repetition Habit Forming
	artefact	Connected Routines	New Association	Learning
Group	*belief*	Shared Belief	Redistribute Informal Power Group Composition	New Influencers Organizational Currency
	routine	Status Quo Methods	Alter Roles Alter Expertise Recognition	Power Redistribution
	artefact	Specialization/Generalization	Increase Specialization	Expertise
Organization	*belief*	Legacy Actors Proffer Beliefs	Replace Actors Adopters	Learning
	routine	Patterned Routines	Fiat	Unlearning
	artefact	Complex Artefact	Canvas Routines for Displacement	Episodic Change
		Simplex Artefact	Exchange/Refresh	Unlearning

Following the construct of the framework provided above, the process retains the individual, group and organizational layers of the organization. Within each layer, change tactics are offered to achieve detachment of the Akgun et al (2007) beliefs, routines and artefacts of practice. Within this framework are the dimensions of the current paradigm – to be destabilized, change – the form of the practice interruption, and the methodology to sustain a new paradigm. This process is not only constructed to enact change, but to also provide durable adhesion to resist reversion to the paradigm being displaced through change. The methodology to sustain change is not restricted solely to learning and unlearning; the study revealed that in some instances, alteration to the organizational power hierarchy and disruption of sources of informal power are crucial to sustaining change. Learning and unlearning are found to be prevalent at the individual and group layers, while power is central to sustaining change at the group layer. This process changes change within the organization.

The process is richly informed by the study. At the individual layer of the organization, the study found that while proffering new beliefs will reach some actors, recalcitrant actors seeking to preserve the current paradigm will retain their system of belief. For these actors, change is addressed at the group layer, where the organization can redistribute sources of informal power, lessen the ability of change-averse actors to accumulate informal power and influence others, and recognize alternative sources of expertise to heighted informal power. Routines at the individual layer can be displaced by organizational fiat. Sustenance of change is derived from new habit forming through repetitive iterations of new routines. Eventually, dated routines will either be unintentionally forgotten, occupy distal horizons of the organization's legacy, or lose currency in the organization to influence in-group interaction. The process can also alter group composition, formation, and reformation, disrupting the perpetuation of beliefs and routines through injecting influencers who have been bestowed high power.

The study found the importance of artefact in the context of the stickiness of the current paradigm to not reside in the physical artefact, rather in the routines that emerge from the deployment of the artefact.

So therefore, the process considers changing artefact and designing new routines for the new artefact such that the dated paradigm cannot be expressed through routine. The organization will do this when applicable; however, it is impractical to constantly change many artefacts of the organization for the sole reason of changing the paradigm. In the scarce instance when any major artefact is replaced, the study advises the process to comb the organization for associated routines that the organization seeks to eradicate. Working with existing artefact, the study found that altering expertise alters sources of influence and power, allowing the organization to de-energize dated routines. Palumbo (1969) found power to increase as role specificity decreases (generalist increases); the study found the corollary to also be true – as specificity increases, power is decreased. Creating specialization in the use of artefact constricts actor sphere of influence and lessens power. Further, as the organizational hierarchy bestows power on specific specialization, actors with that expertise are power enhanced, while others are power neutered.

5.3 Completion of the action research cycle

I find it necessary to include in this thesis the rationale for the construct and process to resolve the organizational problem. This section of the thesis demonstrates that the output was obtained from a rigorous process to interrogate the organization through ethnographic case study, with understanding and interpretation augmented from a wide array of the relevant literature.

Allen and Pilnick (1973) offer two essential foundations for the rationale for the resolution to the organizational problem: that practitioners learn from action; and, there are two organizations with a single organization – the ostensive organization that exists the formal or literal space of the organization, and the informal organization, largely virtual, that exists between the actors in the organization. To this, I add the notion of using collaborative inquiry to imagine a defined future state of the organization (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014) and from Farrell (2016), the pervasive mediocrity and complacency to characterize the external environment of the organization. This provides context of how the study was constructed to solve the organizational problem and an essential element of the environment where the problem manifested and is ultimately resolved.

The problem centers on the tendency of the organization to revert from change to a displaced paradigm of organizational function; the study characterizes this state as mediocre in aspects of the organization that should be superior. From interrogating this problem, the study found complacency to be the actionable phenomenon. I am cautious to not get caught in a labeling exercise where the study simply exchanges ‘mediocrity’ for ‘complacency’. The essence of the problem is that the organization reverts to a paradigm that is perceived to be less than its full potential. When mediocrity is the expected state – all organizations are not exceptional in every dimension and all actors shouldn’t be expected to be exemplary in all functions (Marren, 2004) – there isn’t an actionable problem. However, when the organization is mediocre in circumstances where it has the potential to express exceptionalism, the study found complacency to be the cause. Further, the study findings argue that much of what has been discovered to define mediocrity, is reinterpreted to be complacency. Rather than conclude nuance to mediocrity – ‘accepted mediocrity’, where the organization is mediocre as it should be; and, ‘unaccepted mediocrity’, where the organization does not achieve its genuine potential – the study finds complacency to be a superior expression. This is argued for several reasons. First, reinterpreting mediocrity to be an acceptable, expected state mitigates the negative connotation of the term when it is used in practice. Secondly, I foresee it to be difficult for practitioners to navigate mediocrity that is accepted, versus mediocrity that should be rejected. This causes unnecessary dissonance in practice and arms deviants who seek to preserve dated paradigms. Thirdly, the study finds complacency to be an actionable phenomenon, thusly creating an imperative for the organization to confront and eradicate in the interest of sustaining change. Farrell (2016) argues that the organization's external environment is rich with complacency. The study found that complacency is difficult to detect in the first person with first order thinking. Actors in practice readily recognize complacency in the second and third person with first-order thinking, yet it is difficult to detect first person complacency without engaging in second- and third-order thinking. Without higher order thinking, actors have difficulty detecting when self-satisfaction is misplaced (Kawall, 2006), yet we easily recognize when others' satisfaction is complacent. Ruark (2017) reports a 'learned helplessness'; Stupak and Greisler (2000) report 'lousy advice' in practice being a cause to prevent the sustenance of change. Collectively, Farrell (2017), Kawall (2006), Ruark (2017), and Stupak and Greisler (2000) accurately depict the environment of the company where the study was conducted.

Seeking rationale for the solution, I find it necessary to consider if the paradigm of the company is complacent (mediocre when it ought not to be.) From Berman and West (2003a) the study obtains characteristics of mediocrity, such as failing to grasp the 'big picture', rule-laden organization, coasting on appearances, and patterns of low exceptionalism. In addition to misplaced self-satisfaction, Kawall (2006) adds overestimation, insufficient desire to improve, and low motivation to effort to define complacency. At varying degrees and in unpredictable patterns, these forces are resident in the organization. Study participants reflected that these forces exist and are perceived to be the cause of the organization reverting from change to a displaced paradigm. Coldiron (2009) reports a tendency to 'relapse to mediocrity', indicating both that mediocrity exists in a state that is perceived to be unacceptable, and that the perceived problem is not restricted to this extant organization. The study affirmed organizational organizations that are said to reinforce mediocrity (Kerfoot (2009), most notably the use of measurements and benchmarking to interpret organizational performance (Heffes, 2009) and the use of standards to establish parameters of minimal, acceptable performance (Newell and Stone, 2001). An alternative explanation of the problem is an active pursuit in the organization to 'marginalize the adept' (Hermanowicz, 2013) and punish excellence to create a mediocre paradigm that ostensibly is perceived to be the expected state of the organization (Newell and Stone, 2001). The study found that this activity is exercised in the informal power hierarchy of the organization. These works are not offered in the context of complacency, yet the study interprets this phenomenon to be directly related to the problem.

The rationale is that *a problem* exists, and that problem is accurately depicted in the context of complacency. So therefore, the resolution of the problem requires the organization to address complacency and to alter routines and artefact in the formal organization and beliefs in the informal organization. Added to this, it is interpreted that the organization is afflicted with Best's (2001) 'paradox of perfection' – pessimism derived from failing to achieve perfection, and 'paradox of proliferation' – progress leads to the recognition of new problems – reinforcing resistance to change, even among actors who are fundamental aligned to the organization's stated intent.

Actors in practice possess multiple social identities (Lucas and Baxter, 2012); the solution need not appeal to all social identities, it need only resonant with one. The solution contemplates that this appeal can either be obtained directly through the formal organization, or obliquely via the informal organization. The solution transverses both the formal and informal organization as it navigates change. The formal organization retains control of what is offered for learning and what is reinforced by company activities. Recognizing that comprehension is a precursor to understanding (Forrest, 1991), structured learning can establish what the organization desires to be understood. Outwardly, this is the company aligning actor competencies to the company's future positioning strategy (Moorcroft, 2007). Tangentially, Palumbo (1969) argues that power increases as role specificity decreases; the study found the inverse of this phenomenon to be true. Through a process of specialization, informal power is reduced, allowing the company to obtain greater control of influence. By creating specialization, the solution reinforces the competencies that promote change, while at the same time, reducing the influence of actors who propose to interfere with change.

The company can incent specific learning through distribution of rewards; recognizing that all learning is not company-beneficial (Brook et al, 2016), incentives distributed by the formal organization can substitute intrinsic motivation (Deci and Ryan, 2000) to attract actors to the learning that is beneficial to the company. The solution contemplates new forms of leadership offered to and from the company. Although it will not appeal to all actors, there is a need to substitute inspiration for reciprocity to induce trust (Reed, 2001). Transformational leadership can create organizational newness that eludes the transactional leader (Tucker, 2004). The company presently has emphasis on transactional leadership; the solution infuses transformational leadership from senior leaders who are separated from the minutia of managing transactions so that the company retains the valid contribution of transactional leaders to achieve organizational results, but to augment this with inspiration to be transformational. Study participants have affirmed that the company's workforce is receptive to inspirational messaging and reject that this is manipulative.

The study revealed how beliefs are formed and perpetuated in the organization. The phenomenon of actors adopting the beliefs of others was closely interrogated, finding that this activity is related to the formal and informal power systems of the organization. The formal organization has limited capacity to implant beliefs directly – it can overpower beliefs that are counter to the organization's intent – but can influence how influence itself is exercised in the organization. The problem resolution employs this knowing. Boyatzis (1971) offers that power is influence, through a process of delegating influence to preferred actor behaviors, the organization can alter the power accumulation distribution. Even if actors perceive low position power, their felt power mitigates deficits (Bombari et al, 2017), allowing actors to achieve a positive emotional state from their ability to influence the organization.

Additionally, the organization can change what is rewarded and recognized in the informal organization by leveraging the legitimate power of the formal organization (Newell and Stone, 2001). The problem resolution also recognizes this, using the chattel of the organization and the formal organization's control over tangible organizational benefits to accentuate change-supporting behavior. Nantha (2013) provides that intrinsic motivation precedes behavioral change; the problem resolution adds external incentive to the mix, doing so from the formal organization.

Beliefs are also found to be formed and influenced from membership in organizational groups. Focult (1970 in Townley, 2002) proposes that group membership determines what is challenged as truth; the organization can alter perceived truth through the process to organize actors into groups. The problem resolution includes disruption to groups. The organization altered informal group associations via dislocating members of groups who had formed change averse cliques. Additionally, the resolution calls for the organization to recognize the natural collectives that form based on work time and location proximity, empowering groups to self-govern on organizational matters that influence workload distribution and sense of fairness. Here, the problem resolution incorporates equity theory. Returning briefly to other work from the study of human neuropath physiology, Alexander et al (2014) found equity theory to have a neural basis in the human brain. Lastly, the organization can discard harmful agents and influence what provides organizational currency in the organization (Fan, 2012), with the former being exercised judiciously and the latter a significant rationale in the problem resolution.

In summary, the problem resolution isn't restricted to offering a new change enactment process, it changes change through action on beliefs, routines and artefacts/agent. New sensemaking is thought to lead to new influences of beliefs (van der Heiden et al, 2012). Where new beliefs can be offered and accepted, the resolution advantages this energy. Beyond that, beliefs are either influenced by informal power, de-energized via reengineered routines, or have relevance eroded by way of the formal power hierarchy. Change is socially influenced and is a social influencer (Battilana and Casciaro, 2012). The solution changes the dominant logic of the organization in the context of change; Solovy (1999) argues that the dominant logic must be first unlearned before a new logic can take hold. The study findings refute this understanding. According to Newell and Stone (2001) the dominant culture of the organization resists change to defend the status quo. The problem resolution attacks status quo dominance by altering what dominates the organization reality at the cultural layer off the organization.

5.4 Problem resolution implementation

In a vivid application of theory informing practice, the problem resolution framework was implemented in the organization as it evolved from the study. Clearly, this is an exercise that is polar opposite to Kurt Lewin's 'unfreeze – change – refreeze' seminal change model (Schein, 1999). The implementation of the problem resolution is an emergent, gradual, and evolutionary paradigm to alter change in the company. We have implemented the resolution on an intentional, opportunistic approach to immediately reform change enactment in the company. As has been the established pattern for change in the company over time, there is continuous change that is punctuated with planned, episodic change initiatives onto which the new paradigm for change is applied. Elsewhere, I have argued that the company – in many aspects including change – exists as a complex adaptive system (CAS). This is evident when I attempt to isolate how the proposed solution creates durable change in the context of the Akgun et al (2007) framework for unlearning in the dimensions of detachment of beliefs, routines and artefacts, and the influence of power to improve the stickiness of changed paradigms.

The specific objectives of organizational change to enact problem resolution are:

- Proffering new beliefs
- Eliminating displaced routines
- Installing artefacts
- Disrupting informal power

5.4.1 Frontally proffering new belief

As the company addresses change through dialogic interaction with its actors, the change process includes purposeful, formed beliefs for willing actors to adopt. Principally, this occurs via transformational leadership delivered from the uppermost rung of the organizational hierarchy. There are two examples from the organization to illustrate the implementation of this change methodology. The first also provides a practical illustration of the term 'agent' from CAS theory to be superior to 'artefact'. Although this is offered as a change in belief, the change derives from change to the incumbency of the operational medical director (OMD) of the organization. As an emergency medicine service provider, the OMD is a non-executive, senior leader of the organization, principally tasked with the provision of clinical leadership of the organization. It is through delegated practice of the OMD's medical authority that the clinicians are entitled to administer medical care. Recently, the organization had need to change its OMD. The study informs that change in agent (artefact) in the system is a ripe opportunity to expel dated paradigms. The study concludes that *when* there is need to change a key agent, the organization ought to comb its paradigm to identify related areas for change. Opportunistically, the organization leveraged this occurrence to alter the paradigm of the clinical orientation of the organization. The new OMD introduced clinical case reviews and a 'morbidity and mortality' quality improvement initiative – standard techniques to interrogate clinical decisions and practice in the realm of healthcare service delivery – as an exercise in transformational leadership. The organization signaled a refreshed clinical orientation. Beliefs attached to the old paradigm were not discarded – there is no doubt these beliefs continue to exist – yet, as expressed, were displaced with new beliefs attached to a new paradigm of organizational function.

The second practical example of proffering new belief from transformational leadership advantages scrutiny of the organization that might otherwise be modulated if not shunned. For reasons unclear to the organization, a Joint Select Committee (JSC) of the National Parliament called for an examination of the efficiency and effectiveness of the service directly provided by the organization. In the organizational environment, being called to appear before a JSC of Parliament is a serious matter, oftentimes wrought with trepidation. Alternatively, as chief executive of the company, I leveraged this highly visible, public ventilation of company affairs to inspire actors in the company to discard aspects of the company paradigm that detracted from its core mission. Given the high profile nature of this engagement, many actors expressed new beliefs about the organization's mission and their role in fulfilling same.

Additionally, there are other examples of changing the organizational paradigm through proffering new belief that do not feature vivid transformational leadership, yet are equally demonstrative. The company has long administered a recognition program such that noteworthy or meritorious acts were awarded 'points'; actors in the company accumulated points and exchanged these for company-branded apparel and tchotchkes. Under the old paradigm, leaders awarded points to their subordinates. Under the interest of increasing peer to peer recognition, by organizational fiat, the recognition system was altered such that any actor could award points to any other actor. Actors in the company immediately formed new beliefs about the recognition system; the outcome was a self-regulating system to achieve the company objective. Using an internal social media platform, the company published commendations and testimonials received from clients served by the company. This system also gained the attraction of actors in the company, employing it to commend internal customers and suppliers. The old displayed paradigm was nearly instantaneously displaced and now appears distant to the new. There is no interpretation that the organization will revert to the old paradigm. Beliefs are altered, yet the prior beliefs are not forgotten, rather displaced by the new.

5.4.2 Eliminating displaced routines

Implementing the problem resolution, it was surmised that changing routines via organizational fiat would provide the most immediate organizational unlearning of dated paradigms of organizational function. As above, it is difficult to extract the routine from the acted-upon belief that drives it, and the artefacts of company that employ the routine. The company implemented two production systems that provided for the displacement of routines the hierarchy sought to eradicate. The first is a mobile data terminal, installed in company vehicles, and used as a substitute for voice transmission of changes to resource status over a two-way wireless radio. A longstanding malevolent routine in the company was for actors to falsify their status in order to gain an unscheduled rest period. The ruse worked as such: the two-person crew would start for point B from point A, but not inform the dispatch center of their movement. Upon arriving point B, the crew would falsely advise their moving from point A to B, thus creating the appearance contrary to their actual movement. Although it may seem innocuous, the deleterious impact to the organization was material. Leveraging technology, the mobile data terminal, equipped with a vehicle positioning system, eliminated this routine. The routine was immediately unlearned, as the system newly prevented it from being exercised.

To capture actor time in a pay earning capacity, the company previously employed a written time card system such that actors entered their time of arrival and departure from the workplace. The organizational hierarchy had reason to believe actual late arrivals were recorded on time, and on time departures were recorded as late, earning the actor compensation for time in excess of actual time at the workplace. The company implemented a sophisticated time recording system, equipped with a biometric identification process and a sophisticated control system. Immediately, the prior routines became obsolete, displaced by new routines tied to the time recording system. Out of concern that the automated system might have periods of inoperability, operations leaders instituted a companion system that preserved the old paradigm, to be used as a backup. An early assessment of the functionality of the new system revealed excessive downtime, inconsistent with other knowing of system reliability. By organizational fiat, the company chief executive eliminated the backup system that allow the company to revert to the old paradigm. Once the old routines were prevented from being exercised, organizational unlearning was immediate and there has been no reversion. The time recording system has been leveraged to displace other routines that are deleterious to the company, eroding sources of power and influence in the awarding of extra work opportunities, favoritism in work assignments, and the ability for nefarious actors to 'game' the system to unfair advantage. This example of the solution implementation goes to the heart of the study – sustaining change through the prevention of reversion to dated paradigms.

5.4.3 Installed new artefact

The mobile data terminals and timekeeping systems described above are exceptional examples of new artefact displacing routines and beliefs, and achieving organizational unlearning. There are additional company examples of new artefact leading to sustained change. As previously mentioned, the company introduced an internal social network messaging system. This system deconstructed hierarchal communications constructs that dissociated actors across levels in the organizational hierarchy. Instantaneously, actors were equipped to bypass communications channels that had been leveraged to control messages and interact directly and asynchronously. This connectedness facilitates the displacement of beliefs, allows new belief to be proffered and considered, and is the source of unfiltered organizational edict when the organization seeks unlearning via organizational fiat.

Implementing the solution reveals that if an old paradigm can be applied to new artefact, there is a faction in the company that will seek to do so. Implementation of the solution also revealed a low-complexity artefact change that can facilitate reversion to dated paradigms of organizational function. The company has determined that if an artefact can be changed, the company ought to do so. A compelling example of this rationale exists in the completion of forms. When the company instructs actors to compete a familiar form differently, change compliance is in disarray. If a new form accompanies the procedural change, compliance is widespread if not pervasive, and change reversion is thwarted.

5.4.4 Disrupting sources of informal power

I believe one of the most insightful findings of the study to be the significance of informal power to sustain change. Prior to conducting the study, I realized that power was an important element in the company and in this research, yet I did not appreciate the pervasiveness of power – especially informal power – to enact and sustain change in the company. Russell (1938 in Lucas and Baxter, 2012) argues that power is the most important organizational element. The study supports this assertion; hence, the solution transverses power directly and obliquely, formally and informally. Above, I asserted that a timekeeping system, an internal social networking system, and a peer recognition system were influential to changing the change paradigm in the company. This is largely due to how these systems disrupt the informal power hierarchy, source, and influence. The company is actively migrating as much capability as is the capacity for the timekeeping system to accommodate. The rationale for this move is not solely to automate process to be more efficient; dehumanizing scheduling and work distribution determinations removes these important organizational considerations from being sources of influence and power. In this regard, the study revealed that these processes as so power laden, that actors in the company obtained informal power vicariously, solely from being close to another actor that had influence on the process. As to direct, unfiltered interaction on the internal social network, the study revealed that frontline leaders, who enjoy a degree of formal organizational power, increased their felt power coefficient (Bomberi et al, 2017 and Brass and Burkhardt, 1993) by leveraging their position as a source and interpreter of information and messaging from upper tiers of the organizational hierarchy. It was found that disrupting the system that rationed information and selectively distributed rationale, actors in the company charged with change compliance, who permitted reversion to preserve a dated company paradigm that afforded them additional felt power, eliminated a company phenomenon that interfered with sustaining change. It is found that when all actors have unfiltered access to information and members of the hierarchy – in reality and not solely conceptually – no one actor or tier on the hierarchy could arbitrage access to gain influence. Implementation of the solution found the peer recognition system to function in a similar fashion. Previously, the awarding of points was limited to members of the formal organizational hierarchy. Opening this to all organizational members diluted influence from control of points distribution and leveled influence across the organization. Persons who previously had no influence immediately had the same influence as a senior member of the hierarchy. Further, the system self-organized into a paradigm such that like achievement earned the same 'recognition currency' within the system; to preserve fairness, company members challenge inordinate awards that disrupt the emergent order of what acts earn how much recognition.

Still yet, implementation of the problem resolution guided the company to disrupt informal power accumulation, doing so from the formal power hierarchy. There are two examples that illuminate how changes to informal power influence the sustenance of change. Both examples emerged from small groups of study participants. The first, related to work assignments, is perceived to be seminally influential. To begin, we revisit essential aspects of the organization. As an emergency services agency with responsibility for emergency medical care nationwide, for a small island state, the company operates continuously. Consequently, actors in practice potentially can be assigned to work any hour of any day. Invariably, some work assignments will be at 'non-traditional' work hours. Within the context of emergency services, these assignments are indeed common; hours of work in an organization of this nature are no less traditional than a person’s medical emergency having ‘traditional’ hours of manifestation. However, as social beings, the actors of the company otherwise exist in a paradigm that segregates working hours to ‘traditional’ and ‘non-traditional’ patterns. Subsequently, work assignments within the company that better conform to the balance of the actors’ external social existence are coveted and have high intrinsic value. The company requires a reckoning system to allocate work assignments to match the emergency medical needs of the society being served with the work assignments of its actors. As a method of democratically administering this reckoning system, small teams of the actors affected by the assignments are assembled to construct various shift patterns, taking into account such factors as shift start and end times, the number of hours and days in succession, and the relative attractiveness of scheduled time off. In truth, the company is indifferent of who works when, only that sufficient staff is scheduled to meet peak demand for the company’s services efficiently. Once the shift schedule patterns are determined, there is a separate process to match actual actors to pre-determined work assignments. In the old paradigm, and reflecting widely observed industry standard, the company established a ranking order bidding list that is based on the individual seniority of the actors participating in the assignment matching exercise. That is, the most senior actor selected his/her assignment from all options, whereas the least senior member was assigned the last remaining shift. Ostensibly, persons of high seniority selected the most preferred shift patterns. All company members in this group work in fixed pairs. Given that the nature of the work is at times stressful, and one is assigned to work with the same partner for approximately 48 hours per week, the company has an interest for these pairings to be harmonious. To achieve that objective, the company instituted a method to sum the seniority of bidding partners to obtain a seniority ranking order by partnership. While this methodology achieved the desired harmony – actors selected their immediate coworker rather than this being randomly assigned – the result bestowed significant informal power on the senior organizational members. So therefore, the study found that a selection of the senior actors used this power to coopt the beliefs of junior members of the company, hence the tendency to preserve the dated paradigm so as to retain their source of power. These actors could engage in company-detrimental behaviors to reduce their workload at the expense of others, impede change, and other deviance, yet retain power and influence via the virtue of their company longevity. Otherwise, the company operates as a meritocracy, using objective outcome metrics of productivity and proficiency to rationalize pay increases and most any other aspect of work. The result was a paradoxical conflict in a key organizational area. Next to compensation, shift assignments – to include work times and location – are perceived to be the most important element to members of the organization so affected. Because the shift selection ranking order was based on date of hire, there was no mechanism for a more productive, more effective contributor to overtake a lesser performing, yet more senior, peer. The source of the informal power of the senior actors initially eluded study interpretation. During a focus group session, a small group of participants identified that these actors drew their informal power from expertise – yet the expertise was in gaming the system. Because it was advantageous for a junior organizational member to associate with a senior, the senior could influence the junior to adopt beliefs that preserved the original paradigm for organizational function that preserved the senior’s informal power. This aspect of the informal power accumulation was demonstratively disrupted by organizational fiat; upon correctly interpreting the phenomenon from the study, the company chief executive announced an edict that the next shift selection ranking order would be based upon the same meritorious performance metrics that dictated all other organizational matters. The disruption to the informal power system was profound and vocal. Initially, senior actors attempted to resist, yet there was no means for their informal power – at that point all but neutered – to overpower the change by fiat of the chief executive. In short order, the organization unlearned the displaced paradigm and earnest learning was centered on understanding the new paradigm. While the objective performance metrics that now determine the shift selection ranking order were known to all organization members, there was a newfound motivation for many to thoroughly understand the metrics and how one might improve their individual position.

The second example also relates to expertise. For its approximate first ten years, the company's clinical staff functioned with undifferentiated credentials and scope. To preserve its future competitive position, the chief executive interpreted the need to enhance the clinical sophistication of the company. He introduced a formal learning initiative to increase organizational competency via training a selection of the clinical staff to advanced practice. While germane in the industry, this move was loaded with complexity in the company's local environment. In fact, some stakeholders opined that there was no legal framework for company actors to function at the scope the chief executive aspired they achieve. Undeterred, he accurately interpreted that although the legal framework was questionable at the outset, by the time the two-year initial training cycle was complete, a legal framework would emerge in the local environment. Unlike the expertise described above, this initiative was aligned to the company's positioning strategy. It obtained two intended influences to informal power. First, through specialization – not only were members of the inaugural advanced practice training cohort specialized, their presence resulted in company members that did not volunteer for the program also being specialized – thusly diluting informal power for all. Secondly, the members of the training cohort obtained expertise, advancing their informal power. As actors volunteering for the training exhibited organizational-beneficial exertions of informal power, the organization consolidated power to promote sustained change and reduced the power to influence the organization toward a dated paradigm of function.

5.4.5 Summary of problem resolution

To summarize problem resolution, I extract observations of the organization after implementing the new strategy to enact and manage change.

5.4.5.1 Actions taken in the company and organizational response

Perhaps the essential question is, did the problem resolution framework, process and rationale solve the problem? Although this will ultimately be arbitrated over a duration of time, the initial feedback is a resounding 'yes'. To this point, change enacted via the revised organizational change process has been durable and has resisted reversion to displays of a dated paradigm of organizational function. Artefacts – simple and complex – are being introduced with keen consideration of how undesirable routines can be displaced.

5.4.5.2 Evidence to support change in the organization

There is evidence of organizational unlearning, as displaced routines have been structurally eliminated from the range of potential actor behaviors. It will be interesting to observe the pace of involuntary individual unlearning among organization actors as beliefs evolve and routines change. The company remains on high alert to detect reversion to displaced paradigms of function and rekindled routines. There is also observed evidence of changes to the belief adoption and formation phenomenon. With a fresh cohort of new trainees – persons with no organizational history will matriculate the initial training curriculum and join the organization as this is being written – it will be interesting how the new paradigm, fully vested in meritocracy, will influence belief adoption and formation of these actors. Company actors are responding to transformational leadership and there has been no detected deleterious impact to essential organizational transactions. Evidence from the dialogic exchange on the internal social network reveals vested learning among individual actors to improve their performance outcomes and more highly engaged commitment to ensuring the accuracy of their metrics.

5.4.5.3 New interventions from new understanding

The new interventions in the company emerge from the new strategy to enact and manage change. In this context, the newly obtained knowing and understanding of change from the research provide a new paradigm for change in the organization. To enact change, change leaders consult the change process model to thoroughly plan and manage change, taking into account the visible and hidden aspects of change that heretofore were at risk to reverting to displaced paradigms of organizational function.

5.5 Creation of actionable knowing

Before delving into specific extractions from the study that produce actionable knowledge, I offer a summary that endears to briefly touch upon the essential understanding obtained from the study, engaging a metaphor to assist in making the point.

Complacency is not the problem; complacency is what allows the problem to thrive. If the problem is a plant, complacency is not the seed. Complacency is the loam, fertilizer, water and oxygen that allows the seed to germinate. The problem is preservation of informal power. Actors resist change or revert from change to a known paradigm to preserve informal power and to increase/restore felt power.

Reversion is not sought to make the company look 'bad'. Reverters may actually desire for the company to thrive, yet may paradoxically seek to revert change so as to ensure/restore informal power. This argument provides rationale to explain why frontline leaders – otherwise aligned to organizational intent – allow reversion to occur, as reversion preserves their informal power in an environment when their formal power is perceived to be deficient or declining. Increasing formal power of frontline leaders will not eradicate their complacency. Their formal power is advanced, yet their informal power is unchanged – and may be reduced – as formally and informally sourced power are not cumulative. Informal power plus formal power does not equal total power. Formal power does not traverse the informal organization pristinely. So long as these actors perceive diminished informal power, their felt power will be judged to be in deficit; preserving paradigms and reverting to displaced paradigms maintains and preserves interpretations of felt power.

If complacency is magically eradicated – this is questionable, because complacency is difficult to interpret in the first person with first order thinking – there is question if the problem is avoided or even if problem resolution is simplified. Assuming the organization can be inoculated from complacency, be it by forceful exertion of formal power or some other means, the reversion would likely not occur. However, driving out complacency is not only impractical, it may be ineffective to enact and sustain change. Imagining this hypothetical paragon that is devoid of complacency, it is likely that change implementation will be more difficult. Resistance will be amplified, because without any notion of complacency, actors will perceive that once change occurs, the current paradigm is forever lost. If that current paradigm fulfills informal power needs, then those sources of informal power are also forever lost.

There is an equity theory element to this phenomenon. An actor's felt power quotient is based upon that actor's self-determination and the actor's equilibrium of how much power and autonomy s/he should possess. From Alexander et al (2014), it is known that equity theory has a basis in the human brain. Humans can tolerate inequity they perceive to be fair – others enjoy more because it is perceived that they deserve more. Yet humans are also dissonant to inequity that is perceived as unfair. The actor desires a certain quotient of felt power that is based on that actor's perception of his/her organizational role and investment and returns. When felt power is perceived to be in deficit, the most likely destination to increase felt power is the informal organization. It is unlikely that the actor can obtain new formal power without creating a completely new paradigm of equilibrium. The actor could seek a promotion, but that triggers a new equilibrium. At the current equilibrium, the actor preserves his/her felt power from the power s/he obtains from the informal organization. Additionally, obtaining increased formal power does not increase the currency of power an actor possesses in the informal organization.

So therefore, the actor arranges his/her garden to obtain equity equilibrium and will earnestly seek to preserve the paradigm that keeps that garden tidy. The actor scans the organization, searching for complacency so that s/he can maintain and preserve the garden. The organization, employing formal power, can bring in heavy equipment and till the garden. Yet the actor will continue to survey the organization, searching for complacency so that s/he can replant the garden. I believe this is what drives paradigm reversion.

Additionally, there are broad generalizations to be obtained from the study to inform practice; in my interpretation, this is theory informing practice.

5.5.1 Problem resolution

While the implementation of the problem resolution is highly centric to the extant company of the study, I interpret the problem resolution construct, process and rational to be, in their presented state, informative to practice generally. The problem resolution framework extracts knowing from the study to propose a construct to sustain change. This construct is not germane solely to the organization where the study took place. This framework informs practice to consider change sustenance in the context of Reese (2017) unlearning via destabilization, interruption, and unlearning at the Argyris and Schon (1996) individual, group, and organizational layers of practice, through deliberate intervention in Akgun et al (2007) unlearning via detachment of known paradigms of belief, routine and artefact. Ideally, change enactment visits each of these dimensions. This framework elucidates the complexity of enacting and sustaining change in a complex environment.

The proposed change process obtained from the study also informs practice generally. Retaining the underlying frameworks from Reese (2017), Argyris and Schon (1996), and Akgun et al (2007), the process model provides specific and actionable methodology to destabilize the current paradigm, enact change through interruption of the current paradigm, and sustain a new paradigm. Again, although this process emerged from the study, its proposed change methodology is not relevant solely to the organization of the study. This thesis provides the rationale for the change framework and process, compiling established works related to change, learning and unlearning, complacency and mediocrity, and how human actors enact change, learn and unlearn, adapt to complacency and mediocrity in practice. The study knits these works together in a novel manner, producing general knowing on change to practitioners.

In addition to the above, the study informs practice generally on a number of key dimensions. Although referenced in the generalization obtained from problem resolution, this information delves into succinct knowing from the study. Derived from the investigation into what constitutes the stickiness of established paradigms and the tendency for actors in practice to revert to know paradigms of understanding, this general knowing informs practice in key areas that define the phenomenon.

5.5.2 Paradigm attachment and detachment

The study informs that beliefs, routines and artefacts are the platforms upon which paradigm adhesion occurs; to enact sustained change, practice must detach actor association on these dimensions.

5.5.2.1 Beliefs

The study informs that beliefs exist in multiple dimensions and strengths. As a belief exists invisibly, it may be difficult for one to fully comprehend another's belief. The study found beliefs to be situational and contingent. Actors were found to act contrary to a stated belief; in reality, these actors' behaviors are being driven by a stronger or firmer belief. The actor frequently does not recognize the paradox of acting in conflict with a stated belief, as s/he is acting in accordance to the belief that most strongly influences his/her behavior in a given situation. Additionally, actor beliefs are found to be contingent on full interpretation of the extant circumstance of practice being confronted and negotiated through a complex belief system. The study found beliefs to be malleable – to a degree; some actors' behavior is governed by deep-seeded belief – providing explanation how an actor can evolve through stages of confronted change, eventually arriving at change acceptance. Under this rationale, the study found that beliefs need not always be altered to enact and sustain change. So long as an actor can be led to a belief that is stronger than the belief that is resisting change and seeking to revert to the displaced paradigm of organizational function, change can be enacted and sustained despite there being an element of the actor's belief system that remains in conflict with change. That actor may continuously seek to exercise the belief that causes change resistance and paradigm reversion, yet other aspects of change enactment provide durability.

Within the realm of beliefs, the study found an intriguing subset of adopted belief. In this phenomenon, rather than forming a belief based upon perception and self-interpretation, actors adopt the beliefs of others – often from peers with influential informal power. Belief adoption was found to be both temporary – providing the actor an initial belief framework to thrive in the organizational community – but also with permanence. The study found that in some instances, adopted beliefs are acquired and so firmly rooted in the actor's paradigm of understanding of organizational function that the actor adopts not just the belief, but the organizational history upon what that belief was formed, despite her/him not actually having lived that history. The study labels this phenomenon vicarious experience; an alternative form of knowing, where there may not be genuine understanding, as there was no genuine learning.

5.5.2.2 Routines

The study argues that change manifests as an observable phenomenon through the routines expressed by actors in practice. The study found that routines are indeed quite fluid, demonstrably the same as the fluidity of behaviors. For practice, the determination of change adhesion should be adjudicated through the observation of routines. As above, beliefs may not have changed (and may never change, for some actors), yet the company should be indifferent, so long as there is sustenance to changed routines. Here, the study disputes the proposal from Fiol and O'Connor (2017a) that the ostensive aspect of a routine is difficult to observe. In fact, the study finds that it is the observable aspect of a routine – the ostensive routine – that matters to determine if the organization has sustained change.

From the study, an intriguing and ancillary organizational phenomenon emerged. Judged to be, at best, on the fringe of the scope of the study, this phenomenon was intentionally not deeply interrogated. I believe it is intuitive to consider feigned compliance as a form of change resistance. The study found feigned compliance to be a relevant method to preserve current paradigms of organizational function. However, the study also found 'feigned resistance'. Here, actors in practice actually conform to change, but feign resistance so as to obtain notoriety and potential informal power in the organizational community. Such actors are seen as vocal leaders of the resistance, may be afforded substantial currency in the informal organization, but act in a manner – compliant – contrary to their protestations of change. These crafty actors are found to accumulate social capital in both the formal and informal organizations. In the formal organization, their change congruent behaviors are interpreted to be supportive and congruent to organizational ideals. In the informal organization, their change resistant commentary is viewed as deviant, leading to the accumulation of informal power and the ability to influence other actors in practice. It is for this reason that the study advocates that change enactors observe expressed routines – and not routine expressions – to determine if enacted change is sustained.

5.5.2.3 Artefact

In terms of change, the study informs that artefacts are influential to routines. The study proposes that artefact dictates routine more frequently than routine influences artefact. I perceive this to be related to the infrequency that artefact are exchanged in practice, whereas, routines are open to change, subject to true imperative and conformity. On artefact, I believe the most informative output of the study is to guide practice to scour routines whenever there is an organizational decision to change artefact.

The study segregates artefact to major and minor classification; practice is informed from the study in both dimensions. Minor artefact change – such as forms, consumable materials, and non-capital inputs – should occur whenever practitioners seek to change routines. Such artefact is viewed as low-burden and easily changed at low investment. The study finds that obtaining sustained change through the expression of new routines on current, low-burden artefact to be elusive and to invite paradigm reversion. Rather than asking actors in practice to use existing low-burden artefact differently, the study proposes that these artefacts should be changed (perhaps 'phased out' quickly is an apt method) to protect against paradigm reversion. When an organization is contemplating change to high-burden artefact – organizational infrastructure, capital equipment, and chattel that represents significant investment – the study informs practice to comb the organization for routines attached to and derived from these artefacts that the organization seeks to change, leveraging the investment beyond traditional concepts of return. The study further finds that if practitioners are able to work current routines into new, material artefact, actors seeking to preserve a displaced paradigm will do so.

5.5.2.4 Fiat

The study advocates for the judicious use of fiat to force organizational unlearning to sustain change. Although ceding that this generalization of study findings may be at odds with contemporary view on leadership and management, the study finds that in many instances, to sustain change, there is no cause for leadership timidity. Fiat need not be autocratic; the edict from the formal organizational hierarchy can be obtained from participatory, democratic leadership in a collaborative process, yet once the fiat is formed, it ought not to be ambiguous nor diluted in the interest of appearance. To effect organizational unlearning, it is essential that displaced routines are rendered unavailable; if, in the interest of organizational tranquility, the formal hierarchy allows displaced routines to remain as some form of backup alternative, actors seeking to preserve the displaced paradigm will exercise the alternative in the interest of preserving the status quo. An additional form of fiat obtained from the study is the exercise of formal organizational power to dictate group formation and membership. In practice, the governance of organizational groups ought to include provisions for regular changes to group membership so as to invite unlearning at the group layer of the organization through the insertion of new members.

The final form of fiat to effect organizational unlearning from the study is perhaps the most controversial. The formal organizational hierarchy can extract actors from the company altogether to obtain unlearning. Especially pernicious paradigm reversion may require an exchange of actors for unlearning to occur and to sustain change.

5.5.2.5 Complacency

A key outcome from the study to inform practice generally is a proposal for a reinterpretation of complacency and mediocrity. The study findings align to the interpretation of mediocrity offered by Marren (2004) and Greve (1999) – mediocrity as ordinary or expected – and the notion that in order for excellence to exist, it requires a mediocre referent. The study found that it is complacency that allows an organization to be mediocre when its true potential is to be above ordinary if not excellent. The study advocates that for practice generally, works on mediocrity that provide context of low exceptionalism (Berman and West, 2003a), reinforcement of the status quo (Kerfoot, 2009 and Newell and Stone, 2001) and reliance on rule conformity (Vasilescu, 2013) superiorly apply to complacency. The rationale for reinterpretation of mediocrity is offered with two principle arguments: complacency is an actionable organizational phenomenon; and, other's complacency is the portal to allow actors seeking to preserve the status quo to exert paradigm reversion.

The study found that complacency is difficult to interpret in the first person with first order thinking. Actors in practice were found to readily identify complacency in others – paradigm reverters actually seek complacency to preserve routines – yet it was found that in order to interpret first person complacency, one must engage in higher order thinking; considering why one thinks as s/he does, and what influences one's thinking, exposes misplaced self-satisfaction, improvement insufficiency, overestimation, and impaired motivation to exert effort (Kawall, 2006).

5.5.2.6 Unlearning

The study finds key aspects of unlearning that are informative to practice. Of these, I find the notion that individual intentional unlearning is not a valid phenomenon to be most significant, along with the interpretation that group and organizational unlearning are valid. In my interpretation, this is significant. By separating unlearning into human and organizational platforms, we are able to distinguish the unique characteristics of human thought from human characteristics that we apply to inanimate entities. We can unlearn at the group and organizational layers of the organization by intentional organizational acts, yet as Howard (2014) and Niri et al (2009) argue, intentional, voluntary 'active forgetting' among individual actors is considered, intentional unlearning at the individual layer is inconsistent with contemporary knowing of how the human brains functions, and the complexity of how human actors in a complex organization navigate accepted norms. The study reveals that individual, unintentional unlearning is a valid phenomenon. Individual actors unintentionally unlearn through gradual forgetting of organizational routines and artefact that have been eliminated. The study also found individual, unintentional unlearning to occur when new beliefs are offered and adopted in practice.

As above, actors can stimulate unlearning at the group and organizational layers of practice by exercising power from the formal organization. The study found groups unlearn when members are changed; new members provide the destabilization and interruption to trigger unlearning. The formal organization has the power to assemble and alter group membership and to cluster actors to influence associations that lead to informal group formation. At the organizational layer, the formal hierarchy can achieve instantaneous, intentional unlearning by organizational fiat and excising members of the organization.

5.5.2.6 Power

I interpret the knowing on power in the context of sustaining change to be one of the noteworthy outcomes of this study to inform practice generally. Disruption and alteration of informal power to influence actors in practice and purposeful exercise of formal power were found to be instrumental for intentional and unintentional unlearning to occur and to sustain change. In the opening summary of this section, informal power is related to equity theory; the study revealed that intangible organizational returns, in addition to tangible organizational benefits, influence actor interpretation of fair/unfair equity. The study also found this to figure significantly in actors' imperative to revert to established paradigms of organizational function. The study found that paradigm reversion is not strictly mischievous, malevolent, nor deviant behavior. Preserving sources of informal power to preserve fair equilibrium is discovered to be innate human behavior, explaining why actors in practice can appear to be paradoxically supportive and congruent to the organization's stated intent, yet pursue paradigm reversion in defiance to the organization's desire to sustain change.

I believe this understanding of power – especially informal power, equity theory, and change sustenance to be critically informative to practitioners in all organizational environments. This study finding is the crux of the emergent problem resolution from the study and informs practice to enact durable change and inoculate the organization from paradigm reversion.

5.6 Reflection on the study and recommendations for further research

In conclusion, I reflect upon the study and this thesis. To frame my perception of the study, I consider several dimensions of output from the project. At the outset, I proposed that this study sought to obtain specific, practical knowing about an especially messy and persistent organizational problem, and to generally inform the practice of management through rigorous research. Throughout the execution and reflection on the study, I have thought deeply about what I perceived to be the primary objective of the inquiry. My role duality as primary researcher and chief executive of the organization where the problem emerged and was examined dictates that I conduct rigorous and objective inquiry to serve knowledge generation; from agency, I accept the obligation to dutifully pursue resolution of the problem. I do not view these interests to be competing, nor do I find that they are mutually exclusive. Considering the results and outcome of the study, I perceive harmony in practice informing theory, and theory informing practice.

I perceive the problem to be solved. The change enactment and sustenance methodology produced by the study has been tested in the organization and has changed change in the company; early indicators reveal improved change sustenance. Brander et al (2012) link ethnography to cultural change. The problem resolution methodology has impacted the organizational culture, reinforcing and advancing meritocracy. There are other indicators of cultural change, with disruption to how information is controlled in the company and increased visibility of the rationale of decision-making. The expertise being recognized in the company is change-congruent and there are indicators of lessened informal power being bestowed on actors seeking paradigm reversion. With a fresh cohort of new organizational members, the formation of beliefs will be closely monitored.

Additionally, I conclude that this study obtained its findings through rigorous research. In retrospect, the case study was conducted over an approximate two-year period of time. There was great diversity in background, experience, and interpretation among study participants. To provide framing and to inform the inquiry, I conducted three comprehensive consultations of relevant literature and numerous other visits to published works to provide further insight on emergent themes and revelations. In my view, the robustness, relevance, and novelty of the study findings validates the research methodology framework. I find the case study ethnography to derive new understanding of related theory (Eisenhardt, 1989) especially as it relates to emergent, new knowing (Anderson, 2009) on change, unlearning, and the role of power to sustain change in practice.

Reflecting on the study and its findings, I perceive mixed reaction to the usefulness of ethnography to solve an organizational problem. While I harbor no doubt that the ethnography penetrated the problem deeply and effectively, the study validates the position from Yu et al (2014) that ethnography is an inefficient problem solving method. As above, the study consumed countless person hours over a two-year period – my belief is that few organizations will accept a proposal to devote two years to resolve a recognizable and pernicious problem. However, as I further reflect, a durable resolution to the problem has been elusive for at least 12 years prior to initiation of the study. Past attempts to solve the problem lacked the holistic and inquisitive depth of the ethnographic case study, all the while the problem evaded resolution. In this context, I find that it can be argued that the case study was relatively efficient.

Further in my view, the case study produced high-utilitarian, generalized knowing to inform practice. I believe the results of the study, with specific emphasis on the problem resolution construct, process, and rationale are applicable to generic organizational settings and to all practitioners.

5.7 Considerations of the study

5.7.1 Limitations

This case study is derived from a single case. It is limited in the same fashion as any single-case, case study. Data is derived from a single source. Participants draw their perceptions from many shared events. Although there is ethnic diversity among the participants, study contributions tend to be more homogenous than the heterogeneity of a study of multiple companies. Further, there is uniqueness to the study being conducted in an isolated small island state. Although the study took place over and approximate two-year period of time, it still remains a snapshot in the lifecycle of the entity being studied.

It must be stated that the primary researcher is a novice researcher. Despite having a long tenure of progressive, practical experience, as a researcher, I am new to the process of conceptualizing, executing, and reporting a large scale research project.

5.7.2 Learning from the research process

5.7.2.1 Interviews

My interpretation of the interview questions leads me to conclude that the interaction was dialogic, conducted with sincere criticality, and thoroughly interrogated each theme. Each interview was completed in approximately 70 minutes, although I note variation on the time devoted to each theme for different participants. I perceive this to be driven by the participants' level of interest in each theme as I deferred to their emphasis to elucidate each theme. Although I didn't anticipate my interpretation to be otherwise, I perceived there to be adequately neutralized power in each interaction. There are two observations that I find to deserve merit. First, my skill at conducting this form of interview in my company improved with each session, leading me to conclude that interviews that occurred later in the schedule benefitted from my improved proficiency to conduct the interview. I didn't perceive it necessary to reengage early participants to test if my skill progression would obtain richer data from the first participants. Second, I observed that a participant's role in the organizational hierarchy to be unrelated to my perception of the depth or contributory quality of their input. More senior members of the company who volunteered to participate would enter the interaction with much greater familiarity with me than would junior members, yet I don't perceive that interviews with senior participant volunteers benefitted from this familiarity to obtain greater depth. As I reflect on the interviews, my perception is that study contribution is indifferent to formal organizational role.

5.7.2.2 Focus groups

Although not planned nor intended, by happenstance, each of the focus groups settled into emphasis on one of the four themes I presented in the discussion primer. I find this to be an interesting emergent outcome. Each of the focus groups delved into each of the four themes, yet based upon the collective interest of the groups, through their action, there was demonstrated affinity for a particular theme. This was not facilitated by me, nor does my reflection on each focus group session reveal anything from my participation in the discourse to influence this emergent pattern. In fact, because the focus groups each deeply interrogated a different theme, there was little need for me to facilitate group interaction and steer attention to any one area of inquiry.

In my view, there is no question that the interpretation of the study findings was vastly advanced from collaboration in the focus groups. By way of a vivid example, the contribution of the focus groups to the interpretation of the study proved invaluable. The focus group that settled into emphasis of the power theme devoted considerable attention on the sources of informal power. I offered how accepted theory proposes expertise as a source of informal power (Mechanic, 1962). The group engaged in a vibrant examination of expertise in the company; some members of this group had recently matriculated the company's advanced clinical credential training program, obtaining clear enhanced proficiency for actors in clinical organizational roles. Yet these participants conceded that although they perceived a sense of direct practice expertise, they did not interpret augmentation to their sense of felt power. As a group, we were reluctant to reject that this organization was so unique that expertise did not contribute to the accumulation of informal power. This led to discussion of the various forms of expertise that an organization member could obtain. It was from this collaboration that a key study finding emerged – actors with expertise in 'gaming the system' obtained profound informal power and powerful ability to influence the beliefs and routines of other actors in the organization. This finding is instrumental in the understanding of the problem and would significantly inform the resolution of the problem. I don't find it possible to determine if my sole interpretation of the study findings would have led me to this crucial understanding, although I doubt it, as my thinking was trapped in a paradigm of expertise as proficiency in purposeful organizational roles.

5.8 Recommendations for further research

From the study, I have identified five themes for additional research. While I recognize numerous tentacles of further enquiry to emerge from the study, I conclude these five areas to be the most intriguing and beneficial to theorists and practitioners.

5.8.1 Individual unlearning

The study raises stark question of the legitimacy of intentional individual unlearning as a valid psycho-social phenomenon. The study finds significant contrast between unlearning at the individual and social (group and organizational) dimensions. Hislop (2014) proposes that unlearning is a neglected topic in the realm of organizational science. I interpret great value in further interrogation of individual versus social dimension unlearning and distinguishing intentional and unintentional unlearning.

5.8.2 Other implications of informal power

Informal power emerged as a major theme of the study and a critically important component of the emergent problem resolution. This leads me to interpret that although power is abundantly covered in published knowing, there is further work to be done to obtain superior understanding of how informal power implicates other practical applications of theory in practice.

5.8.3 Other relevance of equity theory

Similar to my reflection on informal power, I interpret there to be value from further interrogating how equity theory governs and modulates actor behavior in practice, especially with regard to intangible organizational returns. I am intrigued by the question of how equity theory fits into actor interpretation of organizational intangibles, such as ‘sense of being’, organizational fidelity, and trust.

5.8.4 Feigning

Reflecting from within the study, the notion of feigning emerged as a tempting distraction. I interpreted the phenomenon of actors feigning resistance as intriguing, inviting me to question what else, and for what rationale do actors feign their outward organizational identity.

5.8.5 Convergence of emerging knowing on neuroscience and management theory

Alexander et al (2014) applied new knowing of human brain function on equity theory. This leads me to consider how emergent knowing in neuroscience can inform other seminal management theories. This intrigues me as it is evidenced-based affirmation of accepted theory.

Chapter Six – Considerations of a Scholar Practitioner

In this chapter I describe how my doctoral education, conducting this research, and drafting this thesis influenced my development and evolution as a scholar practitioner.

6.1 Dual roles as insider action researcher

On reflection, I recognize how my views on role duality evolved as the study progressed and through the process of drafting this thesis. While I can take actions to deliberately segregate my physical self between practitioner and researcher, such as through changing the setting, admonishment of position power, and so on, I cannot likewise partition my thinking. I might ask myself, "How does the researcher view this aspect of the study?", yet the practitioner if forever influencing the researcher, likewise the researcher to the practitioner. I do not view this as problematic. In my interpretation, this phenomenon mimics the dual cycle action research model, where there is a research interest and a problem solving interest. As I engage the inquiry of this study, the research and problem solving interests collide and intersect in my thinking about the problem and the study. In the end, I view role duality as complementary, not competitive.

6.2 Evolution as a scholar practitioner

I take this opportunity to pause and reflect on my evolution as a scholar practitioner. I perceive my growth in this dimension to be profound and count this experience as cathartic to me as a scholar and as a practitioner. I struggle to isolate another topic, in over 30 years of practice and learning, where I have obtained as deep and theoretically based and substantiated knowing as I have obtained on sustaining change from this experience. Perhaps my greatest catharsis as a scholar practitioner came to me as I completed the first draft of my end to end thesis dissertation. My view of the problem evolved dramatically. Entering the study, as a management practitioner, burdened with the problem of paradigm reversion interfering with change sustenance, I viewed the problem as 'problem – something is wrong'. Completing the study, I now view the problem as 'problem – elusive truth and knowing'.

Secondly, while an intent of this study was to influence practice, it did so in an emergent manner that was not anticipated. From their participation, study participants 'walked back' their role duality from the study to their organizational identity. That identity includes anew knowing of me as chief executive. Invariably, they know me better from focused interaction, but they know me differently and in a new dimension and context. I perceive this to be an element of my transformation as a scholar practitioner. Post study, they approach me differently on purely organizational matters. Our interaction in the study has redefined our relationship in the organization. For some, I perceive this as a function of simple increased familiarity, yet because our collaboration on the study was wrought with intention to neutralize the formal power imbalance between us, there is a transference to our organizational positions that I perceive to be durable. Ultimately, I deem this an unintended, yet welcome change.

6.2.1 Narrative of Personal Research Journey

As I reflect on my research journey, I do so in the context of the complete process of my doctoral education. I start with the taught portion of the DBA, as I interpret that element to lay the foundation as a researcher. I note two standouts from the taught portion of the degree curriculum as most influential. First, the asynchronous nature of the discourse routine shaped my thinking in a novel way. Previously, as an international practitioner, I was accustomed to regular, asynchronous discourse, mainly in the form of email exchanges with stakeholders across the global community. The DBA taught me to be a more contemplative asynchronous communicator, adding external research and references from established evidence to give my communiques heft and richness. Additionally, from the taught portion, introduction to Complex Adaptive Systems Theory provides scaffolding to my intellectual interpretation of the world.

Turning to the thesis research project, I interpret my evolutionary growth as a researcher to be profound. On reflection, I highlight elements that are cathartic to my research journey. First, the discipline to maintain progress is crucial. Given the burden of a highly demanding practitioner responsibilities, the competition for not only my time, but the deep thinking necessary to complete the thesis research requires purposeful allocation, and will otherwise be displaced. I found regular, scheduled interaction with my thesis supervisor to be highly effectual for me to remain progress, more so than any progress reporting requirements. Retrospectively, I recognize the importance of structure to achieve established norms of formatting. As I reflect, I also recognize a high degree of comfort and ability to manage the conceptual. This reflection leads means to the essentiality of weaving my conceptual understanding into normative formatting to express my research thoroughly. As I suspect is common to most novice researchers, it is only after completing the end to end research process do I perceive myself to be fully prepared to start.

Lastly, I perceive my research journey to culminate with convergence of scholar practitioner duality to produce a sound intellectual contribution to the practice of management. It is in this context where I interpret scholar practitioners to distinguish themselves, straddling the practice-theory divide.

6.2.2 Professional self-development

Reflecting on my professional self-development, three emergent themes. I developed sound qualitative analytical abilities to complement what has largely been quantitatively focused professional competency to this point. My professional development has benefited from profoundly enhanced appreciation of what can be obtained from peer-reviewed literature. Lastly, my development includes measured patience to permit understanding to emerge from deep thinking and consultation of diverse points of view.

6.2.3 Contribution to self-managerial practice

Considering contributions to my self-managerial practice, again three recognitions stand out. From the research process, I am a more cerebral practitioner. As I undertake messy practice problems, I more diligently seek evidence to form and support problem resolution. As a consequence, I perceive that my arguments are strengthened.

6.2.4 How thinking is deepened

Reflecting on how my thinking has deepened, I note my research journey has advanced – not displaced – how I intellectually engage managerial practice. I newly consider the distinction between reflexivity and reflectivity, recognizing how both forms of thought contribute to understanding. While I previously welcomed a high degree of ambiguity, I interpret that my comfort with ambiguity is further elevated. Lastly, returning to the essence of my research, I contemplate evolutionary and episodic change as distinctly separate phenomena.

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Appendix One – Initial interpretation of the data

Once organized by theme, critical reflection on the data led to forming an initial interpretation of the data and to obtain study results in the context of the research, problem, and company, and framed by the dominant themes previously derived. This interpretation is as follows:

Belief

Reluctance to surrender beliefs

Beliefs may not need to be suspended for change to occur

Accept change when it conforms to a belief

Core beliefs are retained

Behavior does not equal belief

Beliefs may be sacred

Depth of interpreter's faith influences meaning of belief

Actors with deep faith interpret belief as a foundation of their moral code

Company beliefs may be better described as preferences

Beliefs exist in degrees

Emotional attachment renders beliefs difficult to relinquish

If change does not interfere with personal beliefs, actors rarely reconcile the change within a context of their value system

Most actors accept that rules in company are a given

Adopted belief

Vicarious experience

New understanding exists in the first person; true vicarious experience is limited

People adopt others' histories

Adopt beliefs for group inclusion/acceptance

Artefact

No sacred artefacts

Expertise can lead to attachment to artefacts

Using a new artefact with old methods depicts the problem

Common shared meaning of routine and artefact

Change/Routine

Meritocracy: routines; plutocracy: beliefs

Design of artefact to prohibit old methodology facilitates change acceptance

Beliefs form the stickiness of legacy regimes

Resistance as a passive process to emplace barriers

Experimentation to see which barriers are effective to resist change

Collective change resistance is perceived to be safer

Resistance unrelated to change being resisted; other areas of the company

Stagnancy amidst progress elsewhere creates impetus to change; rivalry

Change tainted with negative connotation

There is no penalty for being ignorant

Resistance can be feigned; for group inclusion – see compliance for what it is and not get lost in expressions of resistance

Convey relevance to beliefs to obtain change acceptance

Changed routine can be inspirational

Feigned compliance is more harmful than change resistance

Actors will change if old methods cannot be forced into the new

Learning

Learning may be learning to be deceptive

Internal learning to promote organizational solidarity

Perceived opportunity provides motivation to learn

Fear causes learned interpretations to be retained

Unlearning

No need to discern learning from unlearning for individual actors

No such thing as intentional individual unlearning

Neuroplasticity indicates that the brain can rewire; ‘intentional forgetting’ is contrary to this science

Unlearning as rejection of a known phenomenon

Few actors had a conception of unlearning

Organizational fiat: eliminate routines and/or artefacts

Formal power does not change beliefs; formal power can alter routines and artefacts – leads to organizational unlearning

Unlearning via fiat; eliminate viable options or changing group membership

Unlearning through replacement of actors; baby/bath water

Change group membership

Complacency (mediocrity)

Complacency is real problem

Complacency is mediocrity being tolerated in highly-performing organizations

Complacency is simple to interpret in second- and third-person with first-order thinking

Complacency is an actionable company phenomenon

Complacency is difficult to interpret in first-person with first-order thinking; to interpret first-person complacency one must engage in second- and third-order thinking

Mediocrity is misinterpreted

Power

Informal power to perpetuate beliefs

Control of information as source of power

Specialization to create expertise to emerge as a source of informal power

Power is inseparable to change

For change via fiat to have adhesion, must come from sufficiently high-power pole in organizational hierarchy

Sources of informal power can be elusive

Persons with informal power will protect its source

Company induced measures to elevate actor status can displace sources of informal power

Reversion

Passion (perceived positive) may be what causes stickiness of organizational paradigms

Feigned ignorance as a stalling technique to find avenue to revert to old paradigm

Reversion in the problem is reversion to established knowing

Paradigm slippage is not always malicious

Beliefs changed; prevent reversion – essentiality to change beliefs

Complacency allows reversion to take place

Expertise exists in company-beneficial and company-detrimental forms