

WHAT IS NEEDED TO ENABLE A CULTURAL SHIFT IN THE MARKET RESEARCH DEPARTMENT
AT THE GANGLER COMPANY?

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This thesis investigates how to create an environment for organizational change within the Market Research Department at the Gangler Company (a US-based consumer products company). I explore what is influencing the current cultural environment and which of those influencers can be shifted to encourage organizational change toward the “ideal” culture that the organization has identified. Using new institutionalism as the theoretical approach, I discuss the significance of institutional forces (such as the economy and the rise in technology) on the cultural elements (i.e. behaviors, ideas, material artifacts and social structures) in the Market Research Department. Lastly, I show that by understanding those institutional influences, I can better assess what cultural elements can be shifted and which cannot. Of the cultural elements that are able to be shifted, I recommend three interventions that the organization should employ: 1) from a contrive culture to a culture of candor, 2) from a culture of division to a culture of cohesion, and 3) from a culture of knowing to a culture of learning.

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CHAPTER 1

DESCRIPTION OF APPLIED THESIS

1.1 Historical Context

“We need to find out what people want and give it to them,” said Matthew Nelson¹, former CEO of the Gangler Company², in regard to how the company should successfully market to consumers (McCraw 2000:49). In the 1930s, the Gangler Company, one of the world’s leading consumer products goods manufacturers, was one of few successful companies during the Great Depression. The country was in economical turmoil; many industries were declining or going bankrupt and consumers were investing less in large purchases (McCraw 2000). According to Thomas McCraw, “As the [Gangler Company] entered the 1930s, its executives, like most other businesspeople, were very concerned about the deteriorating state of the national economy. But [Gangler] withstood the depression well” (2000:46). Much of the company’s success could be attributed to their focus on advertisements and market research.

The company shifted its focus away from distributors and toward consumers. As opposed to positioning their ads to wholesalers or retailers, they began advertising directly to consumers via soap operas (originally produced via radio) and conducting research directly with the people who were using their products (McCraw 2000). This shift to focusing on consumers was a breakthrough and was enabled by a young Ph.D. economist D. Sam Parker³ who was originally brought into the company to work in the commodities market analysis department (DeVault). “Doc” Parker, as he affectionately came to be called, had a style and demeanor that

¹ Matthew Nelson was a name created to ensure confidentiality of the Company and people involved in the study

² Gangler Company was a name created to ensure confidentiality of the Company involved.

³ Sam Parker was a name created to ensure confidentiality of the company and people involved.

contrasted with the cultural patterns of Gangler during that time. As McCraw describes, “By the 1930s [Gangler] had developed a curious corporate culture, many aspects of which were still in evidence decades later, at the close of the century. [Gangler] in the thirties was a stodgy, tradition-bound, parochial firm—stiff and formal, almost military” (2000:44). However, Parker was known for walking around in his sports suits asking senior executives questions about the products and how they were used. “Often nobody knew the answer. Thus Parker was able to conclude that [Gangler] as a company, remained ignorant of some basic elements of how its products were being used, and therefore how they should be marketed” (McCraw 2000:50). This lack of knowledge of the product usage highlighted a need for the creation of a formal Market Research Department where the goal would be to employ Matthew Nelson’s model for success: ‘Find out what people want and give it to them.’ In order to do this, the company needed to hear directly from the consumers. “[Gangler Company] was predominantly a consumer products manufacturer and, as such, the majority of the company’s customers were homemakers” (DeVault). To establish this process of knowledge acquisition, Parker solicited the help of door-to-door interviewers, whose tasks were to go across the country asking these homemakers how they do laundry, wash dishes, cook their food or any other domestic task during that time. These “field girls” as they came to be called were hired to have conversations with the homemakers and participate in domestic tasks with them in order to learn. These girls did not use any note-taking devices while they were in with the homemakers; hence, they were expected to record everything from the interview from memory once they got back to their vehicles (McCraw 2000).

The Gangler Company's Market Research Department operated this way for the next 34 years with Doc Parker in leadership; however, this group of field researchers began to phase out in the 1960s with the retirement of Parker in 1959 and with the rise of technology that allowed for more efficient research methods and tools. McCraw describes further, "Cheap long-distance telephone rates had made it possible to conduct mass surveys more cost efficiently. By the 1970s, Market Research at [Gangler] was doing about a million and a half telephone or mail-in interviews each year" (2000:51). This choice to prioritize efficiency continued throughout the twentieth century with Gangler continuing to be the "tightly knit, secretive, ambitious, marketing-obsessed company it had always been" (McCraw 2000:52). It is against this historical backdrop that the need to shift back to a focus on consumers comes to the forefront. In this thesis, I argue that Gangler's market research organization needs to get back to "finding out what consumers want" so the company can "give it to them."

1.2 Importance of Culture in Organizations

The ideas and behaviors of Doc Parker were more pronounced because they deviated from the dominant cultural patterns during that time at the Gangler Company. Culture (as a concept), within the historical context of Gangler presented in the previous section, was used casually by historian Thomas McCraw to characterize the traits of the company during that time. This usage of "culture" as a concept is typical; the focus on culture has been prevalent in the business world since the late 1990s. Forty percent of the 350 articles Allen Batteau downloaded from a 12-month sampling of the trade press mentioned the phrase "corporate culture in a casual, off-the-cuff manner, with no additional development other than to

acknowledge that it existed” (2013:57). Culture within the context of organizations has been studied quite frequently for the past 20 years and has been leveraged in many different ways during that time. As Edgar Schein describes, “It has been used by some organizational researchers and managers to indicate the climate and practices that organizations develop around their handling of people or to refer to the espoused values and credo of an organization” (1992:3). Multiple books and articles have been written about organizational culture and have worked to define culture within the context of business, but this thesis utilizes the following definition of culture as the integrated system of shared ideas (thoughts, attitudes), behaviors (actions), material articles (objects), and social structures (political, economic, religious) that characterize and provide meaning for a group (Jordan 2003; Fischer 2007). This definition acknowledges the shared, learned, symbolic, adaptive and interrelated characteristics of culture (Jordan 2003; Jordan and Caulkins 2013). Each of these characteristics is described here as a foundation for the subsequent chapters.

The *shared* characteristic of culture establishes those patterns that are present among most members of the organization and enables the researcher to identify those behaviors—either displayed by the individual or the group—that are deviant (or uncharacteristic of the group pattern) (Jordan 2003). For example, using the historical context to highlight this concept, the shared pattern of Gangler during the 1930s was stodgy, tradition-bound, parochial, stiff, and formal (McCraw 2000); however, the behaviors of Doc Parker (re: casual, familiar, informal) would be viewed as deviant because they did not fit the shared pattern. The concept is revisited in Chapter 4 Description of Deliverables.

Culture is also *learned*, and this learning occurs primarily through the shared behavioral patterns of the members of the organization. This learned characteristic is important because it indicates it can be adopted by those new to the organization; meaning, it is open versus closed. It can also be trained through programs, stories, ceremonies, and myths (Jordan 2003). As is implied within the historical context, the Market Research Department and broader company of Gangler were able to learn and adopt the research culture needed to connect to their consumers and remain successful during the height of the Great Depression. This example of learning characteristics of a changing culture is revisited in Chapter 4 Description of Deliverables.

The *symbolic* characteristic of culture is important because it discusses many of the traits that are typically mentioned when describing a culture. As Ann Jordan describes “A symbol is anything and everything that transmits culture, including language and jargon, myths and ceremonies, dress, furniture and spatial arrangements, all artifacts, and behavior patterns. To learn a culture, one learns a symbol system” (2003:46). The traits of the Gangler Company that were described in section 1.1 were the symbols inherent in the company. Some of the other symbols that defined the culture at Gangler were the psychological tests for new job applications or the fact that the company is “promote from within” (meaning leaders in the company only come from the internal population as opposed to sourcing leadership positions externally), or that entry into the company usually suggested a life-long career. Additionally, there were symbols that showed the gender differences inherent in the company during that time; for instance, male managers wore dark suits and white shirts and the cafeteria was segregated by gender (McCraw 2000). Each of these traits has meaning and suggests an insular

organizational structure by being internally focused on the employees and the brands and prioritizing the knowledge and expertise gained internally versus that externally. The symbols become important because it is not just the items and ideas that transmit culture, but the significance behind those symbols. As is described in Chapter 3 Project Design, it becomes the task of the researcher to uncover the meaning present in the symbols. Additionally, as anthropologists, we are required to see and recognize the meaning in the symbols and to see the world through the lens of other's orientation and influences.

The *adaptive* characteristic of culture is important in setting up the background, objectives and research questions that outline the premise of this thesis. As Jordan describes, "Culture can and does change, and it can and does change in relation to the environment; culture is adaptive. Any organization's culture must adapt to changes in this market environment to survive. This adaptive characteristic of culture represents a significant area of research" (2003:48). Adaptation is not only inevitable but also necessary for an organization to be successful and to grow (Jordan and Caulkins 2013). As highlighted in section 1.1 (Historical Context), the state of the market environment during the Great Depression was severe. The first four years of the Great Depression brought a 31 percent drop in real Gross National Product and an 87 percent drop in investment as people stopped building new homes and businesses stopped buying new equipment (McCraw 2000). The company had to create the Market Research Department to understand the needs of the consumers during this time. Although investment fell by 87 percent, consumption only declined by 19 percent (McCraw 2000); people were still eating and cleaning and the Gangler Company needed to adapt their culture to meet these consumption habits.

Finally, culture is interrelated. Organizations consist of a complex web of cultural groupings that interact with and influence one another. Culture is not isolated or impenetrable. As I discuss in Chapter 2.2, the job of organizational anthropologists is to analyze and understand the complex relationships that exist within organizations and how those relationships influence and are influenced by institutional dimensions (Jordan and Caulkins 2013). As was the case with the Market Research Department at Gangler, the culture was influenced by the gender relations during that time, the economic situation, the relationship with their competitors in various categories, and the characteristics of the other departments in the company.

In addition to these characteristics of culture, “the concept of culture is most useful if it helps to explain some of the more seemingly incomprehensible and irrational aspects of groups and organizations” (Schein 1992:15). The culture of an organization helps make sense of the behaviors and ideas of the individuals present. In the following sections, the current external environment along with the objectives and research questions is discussed in more detail.

1.3 Project Overview

1.3.1 Background

In 2007, The Great Recession hit the United States causing significant job loss and decreases in consumer spending and lasting through 2009. As outlined by the Economic Policy Institute, as consumers started to cut back on consumption, business investments also started to collapse, followed by significant job loss. Between 2008 and 2009, 8.4 million jobs were lost, which represents six percent of all payroll employment or the most job loss since the Great

Depression. Similar to changes that came as a result of the market environment during the Great Depression in the 1930s, the culture of the Market Research Department needed to adapt to fit the needs of the consumers in this new economic state. Referring back to our definition of culture, the behaviors, ideas, material articles, and social structures of the entire organization needed to adapt.

Therefore, in 2012, a subgroup within the Market Research Department was formed, calling themselves the Amazon⁴ group. This group, made up of 100 market researchers from around the globe across all management levels, was tasked with assessing the current economic landscape and determining how the organization (as a collective) could help the company continue to be successful. The group's primary evaluation was that the market research organization needed to focus on the consumer as they did back in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. The Market Research Department reflected back on the times of the field girls in a recent video: "As the marketing eyes and ears of the company, field girls were combination detectives, reporters, record keepers and diplomats. Housewives were eager to give their opinions and have their voices heard. So [Gangler] never had to guess what Mrs. Consumer wanted, we knew!" (2014). It is this historical context that fueled the Amazon team. They were on a mission to transform the market research organization, which consisted of approximately 1100 researchers globally, back to being the eyes and ears of consumers. Going back to the sentiment of Matthew Nelson, the market research organization need to help the company know what people wanted in this current market environment. To do this, the Amazon team

⁴ Amazon name was created to ensure confidentiality of the people involved.

understood that a shift in behaviors needed to be made, but they did not account for the other cultural shifts around ideas, artifacts and social structures that would need to transform as well.

1.3.2 Objectives

With the Amazon group only focused on the behavioral shifts that needed to be made, I saw an opportunity to partner with the group to best meet their goal of equipping the market research organization with the tools to enable the broader company to get back to success in the post-Recession market environment. As a member of the Market Research Department myself, I saw firsthand the changes as a result of the economic conditions and the need for a shift to be made (discussed in more detail in chapter 5). By applying a more holistic lens to the problem, I knew there would be greater probability that the Market Research Department would make the necessary mental and behavioral shifts to create a cultural environment reflective of the decades Parker was the leader. Paula Gray describes further,

An anthropologist takes a “holistic” view looking at not only the individuals or group, but also the environment, external forces, language, space and history. An anthropologist is trained to see patterns in systems, behavior, processes, communication and is unafraid to examine the “unspoken” rules, the entrenched behaviors and “religious” beliefs. They possess the ability to look beneath surface behaviors to understand the deeper cultural motivations that inspire those behaviors. They can also uncover the significance and origins of deeply held beliefs and tie them to the cultural structure. [Gray n.d.:8]

With this focus specifically on the cultural shifts needed, I worked with a division of the Amazon group that was formed to assess the cultural aspects of the changes needed. This division was defining and evaluating culture from the casual definitions that many other companies use to assess this concept (as described in section 1.2). They defined culture as those things that can be seen or observed as an output of the organization’s environment.

Therefore, I worked with this team to provide a more holistic definition of culture and provide a research plan to assess, outline, and develop the behaviors, ideas, material artifacts, and social structures needed to be able to find out what consumers want.

1.3.3 Research Question

From this objective stemmed the research question, what is needed to enable a cultural shift in the Market Research Department at the Gangler Company? Patricia Sunderland and Rita Denny discuss how a cultural analysis that a researcher conducts should work to extract the meaning and symbolism from behaviors and objects; therefore, the cultural analysis should be multi-modal and analytical (2009). It should be about listening as well as observing, about actions as well as artifacts, about analytic thinking as well as questioning. It is this counsel that influenced the additional research questions that I would need to answer to meet the overall objective.

RQ 1. What patterns exist in the current Market Research Department?

I wanted to understand how members of the organization were describing the internal environment. From their voice, I wanted these members to describe the knowledge that existed in the organization, the ideas that existed, the behaviors that existed, and the people that were influential to enabling change. As Paula Gray describes, “anthropologists were also intent upon introducing the ‘native’s point of view’ as a powerful and valuable source of empirical data. This latter goal, according to Baba (2006) was meant to distinguish anthropological work from other academic disciplines that also claimed expertise or authority

in the domain of 'corporate culture,' such as psychology, yet often represent culture as an unchanging or monolithic concept" (Gray n.d.:2).

RQ 2. What are the ideas, beliefs, rewards, behaviors, artifacts and social structures present in this current culture?

Drawing on our definition of culture, I needed to assess all of the elements of the current culture present in the Market Research Department. I was concerned with the ideas, behaviors, artifacts and social structures present within the organization and how those things work to support or undermine the culture needed for the company's success in the current market environment. Therefore, I also needed to understand which of the elements present in the current culture needed to be maintained in the future. One of the ways to understand this point was by determining how members of the organization (particularly, those at the lower levels) are rewarded and recognized. Rewards and recognition are oftentimes used to push the interests of high-level employees (or those in power). "A central political dimension is the opportunity to advance interests as legitimate in the eyes of significant others. This involves framing personal interests in terms of more rational and analytically accepted terms, which is more important when the change is challenged" (Alvesson and Sveningsson 2008:17).

Furthermore, it was not just important to understand the formally-recognized rewards but also the informal rewards and biases present.

RQ 3. What metaphors can be used to represent the current behaviors?

To further understand the current culture and help enable cultural shifts, metaphors used by employees were examined as one mode of cultural analysis. As Zaltman (1995) describes, metaphors are how people represent their thoughts. Metaphors can be used to

understand the knowledge and thought patterns that are currently present in a culture, and also can be used to create new knowledge and emergent meanings. The concept of metaphor is described more in Chapter 3.

RQ 4. What is the higher order benefit to change?

It was important for me to understand how both the lower-level members and higher-level members of the organization, respectively, described the benefits of the change and how they might fit into the new cultural environment. Overall, this research question ‘What is needed to enable a cultural shift’ provides a future-oriented lens to understand employees’ vision of the ideal organization as opposed to solely what is present today or what was present in the past. Approaching a research question through this lens is innovative in anthropology; yet as more anthropologists move into the business world, this approach to include a future lens in their analysis will be more common and necessary (see Chapter 2.1). This research question also fits into the business anthropologist’s ability to tackle a variety of problems faced by businesses.

1.4 Description of the Organization and the Company

As I sought to answer these questions, it was important for me to conduct the research among a representative sample (in terms of hierarchy, gender, division within the company and years with the company); however, first, I needed to understand the demographic breakdown of the Gangler Company. Gangler has approximately 118,000 employees globally, of which the Market Research Department makes up 980 (8%). Within the Market Research Department, seven percent is non-management and the other ninety-three percent is spread across six band

levels (which is described further in chapter 3). The CEO of the Gangler Company is band 9; however, the leader of the Market Research Department is band 6. Bands 7 and 8 are reserved for the chief officers of marketing, finance, and R&D, and operations. The majority of the management organization is band 3 and below (88%), making the average length of service in the Market Research Department 9.75 years. The department is dispersed geographically with the two primary hubs being North America (United States) and Europe (Switzerland), which make up thirty-seven percent and thirty-one percent of the department, respectively. This research is focused in the North America region, which comprises the following functions or divisions within the company: product supply (61%), R&D (14%), sales (9%), finance (4%), marketing (3%), human resources (2%) market research (1%), design (1%), public relations (0.3%); with the remaining four percent falling into a myriad of small divisions.

Within the Market Research Department, the employees are sub-divided into three areas—brands, corporate and regions. Because the company was founded on brands and brand management, the majority of the Market Research Department (52%) is on a brand sector; whereas, the other forty-eight percent is spread across corporate and regional divisions. Lastly, the most characterizing demographic of the Market Research Department is the dominance of women. It is more heavily populated by females, which make up sixty-two percent of the department. In chapter 3, I provide more information on the demographics of the organization as it pertains to the research conducted as well as discuss from which division I chose to source my participants.

1.5 Theoretical Framework Overview

Throughout this chapter, I have discussed the Market Research Department at Gangler Company and how the organization has shifted throughout its history to react to changes in the market environment. This perspective leverages new institutional theory. This theoretical perspective encompasses many different paths and approaches (some of which is discussed in Chapter 2); however, I am utilizing the path set forth by anthropologist Marietta Baba (2009). Baba draws on the early work of anthropologist W. Lloyd Warner 1947 to discuss the Anthropology of Institutions. Warner has been re-interpreted as an institutional anthropologist due to his influence in re-shaping American anthropology to be more focused on complex societies and the institutional elements that impact them (Baba 2009). Warner's work (Warner and Low 1947) outlining the evolution of the shoe-making factories in Yankee City is credited with forming the initial anthropological approach to contemporary institutions (Baba 2009). Warner and Low's framework places organizations at the discretion of economic and social institutions (see Figure 1.1). Those institutions provide the context surrounding organization dynamics, shifts, and behaviors. Specifically, institutions provide the "foundational elements of the social contexts in which formal organizations are embedded" (Baba et al. 2013: 76). Meaning, institutions provide anthropologists (and other social scientists) with a basis for conceptualizing the environment in which an organization or entity dwells (which highlighted in Chapter 2.4).

These institutions explain changes that have taken place over time in particular organizations as well as the interactions between various organizational elements. "The processes of economic change enabled a new set of norms, rules, and constructs to arise within

civil society (e.g., the value and legitimacy of a union), and these institutional changes affected not only the community but also the factories and other formal organizations” (Baba et al. 2013: 82).

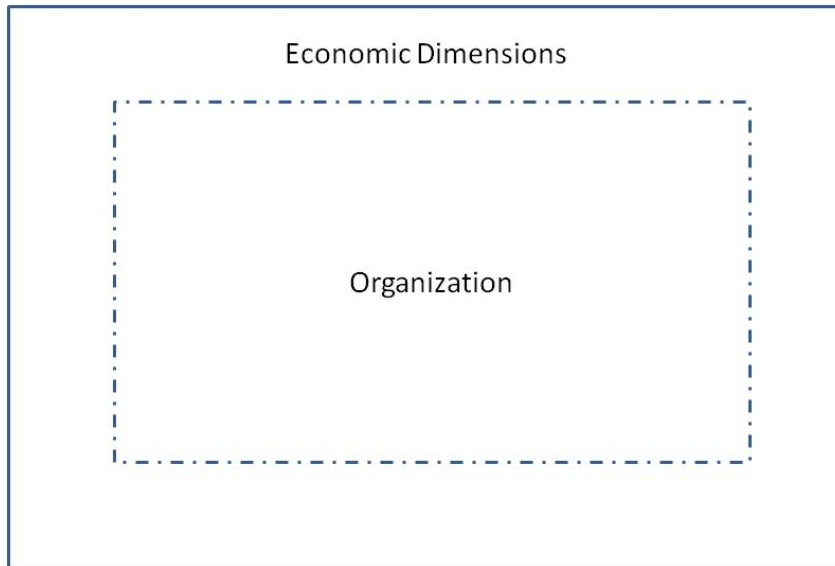


Fig. 1.1. Context surrounding organizations.

Therefore, new institutionalism is used to explain the organizational change that is needed as a product of the economic downturn experience with the Great Recession (2007-2009) and how the behaviors of the individual members of that organization are also influenced by the economic dimensions.

CHAPTER 2

CONTEXT OF WORK

2.1 Theoretical Perspective: Introduction

As presented in the Chapter 1, New Institutional Theory places institutions at the forefront of analysis and treats organizations as the product of institutional changes, such as economic factors, social factors, and environmental factors. Within this chapter, I discuss the anthropological perspective on institutions. To do this, I first begin by discussing organizational anthropology, organizational change, how new institutionalism is defined, and new institutionalism in the social sciences.

2.2 Organizational Anthropology

Organizational anthropology is a study of the beliefs, behaviors, artifacts and social structures in an organization (i.e. the culture within the organization), acknowledging that the organization is a web of interacting cultural groupings of which one must study as well. Organizational anthropology is multi-faceted, inclusive of many areas of studies; this is dictated by the fact that organizations themselves are very complex and the cultural grouping within them are interwoven and interconnected (as was described in Chapter 1.2). Foci of studies include interorganizational relationships, relationships between organizations and other aspects of their complex external environments, and internal dynamics of organizations (Jordan and Caulkins 2013). Therefore, as I seek to understand what is needed to enable a cultural shift within the market research organization at Gangler, I am focusing primarily on the relationship between the organization and the external environment and how the culture of the Market

Research Department might need to adapt to adhere to the changing external landscape. Specifically, what are the beliefs, behaviors, artifacts and social structures of the current organization that would need to change in light of the institutional influences stimulated by the economy?

2.3 Organizational Change and a Future-Oriented Lens

Organizational change is a broad area of study consisting of interests in the time span of the change, the need for change, context and levels of analysis of the change, the content of change, actors of change, and the theoretical perspective (Alvesson and Sveningsson 2008). Each of these areas of interest is discussed throughout the remainder of this thesis, particularly in section 2.2, section 2.5, section 3.2, and section 4.3.

This broad area of interests attracts a broad range of disciplines and researchers. Organizational anthropologists are concerned with organizational change (as is discussed later in this section); but organizational change is also studied by organizational behavioralists, business management consultants, human resources, and sociologists. Organizational change seeks to understand the scale of change, the source of change, the politics of change and the content of change; therefore, each of these disciplines may prioritize one (or a few) of these views, but all fall under the umbrella of organizational change. For instance (as was shown in section 1.3b), human resources prioritized the content of change when assessing the change needed within the Market Research Department, while I was more concerned with the source and politics of change (which is in line with the approach of organizational anthropologists).

As Paula Gray discusses, organizational anthropology is often used to study organizational changes. “This domain focuses inside the firm and analyzes the behaviors of the people and groups that make up the company’s workforce. This study may be done in order to effect changes in these behaviors” (Gray 2). This work to effect change is very much applied anthropology work and has been studied by many business anthropologists, namely Ann Jordan, Elizabeth K. Briody, and Marietta Baba.

Additionally, as discussed in section 2.2, organizational anthropology is concerned with the relationship between the organization and the external environment. The dynamics of this relationship usually brings about a need for organizational change. Thus, I am seeking to understand the source and politics of the change by understanding the internal (politics) and external (source) relationships impacting the Market Research Department at Gangler.

Furthermore, I am seeking to not just understand the cultural elements present within the organization today, but also which of these cultural elements would need to change in the future to enable the organization to get back to finding out what consumers want and giving it to them. This question provides a future lens whereby to observe and understand the ideal organization (in this case, as outlined by the leader of the Amazon group, displaying those cultural characteristics present in the 1930s with the field girls) as opposed to solely what is present today or what was present in the past (Durkheim 1966). This future lens is uncommon in anthropology but a necessary lens, especially in organizational anthropology. In the ever-changing business and market context, applied anthropologists must be able to contribute to the business sector by influencing their mid and long-term strategies; not just diagnosing and

solving current problems or designing initiatives for today. As Emile Durkheim describes, by focusing on the present and the past, our research immediately becomes dated:

If, therefore, reality can be thus understood at a glance, the study of present phenomenal reality is no longer of any practical interest; and, as this interest is the justification for its study, it is henceforth without a purpose. Thus, an incentive is given to turn from the very subject of our science, namely, the present and the past, and to proceed at once to the future. Instead of seeking a comprehension of facts already acquired, it undertakes immediately to discover new ones, more in accord with the ends pursued by end. [Durkheim 1966:16]

This future lens that is inherent in my research question enables me to uncover new facts and explanations; but many authors have described organizational change as being difficult and requiring long timeframes. Alvesson and Svengingsson describe how intentional and systematic organizational cultural change is difficult due in large part to cultural constraints held by both the lower-level and higher-level employees. This is especially true in a company such as Gangler which only conducts promotions among internal employees. Another barrier is that many cultural changes initiated by higher-level management usually are targeted toward changing the culture of the lower-level employees versus learning how to change themselves (which is a big inhibitor in organizational change; described further in Chapter 4 (2008).

Another difficulty comes with needing to change the incentives to promote the behaviors and ideas needed in the ideal culture. Alvesson and Svengingsson (2008), Quick (1992), Aguilera (1996), and Schein (1992) describe how to promote and sustain change and are consistent in their discussions on techniques that require the organization to take action in their approach to change. These techniques become critical to understand and enact because as Schein (1992) describes, all human systems work to maintain equilibrium and status quo. As external environments change, human beings cope and survive by attempting to keep the various

groups and systems that they are a part of consistent. Humans need to have a certain level of predictability and consistency to make sense of the world around them and to organize the beliefs, values, and assumptions that comprise their cognitive structures. “The set of shared assumptions that develop over time in groups and organizations serves this stabilizing and meaning-providing function” (1992:298). Since human systems work to maintain stability in the changing environment; higher-level members of organizations must utilize techniques that promote change while also intentionally maintaining current cultural elements that promote the ideal world. As learned from the historical context, for the Market Research Department at Gangler, change is needed in order to be successful in the changing environment. It is this tension that requires organizational change to be intentional and action oriented.

One commonly presented technique in organizational change literature to overcoming this tension is to use a process of unfreezing. Aguilera describes how Kurt Lewin created this change process model using the Ice Age as a metaphor to effectively enact organizational change. Unfreezing the present behavior patterns “involves making the need for change so obvious that the individual group or organization can readily see and accept it” (1996:736). This process of unfreezing is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4 Description of Deliverables.

As I leverage new institutionalism as the theoretical perspective framing this thesis, it is important to acknowledge the connection back to organizational change. As Baba et al. describe, “Understanding organizational change is particularly important to the development of new institutional approaches to understanding formal organizations” (2013:74). Furthermore, Baba et al. describe how organizational anthropologists could learn from institutional approaches in their analyses. “How institutions come into being, reproduce, and change is a

central question across the social sciences, especially in the organizational and policy arenas” (2013:76). Therefore, I would like to establish a clear connection between organizational anthropology and new institutionalism and how they can work to advance the discipline and theory, respectively.

2.4 New Institutionalism: Defined

In chapter 1, I introduced new institutionalism as a theoretical perspective that proposes that organizations are influenced by institutional factors surrounding them, and these institutions affect the organization as well as its members. In this chapter, I expand upon this definition and provide more detail into the approach. Jordan and Caulkins quote Baba et al. and provide more perspective on institutional analyses:

They state “(n)ew institutional theory, with its focus on processes of institutionalization, could be an interdisciplinary approach to address major societal and economic issues” (this volume). Institutional analysis does not require the traditional perspective of a focal subject or a singular point of view but instead allows for actor-actor and translocal interactions and can reflect divergent perspectives and possible oppositional forces. They explore three analytical dimensions of an anthropological approach to new institutionalism: (i) actors, (ii) interactions, and (iii) multiple perspectives. Three types of actors are found in institutional theory; individuals, organizations, and societies (usually nation-states). [2013:16]

This establishment of new institutionalism’s focus on both the individual and the organization and how those two actors are influenced by society, is critical to my thesis and provides the framework for how I designed my project.

New Institutionalism leverages the idea that institutions are “foundational elements of the social contexts in which formal organizations are embedded” (Baba et al. 2013:76). These foundational elements are often hard to conceptualize because they include both actions that

promote change and constraints that promote stability (Baba et al. 2013). Furthermore, Richard Scott (2008) concludes that institutions are made up of regulatory, normative, and cultural-cognitive elements that could provide stability or encourage action (Figure 2.1). In the case of the Gangler Company, the economy is the establishment (per the traditional definition of institutions as constitutions, courts, schools, marriage and the family (Baba et al. 2013) that has the most influence on the organization and the need for organizational change; but the economy as an institution manifests itself in all three forms. In terms of regulatory, the state of the economy governs the buying and selling of homes, unemployment, investments, and consumption through tax increases, fiscal and monetary policy changes, or government involvement. For example, during the 1930s, the New Deal introduced by Franklin Roosevelt regulated labor and Social Security among others things, “The most important of these were Social Security, unemployment compensation, the minimum wage, support of the labor movement, and the management of aggregate demand through deficit spending—all of which, together with the regulatory measures described below, became part of what some historians came to call “the New Deal Order” (McCraw 2000:69).

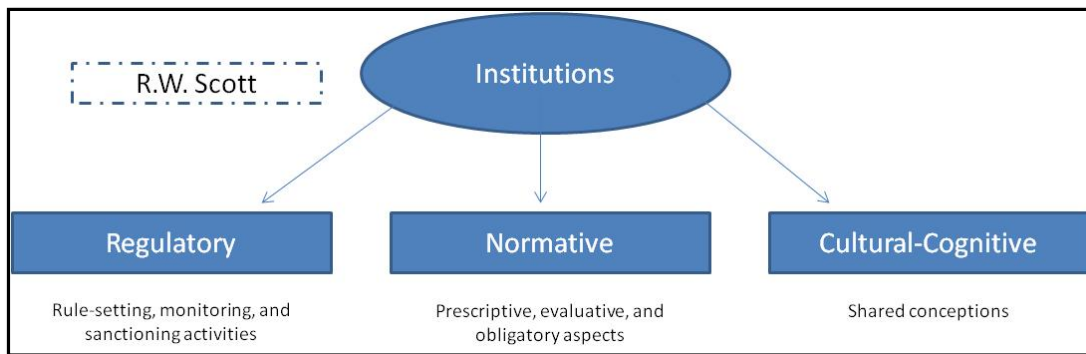


Fig. 2.1. Scott’s institutional elements.

The normative element displayed by the economic conditions could impact how individuals budgeted, spent time with their families, and consumed products. In the case of Gangler in the 1930s, consumption did not follow the same declines that investments saw, especially among the categories that Gangler manufactured and sold. “Many people went from year to year without buying new houses, new cars, or even new clothes. But they did not stop eating or doing the laundry or washing dishes” (McCraw 2000: 41). The economic environment created conditions where individuals were left with tighter budgets and the need to be more fiscally responsible, but they needed to use the money they did have on products that the Gangler Company happened to sell—consumables. Therefore, Gangler had more of an obligation to find out what people wanted and give it to them before their competition did. And they did just that, according to McCraw, “[Gangler] during the 1930s achieved more than twice the U.S. market share of either Verner Brothers⁵ or the Thomas Company⁶. The three together controlled about 80 percent of the American market, with [Gangler] alone at just under 50 percent” (2000:46-47).

In regard to the cultural-cognitive element, one of the shared conceptions associated with economic factors is that the economy is stimulated by efficiency in production. Thomas McCraw describes this connection to economic slowdown, “The reasons for this significant slowdown are not well understood, but the principal cause seems to have been a drop in annual productivity gains—that is, in growth of output per hour worked; part of the reason for this decline was the nation’s broad shift toward a service economy and the difficulty in

⁵ Verner Brothers was a name created to ensure confidentiality of the company and people involved.

⁶ Thomas Company was a name created to ensure confidentiality of the company and people involved.

measuring productivity gains in services” (2000:160). In the case of the Gangler Company, the employees could spend their time connecting with consumers because the company tried to keep layoffs at a minimum. Therefore, the employees were not focused on the possibility of losing their jobs as many Americans were during this time.

The cognitive, normative and regulative elements of institutions provide the needed stability that human systems work to promote as well as provide meaning to the behaviors and attitudes and social structures that were carried by organizational culture. “In this conceptualization, institutions are multifaceted systems incorporating symbolic systems—cognitive constructions and normative rules—and regulative processes carried out through and shaping social behavior. Meaning systems, monitoring processes, and actions are interwoven” (Scott 1995:33-34). It is these institutional elements and their interactions that anthropologists are interested in. Anthropologists want to understand how these interactions evolve in light of contextual differences as well as which elements become institutionalized in a culture (Baba et al. 2013). This notion is represented in section 2.3.

The term institutionalization describes the process by which institutional elements become engrained in an organization, system or structure (Baba et al. 2013). Durkheim describes the process of institutionalization along a continuum, suggesting that not all institutions manifest themselves equally across the three pillars that Scott defined. Figure 2.2 provides a visual representation of Durkheim’s model. This concept of institutionalization is important to outline here because as Scott (1995) discusses, it is not just the institutions themselves that influence organizations and its members, but it is also how deeply entrenched that institutional element is within the organizational culture. The institutionalization of

institutional elements causes members of organizations to conform to the rules (articulated and unarticulated) of the organization at the expense of the changes needed for the organizations to succeed. “The strength of these pressures is such that officials are prone to follow the rules to the point of rigidity, formalism, even ritualism” (1995:17). For example, the need for efficiency that stemmed from the economic cultural-cognitive pillar proposes companies need to constantly be improving their profits year on year and doing more work with fewer people (see section 4.4). This institutional element was shown in the 1960s when the market research organization stopped employing field girls and started relying on the telephone to connect with consumers because it was cheaper and easier. Throughout the decades, this institutional element would be on the far right of the institutionalization continuum (see Figure 2.2) because it dictates how the organization conducts research, talks to consumers, interacts with each other, and makes choices (see chapter 4).

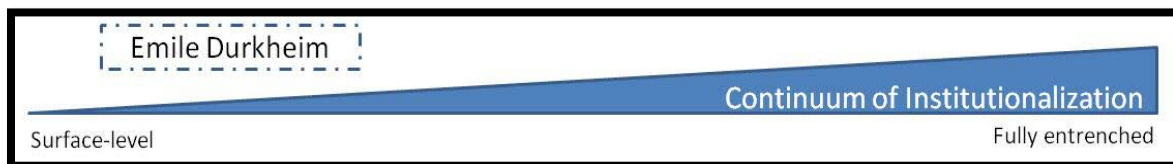


Fig. 2.2. Durkheim’s continuum of institutionalization.

Therefore, institutionalization also denotes a stability of institutional elements or processes over time. This stability can be a deterrent to the unfreezing process that Aguilera (1996) discussed or an incitement to the refreezing process that must occur. In either case, those behaviors, ideas or processes that are maintained over time require explanation and analysis (Scott, 1995). This analysis of the Market Research Department at Gangler is discussed in chapter 3.

2.5 New Institutionalism: In the Social Sciences

I have given an overview of New Institutional theory, but the way this theoretical perspective is approached varies by disciplines within the social sciences. This variability in approaches stems from the historical foundation of how this theory was first introduced in the mid-1970s to each of the disciplines. As is described in more detail in this section, the economic approach focused on the modified rational framework (versus that of the early institutional economists). Within political science, two approaches came to prominence; one that built upon the early institutional political scientists and one that utilized a modified version of the economic new institutional models. The primary approach among new institutional sociologists was to emphasize cognitive frameworks and understand the effects of external environment on organizations versus intraorganizational processes (Scott 1995). In each case, this theoretical perspective manifests itself differently, so I briefly describe how each discipline approaches this theoretical perspective and then give a thorough description in section 2.4 of how anthropologists are currently approaching New Institutionalism and what the opportunities are in the future to become more entrenched in this perspective.

2.5.1 Economics

New institutional economic theories focus primarily on firm-level structures and, specifically, why some economic exchanges are performed inside the firm structure versus in the marketplace (Scott, 1995). Here, Scott is leveraging Ronald Coase's definition of firm, which is the "supersession of the price mechanism" (1937:389). Coase describes this definition further: "Outside the firm, price movements direct production, which is co-ordinated through a

series of exchange transactions on the market. Within a firm, these market transactions are eliminated and in place of the complicated market structure with exchange transactions is substituted entrepreneur, co-ordinator who directs production” (1937:388). In this case, firms are used to describe the companies, businesses, and organizations within a specific industry. Therefore, new institutional economists are concerned with how the regulatory elements (see Chapter 1) of an institution affect a firm, where the economic exchanges are coupled with hierarchical enforcement to regulate and manage people and systems (Scott 1995).

2.5.2 Political Science

New institutional political science theorists can be grouped into two different viewpoints: the historical and the rational choice theorists. It is important to establish this distinction up front since these two groups of theorists do not share many commonalities. Scott describes what these two groups agree on: “both political science camps share a view of the importance of institutions in political life and share an interest in attempting to account for the distinctive features of political institutions and in examining their effects on individual behavior, there are few other commonalities” (1995:28). However, historical institutionalists define political systems as both being influenced by institutional elements and as being from institutional structures, themselves. Furthermore, this group believes behaviors of individuals (or actors) are dictated by institutional forces and can only be understood in that context (Scott 1995). Scott elaborates, “Individual preferences are not stable and often result from rather than precede or determine choices. Institutions construct actors and define their available modes of action; they constrain behavior, but they also empower it” (Scott 1995:27).

Whereas, rational choice theorists view institutional forces similarly to institutional economic theorists, where individuals do have influence over their behaviors, and their interactions are not solely dictated by the exchanges in the marketplace, especially in situations where individuals need to promote or protect their interests (Scott 1995). Rational choice theorists go further and state that economic factors and exchanges could be applied to political systems; they, therefore, make many parallels between economic organizations and political institutions, “economic organizations and institutions are explained in the same way: they are structures that emerge and take the specific form they do because they solve collective-action problems and thereby facilitate gains from trade” (Moe 1990a:217-218).

2.5.3 Sociology

New institutional sociology theorists take the cultural-cognitive view (see Chapter 1) of institutions and their influence, where individuals are constrained by their conceptions of reality. Scott describes this viewpoint and the authorities in this field: “Drawing on the insights from Durkheim, Silverman (1971) argues that meanings operate not only in the minds of individuals but are also objective ‘social facts’ residing in social institutions” (1995:29-30). As Durkheim describes social facts, they are a “category of facts with very distinctive characteristics; it consists of ways of acting, thinking, and feeling, external to the individual, and endowed with a power of coercion, by reason of which they control him” (1966:3). Given this definition, sociology theorists believe all of the individual’s behaviors are products of their socially-constructed view of the world. There are some sociology theorists who favor more of

the economy theorist's and rational choice theorist's views, but this group is much smaller in this subfield (Scott 1995).

With this brief description of how new institutionalism is manifested across the social sciences, I am using the next section to describe the goals of new institutional anthropology theorists.

2.6 New Institutionalism: In Anthropology

New institutionalism is not as developed in anthropology as it is in the other social sciences; however, anthropologists have a long history of seeking to understand individuals, groups, and organizations within a broader context. Additionally, within organizational anthropology, anthropologists are concerned with the beliefs, behaviors and artifacts in an organization. They seek to understand how cultural groupings form and how they interact with each other. This inquisition is at the basis of new institutionalism in anthropology: "A goal of institutional research in anthropology is to understand the perspectives and interests, actions and interactions among actors, how they influence one another, and what difference this makes to the subject of our inquiry" (Baba et al. 2013:89).

Although this theoretical perspective is not highly developed within anthropology, there are key influencers and authorities in this emerging field of interest. In Marietta Baba's 1995 work "Culture Ecology of the Corporation," she describes how a group's external environment influences their actions and interactions: "Cultural ecology conceptualizes the culture of a human social group as a response to that group's environment including influences emanating from other cultures in that environment" (Baba 1995:204). Marietta Baba has since become an

authority in new institutional approaches in formal institutions having written several papers and articles in this field. Marietta Baba is a business anthropologist who has done extensive research leveraging new institutionalism in her work, “Work Mobility to Norway from Poland: New Institutional Perspectives on ‘Social Dumping’” (2009).

Although, not an anthropologist, the work of sociologist W. Richard Scott 2008 has been influential in furthering the thinking of anthropologists, including Baba, Blomberg, LaBond, and Adams who have written on new institutionalism. Scott contributed in the area of dividing institutions into regulatory, normative and cultural-cognitive elements. Additionally, “Scott’s work is valuable in helping to dispel a misimpression of institutions only as reputable establishments of the public and civil sections (e.g. constitutions, courts, schools, marriage, and the family)” (Baba et al. 2013:77). Both Scott and Baba (among other authorities in this field) credit and cite French sociologist Emile Durkheim as one of the earliest influencers of institutional theories. Durkheim emphasized the importance of symbolic systems (systems of knowledge, belief, and ‘moral authority’) and social facts in understanding behavior and perceptions. These systems are perceived to be objective and prescriptive (or placed upon the individual or organization) but are actually subjectively formed and, therefore, can be altered (Scott 1995). These social facts that Durkheim described are the institutions of institutional theories. As described in section 3 of this chapter, social facts govern our actions, thoughts, and ideas; which is how institutions are described, especially by political science and historical economic theorists.

As Scott alluded to in his description, sociologist and political economist Max Weber is also a key influencer in institutional perspectives. Having written *Economy and Society: An*

Interpretive Sociology, Weber discusses the cultural-cognitive, regulatory and normative institutional elements of class, power, status, religion, etc. Scott describes further: “Although Weber did not explicitly employ the concept of ‘institution,’ his work is permeated with a concern for understanding the ways in which cultural rules—ranging in nature from customary mores to legally defined constitutions or rule systems—define social structures and govern social behavior, including economic structures and behavior”(Scott 1995:11). Although Durkheim and Weber are not explicitly trained in anthropology, they have influenced anthropological thought as new institutionalism is forming in anthropology. In the next section, I describe the development of new institutionalism in anthropology and how an anthropological approach can contribute to this theoretical perspective.

2.7 New Institutionalism: Anthropology’s Potential Contributions

The anthropological viewpoint and methodology can be utilized to contribute to new institutionalism and encourage a distinct approach within this social science. The anthropological viewpoint can be influential as we think about each of the concepts of New Institutionalism. The institutional elements, institutionalization, institutions as encouraging stability and change, institutions as solely governing individuals, institutions as partially governing individuals, and institutions as symbolic systems— can all be influenced by anthropology.

As described in chapter 1, the process of institutionalization can be a long process because it requires institutional elements (or social facts as Durkheim referred to them) to be engrained within the organization or firm. Anthropology is uniquely positioned to observe and

analyze these long-term processes through ethnographic methods. Ethnographic fieldwork and/or archival analysis lend themselves to studying and documenting these types of processes. Institutionalization processes are complex; they are engrained in the organization on a myriad of levels and cross cultural groupings and cover an extended period of time (Baba et al. 2013). This type of complexity required the analytical teachings of anthropologists as described earlier in Chapter 1.2.

It is not, therefore, just the duration of institutionalization that ethnographic methods can examine, but also the complexity. It includes the ability to conduct a layered analysis. Ethnography is useful for this type of analysis because it examines ourselves and others in their various cultural contexts and groupings and works to dissect the meaning within cultural traits (i.e. those elements that help identify the artifacts, ideas, behaviors, and social structures) within organizations or groups. It enables the researcher to become a part of the group being examined in order to understand the organizations from the perspective of a participant and observer. It is this data collection and analysis process of self and others that lends itself toward the complexity of long-term examination of institutionalization.

The ethnographic method also helps examine the symbolic nature of institutions as Emile Durkheim promoted. In section 2.4, I discussed how Durkheim defines institutions as symbolic systems (systems of belief and 'collective representations'). These symbolic systems require interpretation which ethnography is suited to address through its ability help the researcher break down people's and group's shared meanings, perceptions, assumptions and generalizations of behaviors and attitudes. "The ethnographic strategy of anthropology seeks to understand and interpret research participants' point(s) of view, especially through linguistic

and discursive representations, an approach that seems especially well suited to capture the emergence (or lack thereof) of such symbolic systems” (Baba et al. 2013:79). Anthropology’s focus on culture—or the ideas, behaviors, material artifacts, and social structures in a group or society—requires the employment of tools and methods that acknowledge the tangible cultural elements of behaviors and material artifacts but also the intangible elements of ideas, thought and attitudes.

Institutional analysis does not just require the interpretation of static systems and organizations but also the interpretation of the interactions of systems and groupings. Organizational anthropology, specifically, is concerned with these cultural groupings (as discussed in section 2.1) and how they interact with one another. This interest within organizational anthropology is a potential contribution to new institutionalism; therefore, one of the goals of new institutionalism in anthropology should be to understand the interactions among the regulatory, normative and cultural-cognitive institutional elements and explore how they are represented along temporal and spatial contexts (Baba et al. 2013).

Anthropologists can uniquely contribute to these dimensions, especially within a global context, as much of anthropological thought originated from the perspective of studying others in non-western communities. Furthermore, anthropologists are interested in understanding people in context and interpreting their behaviors and attitudes across spatial and temporal contexts as described above. This perspective creates a unique tie between new institutionalism and the anthropology discipline (Baba et al. 2013).

Finally, anthropology can contribute to new institutionalism through its focus on practice, whether the practices of the anthropologists themselves or the practices of the

participants of study. Specifically, within organizational anthropology, the routines and behaviors of the collective members of the organization are important to understand as it pertains to the relationships within the organizational and external to the organization and identifying the cultural patterns. Institutional theorists are also concerned with practice. “Everyday practice is at the heart of institutions, as the habitual actions and interactions of subjects or agents are what constitute the production and reproduction of institutions (Barley and Tolbert 1997); one of anthropology’s greatest claims to disciplinary integrity is its expertise in recognizing, interpreting, and narrating such practices” (Baba et al. 2013:80). These ways in which anthropology can contribute to new institutionalism can all occur today through methods and approaches that currently exist in the discipline. The primary challenge is in employing these tools to establish a distinct anthropological approach and voice to new institutionalism.

It is in this way that my research contributes to new institutionalism within anthropology. As Baba et al. describe, “No distinctly anthropological voice has developed from the field’s reflection upon the nature of institutions and their role and meaning in human experience” (2013:75). In Chapter 3 and 4, I present my project design and project deliverables that reflect upon the influence of institutional factors on how the Market Research Department at Gangler behaves and thinks. Economic (stocks, shareholder return, and profitability) and social (risk of job loss, drive for attention, and lack of trust) factors that exist within the corporate sector are highlighted within Chapter 4 Description of Deliverables.

Another way my work contributes to the discipline is through my focus on institutional influence in relation to the historical context. As referenced earlier in this section, how the

institutional elements manifest themselves along temporal and spatial contexts is a potential contribution for anthropologists in this theoretical perspective; therefore, as I discuss and compare the Gangler company now and in the future, it is also in relation to the historical context that was presented in Chapter 1.1.

The spatial context is not explored as much within this thesis as it pertains to global distinctions of institutional influence. As is described in Chapter 3 Project Design, the research did include a select group of employees located outside of the United States within the Market Research Department, but my research was primarily focused on the cultural context present within the Gangler Headquarters, which is located in the United States.

With this in mind, I chose to leverage new institutionalism as a theoretical perspective because it helps to answer key questions that the discipline of anthropology is concerned with: 1) why certain patterns of behavior and meaning persist over time while others do not and 2) interaction of formal organizations and the larger society.

CHAPTER 3
PROJECT DESIGN

3.1 Introduction: Four Stages

As discussed in Chapter 2, a new institutional approach requires a focus on 1) the normative, regulatory, and cultural-cognitive elements of institutions, 2) the actors (individuals and the organization) and their interactions, 3) the static and dynamic characteristics of institutions and their influence, and 4) institutionalization and temporal contexts. Based on these factors, my research plan was organized into four key stages with corresponding research questions (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1.

Research stages.

#	Research Question	Research Stage	Institutional Focus
1	What patterns exist in the current Market Research Department?	Assess the <u>articulated patterns</u> in the current environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional Elements • Institutionalization
2	What are the ideas, beliefs, rewards, behaviors, artifacts, and social structures present in this current culture?	Identify the unarticulated patterns. Determine if those patterns <u>support or undermine</u> the culture change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actors and Interactions • Static and dynamic characteristics
3	What metaphors can be used to represent the current behaviors?	<u>Illustrate</u> how to best “support” the change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Static and dynamic characteristics
4	What is the higher order benefit to change?	Drive the <u>benefits</u> of change in the organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutionalization

From these research questions and stages, I then put together a research plan that would enable me to appropriately answer each of the questions (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2.

Research plan.

Stage	Research Question(s)	Techniques/Activities
Identify patterns in the current culture	<p>What patterns exist in the current Market Research Department?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do the participants describe the current landscape? • What is the cultural knowledge that is currently present? What goods are consumed? • What are the barriers to activation? • What projects/groups are potentially displaying the ideal behavior? • Who do we need to influence? Who will be challenging to influence? • What symbols are present in the organizational environment? <p>Where are there disconnections in the landscape (i.e. things that don't fit the pattern)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Analyze existing cultural data to find barriers to change and patterns in the culture</i> <p><i>Use Globaledg themes and other culture data (74 responses)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Analyze organization's collages by interviewing creators</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>9 CMK Interviews (lower-level employees)</i> ○ <i>Global Representation</i> <p><i>Be looking for symbols/meanings in the organization—leverage matrix in "Organizational Symbolism"</i></p>
Determine if patterns	<p>What are the ideas, beliefs, rewards, behaviors, artifacts present in this current culture?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do those things work to enforce the current culture? • What would need to be maintained in the ideal landscape? • What values are associated with this current culture? Ideal culture? • What are the rewards/recognitions present in current culture? • Should recruiting change as a result of the shift? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Participant Observation</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1 team (15 multi-functional)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Qualitative Research</i> <p><i>Assess interplay of different types of research</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Analyze communication patterns</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>30 formal emails</i> ○ <i>High-level employees in Market Research Department</i> <p><i>Analyze the culture at three levels: artifacts, values, and assumptions</i></p>

Illustrate the	<p>What do the current behaviors resemble?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What examples exist that could be used as symbols for this transformation? • What are the character traits of the ideal landscape? How does that differ from the character traits of the current landscape? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>In-depth Interview</i> <i>Laddering Discussion, Metaphor Elicitation</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>6 Interviews (Market Research Department employees band 2-4)</i> • <i>Leverage previous interviews/observations</i> <i>Including analysis of internal consumer goods</i>
Drive the benefits of	<p>What is the higher order benefit to change?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would the participant express this new experience? • What is the advantage to this ideal landscape? What is the value for the participant? • Are these benefits able to overcome the “cost” associated with this shift? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Analysis</i> <i>Code interviews (use techniques from “Techniques to Identify Themes”)</i> • <i>Apply Research</i> <i>PowerPoint presentation for Amazon team and band 5 communities</i>

3.2 Research Stage 1: Assess the Articulated Patterns in the Current Environment

My goal in this stage of research was to assess the *articulated* ideas, behaviors, material artifacts, and social structures held in the Market Research Department and identify what patterns existed in the organizational culture. It was important for me to assess the articulated ideas (not just the unarticulated that are displayed in the next section) during this first stage to become grounded in the various cultural groupings the members of the organization consider themselves a part of. For instance, two primary groupings that are referenced often in chapter 3 and 4 are “lower-level members” and “higher-level members.” Lower-level members of the organization are those members who are a part of the management group. They are charged with executing many of the day-to-day initiatives and projects. The higher-level members are those members who are a part of the director group. They are charged with providing strategic direction for the organization and are often providing guidance through meetings versus executing initiative work (as is the case with the lower-levels). They also operate across six

levels of hierarchy (referred to as “band levels”), so the lower-level members are band 1, band 2, and band 3; and the higher-level members are band 4, band 5, and band 6. In regard to the background behind this study, it is the higher-level members who have been verbally pushing the need to get back to an authentic connection with consumers; while the higher-level members believe the lower-level members are not acting in accordance with the verbal communication. A distinction such as this is important when determining the barriers and enablers to cultural shift inside what could be classified as a very hierarchical organization. Therefore, during this stage, I was focused on identifying the ideas and behaviors that were communicated by both the lower-level and higher-level members of the organization. I wanted to understand what widely-held beliefs were engrained or institutionalized within the Market Research Department. I was able to identify the articulated elements by analyzing the existing qualitative and quantitative data of a third-party company Globaledg, by interviewing members of the organization that had created collages representing the Market Research Department, and by gathering case studies and stories present within the organization that had been passed down and retold over time (see Chapter 4 for example).

Globaledg, a HR-focused company, works with executives and leaders to accelerate their development within an organization. This company was solicited by the Amazon group to understand the barriers that existed in the Market Research Department that inhibit the organization from accelerating and practicing Matthew Nelson’s purpose. The company conducted 30 interviews across the six band levels within the Market Research Department and invited 150 employees to participate in an online survey with 74 people responding (see Table 3.3). From these research studies, they were able to group the barriers that emerged into five

themes: business partnering, risk taking, decision making, leading with confidence, and collaborating within the Market Research Department. They then summarized their conclusions utilizing both the quantitative and qualitative data into a PowerPoint presentation, which I used to assess the patterns present in the organization. This company was able to uncover some of the barriers present toward “finding out what consumers want and giving it to them” and provided context of whether those barriers were unique to the Market Research Department or typical of other functions in other companies. I reviewed their work and formed a hypothesis around why those barriers were embedded in the culture and what would be needed to enable a shift in the cultural landscape.

Table 3.3.

Globaledg research demographics.

Research Method	Band level	Division in the organization	Other demographics
Qualitative Interviews (30 participants)	band 2=4 (13%) band 3=4 (13%) band 4=6 (20%) band 5=8 (27%) band 6=8 (27%)	Confidential—no access*	Confidential—no access*
Quantitative Survey (74 respondents)	Non-mgmt=4 (5%) band 1=13 (18%) band 2=24 (32%) band 3=15 (20%) band 4=13 (18%) band 5=5 (7%)	Brand=43 (58%) Corporate=14 (19%) Region=17 (23%)	Confidential—no access*

*Because this data was from a third-party supplier, I was not given access to the demographic information of the participants as to keep their identity confidential.

Prior to the review of the Globaledg work, I was unsure whether the lower level members of the organization wanted to shift and get back to the old way in which the Market Research Department conducted research back in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. The research question as it was presented allowed for one of the barriers toward enabling a cultural shift to be resistance to the reasons behind the shift and a resistance to the need for the shift. However, following the Globaledg work, I was able to eliminate lack of need or desire for change as a barrier. Therefore, as I proceeded to assessing the articulated cultural elements and which of these might be inhibiting the shift, I was able to start from the premise of what is disabling a cultural shift when both the lower and higher level members of the organization feel there is a need.

With this narrowed frame, I then analyzed a series of collages that existed in the organization that served as material artifacts of the lower level portion of the Market Research Department. Twenty-seven collages were created by a mix of individuals and business teams (either regional or brand) in August 2013 across the globe, to visually represent what excited them about the Market Research Organization—today and in the future (see Figure 3.2). The culture team within the Amazon group solicited the organization via a monthly-generated newsletter that goes out to the global Market Research Department to create these collages to be used with the higher-level members of the organization to help further the initiative to move toward the more ideal culture. Following the release of the newsletter, a combined 130 people of 13 individuals and 9 teams (see Table 3.4) took initiative to create these collages and submit to the culture team within the Amazon group. The Amazon team did not know

specifically how they were going to use the collages; therefore, when I inquired about them, they were pleased to be able to provide them to me.

Table 3.4.

Collage demographic data.

How collage was generated	Band Level	Division within the organization	Other demographics
Business Team or Group	Mix of band 1, band 2, band 3	Moscow Region Brazil Region India Region Latin America Region Global Brand Team (3) Miscellaneous North America teams (2)	Not applicable--Did not gather
Individual	Non-mgmt=1 band 1=3 band 2=3 band 3=2	Brand=4 Corporate=3 Regional=2	Male=1; Female=8 Time with company: <5 yrs=5 >5 years=4

To keep the research and analysis clean, I chose nine collages (of the 27 collages submitted) to investigate. I initially chose these nine collages because they were created by individuals versus teams. As is described below, when analyzing collages (or any piece of research), it is important to get the language and perspective from the individual(s) who created that collage. Therefore, I prioritized those collages that were only created by one individual to keep the data clean and ensure I was accurately capturing the raw data from that

person (versus what might have been diluted data that comes from a group merging their thoughts and perspectives into a singular collage).

Additionally, I chose these nine collages because they were primarily US-based. Two of the nine collages that were included were generated by members of the Market Research Department that are outside the US (as alluded to in Chapter 2) as a request from the client to ensure the research felt inclusive of employees outside of the US where the headquarters are. My client sponsor then sent an email out to the individuals who created the nine collages to request their permission for me to interview them about their collage. Through these interviews, I sought to understand what each picture within the collage represented and the significance in each picture. I needed to have their interpretation of the picture versus my interpretation. To conduct the interview, I set up a one-hour meeting with each person individually and asked them to dissect their collage and discuss the individual pictures as well as the collection of the pictures as a whole. I then asked them to give the collage a title—which some had already done when they originally created the collage—and provide their perspective of what elements conveyed the organization (as a collective) today versus which portrayed those elements that they imagined would be present in the future. (It was assumed by those who created the collages that what was meant by “today” and the “future,” was “pre” the shift to deeper consumer insights and “post” the shift to deeper consumer insights, respectively). “Consumer insights” is a phrase used often by members of the Market Research Department to reference the authentic connection they want to have again with consumers and the meaningful insights that would come from that connection that can be used to improve the products that the Gangler company manufactures and sells.



Fig. 3.1. Example of collage.

The interviews were audio recorded with the permission of the participants and analyzed to identify the shared beliefs present among the group of nine, lower-level members of the organization. These shared beliefs or patterns were then summarized and placed in a PowerPoint presentation that was shared with the client sponsor. This presentation then served as a progress report for the client, as well as a way for me to get feedback to the process and format of the deliverable. I spent approximately nine hours conducting the interviews and an additional seven hours analyzing the information and creating the presentation that summarized the data. The collage summary not only included the data from the interviews but also data from the Globaledg summary. It was important to combine the analysis from these two data sources to evaluate how representative the ideas of the nine sources were to a more robust quantitative data set (which had the same research objective; re: assess the articulated patterns in the current environment). To analyze the data, I used one of Ryan and Bernard’s (2003) theme-identification techniques of “Repetition” and “Similarities and Differences.” “Repetition is one of the easiest ways to identify themes...The more the same concept occurs in

a text, the more likely it is a theme. How many repetitions are enough to constitute an important theme, however, is an open question and one only the investigator can decide” (Ryan and Bernard 2003:89). In this case, I created a theme if three or more of the participants (one-third or more) had similar language and/or visuals (and the meaning behind those visuals was consistent). Additionally, I identified themes by leveraging the “Similarities and Differences” technique with the collage data and the Globaledg data. Ryan and Bernard describe this tactic:

Another comparative method involves taking pairs of expressions—from the same informant or from different informants—and asking, How is one expression different from or similar to the other? The abstract similarities and differences that this question generates are themes. If a particular theme is present in both expressions, then the next question to ask is, If a particular theme is present in both expressions, then the next question to ask is, in which the theme is articulated in both of the expressions? [2003:91]

In this case, I was seeking to understand what articulation of barriers showed up in the Globaledg work and how were those different or similar to the collages.

This stage of the research was the foundation for identifying the articulated barriers in the organization. Essentially, I was able to understand the cultural-cognitive institutional elements impacting the culture (see Chapter 4). Although I was also able to bring forth the unarticulated barriers through the “similarities and differences” technique, much of the unarticulated or unconsciously articulated cultural barriers were discovered in Stage 2.

3.3 Research Stage 2: Identify the Unarticulated Patterns and Determine if Those Patterns Support or Undermine the Culture Change

The goal of stage 2 was to conduct a deeper cultural analysis and identify the *unarticulated* patterns that existed in the organization (across all management levels) and then determine if those patterns posed barriers for the cultural shift needed or if they acted as enablers to the shift. To identify these patterns, I conducted participant observation as well as a communications analysis. Both of these methods would enable me to understand cultural elements without directly interviewing members of the organization; therefore, I was able to understand the beliefs that were not verbally communicated as well as the beliefs that were unconsciously communicated.

Participant observation allowed me to connect with the research participants by joining in on all their activities as a participant myself. By applying this technique, I enabled the participants to get comfortable with my presence and begin to act as they normally would in their lives; therefore, I am better able to experience them in context. To do this, I have to act as a participant by fully immersing myself in their lives and their activities but also act as an observer by taking a step back from that immersion and interpreting and writing about the significance of their experience (Bernard 2006). It is this immersive process that I was seeking when I asked to join a multi-functional research team of approximately 15 people in Indianapolis, Indiana. This group of 15 people was made up of the following functions: market research, marketing, design, sales, finance, and human resources. This multi-functional group of 15 was conducting research on the same business question, but was filtering the research through their functional perspectives. For example, the person in the marketing function might

be filtering for ways to better communicate to the participant while the person in the sales function might be looking for ways to optimize the participant's shopping experience.

The business question this team was focused on was how to better position the team's initiative for their design target; which was moms who were involved in the community. One of the members present from the Market Research Department was the leader of the research and coordinated the team and the research logistics. It was important for me to conduct the participant observation with a team that had the market researcher as the leader because I wanted to observe the language and behaviors that were being presented to other functions within the company by this organization. Specifically, I wanted to observe how members of the Market Research Department were setting up the research and leading it.

The participant observation included four fieldwork experiences with the multi-functional team. The first was with a smaller portion of the team (8 of the 15 members) to kick off the research and set the objectives for the research. This kick-off meeting was in the business office of Gangler and lasted approximately two hours. In addition to presenting the objectives, the research leader Joann Smith⁷ (band 3 in the Market Research Department) outlined the way in which the team should conduct research to be in line with getting to deep human understanding. As an observer, this consistency in language to the materials and language the Amazon team had been using was note-worthy. This kick-off meeting demonstrated that the work of the Amazon team was effective in changing the language and ideas of Joann and their tactics should be explored further.

⁷ Joann Smith was a name created to ensure confidentiality of the company and people involved.

Lastly, Joann spent time discussing the logistics of the research with the team. She discussed when and where the research would be; what hotel accommodations people should make; how people would be formed into teams; and how long the interviews for the research would last. This was of particular interest to me because I wanted to understand what portion of the meeting was dedicated to training and explaining the behaviors and beliefs needed to gain deep human understanding (see Chapter 4 for the findings).

The second instance of participant observation was in Indianapolis at the prebrief meeting for the research. Within the Market Research Department at Gangler, prebriefs are conducted right before the teams go out to do the fieldwork. These prebriefs (which can be between 1-2 hours) are held to remind people of the fieldwork logistics, to get to know your teams, and to hand out any materials needed for the fieldwork. These materials include profiles of the participants, the interview guides, the note-taking templates, and the confidentiality agreements that the participants would be asked to sign. In this particular case, the prebrief was two hours and the members of the research group were immediately separated into six teams of 2 or 3. In the prebrief, we were given more details of the participants and the research methodology. As part of the methodology, each team would need to conduct in-depth interviews with four participants lasting 90-120 minutes. As a participant, I was interested in how I was being trained to conduct this type of research and how I could work with my team to ensure we were getting deep human understanding. I noted feeling as if I needed more time to get to know my teammates and determine how we would work together to do the interview effectively (refer to section 4.4 Content: Culture of Cohesion).

The third instance of participant observation was the actual fieldwork with my two teammates. One of my teammates was in the Market Research Department and the other was in Finance. We conducted four interviews—one with a mom who is involved in her community (per the design target); one with that participant’s mother; one with that participant’s father; and one with that participant’s partner. The purpose of this recruiting process was to learn about the participant directly from her, but also to learn about the participant from people close to her. In this way, each team would get a holistic view of the consumer’s life which is in line with “finding out what consumers want and giving it to them.”

As an observer, I noticed that the market researcher on my team did not follow all of the training that Joann Smith presented in the kick-off and prebrief meetings. She was the lead moderator on the team and treated the participant with respect but did not follow the recommended tactics of making the interview feel fluid and organic (in order to establish a rapport and have the participant guide the conversation). Instead, I observed her interrupting the conversation to direct the participant back to a question that was on the interview guide. I took note of this experience in order to potentially combine it with the subsequent research methods to see if this came out as a key insight from the research.

The fourth and final instance of participant observation with the multi-functional team was the debrief. The debrief is a way for the members of the team to share their observations and thoughts from the interviews with the other teams in order to develop insights and actions for how to answer the business question (re: how to better position the team’s initiative for their design target; which was moms who were involved in the community). From my observations, one of the most note-worthy behaviors was the non-verbal behavior of many of

the team members during the debrief. One of the main ways to get to deep human insights that the Amazon team and Joann Smith trained the team on was having empathy for the participants and their lives. However, as people were sharing their stories from the interviews with the other teams, the teams who were receiving the information did not display signs of showing empathy. The behaviors I observed were that people were checking their phones, doodling, and looking through their own notes instead of having signs of actively listening to the stories that were shared. Furthermore, as people were sharing their stories and data to the rest of the team, on two occasions Joann made a comment to the team that requested their continued engagement to what was being shared. Once again, this behavior was a signal that some people have shifted their ideas and beliefs toward deep consumer understanding, but their behaviors and material artifacts have not changed.

Overall, participant observation allowed me to compare and contrast what people's language was versus what their behaviors were. In this way, I was able to identify the unarticulated barriers present in the culture. I conducted this analysis by reviewing my field notes taken during each of the four instances of participant observation and reviewing the audio recording from the kick-off meeting; I then leveraged a "similarities and differences" technique (as described in section 3.1) to find the tensions in what members of the Market Research Department say versus what their actual behaviors are. I then created a PowerPoint presentation to further synthesize the findings and to create a deliverable for the client sponsor. Through this analysis process, I was able to identify what cultural elements could be maintained because they also support the ideal culture and what cultural elements needed to

be shifted because they undermine the changes needed for the Market Research Department to make a cultural shift.

In parallel to the participant observation, I conducted a communication audit utilizing 30 formal emails from higher level members of the Market Research Department. These 30 emails had been gathered over the course of 18 months (July 2012 through January 2014), and were all addressed directly to the members of the Market Research Department. I obtained these emails directly from my email account (as a member of the Market Research Department). The purpose of this communication audit was to identify any messages that were inadvertently being delivered to the organization that did not support the cultural shift. McShane and Von Glinow discuss this potential for miscommunication,

The sender forms a message and encodes it into words, gestures, voice intonations, and other symbols or signs. Next, the encoded message is transmitted to the intended receiver through one or more communication channels (media). The receiver senses the incoming message and decodes it into something meaningful. Ideally, the decoded meaning is what the sender had intended...The model recognizes that communication is not a free-flowing conduit. Rather, the transmission of meaning from one person to another is hampered by noise—the psychological, social, and structural barriers that distort and obscure the sender’s intended message. If any part of the communication process is distorted or broken, the sender and receiver will not have a common understanding of the message. [2013:261-262]

One of the things I discovered in the communication audit was that there was a miscommunication occurring between the lower-level members of the organization and the higher-level members. For instance, higher-level members would discuss the need and desire for change with the idea that the lower-level members of the organization needed change to be slow and gentle; whereas, the lower-level members were receiving the message that change was occurring but that the higher-level members did not have a clear picture of how that change would impact the organization.

Three analytical techniques were used for the communication audit (Ryan and Bernard 2003). “Repetition” and “Cutting and Sorting” were used to find the patterns in the written communication. For this, it was important not to just find words that were used repeatedly (as is the case when using “repetition” as an analytical technique), but to also assess the context around the words used to find significance in the data (which is a tactic used with “cutting and sorting.”). Cutting and sorting has many variations, but it involves the act of finding individual quotes in text and sorting them into piles based on themes (Ryan and Bernard 2003). Those piles are then analyzed for content, source of content, and context. I then concluded the analysis by leverage “similarities and differences” as a technique. I used this analytical tool to compare the words the higher-level members of the organization used in the formal emails with the articulated beliefs of the lower-level members in their collages. This technique allowed me to uncover communication as a whole as a cultural barrier; meaning, there was a fundamental difference in how lower-level members of the organization decoded language used versus how high-level members of the organization decoded the language used. In the next stage, I use methods to determine the source of the differences in the lower levels versus higher levels as well as what metaphors and benefits can be used to bridge the gap between the two key groups in the organization.

3.4 Research Stage 3: Illustrate How to Best Support the Change

The goal of this stage of research was to identify a metaphorical reference that would illustrate the change needed to support the organization through the process of unfreezing and refreezing (see Chapter 2). The use of metaphor was critical to conceptualizing the cultural elements present in the Market Research Department today and what cultural elements needed to shift in the future. “Our concepts structure what we perceive, how we get around in the world, and how we relate to other people. Our conceptual system thus plays a central role in defining our everyday realities. If we are right in suggesting that our conceptual system is largely metaphorical, then the way we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor” (Lakoff and Johnson 2003:3). As Lakoff and Johnson describe, how we internalize and make sense of the world is through metaphorical references.

To understand the metaphorical references, I utilized the interview technique Metaphor Elicitation. Metaphor Elicitation (or ZMET as it is also referred to; named after creator Dr. Gerald Zaltman) is a “multi-step analytical procedure [that] has been framed as a means of uncovering consumers’ metaphors through guided conversation, storytelling, collage building, and explorations of visual and other sensory imagery” (Sunderland and Denny 2007:94). I conducted this method among six members in the Market Research Department, ranging from band 2-4 (see Table 3.6). The idea was to get representation from both lower-level employees and higher-level employees. Each interview was two hours and was guided by the research question, What are the mindsets and behaviors that are representative of the current culture and of the ideal culture? To enable this, I provided a stack of 7-8 magazines and asked each participant to please gather four pictures from these magazines that represent their thoughts

and feelings about the current mindsets and behaviors of the market research organization; and to please gather four pictures that represent their thoughts and feelings about the ideal mindsets and behaviors of the market research organization. I then asked them to describe each picture (one at a time), and I used a laddering exercise based upon the key words and metaphors that were said. I then asked them was there anything missing in the picture as well as where they were in this picture. Lastly, I asked them to give the picture a title. We repeated this series of questions for each of the four pictures for both the current culture and ideal culture.

Table 3.5.

Metaphor elicitation demographic profile.

Band Level	Division within the organization	Other demographics
B2=2 B3=3 B4=1	Brand=2 Corporate=3 Region=1	Male=1; Female=5 Time with company: <5=1 >5<9=3 >9=2

I audio recorded each interview while also taking notes during the interview. The note-taking process during the interview was very important because as the participant was talking I needed to identify metaphors that were used and then ask them to tell me what that wording meant to them in that moment. As they described the meaning, I made connection points between the metaphor and what other metaphors and conceptual meanings were referenced. For example one participant pulled a magazine picture that had a buffalo and the text said the

“American Journey.” I then asked the participant what that meant, and they replied “moving forward.” From there, the participant started describing the idea of moving forward and what that signified for where the future of the Market Research Department should be headed. From “American Journey,” the participant explained how the Market Research Department should be continuously evolving with the external marketplace.

This method also served as the primary analytical technique. Ryan and Bernard describe this, “In pioneering work, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) observed that people often represent their thoughts, behaviors, and experiences with analogies and metaphors. Analysis, then, becomes the search for metaphors in rhetoric and deducing the schemas or underlying themes that might produce those metaphors (D’Andrade 1995; Strauss and Quinn 1997)” (2003:90).

Through this process, I was able to uncover that many of the metaphorical references related back to the characteristics of a city for the current environment in the Market Research Department. Conversely, most of the metaphorical references for the ideal culture illustrated characteristics of a community (see Figures 3.7 and 3.8). I was able to define this metaphor by listening and identifying patterns in the language that was used in the metaphor elicitation research and then drawing connections back to the collages and Globaledg research on the current culture.

This metaphor and the distinction between the characteristics of a city versus that of a community are very similar to the distinction brought forth by German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies’s between the and *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft*, respectively (which is described in detail in Chapter 4.). Additionally, chapter 4 discusses how the city metaphor highlights the articulated and unarticulated barriers that were uncovered in Stage 1 and Stage 2. Similarly the

community metaphor highlights the behaviors and material artifacts needed in culture where the Market Research Department is focused on “finding out what people want and giving it to them.” The language and concepts used by these members of the organization highlighted the institutions that were influencing the culture to change versus influencing the culture to remain the same (see Chapter 2).



Fig. 3.2. Current “city” environment.

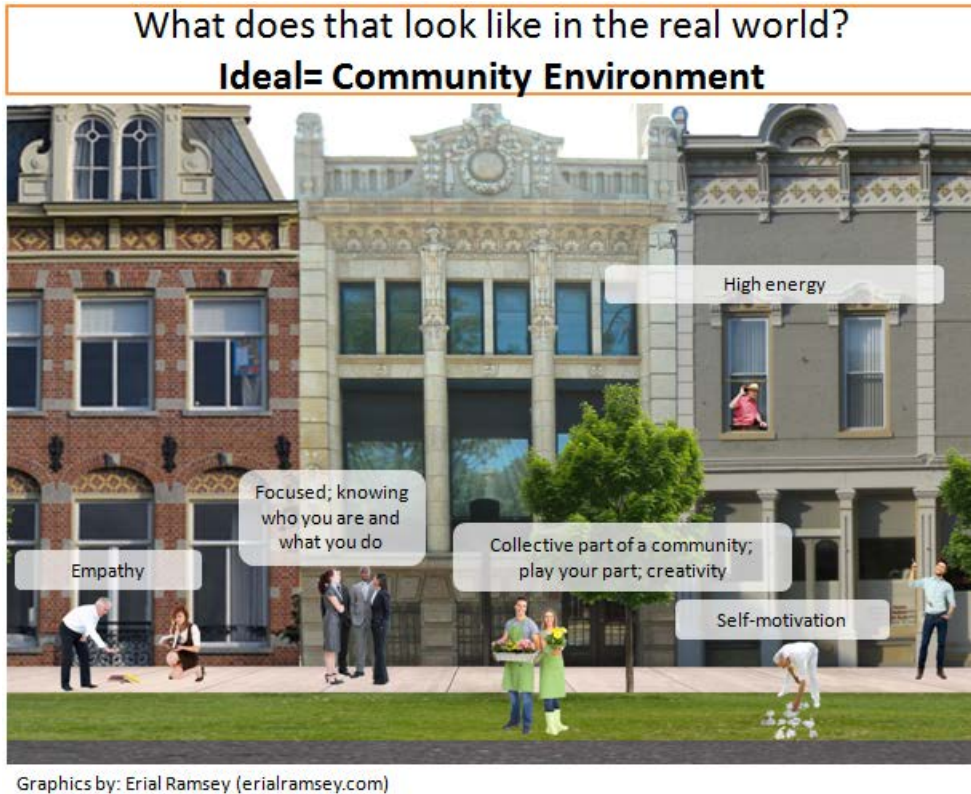


Fig. 3.3. Ideal “community” environment.

This elicitation of metaphor was key to being able to succinctly represent the findings from the three stages of analysis to the client. Prior to the use of the city/community metaphor, the client sponsor was pleased with the level of analysis, but was not able to easily internalize it. The use of metaphor enabled that. Zaltman describes the power of metaphor, “Metaphors are fundamental to sense making; they shape attentional and perceptual processes and comprehension. They are also the primary means by which new ideas are developed” (1995:291).

3.5 Research Stage 4: Drive the Benefits of Change in the Organization

The goal of stage four was to identify the cultural enablers needed for institutionalization. This stage did not utilize primary research, but was a synthesis of secondary research, research from stage 1 and 2, and key concepts from the disciplines organizational anthropology and organizational behavior. This stage was highly focused on analysis. I spent many hours distilling down all the data I had into something that would be digestible for the client. As is discussed in Chapter 4, I had to present the data in a way that was conducive for how the corporate environment was used to receiving data and information. Therefore, I utilized many of the concepts and language from McShane and Von Glinow's 2013 *Organizational Behavior: Emerging Knowledge. Global Reality*; which presents the concepts relevant to organizational change in the common vernacular of corporate environments.

The primary analysis techniques I used during this stage were indigenous typologies or categories, theory-related material, and metacoding (Ryan and Bernard 2003). Indigenous typologies or categories technique was used to find shared cognitive patterns that were unique to the Market Research Department. Ryan and Bernard (2003) describe how this process is done by extracting language that sounds unfamiliar or is used in unfamiliar ways. Many of the things I noted that sounded unfamiliar or unique to the Market Research Department, I obtained from the metaphor elicitation research in stage three. Once those indigenous categories were identified, I reviewed the audio recordings from stage 1 and stage 2 to determine when and how that language was used by participants. From there, I was able to form a series of cultural themes.

I then leveraged the theory-related material technique to find additional themes by comparing the themes that were elicited from the indigenous typology technique with the organizational and cultural themes that were presented by McShane and Von Glinow (2013). McShane and Von Glinow gave me a reference point through which to think about the indigenous typologies. They also gave me a reference of the institutional elements (particularly regulatory and normative) that may be impacting the Market Research Department. These reference points allowed me to extract any indicators of social conflict or cultural contradictions as well as identify any nuanced ways that people manage impersonal social relationships or acquire and maintain status and power (Ryan and Bernard 2003). These types of cultural elements are important to draw out because they help to define what benefits employees may still have to maintaining the status quo.

Lastly, I used metacoding technique to take the themes I identified through the first two analytical techniques and used that to find meta-themes. By utilizing this technique, I was able to get to three primary cultural barriers and three enabling cultural shifts needed (see Chapter 4). I conducted this type of analysis by going through the audio recordings and field notes from each research study and determining what language fit into the prioritized theme versus what ideas were outliers.

This fourth and final stage was critical because it allowed me to compile the analyses from each of the stages and synthesize the information into two PowerPoint presentations for the client. Two presentations were created to appeal to two different audiences within the Market Research Department. The first presentation was created for the Amazon team and provided a detailed analysis of the barriers present in the current culture, provided a written

description of the current culture and ideal culture as well as a visual description of the culture, and provided the behaviors and ideas needed from the actors in the organization to enable the cultural shift. The second presentation was created for the band 5s in the Market Research Department (approximately 20 members) and provided a high-level summary of the cultural barriers, a description of the cultural shifts that needed to be made (including the organizational stories of how those patterns are displayed in the current culture), and a detailed analysis of how to enact those shifts within the organization (see Chapter 4).

With the completion of the four stages of the research plan, I was able to answer the overall research question, What is needed to enable a culture shift with the Market Research Department at Gangler Company, as well as the four sub-questions. The research plan (refer to Figure 3.5) proved to be an effective use of method and analytical tools to answer each of the questions stemming from the overall question.

CHAPTER 4

DESCRIPTION OF DELIVERABLES

4.1 Introduction: Business Context

As mentioned in the Historical Context in Chapter 1, the culture at Gangler Company was and still is “stodgy, tradition-bound, parochial firm—stiff and formal, almost military” (McCraw 2000:44). This culture dictates a certain way in which it is best able to receive information. For example, the 1-page memo is a prevalent material artifact of the company’s culture. The 1-page memo provides a succinct way to sell and improve your ideas (Vandewerk 2013). Because the corporate culture at Gangler values efficiency, this form of presenting information is highly effective. Another value of the Gangler Company is autonomy and decision making authority. One of the shared ideas at the Gangler Company is that managers have the independence and autonomy to effectively operate the part of the business they control and that micro-management (or management lacking decision-making authority) is to be avoided. This value is shared by many businesses in America. As McCraw describes, “In the running of a company of whatever size, the hardest thing to manage is usually this: the delicate balance between the necessity for centralized control and the equally strong need for employees to have autonomy to make maximum contributions to the company and derive satisfaction from their work” (2000:7). It is these two shared values at Gangler—efficiency and autonomy—that governed the content design and format I used to share the results of the research with my client sponsor, Amazon team, and band 5s.

4.2 Format

Each of the deliverables was created via PowerPoint because that is the most highly-leveraged medium at Gangler for verbal presentations. Because the final deliverables all consisted of verbal presentations to key audiences, I utilized PowerPoint in the synthesis of my information, so it would not have to be transferred to that medium later. I conducted a total of three verbal presentations for two different audiences. The first presentation was scheduled for 60 minutes with the Amazon team. The purpose of this meeting was to present what was needed to enable a culture shift at the individual level. The team consisted of band 3 and 4s (therefore, a mix of lower level and higher level employees). Within the way the Market Research Department at Gangler operates, an employee does not have the authority to change organizational policy or processes until band 6, with heavy influencing power at band 5. Therefore, I presented the information to the Amazon team at the individual level; meaning, the ways in which they could effect change within themselves upon leaving the presentation. Additionally, because this team was leading the charge in changing our research behaviors and ideas, they desired immediate next steps that they could enact with themselves and their professional networks right away. However, this team also desired getting this information in front of the organizational decision makers quickly. The Amazon team recognized that the band 6s would be the people to present this information to that would enable the organization to change its operating procedures to enact the desired shift; however, they also recognized that the band 6s are influenced by the band 5s. Therefore, it would be in the best interest of the project and the findings to meet first with the band 5s.

The presentation for the band 5s was re-positioned to adjust for the influencing power of this group. There are 20 band 5s in the Market Research Department; therefore, I needed to schedule two separate meetings to accommodate the group. Each meeting was scheduled for 90 minutes—the first was held in person with a few members joining via phone and the second meeting was held via video conferencing with people attending virtually and via phone. The band 5s are located all around the global, so a diverse set of medium were required to enable the group to join the meeting at the same time. Because I wanted the band 5s to influence the band 6s, I set up the meeting as a working session. I presented the findings to this group but left 20 minutes at the end of the meeting for their organizational stories and their recommendations for enacting change in the organization. Additionally, by re-positioning the content, I presented information to this team that highlights what was needed to enable a cultural shift at the organizational level and how to enact those shifts. Although the meetings were presented as working sessions, it was important for me to include in the summary a set of recommended actions (re: how to enact those shifts) to this audience. Per one of Gangler's core cultural patterns, I would have deviated from the pattern if I did not have recommended actions in the presentation. However, it should be noted here that the focus of my research was what was needed to enable a cultural shift in the organization; therefore, I was not responsible for the organization making the recommended shifts. In the next sections, I discuss the enabling shifts and recommended actions in full.

4.3 Introduction to the Content

In the following three sections, I describe the three enabling shifts that I uncovered through the research as well as the corresponding recommended actions. Within the three sections, you find background on the current culture and how specific aspects of that cultural environment are products of institutional forces, the enabling shift that is needed to overcome the barriers of the current cultural environment, and the recommended actions for the client.

Specifically, I am discussing three cultures shifts: 1) from a Contrived Culture to a Culture of Candor, 2) from a Culture of Division to a Culture of Cohesion, and 3) from a Culture of Knowing to a Culture of Learning. The next three sections are dedicated to explaining these three shifts, respectively.

4.4 Content: Culture of Candor

Finding out what people want and giving it to them--that is the goal. As discovered in the research, there are several elements of economic and social institutions that are inhibiting the members of the Market Research Department from demonstrating these research behaviors. As a fortune 500 company, Gangler is a social institution itself. This social institution has influence over the Market Research Department but also is influenced by other social and economic institutions. As an institution itself, it lays victim to the views and perceptions of many social institutions in the 21st century. Forbes (2014) explains how people no longer have confidence in many of our social institutions. "Less than 25% of the respondents had anything more than 'some' confidence in public schools, banks, big business, or "News on the Internet" (whatever institution that might be). We just don't have much faith in the institutions of our

own creation. I think this challenges our assumptions and values about social experience” (2014).

With this cultural-cognitive element of the social institution being prevalent in American society, it also pervades the metaphorical walls of the market research organization (refer to Figure 1.1). Many of the lower-level members of this organization have a lack of confidence and trust in the upper-level members of the organization (particularly the band 5s and band6s). This lack of confidence and trust is driven by two key factors: 1) the Great Recession of 2007-2009, and 2) the behaviors of key actors in the organization as a result of the economic downturn.

The Great Recession caused many Americans to look at their finances, their spending and their retirement plans. The Great Recession was an unexpected hit to many American’s finances, especially the middle class. Many Americans, including economists themselves, were caught off guard. *The New York Times* discussed the inability to predict recessionary downturns,

Economists have an even worse record, particularly when it comes to predicting downturns. In 1929, for instance, the Harvard Economic Society declared that a depression was “outside the range of probability.” Whoops. Then there is the matter of the last recession. With the benefit of hindsight, we now know that the downturn began in December 2007. Few people realized it at the time. A survey by Blue Chip Economic Indicators that month found that, as a group, economists believed that the economy would grow by 2.2 percent in 2008. Instead, it began to shrink. [Sommer 2011]

Therefore, after the economy started to recover in 2012, many people were still skeptical and cautious of what the economy would do and wanted to avoid being “caught off guard” again. WSL Strategic describe this phenomenon, “Shoppers feel better about the economy but not enough to jumpstart their spending broadly. They now live in a world of “buts” and “what ifs,” so they stick with the cautious approach they learned during the recession” (2013:12).

Therefore, as a manufacturer of consumables, shopper's lack of confidence in the economy translates into a lack of confidence in Gangler and its leadership.

This economic downturn also affected the behaviors of the leadership within the Gangler Company (including leadership within the Market Research Department). Because the company had seen success during times of economic adversity (as demonstrated in the 1930s), the leadership at Gangler was positive about the company's ability to continue to be successful despite the external environment. However, as it was shown in Chapter 1.1 Historical Context, the company's success during the economic downturn was due to a deep connection with the consumer. This deep connection, though, was waning with the rise of technology and could not be utilized in the present to create the same success during this period. But the higher-level members of the Market Research Department remained positive—overly positive as the lower-level employees would describe it. The department overestimated their ability to understand consumers during this period; consequently, Gangler did not maintain the same success as during the 1930s.

This behavior led to a feeling of in-authenticity by the lower-level employees. These employees felt as if the high-level employees were not being authentic. These lower-level employees described how this lack of authenticity and behavior of being overly positive showed up in the communication style of the higher-level employees. As described by the employees in the research, higher-level employees would dilute their communication by: 1) discussing the need for clarity without explicitly describing what needed to be made clear, 2) providing information to the broader organization but omitting information the lower-level employees deemed important or obvious, or 3) painting a rosier picture of the situation versus what the

reality was. Using the metacoding technique of the formal emails, collages, and metaphor elicitation, I was able to summarize these themes as a Contrived Culture.

This contrived culture within the Market Research Department was one of the three key barriers toward finding out what people want and giving it to them because it does not acknowledge what the consumer actually wants, and it suggests that we are currently giving the consumers what they want. Therefore, the first enabling shift to overcome this barrier is a Culture of Candor. I defined culture of candor as leaders communicating truthfully, seeking out diverse sources for information, and protecting and rewarding those who speak openly and truthfully. This enabling shift is focused on the behavioral changes of the higher-level employees because it is their interactions with the lower-level employees that are creating the barrier. Additionally, they are the employees in position to provide incentives and rewards to promote the behaviors and ideas needed in this ideal culture (see chapter 2). As mentioned in chapter 2, I utilized new institutionalism to approach the research and analysis from both the individual actors and organization as an actor. I recommended the following actions for the organization to enable the culture of candor:

1. Conduct team buildings
 - Do something casual and comfortable to encourage vulnerability and openness
2. Get exposed to other forms of feedback and communication
 - Outside suppliers, comedians, preachers, other functions
3. Ensure every B4+ has a reverse mentorship relationship
4. Create award for “truth moments” that help best meet the business or organizational goals

At the individual level, the lower-level and higher-level employees need to be personally connected with each other, confident, consistent, and authentic. This leads to relationships that are open yet empathetic, both inside the company with fellow employees and outside the company with the consumers.

4.5 Content: Culture of Cohesion

As the economy started to decline, the sales and profit of the Gangler Company also started to decline (which was true for many other companies during this time). Therefore, in order to stay in the black, the company was forced to assess each division, role and function and determine where cutbacks would need to be made. Prior to the recession, the company had seen great financial gain—year-on-year profit and increase in sales. With these gains, came a significant boost in hiring to fill various job roles. Conversely, when sales started to decline, the company had to cut roles and streamline the way they operated. To sustain these cuts, the company had to “do more with fewer people.” This productivity program as it was called enabled the company to stay profitable but also created a Culture of Division; which was identified as a pattern in the Market Research Department.

This cultural pattern was demonstrated through the “quiet competitiveness” that was a prominent behavior. As one band 4 described it, we claim to be collaborative but really we are competitive. But we don’t talk about it, so it’s sort of a quiet competitiveness. This pattern became more dominant in the recent years after the recession. As many employees (lower level and higher level) describe, the organization used to feel much more integrated. They describe feeling like a family and as if people knew, were involved in, and cared about the

personal lives of one another; hence, where the metaphor of the community versus the city becomes relevant. The Market Research Department used to behave more like a community—integrated, collaborative, synchronized, harmonious—and now it is has transformed into a city. The ideas and behaviors indicative of the city are individualistic, duplicative, and internally focused (see Figure 3.3; cf. Tönnies 1887). Similarly, Tönnies distinguished the *Gemeinschaft* (or communal society) social system, which is more about personal relationships and face-to-face contact; with the *Gesellschaft* (associational society) social system, which is more bureaucratic and focuses on self-interests (Encyclopedia Britannica 2014). These cultural patterns of the city or the *Gesellschaft* social system are counter to the behaviors needed in the ideal culture because they lead to a focus on internal showcasing of work versus a focus on what is best for the consumer. Additionally, in a culture of division, there is an inherent lack of empathy for the fellow employee and their situation. This lack of empathy translates into their research with consumers. The pattern is very individualistic as displayed in the participant observation analysis in Chapter 3.

I am calling for a Culture of Cohesion; a culture that is focused on the collective body of people versus each employee in isolation. I am defining a culture of cohesion as a cohesive unit that has a shared vision that values the unique contribution of teams and individuals; this unit would think and act like a community. In a culture of cohesion there would be a shared goal that each of the employees within the Market Research Department would be rallied around. That shared goal could be the motto of Matthew Nelson, find out what people want and give it to them. One band 3 provided a story that illustrates the culture of cohesion that would be an enabling shift. A team of five market researchers work for and represent the region of Indian,

Middle East and Africa (as defined by the Gangler Company). This region as it currently is delineated was recently defined in this way. Therefore, these five market researchers (who were newly placed to work on this region) had to know the various consumers of this region and make the company care about these consumers. This team came together virtually with this mission. They had the challenging task of learning about the lives of the consumers that are in the biggest countries in this region and communicating the details of these consumers lives back to the company in a way that the company would want to take action. In the end, this band 3 who was a witness to the aftermath was amazed by the deep level of knowledge this team had, how passionate they were about the consumers in this region and how they were really one unified team. As this band 3 was telling the story, the thing he said that made the difference was their creation of a shared vision.

Therefore, from this organizational story, I recommended the following actions to be taken by the upper-level management:

Modify Work Processes by:

1. Creating a shared goal.
2. Ensuring work plans have each person's contribution to the shared goal based on their personal strengths
3. Incorporating language of the shared goal into the Organizational Action Plan (material artifact present within the culture).
4. Rewarding those who are intentionally and effectively delivering on the goal (via the defined measures)

These actions should be led by the high-level members of the organization, but propelled by the lower-level members.

In addition to the organizational actions, at the individual level, shifts need to be made to enable focus and empathy. These items were compiled using metacoding and indigenous typology.

Focus

- Knowing who you are and what you do
- Knowing how work connects through to the vision
- Being fierce, vibrant and energized
- More efficient and motivated
- Working on the most important things; pick battles
- Do things you think are important to drive the business

Empathy

- Connection with others and yourself
- Sharing together
- Striving to be a better person
- Personal growth
- Knows themes/trends in pop culture
- Knows what competition is doing and where we fit in

4.6 Content: Culture of Learning

As described in the historical context in Chapter 1, the Gangler Company displays traits of being traditional. They have had a long history of success and attribute that success to their focus on the consumer and taking time to build and train their employees. Because of changes in the economy and in technology, the company has changed the way it has focused on consumers. Instead of traveling around the country talking to homemakers individually (as the field girls did in the 1930s), they leverage advances in technology to reach hundreds of consumers at a time via online surveys. Or they use online databases to quickly and easily find consumers who meet a certain criteria in order to conduct focus groups with them. Technology has enabled the Gangler Company to be more efficient in their research methods. However, as described in Chapter 1, efficiency does not always equate to efficacy. Particularly in the Market Research Department, as the researchers became more efficient, they not only lost their connection to the consumer, but also lost their freedom to learn and explore. Additionally, in a world of productivity (“do more with less”), the need for efficiency becomes greater. Even though the members of the Market Research Department described having a desire to try new ways of doing research or adapting the research method to specifically meet the business question, they expressed how the internal (cultural patterns of Gangler) and the external environment (driven by the economy) did not allow for this behavior.

This pattern of efficiency led to behaviors of being uncomfortable with the unknown and avoiding methods, ideas, people, and situations that were unfamiliar. From this behavioral pattern, stemmed the idea that the members of the Market Research Department knew the best methods and knew what consumers wanted, which is why they were not focused on

learning and exploring. However, as the research shows, the lack of learning is really driven by a draw toward efficiency.

Additionally, the lower-level members of the organization were afraid to take risks (in this case, going outside the known approaches and solutions to research were viewed as risks). They did not see higher-level members of the organization taking risks and they were not rewarded for taking risks. Specifically, one of the material artifacts present within the Market Research Department is a set of awards that were given to employees for good reapplication and for simplicity. These awards in isolation are positive; however, within the context of the efficiency pattern that was already institutionalized within the company, these awards were incentivizing the lower-level members to re-use old ways of doing learning and making processes simple that were already created for efficiency. Again, these incentives are not wrong, but are not the most valuable in this cultural context.

In this current environment, aversion to risk and lack of role-models become barriers to finding out what consumers want and giving it to them. These things exist as barriers because finding out what the consumers want may require a different method (versus what is a standard part of the learning plan; which is a material artifact within the organization) or may require a solution that is outside the normal way of doing things. Additionally, it limits employees' ability to innovate and find solutions to problems that have not been created yet.

Therefore, the Market Research Department needs to shift to a Culture of Learning; a culture where learning is viewed as the main driver of competitive advantage. This means constantly renewing what they learn and then teaching others. Additionally, it means being okay with failures that come from smart risks. Astro Teller (leader at Google X) describes how

failure is a must and how you need to fail in order to learn and innovate. Furthermore, he shared how a company's culture must reward you for taking good risks and as long as you are taking a good risk, you should not be punished for failing; because the moment you are punished for failure, is the moment people stop trying new things.

With these words in mind, I recommended the following actions to be taken by the organization.

Build People Development Skills by:

1. B4+ encourage personal decision making for B1-3
2. Leveraging meetings with managers to create integrated personal and professional growth goals
3. Training the organization on new, immersive approaches to learning
4. Allowing freedom to learn, integrate, apply data, science and empathy to learn and teach
5. Building into all learning plans time/spaces/immersions to get regular inspiration
6. Encouraging working offsite or where you can best create and learn
 - Modify workspaces to pair natural teams together in a work setting where you can draw, leave up sticky notes, take pictures, etc
7. Measuring and reward teaching and energizing the brand teams through formal awards

These actions put the ownership of learning both on the lower-level employees as well as the high-level employees; however, the higher-level employees need to start by giving the band 1

through band 3 the authority and freedom to learn as they need to in order to answer the questions they are getting on their respective businesses.

At the individual level, the employees need to embrace their creativity and self-motivation.

Creativity

- Willing to experiment; not afraid to jump in
- Ok to fail
- Personal passion areas are celebrated
- Output is intuitive
- Feel proud to do things that matter and worth our time/effort
- Exploration
- Entrepreneurial; how would you approach outside of P&G
- Customization

Self-motivation

- Letting go of negative feelings..."It was good, but..."
- Every player on the team counts, but we play different positions
- Grounded, confident, happy, satisfied
- Other things in life that are important besides work
- Knowing you are good enough
- Accepts successes and failures
- Investment to become a better person

4.7 Conclusion of Research Plan

With these enabling shifts, the Market Research Department should be able to transform from displaying qualities of efficiency and having disparate goals to achieving efficacy and connection to consumers. One participant described the shift starting with the current culture environment,

We create work for the sake of work—meta analyses, global scale-up, cool tools. We create knowledge that may or may not be good for the business but look good on a W&DP [internal performance and rating document]. We put together a showy analysis to stand out among people versus something leading to good business results. Then we wait for someone to tell us we did a good job.

This participant then went on to say we need to have focus and personal conviction. “This means letting go of ‘am I good enough’ and letting go of comparing ourselves to others. I know that’s easier said than done, but it’s necessary. And it only comes from knowing you are making a strong, yet unique contribution to the overall vision—but we need to know and be focused around what that vision is first.”

This shift means breaking the patterns of individualism, in-authenticity, and efficiency; which must be led by the higher-level members of the Market Research Department. In many cases, this means focusing on core priorities that this organization can influence and role-modeling the focus. Additionally, it means creating an environment where it is accepted to fail if it’s in the name of innovation and better connection with the consumers that buy the company’s products. Alvesson and Sveningsson summarize well,

According to this view culture change is a project emerging from and run from above. It is assumed that top management is the agent from which superior insight about the needed change emerges and also the chief architect behind the plan for change. Apart from planning and allocation of resources to change projects and making decisions in line with the wanted change, the dramaturgical acts of senior executives – public speeches and highly visible acts drawing attention to the ideals – also symbolize the

reframing of how people should think, feel and act in accordance with the new ideals and values. Consultants are frequently used to back up senior managers in this kind of change project. [2008:45]

Therefore, it was important for me to share (as I did) the results with the band 5s in order to enact change and start the unfreezing and refreezing processes.

4.8 How the Research Contributed to New Institutionalism

As discussed in Chapter 2.6, “A goal of institutional research in anthropology is to understand the perspectives and interests, actions and interactions among actors, how they influence one another, and what difference this makes to the subject of our inquiry” (Baba et al. 2013:89). From this research, I was able to contribute to this goal in three distinct ways. First, by presenting the economic landscape as an institutional force and by discussing the cultural-cognitive elements (re: people lack confidence in social institutions, such as schools, banks, and big businesses) of that institution, I was able to demonstrate how the attitudes of the members (i.e. actors) of the Market Research Department were affected. The lack of confidence in social institutions as a whole pervaded the Market Research Department; which, in turn, caused the lower-level members to be more sensitive to behaviors and language that would be deemed inauthentic.

Second, I demonstrated how institutional changes (as seen with the productivity program) influenced the way the members of the Market Research Department interacted with each other, causing the organization as a whole to feel and behave as a disjointed unit. Third, I discussed how the rise in technology led to a focus on becoming more efficient. This focus on efficiency led to a cognitive construction that efficiency meant to do things as fast and low-cost

as possible. With this cognitive construction came a symbolic system that created institutionalized behaviors of having a standardized process for generating new learning, which in turn stifled new learning.

In all, new institutionalism allowed me to identify the external influencers affecting the behaviors, objects, ideas, and social structures internal to the Market Research Department at Gangler. By understanding the external institutional forces (which are outside the control of factors that are able to be shifted), I was able to focus my attention toward those cultural shifts that could be made to the internal forces affecting the organization.

CHAPTER 5

REFLECTIONS

From the beginning, I was passionate about this project. I fought to be able to do this project. I had a vested interest in doing this project. As a member of the Market Research Department at Gangler Company, I was and am a part of the current culture. Having joined the company in 2007, the economy was already starting its decline. Therefore, the majority of my seven years with the company (at the time of this publication in 2014) was spent during and post recession. When I first started, the organization did not display the character traits of individualism and lack of empathy. The economic situation exacerbated those cultural patterns. However, duplication and lack of focus as well as attention toward efficiency existed even prior to the recession and were triggered by technology in the 1970s (see Chapter 1).

Therefore, when the Amazon team was formed with the goal of getting us back connected with consumers and the way research was done in the 1930s with the field girls, I immediately was interested in partnering with this team to help with the effort. I believed anthropology could be an excellent lens through which to view the problem and provide a solution. At that time, the Amazon team knew there was a cultural element to enabling the organization to move toward deep human understanding, but this team did not know the extent to which cultural patterns played a role and specifically how those patterns could be inhibiting the employees from shifting the way they behaved. Prior to my joining, higher-level members of the Market Research Department were questioning whether lower-level members of the organization desired this change and believed this change was necessary. This belief was made evident by formal emails and formal meetings that were focused on explaining to the

organization why the change was important versus focused on changing the cultural elements to make the shift easier (see Chapter 4). Anthropology provided the external lens and the perspective that cultural influences may be causing people not to act (as opposed to only thinking of culture as the entity that needed to be shifted) (as explained in Chapter 1.3b).

Anthropology also provided the theoretical framework through which to approach the problem. Within the business world, attention is placed upon action. Policy, initiatives, and projects are all focused on activation. The design of any project within the Gangler Company would by necessity also include a plan for activation—every project is very end-result focused. Applying anthropology as a lens allowed me to really focus on the set up of the research. What was the research question? What was my hypothesis? What was my theoretical perspective? These are all questions that I had to answer for myself prior to starting the research. In fact, the research, analysis, and solutions were all a direct result of how I thought about the project on the front-end.

Lastly, anthropologists are concerned with patterns of behaviors and ideas as well as the interaction of the organization or community within the larger society; therefore, some of the methods of research and analysis I chose to employ were a direct reflection of that focus. These methods were then able to provide my client with a fresh take on an old problem (which essentially is how to change behavior). Specifically, the client was interested in the communication audit, participant observation, and rewards/recognition recommendation. These methods and potential recommendations were unique from the methods typically used by market researchers.

I learned many personal, academic, and professional lessons from the process of starting this thesis until now. Personally, I learned about persistence and meeting people where they are. When I first had the idea of doing this project, I was met with closed doors. The person who I initially reached out to in order to start this project was seemingly not open to partnering. She would not return my emails and seemed to avoid the conversation when we would meet in person. However, as I mentioned in the opening of this chapter, I was passionate about this idea, so I did not give up. Around this time I was attempting to create contact with the initial person, one of the band 6s in the Market Research Department emailed me saying that she heard I was getting my Master's in Anthropology. She was impressed to hear that and invited me to share any ideas I had about the organization with her personally. I used this invitation as my chance to pitch my idea to do my thesis on the problem the Market Research Department was having; which was enabling change in the behaviors of the employees.

When I met with the band 6 and explained my idea, I was met with open arms. I determined later she was open to the idea because I was coming to her with a potential solution to the problem she had been facing. In that moment, I learned that timing is everything. She was receptive to my idea because she too had noticed there was a problem; however, she did not know how to solve it. As she explained, she had been thinking of this and trying to understand why the lower-level employees were not readily changing their behaviors. Therefore, when I entered her office that day with a solution to that very problem she had been contemplating, she was extremely willing to do what was necessary to create an answer (which was by allowing me to do my thesis using the Market Research Department as my client).

Academically, I learned the difference between the business audience and the academic audience. Having been employed by Gangler Company for the last seven years, I learned all about business writing, corporate thinking, corporate jargon, how to “play the game,” and how to sell an idea. The Gangler Company is an intense training program for those like me who did not have much real-world experience upon entering the company straight out of undergraduate school. That being said, as I was preparing for my thesis (particularly, the written portion), I had to learn how to shift my behaviors and thoughts to fit the academic world versus the business world. However, applying an anthropological lens here, I am more engrained in the corporate cultural grouping versus the academic cultural grouping, so it was very difficult to switch from the cultural grouping I was a part of on a daily basis to fit a different cultural group (academia) I was entering into. This problem is not unique to me. As the sub-discipline of applied anthropology continues to grow and has grown, many anthropologists face this tension (Nolan 2003). However, my particular situation is a bit exaggerated because I am a part of the cultural environment that I am also studying, so it was sometimes difficult to turn off the market researcher working for a corporation and turn on the researcher writing for an academic audience; which I believe is note-worthy as more companies begin to hire practitioners.

Professionally, I learned that most of the behaviors and ideas that are put forth at Gangler are a product of the cultural environment and external institutions. Individuals’ activities are a part of a shared pattern within the culture. Therefore, to understand a person’s actions, I must understand the social facts (as Durkheim defined them). I must understand the cultural patterns and the institutional elements that are influencing that individual. At that

point, I can determine how to best address their actions. Furthermore, I learned that there must be a holistic approach to changing behaviors and ideas; an approach that influences recruiting, training, rewards, research plans, decision making, communication, and team interactions. As is currently the practice, we cannot just tell the organization what to change and expect the members of the organization to do that (whether their intentions are pure or not); hence, the impetus for this project.

Finally, this applied thesis made me fully exposed to biases; my own biases included. In an effort to provide full disclosure, my inherent biases toward this shift to human insights is that this is something I believe the organization should be doing and that I would want to be a part of as a member of the organization. I believe this shift is inspiring and could bring about true innovation, as well as provide more meaning and significance to the work we do every day.

Additionally, I am a person who values relationships and spends a notable amount of my time working toward helping myself and others build happy, healthy relationships. So this shift toward being a more cohesive organization and having more empathy for each other and with our consumers does not scare me; in fact, it excites me.

Lastly, I've been conducting market research for the past seven years and am very familiar with the more "traditional" market research techniques of focus groups, in-home interviews, etc. Furthermore, I was a broadcast journalism major in college, so I spent much of my time researching and investigating stories. I say all of this to say, I have biases as a researcher; which may be different from other students who have not had as much primary research experience.

Above all, I have a bias for change; therefore, as a member of the Market Research Department, I continue to try to enact these changes in the organization in order to get back to “finding out what consumers want and giving it to them”!

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