WORKPLACE IDENTITY

BY

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SYNOPSIS

There have been a limited number of studies carried out on employee workplace identity. There have been many studies carried out on organizational change; however, they have been carried out mostly from an instrumentalist perspective where the topic of organizational change has been treated in isolation from other aspects of organization. The question of how a relationship exists between employee workplace identity and organizational change has been left unanswered. This thesis applies narrative theory as a conceptual bridge across identity and change. By considering how employees derive a sense of workplace identity from the workplace narratives, and organizational change as the destruction of existing workplace narratives and adoption of new workplace narratives, it is possible to gain new understandings of these concepts. A theory is developed which explains how narrative theory creates a relationship between identity and change. This new theory is further developed to explain how narrative theory creates a relationship between organizational identity, culture, leadership, conflict, and change. The new extended theory is applied to a narrative presentation of empirical data, which offers a powerful explanatory lens for understanding the relationship between these chosen aspects of organization.

CONFIDENTIALITY

In order to preserve confidentiality of the people who participated in this research; pseudonyms have been used for names, titles, and organizations.

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Finally I would like to acknowledge other members of my family who supported and encouraged me indirectly but nonetheless assisted along the journey. So thank you to Leno, Jenny, Sonia, Mark and Bubby.

DECLARATION

This thesis does not contain any material which has been accepted at any other university for the award of a degree, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis does not contain any material previously published or written by another person; except where reference is made in the text.

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MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

8-MAR-2004

This thesis is about garbage collectors.

Garbos: try and do without them.

CONTENTS

ABOUT THE RESEARCHER

The process of ethnography is a joint construction of meaning narratively based by the participants and the researcher. The final case study narrative is open for interpretation by the reader. This entire thesis is presented in narrative form and it may assist the reader to have some concept of the researcher's narratives in order to have a deeper insight into how the researcher may have impacted on the research. I do not wish to predispose the reader to a specific interpretation of what is written. The intention is to heighten the concept that ethnography is a joint construction in meaning.

At the time this research commenced in 1996, I was coming to terms with recently finalised serious litigation procedures following a rather unpleasant family business wind down involving partnership conflict issues. The litigation had created fundamental change to my work role and personal circumstances, which seriously impacted on my family's financial security due to the loss of valuable assets and enormous legal costs. Emotional stress had taken a toll and I was suffering health problems including depression. Spiritually I felt lost and my confidence along with my esteem suffered extreme setbacks. I was in physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional pain.

The litigation had created a fundamental change in the lives of my family and myself. The litigation had impacted on my sense of identity, as who I had been for many years suddenly changed. I had to come to terms with a new perception of financial security and status. My role as a father, husband, and provider was challenged and my sense of identity had been altered. Some of my personal narratives had been destroyed and some were in dissonance. As a result I experienced internal conflict and fragmentation.

I turned to work and study as a means to focus my attention away from my personal problems and as a way of maintaining structure in my life. When the Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) legislation created fundamental organizational change at Haddon City Council (HCC) I saw it as an ideal opportunity to study how fundamental organizational change impacts on the individuals who make up the organization. Having witnessed a number of organizational change efforts and having experienced fundamental

change in my personal circumstances I realized that fundamental organizational change had the potential to impact on the identity of the individuals involved.

I wanted to understand how a relationship exists between individual workplace identity and organizational change. Just as my personal narratives had been impacted by fundamental change, the workplace narratives of the research participants were impacted by fundamental organizational change. As I discovered a narrative link between identity and change, I realized that my research had a secondary potential; to also demonstrate a link between identity, culture, leadership, and conflict.

PREFACE

This study gives expression to a particular way of viewing, thinking about, and speaking about various aspects of organization such as identity, culture, leadership, conflict, and change. The dominant voices in the organizational literature have tended to draw on the physical sciences to study organization and as a result these aspects of organization have tended to be studied in isolation.

The onslaught of a global economy and developing technology has created a furious and dynamic business environment with fierce competition and change that is rapid, fundamental and often devastating. Under these conditions many business environments have become complex and turbulent where a three-year business plan may even be too long. This calls for new theories of organization that can deal with the complexity and turbulence of dynamic business environments. On the fringes of the organizational literature are the voices that recognize the need for social sciences to develop organizational theory; as organizations are after all made up of the human beings that work within them. These voices are from disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and anthropology and speak with the aim of developing theories of organization that account for the complexities of human behavior and action.

This study is not situated with the dominant voices within the organizational literature that speak to an organizational theory of control, stability, mechanistic cause and effect, and isolated aspects of organization. Rather, this study is situated within the voices of the organizational literature that speak of complexity and change. This study speaks to a theory of relationship between organizational identity, culture, leadership, conflict and change. These metaphors of organization are held within the narratives of the people who make up the organization and each aspect is integrally connected to the other. Impacting on one aspect of organization inevitably has some degree of impact on other aspects. This offers a new lens for viewing organization and a new way of speaking about organizational relationships.

INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of this thesis is to better understand the concept of identity, particularly under conditions of fundamental organizational change. Identity has the potential to be interpreted in individual, group, or organizational contexts, however, for the purposes of this study the main focus will be on individual and group identity. The aim of the thesis is to answer the research question: *"What is the relationship between employee workplace identity and fundamental organizational change?"* To achieve this it will be necessary to construct a conceptual bridge between organizational identity and organizational change. A theory will need to be developed, which explains how employees respond to fundamental organizational change through their sense of workplace identity. Following from this, another important aspect is to understand the relationship between identity and various other aspects of organization such as culture, leadership, and conflict. Indeed the study highlights how these aspects of organization have a relationship and influence one another.

Topic Development

Having been involved in several organizational change efforts which were only marginally successful I was curious as to why people resist organizational change, particularly if the change is fundamental in nature. My observation was that throughout organizational change efforts, no matter what changed, the people within the organization continued to behave rather as they did prior to the change. Put another way, regardless of new logo's, uniforms, or equipment the people did not behave any differently and so the same results persisted.

The more fundamental the change the more employees seemed to remain the same. Logic demanded that if the people themselves do not change how can the workplace possibly change. In my experience where change efforts had not succeeded I had observed an instrumental approach from leaders where the

change was treated in isolation from other aspects of organization. Enormous resources were utilized to carry out cosmetic changes such as logo's, uniforms, slogans, colour schemes, and stationary, however, almost no resources were utilized to assist the people adapt to the change. Leaders attempted to implement fundamental organizational change without regard for employee identity, and certainly without regard to culture, leadership, or conflict.

The organizational literature contains an overwhelming amount of material about culture, leadership, conflict and organizational change, however, there is a very limited amount of literature devoted to individual employee identity or group identity. Despite an intense literature review, no material was located on the relationship between identity, culture, leadership, conflict, and change.

The Academy of Management Review published a range of articles regarding identity in January 2000 and even then identity was considered in isolation from culture, leadership, conflict, and change. The topic of identity has come of age and deserves to have a prominent place in the organizational literature. The arguments within this thesis will advance identity theory by considering the relationship between identity and organizational change as a primary purpose and the relationship between identity, culture, leadership, and conflict as a secondary purpose. Understanding how these aspects of organization are interrelated will provide a more complex and holistic view of organization. It is hoped that readers will gain a richer sense of appreciation of employee identity and associated emotional and cognitive responses in the face of fundamental organizational change. It is also hoped that extending the theory will have practical benefits for the successful implementation of organizational change in complex and dynamic business environments.

Thesis Structure

The study is composed of three parts:

Part One

This section presents a literature review, which will become the basis for developing a theory to explain how a relationship exists between employee workplace identity and organizational change.

Chapter 1 focuses on narrative theory and how narratives lead people to action. This chapter provides a narrative basis for identity and an understanding for how individual identity is constructed. Human beings live in language and narrative on a daily basis. We are surrounded by narratives in the form of conversations, newspapers, radio, television, books, and various other stories. Our personal narratives determine how we feel, think, and behave, in other words our personal narratives give rise to our actions. The narratives we live within at various social settings including organization determine how we behave within those social settings. Individual identity is narratively constructed from personal narratives and from the narratives held in the minds of other people we interact with. Employee workplace identity is constructed from the workplace narratives.

Chapter 2 deals with the concept of individual identity and its development over time. As individuals interact with other people in various social settings they develop a sense of identity, of who they are in relation to significant others. Over time and repeated interactions individuals embed a sense of identity within various social settings such as home, school, work, sports clubs, etc. In Western society work is an important aspect of peoples lives and to this extent they derive an important sense of identity from the organizations for which they work.

Chapter 3 explores organizational change theory and how employees respond to organizational change. At one extreme is cosmetic organizational change, which is change for the sake of appearance. This type of change involves a change of a company logo and colour schemes or perhaps the mission statement. These

types of changes are unlikely to create high-level responses from employees. At the other extreme there is fundamental organizational change where things will never be the same again and this type of change is likely to invoke strong responses from employees. To achieve a fundamental organizational change it is necessary to destroy existing workplace narratives and replace them with new workplace narratives. If workplace narratives are destroyed to implement fundamental organizational change then this inevitably alters the narratives which constitute employee workplace identity. This theory explains how a relationship exists between identity and change.

Chapter 4 explores the importance of metaphor. Aspects of organization such as organizational identity, culture, leadership, conflict, and change are given metaphorical status, which helps to explain how narrative theory provides a conceptual bridge between these aspects of organization.

Chapter 5 extends the theory further by developing a relationship theory to explain how a relationship exists between organizational identity, culture, leadership, conflict, and change to the extent that a variation in one implies a degree of variation in the others. Influencing the workplace narratives of people within an organization will invariably impact on whatever is constituted within those workplace narratives.

Chapter 6 explains the methodology used for this study. Why a particular method was chosen, how the data was collected, and how the data is presented. The research question by its very nature demanded qualitative methods of research to allow for the complexities of human behavior. This study draws on methods from anthropology, where the researcher adopted the role of modern ethnographer to collect research data and the case study is presented as an ethnographic narrative.

Part Two

Part Two presents the case study narrative. A brief history is presented to give a contextual background for the case study. The participant group consists of a group of garbage collectors in a Local Council workplace faced with a fundamental organizational change and a group of leaders attempting to implement a fundamental organizational change. The case study narrative has been constructed from field notes collected by the researcher as a modern ethnographer. The narrative is presented in the form of a stage play in order to give the participants a voice as actors and the researcher a voice as narrator. This allows the reader to draw their own judgements and conclusions as to why the participants responded as they did. The story allows the reader to give meaning and intentions to the behavior and actions of the participants in a particular situation at a particular point in time.

Part Three

Part Three presents a synthesis between the theory developed in Part One and the case study in Part Two. This allows the theory within the literature review to be applied to the findings within the empirical data collected in the field. A discussion about the findings provides a pathway for the study to resonate with other organizations. Contributions of the study and limitations of the study are discussed to identify potential broader applications and areas for future research.

PART ONE: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

CHAPTER 1:   A NARRATIVE BASIS FOR IDENTITY

The central focus of this chapter is to provide a narrative basis for individual identity and an understanding of how individuals narratively construct their identity. Narrative theory plays a central role within this study as it provides a conceptual bridge between identity theory and organizational change theory. It will later be argued that fundamental organizational change requires the destruction of existing workplace narratives. This chapter will provide a foundation for understanding how narratives are central to all human endeavor on a daily basis including organization.

Bernstein (1983) argues that language is not a tool but the medium in which we live. He further argues that narratives are the core of human experiences and that we not only tell stories but that we enact them. We live within the narratives we tell ourselves and exchange during interaction with others on a daily basis within various social settings including organization. These narratives guide our actions. History shows us that human beings have gone to war on the basis of political and religious narratives and that subsequent peace agreements have been narratively negotiated. All around us within various cultures, locations, and settings there are examples of human beings living out narratives and organizing action. On a daily basis society is inundated with enormous volumes of newspaper narratives, radio narratives, television narratives, and so on, which demonstrates the central role that narratives play in the lives and affairs of the human race. Our narratives lead us to various courses of action on a daily basis.

Narrative and Human Action

Drummond (1998) argues that we live a storied existence. As children we are told stories and indeed we see our children enact them in the playground of our

schools. The stories of heroes, mythical figures, and make believe characters are not just the domain of children, but also of adults as they watch television and read novels. Gadamer (1993) argues that the stories of our culture and traditions are undoubtedly taken seriously by people and Chomsky (1992) argues that the stories of politicians through their speeches in parliament can lead us in and out of war. Narratives are central to all human endeavor including organizations. Drummond (1998) argues that the centrality of narratives within organization has been often neglected by organizational researchers despite the fact that discussion about qualitative data is presented in narrative form and discussion about quantitative data is presented in narrative form.

Narratives bring time into being and link human action and events. Without narratives the past, present and future would have no temporal links and one would only notice a listing of events as they occurred. Polkinghorne (1988) argues that narrative is the fundamental scheme for linking individual human action and events into aspects that are interrelated and form an understandable composite. For example, narrative joins two separate events, 'the father died' and 'the son cried'. Without a means of connection these two statements would merely be separate listings of events and we would be oblivious to the relationship between the two people indicated by the phrases. A narrative link between the two statements infers that there is a significant relationship between the two people in the story, and easily links rationality and emotion to handle the complex relationship of father and son. Gergen and Gergen (1986) argue that our experiences are given coherence by weaving them together in such a way that they demonstrate connectedness over time and movement or direction through time. It is narrative that provides the medium to give events and experience coherence and meaning over time.

Polkinghorne (1988) argues that the plot of narratives we use in everyday life, including organizational situations, avoids a chronological listing of events and transforms isolated events into a schematic whole by highlighting and

recognizing the contribution that certain events make to the development and outcome of the story. Ricoeur (1984) argues that the plot of narratives brings together goals, causes, and chance within the temporal unity of a whole and complete action. It is narratives that help us to understand human action and intention.

Bruner (1986) argues that narrative deals with the vicissitudes of human intentions. This is an important point to highlight and has a particular relevance to this study as to note or infer intentions assists in terms of explaining to the reader why certain events took place at a particular time. For example, the response of certain Local Government Departments to the Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) legislation introduced by the reining State Government. These events created a fundamental workplace change for the case study participants and led the individuals to a particular course of action. Narratives give us the basis for weaving the complexities of events, intentions and actions into a coherent story. It is argued that paradigmatic rationality refers to those discourses that "function to…prove a statement by linking it to other statements through connective of formal logic. Contrastingly, narrative is used for those discourses that 'demonstrate' by the type of reasoning that connects the reader to the whole." (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 35)

Bruner (1986) further argues that events, which are linked, have the potential to be boring without the dramatic affect. Usually, the characters in action are linked with intentions or goals, in a particular setting(s), using particular means. The linking of events in the case study by the narrative has the capacity to give the reader a greater appreciation of emotions, intentions, beliefs, and values, which led the garbage collectors to particular courses of action. It is the drama and theatre within the narrative, which allows others to understand the unpredictable responses of the garbage collectors to the fundamental organizational change.

Ricoeur (1991) argues that there is an integral connection between narrative and action. Narratives lead individuals to intervene in the course of things. The action derives from intention or motivation, based on the particular narratives of an individual, irrespective of whether these are self generated from a culture or simply appropriated from a culture. Through narrative reasoning a person connects to the whole by a process of emplotment, which means that random events can be linked to understand hopes, fears, motives, intentions, and beliefs. Ricoeur (1984) argues that a plot is a quasi-causal explanation as it helps to comprehend circumstances, goals, interactions, and unintended results in one intelligible whole. The plot within the narrative helps us to comprehend the circumstances surrounding the actions of people within particular contexts.

Human actions have a narrative quality as we attribute motive and intention to those actions. We hold people accountable for their actions within the legal systems because we attribute actions as springing from people's intentions within a specific context. These intentions are integral to the narratives they enact. We understand the actions of others because action has a basically narrative character. While the end point of a story cannot be predicted it must be acceptable; that is it must contain the necessary explanation of the actions of people so that we can understand their intentions or infer their motives. Polkinghorne (1988) argues that emplotment is grounded in a pre-understanding of the world of action and that more than one plot can provide meaning to the same set of events.

Ricoeur (1984) argues that human experiences are held in the mind as pre-narratives (narratives in the making) or prefiguration. The articulation of an experience or the narrative of an experience, in other words its emplotment is referred to as configuration by Ricoeur. Once an experience is narrated it is then possible to refigure or re-author that experience to make even greater sense of the experience and this process has been called refiguration.

These central elements of Ricoeur's theory form a basis for the understanding of narrative and action. Take for example the experience of a vehicle accident. When a collision occurs the experience is prefigured in the mind of the individual(s) involved. The event is then configured into a narrative. Once the drama and trauma of the experience has settled the narrative can then be refigured to make greater sense of the episode as to how and why the accident occurred. The refiguration will then lead the individuals to various courses of action in terms of blame, legal recovery and compensation.

Drummond (1998) argues that we understand our world and create our realities through narratives. Narratives can handle both rational and emotional aspects very comfortably along with the past, present, and future. They enable us to adopt perspectives which value complexity over simplicity, and human sensitivity over the mechanistic orientations to organization. This argument explains how people's narratives assist them to deal with the complexities of life including existence and experience within organization.

On a daily basis individuals come together within organization and live within the workplace narratives to achieve the daily work. The workplace policies, procedures, work processes, working conditions, meetings and conversations are all workplace narratives. Individuals may come together for a meeting or conversation about a particular problem and a narrative is created to deal with the problem. This may involve for example, repairing machinery, reverting to spare machinery or temporarily performing alternative work depending on the workplace environment and the nature of the work.

For the purposes of this study it is important to understand how individuals construct their identity and how they derive a sense of identity. Narrative theory has the capacity to offer explanations for both of these aspects of identity. The following section will deal with the issue of how individual identity is narratively constructed and the following chapter will deal with the concept of

identity and how an individual derives a sense of identity from various social settings and interactions including organization.

Narrative Identity

Spence (1982) argues that we are able to experience an event or a series of events in such a way as to facilitate the development of an enabling reinterpretation of one's identity. A narrative identity is a storied identity emploted by an individual. A person may change their narrative identity with time and circumstance to include both historical and fictive elements in the narrative. This requires an individual to be the reader and writer of their life's narratives. This argument creates a link between an individual's personal narratives and their identity. Narratives constitute who we are. Spence is arguing that when we experience events we narratively reinterpret those events and in so doing over time we change our individual identity.

Kerby (1991) argues, "Identity will be dependent, in certain important respects, upon the coherence and continuity of one's personal narrative." (Kerby, 1991, p. 6) Kerby further argues that for much of our lives a concern with our identity may only be marginal. We tend to question our identity in crisis situations and at certain turning points in our routine behavior. Just as Spence above has argued that a narrative identity may include historical and fictive elements of an individual's life, Ricoeur supports this theory and points out that a life story is made up of previous narratives and in some cases previous legends.

Ricoeur (1984) argues that in (telling and retelling of a life) we can see how the story of a life comes to be constituted through a series of rectifications applied to previous narratives, just as the history of a people, or a collectivity or an institution proceeds from the series of corrections that new historians bring to their predecessors' descriptions and explanations, and, step by step, to the legends that preceded this genuinely historiographical work. Historical

narratives and bits of information about a person's life or events are reinterpreted to create an acceptable narrative identity.

Historical narratives in conjunction with continuing contemporary narratives influence our narrative identities. Kerby also links narrative identity and historical narratives as he argues that, "When asked by others who are we, more often than not we are forced to some account of our past life, and this will be predominately narrative in form." (Kerby, 1991, p. 7) If we lose the ability to narrate our past, it is tantamount to a form of amnesia. A loss of historical narratives could result in a diminishing of one's sense of identity. Our history constitutes a drama in which we are a leading actor, and the meaning of our historical role is understood through the recollective and imaginative configuring of that history in autobiographical narratives. By narrating the past we understand ourselves to be the implied subject generated by the narrative.

Just as it is possible to compose several plots involving the same incidents or the same events, Ricoeur (1984) argues that it is always possible to weave different, and even opposed plots about our lives. This argument presents a philosophical explanation for people giving different expressions of their identity, in different circumstances and at different times. Individuals are thereby continually delicately balanced between history and fiction; between actual events and an individual's interpretation of those events. Kerby (1991) argues that narrating individual identity is an interpretive activity and not a simple mirroring of the past. In this respect, even fictions can provide us with characters and plots that we may identify with and which disclose ourselves; our experiences of literature and film should readily prove this point.

As human beings we have an enormous capacity to enjoy films and novels and the characters within them. In the case of our personal narratives "truth" becomes more a question of a certain adequacy to an implicit meaning of the past than of a historically correct representation. The meaning of the past is not

something fixed and final but is something continually refigured and updated in the present. What must be emphasized here is that a narrative identity involves interplay of a person's history and the personal narratives a person tells, either himself/herself or others.

We emplot our experiences and so create our narrative identities. A person's identity may be made up of multiple narratives, with enough coherence between them to give a sense of consistency in different situations. However in reality, many of our narratives, both individual and collective may have much dissonance between them and indeed at times contain outright contradictions. For example, a husband who has a lover; in Western society this contradicts the institution of marriage. So on the one hand the husband must live within personal narratives that constitute an identity as a married man and faithful husband while on the other hand he must live within narratives that constitute an identity as a lover and an unfaithful husband.

MacIntyre (1981) argues that we inherit a past that is present to some degree in the present and that we are part of history, which embeds traditions, which in turn give rise to practices. Kerby (1991) supports this notion and argues that, "The narrated past best generates our sense of personal identity, and the emphasis is on the word personal because emplotment may indeed create the individual meaning or story of our lives for ourselves." (Kerby, 1991, p. 33) Narrative gives us both a structure and a degree of understanding of the ongoing experiences of our lives. Individuals construct personal narrative identities from their particular narratives with regard to various experiences and interactions. Individuals are constituted by multiple personal narratives and all of those personal narratives are integral to the narrative identity of the individual.

MacIntyre, (1981) argues that "what is crucial to human beings as characters in enacted narratives is that possessing only the resources of psychological continuity, we have to be able to respond to the imputation of strict identity, I

am forever whatever I have been at any time for others; and I may be called upon to answer for it; no matter how changed I may be now." (MacIntyre, 1981, p. 202) This highlights that narratively constructed identities are not only in the minds of the individuals but also in the minds of others, who may consider our identities grounded to a particular point in time even though we may argue that we have changed. Other people hold us accountable for previous actions. Eliot (1969) argues that the concept of narrative identity has two elements to it. On the one hand it is the narrative identity held by others and on the other hand it is a persons own history held in their life's narrative with its own idiosyncratic meaning. Kerby (1991) supports the views of both MacIntyre and Eliot with regard to an individual narrative identity being held in the minds of others as he argues that an individual identity is achieved through our own and other people's narratives.

Taylor argues that only narrative can offer a coherent answer to the persistent questions concerning our identity, and that "We see that the sense of the good has to be woven into my understanding of my life as an unfolding story. But this is to state another basic condition of making sense of ourselves, that we grasp our lives in narrative." (Taylor, 1989, p. 47)

Ezzy (1998) argues for a synthesis of George Herbert Mead's conception of the temporal and intersubjective nature of identity with Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutic theory of narrative identity. This combines a philosophical and a social-psychological explanation of identity. He argues, "A narrative conception of identity implies that subjectivity is neither a philosophical illusion nor an impermeable substance." (Ezzy, 1998, p. 1) A narrative identity provides us with continuity and a subjective sense of who we are as it symbolically integrates the events of our lived experience in the plot of the story we tell about our lives. While narrative identity is generally stable, it can also be changeable. Ezzy further argues that narrative identity is necessarily process based because

it describes lived time, which is ongoing. Narrative identity is in process and unfinished and is continuously shaped and reshaped as episodes happen.

The literature has presented a theory, which provides us with an understanding that individual identity is constructed from both personal narratives (past and present) and the narratives about individuals held in the minds of the people they interact with. These narratives are contoured by life's experiences and as the narratives are refigured by the individual, his or her narrative identity is reconstituted. Strong arguments for how individual identity is narratively constructed have been presented, however, the issue of narratives held within tradition has not been dealt with. Narratives that are embedded in tradition and passed on over a period of time may also influence the narrative identity of an individual. The following section will deal with how traditional narratives influence narrative identity.

Narrative Identity and Tradition

Gadamer (1993) argues that tradition has an all-pervasive influence on individuals. Through successive ages, groups of people have developed traditions that are handed on down from parents to children through the generations, often with little change through time. Bernstein argues that traditions are "constitutive of what we are now and are in the process of becoming, and they are anticipatory; always open to future testing and transformation." (Bernstein, 1983, p. 141)

We are all born into some form of society and with that society comes a range of traditions, which become a source and basis of our prejudices, and form a foundation for our frameworks of interpretation. We adopt the traditions of our birth groups in the main with little choice and those traditions shape the way we behave in the world. Gadamer (1993) argues that we always stand within tradition. It is further agued that tradition "through its sedimentations has a

power which is constantly determining what we are in the process of becoming. It is not just that works of art, texts, and traditions have affects and leave traces. Rather, what we are…is always being influenced by tradition, even when we think we are most free of it." (Bernstein, 1983, p. 142)

Traditions are the accumulation of stories, rituals, and customs including narratives that enable individuals and groups to interact in various social settings. These narratives are not options we choose but rather as Gadamer argues, they are given to us, and told "whether through direct retelling, in which myth, legend and custom have their life, or through written tradition, whose signs are, as it were, immediately clear to every reader who can read them." (Gadamer, 1993, p. 390) If applied in an organizational context, the established traditional narratives within the workplace influence the workplace narratives of individuals and in turn influence their narrative identity. The workplace traditions of an organization are developed over time and passed on to new employees by the longer serving employees of the group through workplace narratives and in turn those narratives and traditions influence the narrative identity of each individual.

MacIntyre argues that if you deprive children of stories (particularly those of a culture) "you leave them unscripted, anxious stutterers in their actions as in their words." (MacIntyre, 1981, p. 201) The most appropriate way to give an understanding of any society, including our own, is through the stock of traditional narratives, which constitute its cultural foundation. The cultural narratives, which we adopt as children give us a sense of positioning and orientation and influence how we experience events within various social settings and interactions.

A person's history and therefore, identity is influenced by the traditions a person inherits. "I find myself part of a history and that is generally to say, whether I like it or not, whether I recognize it or not, I am one of the bearers of tradition."

(MacIntyre, 1981, p. 206) Kerby is in accord with MacIntyre with regard to the traditions we narratively inherit as he argues, "The stories we tell ourselves are determined not only by how other people narrate us but also by our language and the genres of storytelling inherited from our traditions." (Kerby, 1991, p. 6) Kerby further argues that narrating our identity is a process of becoming conscious of the narratives that we already live with and in; for example, our roles in the family and in the broader sociopolitical arena. To this extent history and tradition are inseparable.

Individual identity is narratively constructed and is constituted by both personal narratives and the narratives held in the minds of other people with whom we interact. These narratives include historical events and in some cases elements of fiction that an individual identifies with to create a coherent narrative identity. The traditional narratives passed down from generation to generation influence our personal narratives and in turn influences the construction of our narrative identity.

Identity is subtle and delicate as it is contoured, influenced and constructed minute by minute by events and experiences in our daily lives. From the moment we are born and awareness grows we learn to think at all levels in language. We soak up narratives by all our senses as we see, hear, speak, smell and feel our experiences. As individuals we absorb narratives from traditional stories, from conversations, from literature, media such as radio and television, songs, poems, and films in cinemas. As we interact in various social settings including organization we read peoples expressions, body language and attitudes, which also tell a story. No matter where we are, we live in narratives, which we continuously interpret and refigure to shape our narrative individual identity.

CHAPTER 2:   THE CONCEPT OF IDENTITY

Individual Identity

Identity has the capacity to be interpreted in the individual, group, or organizational contexts. For the purposes of this study the main focus will be on individual and group identity. In order to answer the research question it will be necessary to gain an appreciation of how individuals derive a sense of identity and more specifically how individuals derive a sense of workplace identity from the organization that they are a part of.

Erickson (1964) argues that identity formation is mostly an unconscious process except when inner conditions and outer circumstances combine to make the individual painfully aware of self-identity. According to Erickson, the process of identity formation requires the individual to simultaneously reflect and observe in order to judge himself in light of how others may be judging him in comparison to themselves. At the same time he judges their way of judging him in light of how he perceives himself. This line of argument serves to highlight the fact that the development of individual identity is a process that requires interaction with other individuals or groups. As an individual becomes aware of the differences and similarities in comparison with others a sense of individual identity is formed.

Erickson (1964) further argues that identity is always changing and developing and that it is a process of increasing differentiation which becomes ever more inclusive as the individual grows aware of a widening circle of others significant to him, from the maternal person to mankind. Erickson is not arguing for an original identity that simply expands and remains fixed, but rather, he argues that identity is never established in a form that is static and unchangeable. This would suggest that individual identity develops over time and interaction with other people and that somehow individuals continue to change their sense of identity. In other words, the experiences of various social

interactions have an influence on how an individual identity is contoured. Whetten and Godfrey support this line of argument and also view individual identity as changing over time and circumstances.

Whetten and Godfrey (1998) argue that identity distinguishes an individual idiosyncratically from a myriad of other people. The difficulty with individual identity is that descriptions change over time and circumstances. They argue that "Maintaining a certain optimal amount of ambiguity in defining myself grants me some latitude over time and context to harbour a wide range of opinions, beliefs, and values…to see myself as an adaptive individual…also gives me the latitude to change my self image and my public presentation, typically in an incremental fashion." (Whetten and Godfrey, 1998, p. 20) An individual identity may be based on being a student and child at one point of life and being an employee and parent at another point. An individual may emphasize different aspects of their identity in different social settings such as school, home, work, and social clubs.

While this line of argument may indicate that individuals are not strictly bound to one description of identity it is quite remarkable just how stable individual identity really is. It would not be difficult to point to people who have lived in the same house, worked for the same organization and remained members of the same club for most of their lives. Although they may display different aspects of their identity in different social settings, they seem to maintain a core individual identity within various settings, which remains comfortably stable over time and yet distinguishes them from millions of others. There are varying opinions regarding how identity is contoured and why individuals display different identities in various circumstances.

Scott and Lane (2000) argue that people seek to define and understand themselves through an interaction occurring in a particular context with a salient audience. As individuals enter a social interaction with prior beliefs about their

own values and goals they make assessments of the audience and the situational characteristics which include social rules and roles within which interactions will occur. In a wide variety of social situations including organization individuals develop an identity which preserves their sense of esteem, serves their goals and values, and which they think are believable given their prior behavior and the expectations of the immediate audience.

Scott and Lane (2000) further argue that over time and through repeated interactions with the same audience identities become generalized and held in the memory of the individual. An individual mentally embeds a particular identity to be emphasized within a particular social setting or in the presence a particular audience.

Schlenker (1980, 1984, 1985) argues that for purposes of clarification, audiences include the person or actor/agent, interaction partners, and reference groups. Audiences gather cues from the person at particular times, and in particular settings; in subtle (and not so subtle) ways, how the person appears to them. This can range from affirmations like smiles, to engaging conversations, and direct positive affirmations. Audiences will vary in different settings such as home (children, parents, spouse), school (friends, students, teachers), social (friends, relatives), and organization (employees, management, stakeholders, customers). Identification with a particular audience will depend on the extent that a person wants the approval of a particular audience. If an individual identifies with a particular audience there must be some perceived benefit by the individual. The participants in this study validated their identity as garbage collectors by internalizing and identifying with the members of the particular workgroup (the audience). The issue of identification will be further discussed in the following section.

The concept of individual identity has been largely under theorized within the organizational literature. Ashforth and Mael (1996) argue that an individual

identity is shaped by social context or contexts including organization with regard to a person's role in that social context. Albert, Ashforth, and Dutton (2000) argue that identity and identification are powerful constructs because they address the definition of an entity whether it is an individual, group, or organization. "Part of the power of the constructs comes from the need for a situated sense of an entity. Whether an organization, group, or person, each entity needs at least a preliminary answer to the question "Who are we?" or "Who am I?" in order to interact effectively with other entities over the long run. Similarly, other entities need at least a preliminary answer to the question "Who are they?" for effective interaction. Identities situate the organization, group, or person." (Albert, Ashforth, and Dutton, 2000, p. 1)

They further argue "Identity and identification, in short, are root constructs in organizational phenomena and have been a subtext of many organizational behaviors." (Albert, Ashforth, and Dutton, 2000, p. 1) The argument here is that because identity and identification speak to the very definition of an entity, an individual, a group, or organization, they are powerful terms and have been the subtext of many strategy sessions, organization development initiatives, team building exercises and socialization efforts. Identity and identification have powerful integrative and generative capacity because they travel easily across various levels of analysis. Identity can simultaneously convey distinctiveness and oneness of an individual, group, or organization; while allowing for blurring, multiplicity, and dynamism in the content and process of identity. The term identity can be used as a concept to open up possibilities for theoretical development and revelation.

There is however a noticeable shortage of material regarding identity within the organizational literature prior to January 2000 when The Academy of Management Review published a range of articles referring to the topic of identity within organization. Albert, Ashforth, and Dutton (2000) argue that the topic is now being given serious consideration within the organizational

literature because in a more dynamic business environment organizational members need to clearly cognize a clear sense of the organization's identity. The topic of identity has come of age within the organizational literature because as much as members of the organization need to understand the identity of the organization, the organization needs to understand the identity of its individuals, particularly in turbulent times when understanding human behavior may be critical for quickly adapting to a changing business environment. How and why individuals display particular aspects of their identity within organization may determine how and why individuals identify with the organization.

Identity, Identification and Organization

Work and the workplace is a major part of people's lives and if the choice of their career leads them to choose a particular place of employment, it follows that approval from the workplace offers long-term benefits to individuals from a close identification with it. Scott and Lane (2000) argue that identities have both unique and collective aspects, made salient by different situational and audiences cues; the personal definition, and identity processes, become scripted and schematized and one's identity becomes more consistent over time. This would suggest that in particular situations such as organizations, the sense of identity that individuals derive from the workplace would be consistently contoured by the organization over a period of time.

In light of this argument we can now deal with the issues of identification, and appreciate that by a process of internalization of an audience, the person identifies with that audience. If membership is at stake the person will identify with the group particularly if there is a perceived advantage for being part of a particular group. Turner, Oakes, Haslam, and McGarty (1992) argue that identification is, in part, a form of categorization, which is inherently comparative and hence intrinsically variable, fluid, and relative to a frame of

reference. An individual will display an identity based on the social context and the behavior of the group they are identifying with.

Hogg and Terry (2000) argue that social identity processes are not only motivated by a need to enhance ourselves but also by a need to reduce subjective uncertainty about our perceptions, attitudes, feelings, and behaviors, and ultimately, our identity and place within the social world. There is a core human motivation to reduce uncertainty, particularly about subjectively important matters that generally involve identity. Certainty gives meaning to existence and instills confidence in how to behave and what to expect from the physical and social environment within which we may find ourselves.

Identification with a particular group can reduce uncertainty by providing an individual with a prescription for attitudes, feelings and behaviors. Such a group may be a work group and this highlights the social aspect and group aspect of organization. Hogg and Terry (2000) argue, "We consider organizations to be groups, units or divisions within organizations to be groups, professions or sociodemographic categories that are distributed across organizations to be groups, and so forth, all with different social identities and group prototypes." (Hogg and Terry, 2000, p. 2) In fact Hogg and Terry argue that individual identity derived from organizations is indeed important.

Organizations are structured groups that are located in complex networks of intergroup relations characterized by power, status, and prestige differentials. To varying degrees, people derive part of their identity and sense of identity from the organizations or workgroups to which they belong. "Indeed, for many people their professional and/or organizational identity may be more pervasive and important than ascribed identities based on gender, age, ethnicity, race, or nationality." (Hogg and Terry, 2000, p. 1) This is a powerful argument as it suggests that for some individuals a workplace identity may be the most important aspect of their identity. In a similar vein other writers also argue that

the identification process between an individual and the organization is important for the development and influence of individual identity.

Scott and Lane (2000) argue that identification occurs when individuals perceive that there is an overlap between themselves and the perceived organizational images. They further argue that "heightening people's awareness of themselves as similar to an organization and to other organizational participants on some dimension or dimensions is essential." (Scott and Lane, 2000, p. 8) The strength of identification with an organization depends on how an individual mentally embeds the process. The individual identification process becomes well elaborated, tightly interconnected, and firmly planted in the mind when it is interwoven within personal identity.

Scott and Lane (2000) argue, "Two individuals may view an organization's identity as highly attractive and desire similarity to and affiliation with it. Yet, one individual's identification with the organization may be highly accessible and salient, whereas the other's may not be." (Scott and Lane, 2000, p. 8) For the first individual, the workplace identity may be more central to his/her individual identity. In this instance there would be no need to reflect about whether the workplace identity aligned with his/her concept of identity because via prior thoughtful contemplation and reflection, he/she would have mentally embedded the workplace identity. For the second individual, the workplace identity may be peripheral and would not be as central to his/her individual identity. In this instance the workplace identity may be desirable to the individual, however the identification process would be more difficult.

Scott and Lane (2000) further argue that for employees, a workplace identity is often highly accessible and salient because over long periods of time daily interaction, following workplace routines, provision of a paycheck, inclusion on the organizational chart, and myriad of other activities cue their membership status. How people derive a sense of individual identity from the organization

and how they identify with the organization may influence behavior towards the organization in a positive or negative way. If people strongly identify with an organization and develop a sense of identity accordingly they are more likely to support the organizations goals. However, if individuals fail to identify with an organization it may have negative connotations and consequences such as reduced trust and support for the organization's goals.

Individual identity has been described as being partly static and partly dynamic, however, the process for negotiating individual identity is lacking a theory and one is left with an assertion that this is so, rather than a compelling argument as to how it is so. Albert, Ashforth and Dutton (2000) argue that identity touches on a wealth of provocative issues: multilevel identity (personal and collective); dynamics among levels; negotiated or socially constructed identity; multiple identities; identities as political arenas; identity as changing or enduring; and as flash points for psychodynamic processes. Given this argument, it is reasonable to point out that the topic of individual identity is a generative construct, which deserves a great deal more in depth and systemic argument. For the purposes of this study, there needs to be an understanding of formation, development and transformation of individual identity within a workplace setting.

Most writers on the topic of individual identity appear to come from a social constructionist orientation, that is, that identities are contoured by individuals in interaction with significant others in various social settings. There appears to be no clear agreed definition of individual identity, or for that matter, any clear definitions of how individuals derive a sense of identity from the workplace. However, the literature has established that people derive a sense of individual identity from interactions within various social settings including organizations and indeed that some individuals derive an important sense of identity from the organization of which they are a part. This serves to create a link between individual identity and the workplace.

Identity and Work

For the purposes of this study it is important to elaborate how individuals develop a workplace identity. By workplace identity I mean the sense of individual identity that an employee derives from being part of a particular workplace. The definition of employee for the purposes of this study is intended to mean any person who works within an organization. The concept of role theory which links an individual to a place in the hierarchy has not been included as this would broaden the scope beyond the limits of this study.

It would not be difficult to argue that in Western Society a person's role is considered to be an important part of their identity. When we are introduced to someone at social gatherings it is almost certain that the question, "What do you do?" will be asked. The response enables us to be classified into simple categories of similarity (things in common) and difference (things not in common). Kramer (1991) argues that this is a critical element in individual identity construction by processes of categorization, or of group identity by agreements about the things in common and things not in common which delineate the group. The answer to the question, "What do you do?" may be Engineer, Plumber, Doctor, Builder, Garbage Collector, Lawyer, and so forth. The response automatically categorizes us into groups and identifies us with certain traits, activities and reputations. In other words part of who we are becomes identified with what we do for employment. If the question, Where do you work?" is included in the conversation we may then be further categorized by organizational identity. So, in Western society at least, an important part of individual identity is derived from the workplace.

Mason and Carr (2000) argue that in Western society at least, the work organization can be a powerful social group for many individuals. Individual employees are encouraged to make a series of identifications with the organization to assimilate with values, attributes, and characteristics. They

further argue that individuals are likely to identify with the attributes of the organization that will serve the individual. This raises questions about the Quality of Work Life (QWL) and why people choose to identify with a particular workplace and remain there for long periods of time. The garbage collectors in this study chose to identify with their workplace and in some cases encouraged their children to join the group. Some had remained on an application list for several years to secure a place within the group and the majority of members were long serving. They chose to establish a workplace identity as garbage collectors. This serves to illustrate that the sense of identity employees derive from organizations is likely to be very important to them.

We have so far argued for a theory that explains how an individual comes to derive a sense of workplace identity. To explore the relationship between employee workplace identity and fundamental organizational change it is now necessary to consider the issue of organizational change in some detail.

CHAPTER 3:   CHANGE THEORY

In Chapter 1 we have seen how narratives lead people to action and how identity is constructed from personal narratives. We have also seen how narratives are held in the minds of other people and are handed down in tradition. In Chapter 2 we have seen how individuals derive a sense of identity from social settings including organizations. Individuals derive a strong sense of identity from their workplace and use the workplace narratives to construct a workplace identity. In this chapter we will explore change theory and how organizational change impacts on workplace narratives.

The focus of this chapter will be to develop a theory that elaborates the understanding of fundamental organizational change, which is a deep core change where things will never be the same again and how employees experience such organizational change. The purpose is to develop a theory which allows us to explore the relationship between employee identity and organizational change. To achieve this it will be necessary to build a conceptual bridge between identity and change.

Fundamental Organizational Change

Smith (1982) argues that change efforts are constantly caught between morphostasis and morphogenesis, that is, between things remaining the same or changing at a fundamental level such that things are never the same again. By morphostasis he means the types of changes that enables things to look different while remaining basically as they have always been. This is a cosmetic type of change more for the sake of appearance than reality (similar to moving chairs around on the Titanic; obvious changes but the ship still sank). There are countless organization restructures where things have remained essentially the same.

By the term morphogenic Smith implies a fundamental change where things can never be the same again. Smith argues that we struggle to produce morphogenic change because our tools and technologies are fundamentally of a morphostatic type. For the purposes of this study we will be dealing with morphogenic change where things will never be the same again. Morphogenic organizational change requires the individuals who constitute the organization to change their thoughts, feelings and behavior on the workplace.

It is unlikely that employees will resist morphostatic change such as a new company logo, or a refurbishment of the premises. Employees are much more likely to respond negatively to a morphogenic change that requires adaptation responses involving the pain and stress related to a shift in mindset, values, beliefs, and behavior. To achieve an organizational change that is deep and fundamental, it is necessary to change the minds of people and the beliefs that lead individuals to action. The participants within this study were subjected to a fundamental organizational change imposed by the reining State Government on Local Councils during the mid 1990's in Victoria, Australia. This fundamental organizational change was driven by the Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) legislation.

CCT: Fundamental Workplace Reform

During 1994 the State Government in Victoria, introduced the Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) legislation. The CCT legislation required all Local Councils in Victoria to tender out at least 50% of the services that they delivered to their ratepayers. The legislated outsourcing of such a large volume of services meant a sudden fundamental change for Local Councils in Victoria as this industry had traditionally functioned in a protected environment and was heavily controlled by the unions. This legislation was preceded by a forced amalgamation of Local Councils, which reduced their numbers from 211 to 78.

At the same time the Victorian State Government sacked some thousand elected Councilors and replaced them with Government appointed Commissioners. Between 1993 and 1998 the number of employees in Local Government was reduced by some thirty percent. O'Connor (2000) argues that during this period Local Government was irreversibly transformed. He further argues, "Municipal restructuring and Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) were two key policies of the Kennett Government that epitomize its radical approach." (O'Connor, 2000, p.1-2) These issues give some context to the magnitude of sudden change and turbulence within an environment that had functioned in relative stability for some one hundred years.

The rationale behind the CCT legislation was to expose Local Government to competition to drive out inefficiencies, which would align them with their private counterparts and ultimately achieve rate cuts to the residents. Indeed, a twenty percent rate reduction was imposed on all Councils by the Victorian State Government. O'Connor (2000) argues that the twenty percent savings to meet the imposed rate cuts were not achieved by efficiency gains, rather, they were achieved by reducing services, cutting employment conditions, staff numbers and pay rates, and *some* productivity improvement. There is no doubt that during this period employees within the Local Government sector were experiencing first hand fundamental organizational change.

O'Connor argues, "It is important, I think, to remember that while this organizational upheaval was underway, the new Councils were being forced by State Legislation to embark on a massive tendering process, with 50% of each Council's operating costs subject to the tendering process. The effect of this tendering in Councils meant that over half of the permanent employees had to bid for their own work." (O'Connor, 2000, p. 3). Having to compete for their jobs against private industry was indeed a fundamental change to the people within Local Government Organizations. Under the new legislation Local Councils were also given the freedom to submit tenders for one another's work.

In other words, Councils could compete with private industry for any Local Government Tenders.

One particular Council, Haddon City Council (HCC), decided to take the new legislation one step further. As they now had the opportunity to compete for Local Government work, they decided to establish an independent subsidiary company, Tratcon Works. The new subsidiary would be owned by HCC, however it would have its own Board of Directors and would be required to run as a financially independent concern. Under these conditions Tratcon Works would have the freedom to tender for any Local Government work including work tendered out by HCC and any work in the private sector. This was indeed a pioneer move and a unique situation within the Local Government industry as the focus of Local Government has historically been not for profit services.

HCC decided to transfer a group of garbage collectors to Tratcon Works as the first business unit of its waste management arm. Essentially this meant that a group of people who had been Council employees for many years would need to almost overnight become contractors. The garbage collectors had functioned in a unionized protected environment for up to 30 years in some cases and would now have to function in a competitive turbulent environment where they had to compete for their jobs approximately every five years. For this group of employees this was indeed a fundamental organizational change where things would never be the same again.

Changing Workplace Behavior

McLennan (1989) takes an instrumental approach to change as he argues that the skill needed to manage change is as fundamental to a manager as managing money, markets, and people. McLennan makes the assumption that managers are in a position to know when change is required and which direction that change should take. Drummond makes the point that this is not the case as he

argues, "Clearly, however, there are many circumstances into which the manager is plunged with which he is unfamiliar." (Drummond, 1998, p. 101) Drummond further argues that it is possible for us to imagine making changes as a rational act in the quiet of an executive office or boardroom. However, turbulent change can throw structures and processes into turmoil and leave individuals feeling internally fragmented.

Morgan (1997) argues that organizations are in a constant state of flux and transformation and are subject to the paradox of a constant struggle between permanence and change, which has the potential to stall organizational change. The change paradox can impact on employees at both a psychological and action level. This prevents employees from changing behavior on the workplace and in turn prevents the organizational change from taking place.

Kotter, (2000) argues for an eight step process to achieve organizational change, namely:

- Increase Urgency
- Build the Guiding Team
- Get the Vision right
- Communicate for Buy In
- Empower Action
- Create Short Term Wins
- Don't Let Up
- Make Change Stick

However, he argues, "The central challenge in all eight stages is *changing people's behavior*. The central challenge is not strategy, not systems, not culture. These elements and many others can be very important, but the core problem without question is behavior; what people do, and the need for significant shifts in what people do." (Kotter, 2000, p. 2)

Kotter (2000) further argues, that significantly changing the behavior of a single person can be exceptionally difficult, however, changing 101 or 10,001 people can be a Herculean task. Organizations that successfully implement change do so because they do not focus merely on formal data gathering, analysis, report writing, which are the sorts of actions typically aimed at changing thinking in order to change behavior. They also focus on reducing feelings in employees that tend to stifle change. The point that needs to be emphasized here is that successful organizational change requires processes that change what people think and how people behave.

Pendlebury, Grouard and Meston, (1998) argue, "The greatest difficulties encountered during a process of change are those that arise inside people's heads. (Pendlebury, Grouard and Meston, 1998, p. 197) Change unsettles people and challenges them because it directly impacts on the individual's view of the world, their role in their environment, and the way their identity is constructed. The new conditions created by change can be intimidating to employees and provoke fear and self-doubt.

Pendlebury, Grouard and Meston argue, "The initial break with the status quo (in accordance with the principle of dislocation) is particularly unsettling for employees, whether they have already accepted change or not. The novel and destabilizing nature of change therefore gives rise to symptoms of resistance and the development of mental blocks on the part of the people affected by it." (Pendlebury, Grouard and Meston, 1998, p. 197) This would suggest that even when employees have accepted an organizational change it could still be extremely difficult for individuals to change their existing workplace behavior, which predisposes them to think and behave in particular ways within the organizational environment. Argyris & Schon argue from a learning perspective and point out that some people may find it difficult to learn new ways of behaving.

Argyris and Schon (1974) argue, "We thought the trouble people have in learning new theories of action may stem not so much from the inherent difficulty of the new theories as from existing theories people have that already determine practice. We called these operational theories of action *theories-in-use* to distinguish them from the *espoused theories* that are used to describe and justify behavior. We wondered whether the difficulty in learning new theories of action is related to a disposition to protect the old theories." (Argyris and Schon, 1974, p. viii) People may not have difficulty learning a new theory, however, protecting old existing theories prevents new theories of action from being learned and therefore prevents new behavior. The underlying premise here is that creating learning within the organization will lead to new insights and perspectives that can assist employees to disconnect from old habits and open up to change.

Marks (2000) takes a cultural perspective regarding organizational change and argues that for effective change to take place within an organization it is necessary to change the cultural knowledge of employees to alter behavior as well as the structural changes such as systems. She argues "How exactly one goes about evaluating whether or not *change* has taken place in any given organization is a complex issue. While it is relatively easy to assess whether structural *change* has taken place, it is more difficult to assess whether individuals have changed, and if there is *change* in the more informal component of organization." (Marks, 2000, p. 5)

Marks further argues that to achieve organizational change that is lasting and comprehensive there needs to be changes in both the habitus (individual cultural knowledge and established ways of perceiving and acting) and also changes in the field (objective historical relations anchored in existing forms of power). In other words, a change in the culture and the structural context of organization. We have previously argued that fundamental organizational change requires change in human behavior. The link between organizational change and habitus

is important as it relates to how individuals behave and needs to be further explored.

Bourdieu (1990) argues that schemas of perception, thought and action create an individuals habitus, which holds the active presence of past experience. He argues, "Habitus is an embodied history so integral to the individual that the individual cannot 'see' it in its totality. It shows itself as a person's bearing, or knowledge of how to play the game, local knowledge or 'savvy', and is manifest in social circumstances. It shows itself as spontaneity without consciousness or will." (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 56) Habitus influences how people feel, think, and behave.

Kerby (1991) makes a link between habitus and identity as he argues, "The typical style of my being-in-the-world is thus the dynamic equivalent of my habitus, and, as already noted, this habitus is very much the structural basis of my abiding character and also of my identity." (Kerby 1991, p. 20). Kerby's argument draws a link between habitus and identity, which also creates a link between organizational change and identity. We have argued in the previous chapter that identity influences how people feel, think, and behave in social settings including organizations. The theory emerging so far regarding organizational change is that fundamental organizational change requires changing the way people behave within organization. So on this basis it would be reasonable to argue that if identity influences how people behave within organization, then the link between organizational change and identity is critical for the purposes of this study. Other writers within the organizational literature also make a link between organizational change and identity.

Bennett, (2000) argues that successful implementation of an organizational change process relies heavily on the commitment of employees along the three dimensions of:

1. Compliance (instrumental involvement for specific, extrinsic rewards, economic terms and conditions of employment)
2. Identification (involvement based on a desire for affiliation. Identity of the individual and the organization)
3. Internalization (involvement based on similar values between the individual and the organization).

Bennett's work links organizational change with individual identity based on affiliation with the organization and an alignment of values between the individual and the organization. In other words an organizational change could create a shift in the way an employee identifies with the organization. Huy also supports this line of argument.

Huy (1999) argues that radical organizational change can impact on the core identity of the organization causing strong responses for people. "Why is radical change likely to arouse strong emotional responses? Radical (or second order) change refers to a fundamental, qualitative change in the firm's philosophy or core perspective/identity." (Huy, 1999, p. 5) Huy points out that a change in organizational core identity that employees identify with can create emotional responses and lead to various courses of action. "A proposal for radical change-a fundamental change in identity or basic philosophy-often triggers strong emotional responses, which affect how the change is cognitively construed, as well as the nature of ensuing actions." (Huy, 1999, p. 2-3)

Huy (1999) further argues that employees can be ambivalent in the face of radical organizational change due to emotional pain caused when identity and ego integrity are challenged. Even people who are receptive to change may be ambivalent in the face of organizational change which impacts on their sense of identity. Fundamental organizational change may influence the fundamental core identity of the organization that employees personally identify with. This is a critical issue because it highlights that employees derive a sense of personal

identity from the organization and that organizational change can challenge identity at both an organizational and individual level.

A connection between organizational change and employee identity is also made by Morgan (1997) who argues that if individuals and organizations refuse to surrender old identities for new identities, then, organizational change may well be resisted and may have serious consequences on organizations due to lack of creativity and innovation. On the other hand challenging and creating new identity can create change. He argues that individuals and organizations can create new patterns of behavior by challenging existing identity. Morgan not only makes a link between organizational change and identity but indeed highlights that to achieve organizational change requires a change in identity.

Ford & Ford (1994) present a similar argument to Morgan in as much as they argue that change and identity are linked and that change is the process of one identity becoming another. However they introduce a varying perspective as they point out that change is a phenomenon of time. They argue, "From this perspective, *change* involves two interrelated elements. The first is identity, or what the something is. The second is the *change* process, which we observe as the movement of the original something from its starting state or condition in time and space to another state or condition in time and space." (Ford & Ford, 1994, p. 3) Although this does not offer any explanation as to how organizational change and identity are linked it serves to support the theory that there is a relationship between organizational change and identity.

This emphasizes the point that fundamental organizational change has an impact on identity. A change in identity can be difficult for both individuals and organizations. Brown and Starkey argue, "Organizations, like individuals, frequently find instituting a fundamental identity change difficult. Crucial to this process is the development of a capacity to deal with the fundamental anxieties that the ego defenses defend against." (Brown & Starkey, 2000, p. 8) The

participants in the case study were faced with a fundamental organizational change, which required them to learn how to change from Council employees to contractors and certainly challenged their existing workplace identity. Brown and Starkey (2000) further argue that individuals are motivated to preserve or defend their personal identity due to a need to maintain personal levels of esteem. Individuals, groups, and organizations seek to maintain esteem and this generally means acting conservatively to preserve an existing identity.

To understand how organizational change impacts on the individual identity of employees and vice versa some further exploration is required. If as the literature indicates, a variation in organizational change implies a variation in individual employee identity, then there needs to be a conceptual bridge between the two. The following section will deal with organizational change and narrative and will establish a platform for a theory to deal with the relationship between identity and change.

Changing Workplace Narratives

Bruner (1986) argues "The key to structural change is a radical shift in the social context. New stories arise when there is a new reality to be explained, when the social arrangements are so different that the old narrative no longer seems adequate." (Bruner, 1986, p. 151-152) This argument highlights that there is a connection between change and narrative. He further argues "Stories operate not only in the realm of the mind, as ideas; to be convincing they also must have a base in experience or social practice. It is the perceived discrepancy between the previously accepted story and the new situation that leads us to discard or question the old narrative; and it is the perceived relevance of the new story to our own life situation that leads to its acceptance." (Bruner, 1986, p. 153) Creating a fundamental change requires discarding existing narratives for new narratives.

Drummond (1998) takes the position that the key to understanding organizational change is narrative. He argues that narratives can be collected from members of the organization to better understand their emotional reactions and the processes and outcomes of change. Drummond makes the point that narratives are central to change as he argues, "The most significant aspect of change is that it requires the destruction of old narratives, in which there may be considerable investment, to make way for the new, and while change is inevitable, it is rarely achieved without considerable risk and heartache. Core change is a process that requires creating that which does not already exist." (Drummond, 1998, p. 101)

Creating that which does not yet exist may be much easier said than achieved. Dominant organizational narratives held in the minds of individuals can be very resistant to change because they involve an immense variety of myths, stories, histories, rituals, traditions, and processes and these narratives involve the emotional investment of the individual members of the organization. Drummond is not arguing that organizational narratives cannot be changed; rather, he argues that changing processes, strategies and tactics requires the destruction of established workplace narratives, and indeed possibly the people who established them.

The destruction of established workplace narratives is not meant to imply that narratives are simply destroyed leaving an individual with a void where a workplace narrative once existed. Drummond (1998) argues that that when an individual appropriates a narrative for personal use or develops one based on experience it actually strengthens one's identity. When alternative narratives are adopted for existing ones it may challenge an individuals identity. When we combine Morgan's argument that challenging an existing identity creates change and Drummond's argument that the change process requires the adoption of new narratives so that old narratives fall into incoherence and that alternative narratives challenge identity; it becomes easier to appreciate that

changing workplace narratives changes workplace identity and creates workplace change.

A theory has emerged that to achieve fundamental organizational change it is necessary to destroy existing workplace narratives and replace them with new workplace narratives. We have previously argued for a theory that individuals derive an important sense of identity from the workplace and that employee workplace identity is narratively constructed from workplace narratives.

Narrative theory provides us with a conceptual bridge between employee workplace identity and organizational change and explains how a relationship exists between the two. I would argue that destroying workplace narratives to create a fundamental organizational change would invariably alter or even destroy employee workplace identity, which has been narratively constructed from the workplace narratives. The following chapter will elaborate further on how narrative creates a relationship between various aspects of organization such as identity, culture, leadership, conflict, and change.

CHAPTER 4:   KEY METAPHORS OF ORGANIZATION

A narrative thread has been maintained throughout the previous chapters of this thesis. We have discussed how employees use workplace narratives to narratively construct a workplace identity and that to achieve a fundamental organizational change requires the destruction of existing workplace narratives. This has provided a conceptual bridge between identity and change. In this chapter the narrative thread is extended to explain how metaphors within narratives give us new ways to view organization. By viewing aspects of organization such as organizational identity, culture, leadership, conflict, and change as metaphors, we are able to see how narrative links all these aspects of organization.

Metaphor and Organization

"It is because we use narratives to describe the world that we employ metaphors, however partial they may be, to assist in description of organizations and to convey meanings and interpretations." (Drummond, 1998, p. 94) The fundamental theoretical orientation for this thesis is narrative and therefore organizational aspects will be treated as metaphors.

The study of the participants within an organization and their experiences within that organization will embrace the narratives and metaphors of the organization. These are the same narratives that members of the organization use to make sense of their experiences within the organization in conjunction with their personal narratives and metaphors.

Organizational members inherit, generate and re-author narratives which they use to describe and re-describe the organization. Narratives and metaphors are integrally entwined in each other's existence. Metaphors colour the narratives we live within and in turn the narratives we generate influence the metaphors we use to describe our world.

Nietzsche argues that "we believe we know something about the things (of which we speak) when we speak of trees, colour, snow, and flowers: and yet we posses nothing but metaphors for things-metaphors which correspond no way to the original entities." (Nietzsche, 1979, p. 83) Language is permeated with metaphors, which help us to understand one concept in terms of another. If we were to describe an organizational leader as being a lion we understand that he is not really a lion but possesses the qualities of a lion. We would not expect the leader to have four legs and a mane; however, we would expect the leader to have courage, strength, and stamina.

Words become an approximation for meaning and experience and this is so with metaphors. Therefore the terms identity, culture, leadership, conflict, and change referred to within this thesis can be thought of as metaphors used within narratives and are useful for giving us new ways to view organizations. This puts these words into a context and leads us to understand in an 'as if' manner. That is, it is 'as if' these concepts of organizational identity, organizational culture, organizational leadership, organizational conflict, and organizational change have a solid status whereas in fact they are metaphors.

Lakoff & Johnson (1980) argue "Metaphor is for most people a device of the poetic imagination and the rhetorical flourish; a matter of extraordinary rather than ordinary language. Moreover, metaphor is typically viewed as characteristic of language alone, a matter of words rather than thought or action. For this reason, most people think they can get along perfectly well without metaphor. We have found, on the contrary, that metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action." (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 3)

They further argue that our conceptual system is metaphorical in nature and that it plays a role in defining our everyday realities. Our very thought processes are metaphorical in nature. Our daily lives within organization are also pervaded by

metaphors within the workplace narratives of the people who constitute the organization. Metaphors offer a way of understanding one thing in terms of another. When organizational leaders speak of going to war with competitors we understand that we are not really going to war in the literal sense of the word but that we need to do things better than our competitors in order to win the battle of the markets. In other words it is 'as if' we were going to war. We understand the concept of war and are able to metaphorically relate it to the activities within the organization.

Smith (1982) argues that the concept of organization is metaphorical as buildings, people, and machinery, even when aggregated, do not individually or collectively constitute organization. They are merely the parts. Without a system of relations to draw the parts together into a whole, there is no organization, just free-floating parts. Hence, to talk about organization is to talk about relationship, relations among parts and relations among relations.

We cannot actually see relationships we can only infer them. When we look at people interacting, their behaviors are observable but the meaning of the interactions themselves are not. We must derive them or infer them from what follows. Smith (1982) points out that when the mime Marcel Marceau takes his invisible dog for a walk on stage, as Marceau's arm jerks back and forth, everyone "sees" the dog straining on the leash. We "see" something that does not exist. In other words we are inferring the meaning from the actions of the mime. It 'is as' if a dog is being taken for a walk.

Smith's argument is that if organization does not exist in a concrete form, then the only way we can talk about it is metaphorically, just like talking about, ego, or God, or ghosts. The nature of our understanding of organization will depend on the metaphors we use, just as our understanding of God depends on the system of religious beliefs that undergird our experience. This means that how we experience, see, and infer organization, relations between parts, and relations

between relations will depend primarily on the characteristics of the metaphors we choose to use and on the relationships among the metaphors themselves, for how we talk shapes what we talk about. Metaphors become a language for understanding organization.

If a relationship is changing, the metaphors being used to capture that relationship must also have the capacity to change in ways similar to reflect the dynamic properties of the phenomenon. Because the relationship and the metaphor used to discuss the relationship are in a dynamic relationship with each other, the development or growth of the relationship requires different descriptions or metaphors. Smith further argues that we need a broad array of metaphors and different ways of understanding our linguistics than we currently have to capture how relations change and how organization evolves.

Morgan (1997) explores a constellation of organizational metaphors such as an organization as a machine, a brain, a psychic prison, or as flux and transformation in order to capture various aspects and experiences of organization. He argues that metaphors may illuminate in one way and obscure in other ways, however metaphors do provide novel ways of understanding and provide opportunities for thinking about people and organizations in different ways. He argues "that all theories of organization and management are based on implicit images or metaphors that lead us to see, understand, and manage organizations in distinctive yet partial ways." (Morgan, 1997, p. 6)

Morgan points out that metaphor produces a one sided insight and always creates distortions. A way of seeing through a metaphor creates a way of not seeing, however, "when we recognize this we can begin to mobilize the true power of metaphor and its role in management. In recognizing theory as metaphor, we quickly appreciate that no single theory will ever give us a perfect or all-purpose point of view. We realize that the challenge is to become skilled in the art of using metaphor: to find fresh ways of seeing, understanding, and

shaping the situations that we want to organize and manage." (Morgan, 1997, p. 6)

Morgan argues that managers may miss the complexity of organizational life and simply not see what is going on if they do not embrace different points of view. Metaphors we use to see and read different situations may influence how we act. "Managers who see organizations in a mechanistic way have a tendency to try and "mechanize". Those dominated by a cultural lens tend to act in a way that shapes and reshapes culture. Favoured metaphors tend to trap us in specific modes of action." (Morgan, 1997, p.350) He also emphasizes that insights generated by metaphors have both a theoretical and practical value. "As we gain comfort in using the implications of different metaphors in this way, we quickly learn that the insights of one metaphor can often help us overcome the limitations of another. This, in turn, encourages us to recognize and, indeed, search for the limitations of existing insights: So that we can use them as springboards for new insight." (Morgan, 1997, p. 353)

The terms identity, culture, leadership, conflict, and change in this thesis are metaphorical and provide different ways of viewing aspects of organization. It is 'as if' we are viewing organizational identity, organizational culture, organizational leadership, organizational conflict, and organizational change. Attention is drawn to the relationship between these metaphors of organization to illuminate the fact that when viewed in isolation the others will be obscured. However, when viewed as a whole the limitations of one metaphor can be overcome by the insights offered by the other metaphors. The appreciation of how identity may influence culture, leadership, conflict, and change offers new possibilities for theories of organization.

Links Between Metaphors of Organization

Drummond (1998) argues that "While Morgan highlighted metaphors of organization, for example, as machines, cultures, and prisons, he left unattended the issue that metaphors are used because we are beings of language who construct "social reality" narratively. We understand our world in story form." (Drummond, 1998, p. 94) He further argues that because we use narratives to describe the world, we employ metaphors. The metaphors we use assist us to describe organization and to convey meanings and interpretations. Organizations are described and re-described through the ever-changing workplace narratives, which employees inherit, generate, and re-author

Drummond (1988) argues that narratives and metaphors are integrally entwined in each other's existence. "Organizational concepts such as organizational culture, leadership, conflict, and change have metaphorical status and are embedded within the narratives of organization, though they become taken for granted, reified, and treated as though they always existed." (Drummond, 1998, p. 94) This emphasizes that the metaphors used to describe various aspects of organization become part of the workplace narratives and over time become an integral part of the language on the workplace.

Drummond further argues, "It is possible to think of organizational culture as composed of multiple narratives, to think of leaders as enacting established narratives or generating new one's by which to guide organizational behavior, of conflict as the attempt by one person (or group of people) to impose their narratives as the correct interpretation of a given situation, and of change as the adoption of new narratives, a process by which the old narratives are caused to fall into incoherence." (Drummond, 1998, p. 94-95). Key aspects of organization are created by the workplace narratives and the metaphors used within those narratives. A further elaboration of these metaphors of

organization will develop a better understanding of the narrative link between them.

Organizational Identity

Drummond's work demonstrates how a relationship exists between culture, leadership, conflict, and change through workplace narratives. This study builds on the work of Drummond to include organizational identity as a prominent aspect of organization. Identity is also narratively constructed and is integrally related to organizational culture, leadership, conflict, and change. Applying narrative theory and metaphor it is possible to conceive of identity within organization as the sense of identity that employees derive from the organization and narratively construct from the workplace narratives. Over a period of time individuals on the workplace construct and contour a narrative workplace identity in accordance with the workplace narratives. These narratives create a theory of action for people within the organization and influences how they feel, think, and behave on the workplace.

The workplace identity of the individuals, groups, and the organization is held in the minds of the individuals who make up the organization in the form of workplace narratives. Multiple workplace narratives about the benefits associated with identification and about group norms will constitute a workplace identity for the individuals within organizations.

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture could be interpreted as "The way things are done around here." Drummond (1998) argues that culture and organizational culture can be conceptualized as being both verbalized or implied narratives in management routines, buildings, artifacts, and customs. This is a major advance in the understanding of organizational culture because it considers organizational

culture as being composed of multiple narratives with enough coherence between them to give a sense of the whole rather than reducing culture to specific values, beliefs, rituals, and practices. The central argument here is that an organization's culture is composed of multiple narratives, which shape the behavior of the members of that organization and in turn the members of the organization shape the narratives of the culture.

Drummond emphasizes a dynamic approach to culture where meaning is created through narratives and the enactment of given narratives perpetuate assumptions, values and beliefs. Organization culture is in continuous creation. It flows from both the conscious and non-conscious narratives of the individuals who make up the organization. Culture can be read from what individuals say, write and do and from what can be read between the lines. Narrative theory gives us a deeper understanding and a more complex view of how multiple cultures can exist within an organization, how human action can be shaped by organization culture, and how new narratives can shape organizational culture.

Drummond argues, "This does not mean that there is unity among all the narratives within an organization. Indeed they may or may not overlap. They may be consistent or divergent, but still operate to create a sense of the whole. This does not mean that the narratives of organization cultures are unchanging. As a narrative falls into incoherence, new narratives are generated to expand cultural understandings. In this way culture can be conceived of in a dynamic way, both shaping human action and in turn being shaped by new narratives." (Drummond, 1998, p. 99).

Organizational Leadership

If we continue this argument, leaders create meaning for those they lead and influence organizational culture by framing the context of action through narratives. Drummond argues that when conceptualized through narrative

theory, leadership can be viewed as the maintenance or creation of narratives, which shape and frame the context for the action of followers and that leaders learn and enact narratives or attempt to develop and enact new narratives.

"It is possible to view leadership as the maintenance or creation of narratives which shape and frame the context in which followers take action. Equally, followers can shape the narrative of leaders. There is no reason to assume that the narratives which a leader enacts will be accorded legitimacy in all cases by those who are led. The enacted narratives may vary from close accord to being very dissonant with those led. If the narratives of the leader are discordant to those led they may comply or if by dint of numbers they have the power, negotiability, or capital they may be able to impose their narrative on the leader. Leader's narratives also contribute to contouring an organization's culture." (Drummond, 1998, p. 99-100)

Organizational Conflict

With regard to conflict within the framework of narrative theory, conflict can be seen as deriving from the attempt by an individual or group to impose their narratives on others.

"Conflict may be thought of as the experience of people competing to assert the dominance of their narratives. (People may well experience competing narratives within themselves as two different narratives compete for dominance either of which would lead to different actions). It is worth noting that a conflict may be experienced very intensely and has the potential to do violence to one's self-concept. This is why conflict is so often experienced with intense and disturbing emotions which themselves have to be dealt with as well as the conflict." (Drummond, 1998, p. 100)

It would not be difficult to imagine that competing narratives within an organization may shape organizational culture or that a leader may need to resolve a situation of conflict by creating a different meaning for followers by introducing new narratives.

Organizational Change

Organizational change is a process that requires the destruction of existing workplace narratives to make way for new workplace narratives. Because there is considerable investment in the construction of people's workplace narratives, this process can be an extremely painful and fragmenting experience. Drummond emphasizes the centrality of narratives in the organizational change process.

"This type of change requires a destruction of the old narratives to give way to the new. The position being advocated here is intended to highlight narratives associated with morphostatic and morphogenic change; superficial and core change. The manager, consultant, or researcher can collect narratives from organizational members including their emotional reactions to change to better understand the processes and outcomes of change." (Drummond, 1998, p. 101)

Drummond's work emphasizes the centrality of narratives within organization and offers a new and rich way of understanding the relationship between organizational identity, culture, leadership, conflict, and change. Narrative provides us with a conceptual bridge across these aspects of organization and demonstrates that they should not be considered as separate parts to be isolated and manipulated. Rather organizational identity, culture, leadership, conflict, and change are integrally entwined with each other through workplace narratives, to the extent that impacting on one aspect will invariably impact on one of or possibly to some degree on all of the others. This theory will be further elaborated in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5:   THEORY DEVELOPMENT

Extending Theory

An extensive literature review has been carried out for this study to develop a theory that explains how a relationship exists between employee workplace identity and organizational change. A range of writers have made valuable contributions towards narrative theory, identity theory and organizational change theory, for which they deserve acknowledgement and thanks.   The organizational literature yielded only a scant amount of material regarding identity within organization and even less regarding individual employee identity within organization. The literature treated the topic of identity in an isolated manner without consideration to how identity might be linked to other aspects of organization.

The material regarding organizational change within the organizational literature yielded more quantity, however, the topic of organizational change was also treated in isolation. Although a link was established between individual identity and organizational change, it lacked the depth to explain how a relationship exists between employee workplace identity and organizational change. No material was located within the organizational literature regarding the relationship between identity and organizational change.

Narrative theory explains that human beings live within narratives, which allow us to make sense of complex events and experiences in a coherent way. The narratives we live within not only allow us to connect and comprehend disparate events but they also create our theories of action, which lead individuals to various courses of behavior. Individual identity is narratively constructed and therefore influenced by personal narratives, traditions and the narratives held in the minds of other people. Employees construct a workplace identity from the workplace narratives they live within on a daily basis. This workplace identity gives rise to their actions within the organizational setting.

Identity theory explains how individuals derive and develop a sense of identity through interaction with others in various social settings including organization. Identity is continuously contoured over time, however may become quite stable over time in a particular social setting. Individuals derive an important part of their identity from the organizations they are a part of, particularly in Western society. Over a period of time within the same organization, employees develop a sense of workplace identity.

Organizational change theory explains that to achieve a lasting fundamental organizational change it is necessary to change how people think and behave. This requires changing people's theory of action and this level of change may impact on the sense of identity an employee derives from the workplace. To effectively achieve a fundamental organizational change it is necessary to destroy existing workplace narratives in order to replace them with new workplace narratives and new theories of action.

People use metaphors to colour language and provide different lenses for looking at the world around them. Metaphors are infused with narratives and the two are integrally linked. The terms organizational identity, culture, leadership, conflict, and change are given metaphorical status and through narrative theory we can see how a relationship exists between them.

This study has filled a gap in the organizational literature by developing a theory to explain how a narrative relationship exists between employee workplace identity and organizational change. I argue that narrative theory provides us with a conceptual bridge that allows us to walk across identity and organizational change.

A relationship exists between employee workplace identity and organizational change through narrative. Employee workplace identity is narratively constructed and derived from the workplace narratives. A fundamental change

requires the destruction of existing organization narratives, which also constitute the narrative workplace identity of the employees. Destruction of these narratives would invariably alter an employee workplace identity and possibly even mean the destruction of the existing employee workplace identity. If employees have become comfortable with an existing workplace identity and that identity has become stable over time; employees would resist an organizational change that threatens the destruction of existing workplace narratives in order to protect their existing workplace identity. A narrative link between identity and organizational change implies that an impact on one will invariably mean an impact on the other.

Linking Key Metaphors of Organization

We have established a narrative link between identity and organizational change. This concept can now be expanded to include other aspects of organization such as culture, leadership, and conflict. *Figure 1* shows a five by five matrix, which illustrates that the five key metaphors of organization, organizational identity, culture, leadership, conflict, and change are invariably linked by organization narratives. In light of previous argument and theory development it would be reasonable to argue that these metaphors of organization are infused with workplace narratives to the extent that an impact on one would invariably mean a variation to some degree in the others. Through the workplace narratives identity is not only linked with organizational change, rather I would argue that identity is equally linked with culture, leadership, and conflict.
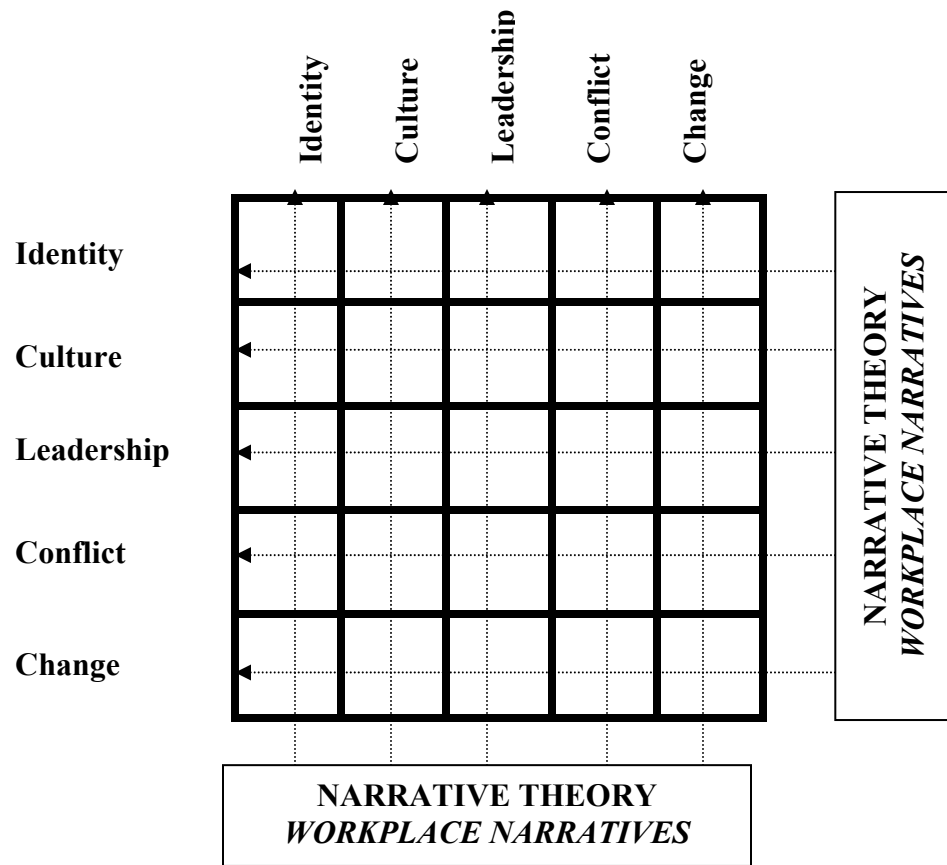
Figure 1.   **Key Metaphors of Organization**

Explanation of Figure 1: Workplace narratives create a link across the nominated key aspects of organization. The key metaphors depicted above are narratively constructed and therefore are all interrelated. The matrix allows us to see that these aspects of organization do not exist in isolation; not only are they linked but indeed they are linked in a multidimensional way.

Multidimensional Perspective of Key Metaphors

The five chosen aspects of organization shown in *Figure 1* exist within the workplace narratives held in the minds of the individuals who make up an organization. On a daily basis the individuals come together and interact through the workplace narratives to achieve the daily work requirements. The workplace narratives lead the individuals within the organization to various

courses of action. The workplace narratives are generated through the vision, mission, purpose, policies, procedures, memos, meetings, work practices, instructions, daily conversations, buildings, equipment, pay rates, working conditions, awards, industrial relations, tradition and so on. The workplace narratives of an organization generate identity, culture, leadership, conflict, and change, and these aspects of organization exist simultaneously within the workplace narratives embedded in the minds of people within the organization. Over a period of time the workplace narratives become dominant and influence the actions, feelings, thoughts, attitudes, and behavior of the individuals.

The workplace *identity* of individuals is generated by the dominant workplace narratives. An individual behaves like the shoe designer, the administration officer, the cleaner, or the manager of sales and marketing because their workplace identity is held within their workplace narratives and the workplace narratives of other people within the organization.

The workplace *culture* of the employees (the way we do things around here) or of the leaders is determined by the workplace narratives. For the employees it may be narratives about working conditions, productivity rates, mistrust of management and traditional influence, while for the leaders it may be narratives about having to control employees to ensure maximum production for the least possible pay.

Conflict in the workplace is created when workplace narratives are dissonant, for example, the workplace narratives of employees may not be in agreement with the workplace narratives of the leaders. The narratives of the leaders may demand an increase in productivity for no extra reward, where as the narratives of the employees may insist that increased productivity is not possible. This situation would most certainly lead to conflict and possibly industrial dispute and action.

Organizational *change* requires the destruction of existing workplace narratives to replace them with new workplace narratives. Because workplace narratives determine how people behave on the workplace, it is necessary to create new workplace narratives to create new behavior.

Narrative Theory creates a multidimensional relationship between identity, culture, leadership, conflict, and change. Workplace narratives may alter the identity of a leader, which in turn may influence the workplace identity of the employees. Alternatively, workplace narratives may alter the workplace identity of employees, which in turn may impact on the workplace identity of a leader.

Workplace narratives may alter the culture of the employees in a negative or positive way, consequently the culture of the leaders may also be influenced, as they may have to change the way they lead the organization. Workplace narratives may alter the culture of the leaders and in turn create a shift in the culture of employees.

Workplace narratives may change the actions of the CEO, which may then alter the workplace narratives of the management team, or a change in the workplace narratives of the management team may influence the leadership style of the CEO. Workplace narratives may alter the behavior of group leaders at the operational level and this may then impact on the leaders at the management level.

Workplace narratives may create conflict among employees and this conflict may cause dissonance between employee workplace narratives and the leadership's workplace narratives and result in workplace conflict. Workplace narratives may also create conflict among the leaders within an organization, which eventually may influence the employees and create further conflict.

An external or internal change may alter or destroy the existing workplace narratives and replace them with new workplace narratives to create an organizational change. Alternatively a change in workplace narratives may drive organizational change and create change within the organization as well as creating external change within an industry.

Because identity, culture, leadership, conflict, and change exist within the same workplace narratives, identity may influence identity, culture may influence culture, leadership may influence leadership, conflict may influence conflict, and change may influence change. In the same vein, identity may influence culture, identity may influence leadership, identity may influence conflict, and identity may influence change. Narrative Theory creates a multidimensional relationship between all these aspects of organization.

Following the same line of argument, the workplace narratives of individuals within the organization in combination with existing workplace narratives may form a variety of relationships between the nominated aspects of organization at different levels and to varying degrees. Over a period of time the workplace narratives accommodate the relationships such that they become commonplace.

The identity of the employees may influence the culture of the organization while the culture of the leader may influence the identity of employees and the organization. Leadership may create conflict, which in turn may influence culture and create change. We could create an enormous list of the possible multidimensional links between organizational identity, culture, leadership, conflict, and change. If we were to run a length of string to represent each possible link between these metaphors of organization, it would not take long before we could no longer see where one string ends and the other begins. The point is that as previously argued, workplace narratives not only form a conceptual bridge between identity and organizational change but these same

workplace narratives also form a conceptual bridge between all the key aspects of organization in a multidimensional way.

CHAPTER 6: METHOD

Selecting a Research Organization

During 1996 when Haddon City Council was implementing the Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) requirements in accordance with the legislation introduced by the State Government in 1994, I was carrying out project work within the HCC Waste Management Department. As described in Chapter 3, the CCT legislation meant fundamental change for the Local Government industry. I was aware that HCC had also established a subsidiary contracting company (Tratcon Works) and was planning to transfer the existing garbage collection group to Tratcon Works. This transfer would require a group of Council garbage collectors to become contractors almost overnight. This presented an ideal opportunity and environment to carry out research regarding fundamental organizational change implementation and the relationship between identity, culture, leadership, conflict, and change.

I approached the CEO of HCC and the CEO of Tratcon Works seeking permission to carry out research within both organizations. The intention was to conduct discussions with the group while they were Council garbage collectors within HCC and then follow up with a second set of discussions with the same group when they had become contractors within Tratcon Works. I was also intending to conduct discussions with the HCC and Tratcon Works' leaders who were implementing the change. Both CEO's were receptive and willingly granted permission to approach the targeted research participants and proceed with the research.

Selecting the Research Participants

Over a two-year period of carrying out project work within the HCC Waste Management Department I had become quite familiar with the department managers and the garbage collection group. In fact I worked out of an office

situated within the works depot where the garbage collectors were located. I met with the Director Physical Services HCC and the Manager Waste Services HCC to discuss my research and they both agreed to be participants. I then approached the General Manager Enviro Services Tratcon Works and the Manager Contracts Tratcon Works who also agreed to be participants. The Supervisor Garbage Collection HCC agreed to be a participant, however the group of forty garbage collectors were initially apprehensive about being participants. They felt that the workplace change relating to the CCT legislation was a union matter and were not comfortable discussing it although I had a sound relationship with the group. The garbage collectors made it quite clear that no tape recording would be allowed, however, if the Union Organizer would allow it they were willing to discuss the issue of being research participants.

When I met with the Union Organizer he explained that there was heightened tension regarding the CCT legislation and that the research may be difficult within the current industrial relations environment. He was not opposed to the research; however, he also expressed concerns about tape recording interviews with the garbage collectors, as they were already tense about impending change and suspicious of anyone not associated with the union. The Union Organizer suggested that I might conduct the research by observation if the garbage collectors agreed. The group agreed to become participants in the study on this basis. I would be allowed to observe events and take field notes when it was considered appropriate by the group and they were willing to discuss workplace change issues as long as I did not tape record conversations.

Although this was not in line with my original intention to conduct tape-recorded interviews it would still allow me access to a workplace undergoing fundamental organizational change. For the sake of consistency I decided to use field notes throughout the study and discussed this issue with the management participants from HCC and Tratcon Works. They were in agreement that

consistency should be maintained and suggested that if the garbage collectors were not comfortable with tape recording, then it may create suspicion if a tape recorder was used in any part of the study. The managers also offered access to any appropriate secondary data such as memos, letters, and minutes of meetings that would support the research. Because I was a familiar person on the HCC workplace, I was given a commitment by the managers that wherever possible I would be given access to activities and meetings regarding the organizational change.

The participant group consisted of:

- Director Physical Services HCC
- Manager Waste Services HCC
- Supervisor Garbage Collection HCC
- General Manager Enviro Services Tratcon Works
- Manager Contracts Tratcon Works
- 40 Operational Employees (including 3 Foremen) HCC
- Union Organizer Municipal Employees Union (MEU)

Note: An organizational chart for HCC is attached as Appendix 1

An organizational chart for Tratcon Works is attached as Appendix 2

A list of participants is attached as Appendix 3   (Names have been changed for confidentiality)

All the participants were given the opportunity to withdraw from the study at any time.

Selecting a Research Method

Strauss and Corbin (1998) argue that the primary purpose of qualitative research is discovery. Discovering meaning and reasons why the participants in the case study responded to organizational change in a particular manner requires interpreting the intricate human interactions, emotions, responses, and behavior of the individuals within a certain context at a particular point in time. This type of discovery and interpretation can most effectively be achieved through qualitative means. For the reader to experience a sense of being part of the events in order to interpret actions, behaviors, and intentions of participants it was necessary to relay the data with as much contextual richness as possible.

The fundamental basis of this study is narrative. The theory in Part One is discussed and developed in narrative. Part Two presents a case study narrative and Part Three presents a synthesis in narrative form. Narrative theory is used to develop a conceptual bridge between various aspects of organization. Narrative has the capacity to deal with the complexities of human behavior and so it is appropriate that the research method has a narrative basis.

Ethnography in essence is the gathering of narratives in the field. The ethnographer spends time living within, interacting and observing a particular culture and records those observations. Geertz (1973) argues "The ethnographer "inscribes" social discourse; *he writes it down*. In so doing he turns it from a passing event, which exists only in its own moment of occurrence, into an account, which exists in its inscriptions and can be reconsulted. (Geertz, 1973, p.19)

Ethnography has been adopted as a research method for this study. As a modern ethnographer I was able to interact with and observe the participants within their own environment over a particular period of time and record the data. Bruner (1986) argues that doing ethnography is constructing a narrative. As a modern

ethnographer I used the data collected in the field to construct the case study in Part Two. The case study narrative can be reconsulted to interpret the text, understand actions and intentions of the participants while grasping the complexities of human interaction within an organization faced with a fundamental organizational change.

Data Collection-Modern Ethnographer

The term ethnography is most commonly associated with the study of primitive cultures and culture change. However modern ethnography is particularly suited to the study of culture and human behavior in contemporary organizations. Geertz (1973) argues, "From one point of view, that of the textbook, doing ethnography is establishing rapport, selecting informants, transcribing texts, taking genealogies, mapping fields, keeping a diary and so on. But it is not these things, techniques and received procedures that define the enterprise. What defines it is the kind of intellectual effort it is: an elaborate venture in, to borrow a notion from Gilbert Ryle, "thick description." (Geertz, 1973, p. 5-6)

As a modern ethnographer I observed and interacted with the participant group. The data was collected from observation, conversation, and knowledge of the participants and was recorded using copious field notes. Although it was not possible to record events and conversations word for word as they occurred, the interactions with the participants were recorded as accurately as possible and later verified by the participant group. The data was used to construct a narrative or a "thick description" of events within a contemporary workplace setting.

The concept of "thick description" bears a particular relevance to the research method in this study. Geertz (1973) argues, "Ryle's discussion of "thick description" appears in two recent essays of his… Consider, he says, two boys rapidly contracting the eyelids of their right eyes. In one, this is an involuntary

twitch; in the other, a conspiratorial signal to a friend." (Geertz, 1973, p. 6) The two movements from observation alone may appear identical, however, the winker is deliberately communicating with someone to relay a particular message according to some socially established code whereas the twitcher is simply contracting his eyelids. Knowing the difference between the twitch and the wink requires an understanding of the established social codes. Collection of data as a modern ethnographer has allowed for a "thick description" of events within the case study narrative and allows the reader to understand what is a twitch and what is a wink.

Geertz (1973) argues "If ethnography is thick description and ethnographers those who are doing the describing, then the determining question for any given example of it, whether a field journal squib or a Malinowski sized monograph, is whether it sorts winks from twitches and real winks from mimicked ones." (Geertz, 1973, p. 16) The collection of data as a modern ethnographer made it possible for me as a researcher to observe, record, and relay information in order to give the reader a deeper understanding and context for interpreting behavior and intentions of individuals within the participant group.

As I gathered ethnographic field notes, experienced the culture, came to know the participants more intimately, and lived within the same context it was possible to gain a deeper understanding of the group. This allowed a "thick description" (narrative) of the garbage collectors' culture, inferences, gestures and codes (twitches and winks). Geertz (1973) argues "Understanding a people's culture exposes their normalness without reducing their particularity…It renders them accessible: setting them in the frame of their own banalities, it dissolves their opacity." (Geertz, 1973, p. 14) Understanding a group of people within their own culture, context and codes of behavior allows us to view them as normal within their own social frames without removing their uniqueness.

Geertz further argues "The claim to attention of an ethnographic account does not rest on its author's ability to capture primitive facts in faraway places and carry them home like a mask or a carving, but on the degree to which he is able to clarify what goes on in such places, to reduce the puzzlement." (Geertz, 1973, p. 16) The point of ethnographic data is not to simply relay information but rather to understand why people behave as they do in particular contexts. The ethnographer must build a relationship with a group and live as an insider to understand a culture and how it influences the actions of individuals.

In the role of modern ethnographer over a six-month period I observed the garbage collectors struggle with a fundamental organizational change. I observed managers struggle to implement a fundamental organizational change. The data was recorded as field notes and then processed to construct a narrative account of the ethnographic study.

Data Processing-Ethnography as Narrative

Bruner, E (1986) argues that ethnographies are guided by an implicit narrative structure in the form of stories we tell about the peoples we study. "We are familiar with the stories people tell about themselves in life history and psychiatric interviews, in myth and ritual, in history books and Balinese cockfights. I wish to extend this notion to ethnography as a discourse, as a genre of storytelling." (Bruner, E 1986, p. 139) Conducting an ethnographic study in essence is the same as constructing a narrative. How the story is constructed and relayed to the reader will determine what narrative becomes dominant about a particular culture or situation.

Bruner, E (1986) further argues, "Just as a story has a beginning, a middle, and an end, culture change too, almost by definition, takes the form of a sequence with a past, present, and a future. Our predicament in ethnographic studies of change is that all we have before us is the present, the contemporary scene, and

by one means or another we must situate that present in a time sequence." (Bruner, E 1986, p. 140-141) The past, present, and future are not constructed but are lineally or causally related. How we depict and understand any one segment of the sequence depends on the ethnographic narrative.

Understanding past, present and future influences the shape and focus of the dominant narrative. The dominant narrative flowing from an ethnographic study needs to provide us with an understanding of the past, present, and future, however it also needs to provide us with an understanding of the people we are studying and their dominant narratives.

Bruner, E (1986) argues that ethnographers start with a narrative in their heads, which influences observations in the field and that from beginning to end the production of ethnography is framed by the dominant narrative. "Narrative structures serve as interpretive guides; they tell us what constitute data, define topics for study, and place a construction on the field situation that transforms it from alien to the familiar. Even when we are settled in, however, feeling comfortable in our new surroundings, there is still the problem of going back from the lived experience of the field situation to the anthropological literature, to our final destination. (Bruner, E 1986, p. 147)

The process of turning the field experience into a narrative, which captures the complexities, dynamics and meaning of human behavior, becomes a challenge for the ethnographer. As the researcher in the current study I was faced with the challenge of turning field experience into a narrative that can be deeply interpreted by the reader and I was further challenged by the subjectivity of my own narratives and the influence they may have had on interpretation in the field.

Bruner, E (1986) argues that there are three tellings of the ethnographic narrative. In the first telling research participants respond to our questions and

we begin the ethnographic dialogue, the complex interactions and exchanges that lead to the negotiation of the text. In the second telling we take this verbal and visual information and process it by committing it to writing in our field diaries. "This transcription is not easy. Every ethnographer is painfully aware of the discrepancy between the richness of the lived field experience and the paucity of the language used to characterize it." (Bruner, E 1986, p. 148) In the third telling we relay the narrative to our colleagues, who provide feedback as a preparation for publication. In the construction of the ethnographic narrative I have attempted to construct a narrative that is as rich as possible to allow the reader to draw their own conclusions.

Bruner, E (1986) argues that the ethnographer is like a material body through which a narrative structure unfolds. He further argues, "both anthropologist and native informant participate in the same symbolic system. Not that our cultures are identical; rather, we share, at least partially, those narratives dealing with intercultural relations and cultural change. (Bruner, E 1986, p. 150) It is the narrative structure of ethnography (the narrative constructed by the ethnographer as he/she lives among and shares the narratives of participants), which helps us to understand the complexities of social research and to understand unfamiliar situations and cultures of participants whom we have never met.

I typed all the field notes guided by the principle that this research was not a study of language per se, so that swear words and repetitions were omitted. Although swear words were emphasized by hieroglyphic symbols in some places to capture the intensity and emotion of a particular situation. It was important to maintain the gist of what had been said and of what had taken place in order to present the reader with a "thick description" of events in the field. The field notes provided the data to construct the case study narrative. In order to prepare the narrative, attention was given to the historical order of events and focus was directed towards episodes that best demonstrated the behavior,

actions, intentions, inferences, expressions and emotions of the participants. It is the narrative I constructed as modern ethnographer in the field that is reflected in the field notes and presented as the case study narrative in Part Two of this thesis.

Data Presentation-Narrative Structure

Lyotard (1989), Bernstein (1983), and Feyerabend (1975) all argue that narrative is the fundamental structure through which humans communicate. For the purposes of the current study a narrative will be used to tell the story in the case study in Part Two. It will be sufficient to tell the story and it will be left to the reader to appropriate meanings from the narrative, or to make generalizations. The power will be in the intensity of the story and its various presentations of reality. Polkinghorne (1988) argues that narrative research uses the ideal of a scholarly consensus as the test of verisimilitude rather than the test of mathematical validity. Narrative will not be used to create laws of causality, models, or generalizations. The narrative may not apply to other times, places, people, and organizations, however, it may resonate with other people and organizations.

It is hoped that the narrative will lead the reader to appreciate the multiple narratives, which in turn have the potential to lead to action for those who derive some of the meaning in the text.

Drummond (1998) argues narrative easily accommodates thoughts, feelings, and the rational and irrational across the entire chronological continuum (past, present, future). All human experiences are readily described by narratives. The narrative in Part Two is able to accommodate the behavior, thoughts, conflicts, actions, intentions, drama, and theatre of the participant group as they responded to a fundamental organizational change at a deep emotional level. The focus of the narrative is to present a story that captures all the human

complexities in a way that gives meaning to actions of the participant group. It is narrative that gives a common language and meaning that may resonate with participants, researcher, and readers.

Polkinghorne points out that explanations are retrospective as he argues, "they sort out the multitude of events and decisions that are connected to a particular incident or series of incidents, and select those which are significant in the light of the outcome." (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 170) He emphasizes that narrative explanations are genuinely explanatory because they can answer the question of why something has happened. It is argued that to this extent the "story highlights the significance of particular decisions and events and their role in the final outcome." (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 170) Drawing on the work of Atkinson he suggests that in order for a narrative account to be explanatory it requires three types of coherence:

1   It should be intelligible in human terms.
2   It should have an appropriately unified subject matter.
3   It should be causally related.

The reader of a particular narrative may or may not interpret the message or meaning that was intended by the author. Iser (1978) does not consider text from a subject-object relationship, but rather considers that the reader is inside the text and that there is a moving viewpoint, which travels inside that text, which the reader has to apprehend. This mode of grasping an object is unique to literature. Because the interpretation of a narrative may vary between author and the reader does not render the narrative invalid, but merely emphasizes that the vantage point of the author and the interpretation of the reader can be at variance.

This serves to highlight that within a narrative there will be some overlapping areas of agreement and disagreement. The presentation of the case study in narrative form for this thesis is presented from a specific viewpoint and the

aspects chosen for emphasis or analysis continue to represent that viewpoint. The reader may prefer other emphases or interpretations, however, there can only be marginal agreement on the orientation for the analysis of a given narrative. The central focus of this study is to highlight the relationship between employee workplace identity and fundamental organizational change and so the narrative has been emphasized and analyzed from that perspective. The reader may wonder why other aspects were not given emphasis; however, this does not render the narrative in Part Two, or the analysis as invalid.

The narrative in Part Two is a construction of facts, experiences, observations, interpretations, and speculations. The narrative therefore, raises the issue of the "truth". At the extreme point Nietzsche argues that truth is "a movable host of metaphors, metonymies, and anthromorphisisms…illusions which we have forgotten are illusions…coins which have lost their embossing and are now considered as metal and no longer as coins." (Nietzsche, 1979, p. 84) The message of the narrative or the "truth" within the narrative will depend on the interpretation of the reader, if we interpret the pieces of metal as having been coins, then we will consider them to still be coins. If however we interpret the pieces of metal as simply pieces of metal it does not change the fact or the "truth" that the pieces of metal were in fact once coins with the appropriate markings to distinguish them as such. In illuminating particular aspects of events within the narrative it may diminish other aspects causing the reader to interpret the message differently than intended by the researcher, however, this does not mean that the diminished aspect did not exist or that the author did not intend to send a particular message.

For the purposes of this thesis an understanding may be gained from juridical reasoning. Ricoeur (1981) argues that the type of reasoning on which a judge uses to make a decision regarding crime, comes to grips with the different ways of defeating a claim or an accusation. In the case of a crime the verdict is based on which interpretation appears to fit the facts or circumstances in the best

possible way. There may be many interpretations of the circumstances, but a verdict "beyond reasonable doubt", allows the possibility that another interpretation could be valid. Given the evidence available at the time however, the verdict was the best that could be made. Bernstein (1983) argues that whatever reasons are advanced for making the verdict, "these do not prove the judgement, they support it." (Bernstein, 1983, p. 56)

Ricoeur (1991b) argues, "A conversation may be said to be more probable than another, but not true. The most probable, 1. Accounts for the greatest number of facts provided by the text, including potential connotations and 2. Offers a better qualitative convergence between the traits which it takes into account. A poor explication may be said to be narrow or farfetched." (Ricoeur, 1991b, p. 313) At another time with further information, the interpretation could be changed. The narrative in Part Two is presented in the best possible manner to send meaning to the reader regarding the actions and intentions of the participant group.

Polkinghorne points out that the outcome of narrative research cannot claim to correspond exactly with what has actually occurred, if truth is equated with exact correspondence or conformity to actuality. Rather, truth in narrative research like a juridical finding, employs scholarly consensus, "as the test of verisimilitude, rather than the test of logical or mathematical validity." (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 176)

The narrative is written and presented as events unfolded, therefore, the reaction, responses, behaviour, and actions of the participants are unreserved and unguarded. So as much as it is open to interpretation from the reader it is more likely to be a more authentic narrative than one co-constructed between the interviewer and the participants in an interview situation. As a modern ethnographer narrating events as they occurred minimized the opportunity for participants to forget critical information and to edit events. The researcher had

a relationship of trust and respect with the participants and so the story is told from an insider/outsider perspective where motives, emotions, thoughts, and behavior were observed first hand. What was not observed first hand was derived from discussions with and the narratives of the participants who were living out a workplace incident as it evolved.

The final narrative constructed as modern ethnography is intended to be a "thick description" and relay the intricate complexities of a real life drama as it occurred within a specific context and at a particular point in time. This drama would have taken place regardless of whether or not it was used as a research study and as such the events described are simply a natural sequence of events that unfolded.

There are parts of the narrative where language has been toned down or replaced for the sake of grammar, however, the story is presented in the most authentic manner possible and as close to actual events as is able to be verified by the participants. Although the participants have verified the narrative and agreed to be research participants all names and locations have been changed and particular care has been taken not to identify any of the people involved.

The structure of the narrative is presented in a format that resembles a stage play where the research participants are portrayed as actors and the researcher is portrayed as both actor and narrator. This has been done to not only capture the real life drama of the events chosen for the narrative but also to give a voice both to the participants and the researcher. In this way the reader may gain a deeper insight into some of the individuals who made up the participant group in order to better grasp what is a twitch and what is a wink. The narrative is intended to maintain the gist of events in the field.

In order to construct the narrative, the field notes were examined for logical groupings which could serve for sequencing the narrative presentation. The

groupings also serve to highlight the most relevant events that contribute towards answering the research question. In essence they relate to:

- Initial resistance to organizational change

- Maintaining a workplace identity as Council garbage collectors

- Heightening tension on the workplace

- Industrial action to resist organizational change

- Emotional responses to the organizational change

- Negotiating outcomes

- Relinquishing jobs rather than workplace identity

An attempt was made to include and highlight thoughts, opinions, emotions, actions, and intentions of the participants. Both constructive and negative action has been included. The intention has not been to portray the participants as either right or wrong, but to provide material for the reader to make their own judgements and grasp a holistic sense of the ethnographic narrative in order to answer the research question.

The Researcher in the Research

Having knowledge of the participants inevitably entwines the data, the participants and the researcher in a way that makes it difficult to separate what one knows from how one knows it. The subjectivity of the researcher needs framing so that the reader can make their own judgements and draw their own conclusions from the case study.

Van Maanen, Dabbs and Faulkner (1982) argue that the guiding principle for organizational studies calls for the first-hand inspection of ongoing organizational life. The argument here is that when making close up observation generalizations are built from the ground up and based on concrete occurrences involving ordinary behavior of those studied. Under these conditions human

actions have meanings and contexts that are situationally relevant and discovered rather than being imposed by the researcher. The actions of the participants in the case study were certainly not imposed by the researcher and were observed as they occurred. In this regard organizational life was being studied and observed first hand within its own context and time.

Van Maanen, Dabbs and Faulkner (1982) further argue "the disquieting but forthright realization that organization research is, in all its guises, hardly a process marked by the accumulation of detached neutral, or purely descriptive observations. Research is inherently a social and cultural process with deeply rooted moral, political, and personal overtones. By directly confronting such issues, qualitative research is perhaps assuming a kind of legitimacy." (Van Maanen, Dabbs and Faulkner, 1982, p.14) What needs to be emphasized is the fact that there is a subjective relationship between the researcher and participants.

Mirvis and Louis (1985) argue that their work in organizational research was not value free, as was purported to be the case in scientific experiments. Diesling emphasizes the importance of subjectivity and value as he argues, "Remove my subjectivity and I do not become a value free participant observer, merely an empty headed one." (Diesling, 1971, p. 280) This line of argument the need for researcher subjectivity in qualitative research rather than for the removal of it.

Berg and Smith (1988) argue, "Too many of us are taught that our personal involvement in our research renders our work unscientific or illegitimate, as if there is a social scientist somewhere who has no personal involvement or whose involvement has no influence on his or her work." (Berg and Smith, 1988, p. 27) Subjectivity in social research is inevitable, however, if there is an understanding of how the researcher influences the research and this understanding can be passed on to the reader, then subjectivity can add to the

richness and meaning of social research. Mishler (1986) argues that the researcher cannot be an objective observer to whatever is being studied. His work suggests that there is no such thing as the objective observer.

The case study presented in Part Two was not constructed from an interview situation. The narrative was constructed from observation by the researcher as events unfolded. In this regard there were few barriers to information as the researcher had access to events as they took place and people expressed feelings rather openly. The researcher had a relationship with the participant group and at times the benefit of insider status. The data used to construct the narrative in Part Two has been influenced by the researcher and would have been somewhat different if collected under a typical question and answer interview situation. The data contains insights into the human complexities of the participants to which an outsider may never have the privilege to observe during social research as interviews may present edited information and at a minimum a refigured narrative, which often loses a richness of context.

Berg and Smith (1988) argue that researchers bring biases and inclinations to their work because unlike clothing they are preexisting states that cannot be shed and prevented from interacting to some degree with the research. The researcher in the current study highlighted certain events in the case study narrative and to this degree other events were dimmed, however these choices were based on the belief that the events chosen for emphasis would best portray the meanings and intentions behind the actions of the participant group.

As a modern ethnographer I was deeply involved in what was collected and recorded in my field notes (data), and of that data, what is reported. Bearing in mind my partiality to the data collected and reported, it is simply not possible to report everything within the confines of this study. My selectivity in constructing the ethnographic narrative has to some degree been influenced by

my personal narratives, which reflect my interests, constructs, ethnocentricity, and various emotions.

Throughout this thesis as a whole, and the narrative presented in Part Two, some reflections of the researcher are stated in keeping with the orientation described above. The reflections are stated to provide clues to the reader of the ongoing nature of relationships within the research domain. The reflections offered are hopefully not intrusive, and are contextually grounded so that the reader may understand something of the operative dynamics between the ethnographer and the participants.

PART TWO: THE CASE STUDY NARRATIVE

CHAPTER 7:   A BRIEF HISTORY AND CONTEXT

Physical Services Delivered

Historically, Victorian Local Government Departments (Local Councils) have delivered a range of services to residents within their municipal boundaries. Local Councils have traditionally been responsible for delivering services such as:

- Waste Management
- Parks and Open Space Management
- Tree Services
- Road/Footpath Maintenance
- Drainage Infrastructure and Maintenance
- Community Services (Aged care, Child care, Home help)
- Recreational (Swimming pools, Sports centers, Libraries)
- Town planning and so forth

Revenue and Budgets

Councils have historically functioned as not for profit organizations that are managed by CEO's and a team of managers responsible for a particular area of service delivery. Elected Councilors act as a Board of Directors to oversee the running of the organization. The funds to deliver services to the ratepayers are raised from a variety of sources such as:

- Annual property rates
- Animal licensing fees
- Parking fines
- State Government funding

- Permit fees

The budget for delivery of each service is established on the basis of what it cost the previous year plus estimated increases required. Rates, fees, fines, and so on are adjusted to suit the projected budgets. The collection and disposal of municipal garbage in Victoria currently costs Councils some $120 Million per annum. During the 1990's the cost to deliver the same service was in excess of $200 Million per annum. In essence, the local Councils have run as regulated industries cut off from external influences and pressures. The millions of dollars spent to deliver services to the community were not benchmarked against private enterprise. This industry was renowned for lack of competiveness compared to the private sector. Council worksites, particularly in the physical services departments have been renowned for heavily unionized cultures and inefficient work practices. Internal demarcation disputes were commonplace as some minor work could involve up to five unions and take excessive time to complete. "You can't get me I'm part of the union" was a common catchphrase within Local Council workplaces. In fact the unions held the power base and ran most of the Council workplaces. Private contractors have seen local Council work as lucrative targets but have been kept at bay by unions and political pressures. For many years Council employees have enjoyed working conditions, pay, and security superior to their counterparts in private enterprise. Up until the mid 1990's, while many industries and employees were feeling the pressures of downsizing, re engineering, re structuring, organizational development, and the global economy, Local Council employees were still functioning within an environment that was protected from competition and external benchmarking.

A Subsidiary Contracting Company

During 1994 the Victorian Government (State Liberal/Conservative) in Victoria introduced the Compulsory Competitive Tendering Legislation (CCT), which compelled Local Government Departments (Councils) under the heading of

efficiency, to incrementally tender out at least fifty percent of services they provided to their ratepayers. Almost simultaneously some 211 Councils were amalgamated into 78 Super Councils. The new legislation also gave the Councils authority to submit tender proposals for work outside of their own municipality. This process had enormous change implications for Council employees as it meant that suddenly they would have to tender for their existing jobs against external service providers.

One of the Victorian Councils, the Haddon City Council (HCC), decided it would take the process one step further and established a fully independent subsidiary company that could tender for Local Government work and create a new revenue stream. This was certainly a new concept within the Local Government environment. *Tratcon Works* was established in February 1996. The HCC decided that its newborn subsidiary would take over the current domestic garbage collection group, complete with employees and equipment. The transferred group would become the Waste Services Business Unit for Tratcon Works.

At the beginning of March 1996 the garbage collection employees at HCC were given a letter of offer for employment with Tratcon Works, the new subsidiary contracting company. The letter simply stated that as from 8-April-96 the garbage collection unit would become part of Tratcon Works. Employees who signed the letter of acceptance would continue their employment under the existing pay rates for a one-year period. Those who did not sign the letter of acceptance would be taken through a redeployment and redundancy process.

Working Conditions

The Council garbage collection group consisted of forty employees, all male with years of service ranging from fifteen to thirty. The group serviced the domestic and a number of commercial premises within HCC. Some commercial premises required waste collections seven days per week and weekend overtime was rostered among the garbage collection group. On average the waste collection crew were paid 50 hours per week. This needs to be put into context as these were paid hours not hours physically spent at the workplace. This group of employees was part of the Municipal Employees Union (MEU), which was notorious for industrial action and using the garbage collection groups to flex industrial muscle to continuously creep working conditions beyond industry standards. Garbage on the streets has always been a hot political issue for Local Governments and the unions used this as leverage to gain ground and a strong power base. The HCC garbage collection group was on a particularly good set of working conditions:

- A 35-hour week (9 day fortnight) while most of the workforce was still negotiating a 38-hour week.
- Work to finish (The employees finished their garbage collection runs in approximately 4 hours and went home but still received 8 hours pay).
- If employees were required to do extra work in the case of mechanical failure for example, they were paid overtime after 5 hours, so on these occasions they were paid overtime within their 8-hour day.
- Each member of the group was guaranteed at least 8 hours a week of weekend overtime and had a choice of working or passing it on to be pooled among the other members.
- On public holidays employees were paid 20 hours for a 4-hour shift.
- The group had a weekly base pay rate that was some 25 percent above the industry award.
- A highly regarded Superannuation scheme.

These employees saw themselves as professional garbage collectors and as a matter of fact there were seven father and son combinations within the group. The majority of employees expected to work at HCC for life. It was what they considered to be a safe, stable, secure job that one did not leave. Members of the group also interacted at a social level and certainly shared a well-entrenched unionized culture. There is no doubt that these employees derived a strong sense of identity from their workplace. They openly bragged about how they had fought for pay and conditions that were superior to many other Local Councils and superior to contractors doing the same work. They saw themselves as Council employees working in the most secure job in the state and planned their entire working life and in some cases, the working lives of their children around this particular workplace. The turn over rate for this group was extremely low and people would remain on waiting lists for several years to secure a job as a HCC garbage collector. Being competitive was never an issue within Local Government Departments. Change was the last thing on the mind of the garbage collectors.

These employees were proud to be garbage collectors working for a Council and they were proud to be members of a union which had fought for pay, conditions, security, and countless extra benefits they had accumulated along the way. These particular employees felt a sense of power because any industrial action they had undertaken had, in the main, always achieved the desired outcomes. To them, being a garbage collector was a good choice for a long-term career. Even after the introduction of the CCT legislation and a looming threat of a tender process the group believed they were untouchable. Group gatherings abounded with stories about how they had fought change in the past and would continue to fight until it just all blew over. The stories they told one another were full of confidence that they would remain Council garbage collectors forever.

Organizational Change

Almost overnight the Council garbage collectors were required to become contractors in a competitive environment. Suddenly, a group of employees who derived a sense of identity from an organization based on an uncompetitive, not for profit secure Council environment, which had experienced little or no change for a considerable time; were being asked to become contractors who would need to function in a competitive, profit generating insecure environment where survival could depend on continuous change. Employees who identified with a job for life were being asked to identify with finite work projects that had to be renewed through a competitive tender process. This was indeed a deep and fundamental change for this group of employees, as they needed to change their beliefs, values, behavior, and actions to adapt.

Traditionally Council workers saw contractors as "scabs" who were just waiting for the opportunity to steal jobs and erode conditions, which the unions had fought hard to achieve. Now they were being asked to become the people they had hated and kept at bay for decades. The Council employees turned to the union believing that industrial action could prevent the change. They truly believed that if they resisted for long enough things would just revert back to what they considered normal. The thought of shifting from being Council employees functioning in a stable protected environment, to becoming contractors whom they hated, and functioning in an unstable environment where jobs depended on competition and price focus caused intense anxiety to say the least among the Council employees. The industrial action continued for some six months and tension and anxiety steadily escalated within the group. The narrative in the following chapters is a story about a group of garbage collectors who resisted a fundamental organizational change.

CHAPTER 8:   RESISTING CHANGE

On Friday 8-March-96 at the end of shift the Manager Waste Services Haddon City Council (HCC) handed out the letters of offer to the HCC domestic garbage collection group to join Tratcon Works. (The new contracting subsidiary owned by HCC) There was an immediate response from the employees as they began to open the letters. I walked out of my office to an undercover assembly area in the works depot where employees congregated at the beginning and end of shift to drink coffee and smoke while they socialized.

I could hear raised voices. Some of the employees were reading letters and shaking their heads, several employees were simply tearing the letters and letting the pieces drop to the ground while shouting obscenities. Tommy, the workplace union representative screwed the letter into a spiral shape, took a cigarette lighter out of his pocket and lit the end of the letter, as it dropped to the ground their was a sudden uproar of support from the other garbage collectors. The response to the proposed organizational change was intense and full of emotion as the employees displayed what could only be described as extreme anger. I looked around to see if I could see Robert Nilson, the Manager Waste Services, who had handed out the letters and I caught a glimpse of his car as he drove out of the works depot. I walked over to Dennis (garbage collection driver) who was still reading the letter and shaking his head in disbelief:

Researcher: What's the problem Dennis?

Dennis: We have just been given a letter telling us we have to join Tratcon Works and become contractors next month or we don't have a job. Have a look at this.

I glanced over the letter which Dennis had handed me. The letter from HCC stated that as from 8-April-96 the garbage collection crew would be transferred to Tratcon Works. The employees would maintain their current pay and

working conditions for a one-year period. During that time, a new workplace agreement would be negotiated with Tratcon Works. Employees who did not wish to sign over to Tratcon Works would be made redundant. Several other members of the group walked over to where Dennis and I were standing.

Researcher: Surely you all knew changes were bound to come after the Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) legislation was introduced.

Dennis: We knew about CCT and that eventually we might have to face it unless the Labour Government was re elected or the unions put an end to it. We expected the union to fight for us and at worst we might have to strike for a few days. We never dreamed we would be told to become contractors overnight.

Rick: This CCT stuff is about union breaking, nothing to do with anything else.

Researcher: What do you mean Rick?

Rick: It's a well known fact that the establishment has been trying to change the way things are done in Councils for a long time.

Researcher: What sort of things?

Rick: We don't do things like the privates here. It's one man one job here. We create jobs. We run three man trucks and privates run two man trucks. We have spare trucks, they don't. We have a pool of spare drivers and jockeys to cover sick leave, annual leave and Workcover, privates use contract labour but we won't allow that. You know, stuff like that.

Researcher: Sounds like you have had a good run then?

Tommy: Yes we have had it good but we fought for it. The union holds the power here. That's why we will fight CCT. The managers at HCC can't tell us what to do and they know it. It's all covered in the Industrial Award.

Researcher: But surely management need to direct you Tommy?

Tommy: Look, they run the systems but we control the workplace. We have pushed our luck a little, we admit that. We have great pay and working conditions, we have lurks and perks, and we like to double dip if we can. We like to get the most for minimum effort. It's how we have always done things and how we will keep doing things. It's who we are now I guess.

Wayne: The General and the Major will be behind this I bet. They have tried to take things off us before and failed. They hate us and we hate them. We never see them down here, they just send orders in the mail and expect us to jump. What a joke. There is no way they will get away with this.

The General and the Major were nicknames given to the Director Physical Services and the Manager Waste Services respectively.

Rick: They will never beat us. They can't sack us. Nobody has been sacked here for as long as we can remember. They have tried and the union always wins. This job is as safe as houses, it's a job for life.

Researcher: CCT is a change of legislation Rick, that's different to just making workplace changes.

Peter: There is no way known they will make us contractors.

Researcher: Weren't you all aware about the new subsidiary company, Tratcon Works?

Dennis: We were told that a new subsidiary contract company was going to start but we were never told that we would be forced to become part of it.

Researcher: There doesn't appear to be much choice Dennis, the letter does not offer too many options.

Dennis: This won't happen, there is no way that we are just going to give up our jobs and become contractors. Believe me the union will have something to say about this. This is so bloody typical of HCC management. They haven't got the guts to talk to us straight so they hit us with things suddenly and behind our backs, and they wonder why we rely on the union. They must have known about this for months.

Researcher: Would it have made any difference if you had known earlier Dennis?

Dennis: No, we still would not want to become contractors but it's so typical of the way they treat us, like we don't think or feel. We are Council employees and there is no way we are going to become contractors, not a chance.

Researcher: Do you really believe they don't care how you feel Dennis?

Dennis: They never talk to us like normal people, it's always from a distance. This is a perfect example, asking these blokes to become contractors is like asking them to step out of their skin and the major just hands us a letter like we are robots or something.

I realized at that point why the garbage collectors were reacting so intensely. The proposed organizational change was not only deep and fundamental for their workplace, but there had been no consultative process by the HCC to prepare them for this type of change. Even though the employees were aware of CCT they believed that the union would somehow prevent the new legislation from impacting on their workplace. The immediate response by the employees was to resist the change. I could understand and empathize with their reactions and at the same time I knew that the CCT legislation was inevitable and eventually the garbage collectors would be forced to change. I was surprised however at the approach taken by management.

As I contemplated the difficult start to the process I could hear voices discussing union meetings and industrial action. The garbage collectors were planning to resist the workplace change. They had been Council employees for many years and enjoyed the security and working conditions that were part of being a Council garbage collector. The letter they had just received meant an instant change from Council employee to contractor. This was a fundamental workplace change that meant things would never be the same again. The union had always protected this group from any major changes and they were planning to use their union muscle to resist not only joining Tratcon Works and becoming contractors, but they were also planning to resist the CCT legislation.

On Wednesday 13-march-96 the garbage collection employees voted to implement union work bans that would attract the attention of the HCC management. Any extra waste that was not presented in the appropriate garbage

bins would be left on the street. Residents at HCC received two garbage collections per week and were allowed to present 2 by 55 litre garbage bins for collection each time. Usually any extra waste presented around the bins was collected by the collection crews as part of a goodwill agreement to prevent complaints being generated through the customer service centre. A meeting took place on Monday 18-March-96 between HCC and Tratcon Works (Requested by Tratcon Works) to discuss possible ways forward for the transfer of the garbage collection group to Tratcon Works.

Attendees were:

- Daniel Stroby Director Physical Services HCC
- Robert Nilson Manager Waste Services HCC
- Ian Montague GM Enviro Services Tratcon Works
- Greg Williams Manager Contracts Tratcon Works
- The Researcher

Ian: Thanks for your time gentlemen; I was hoping that we may be able to solve the current problem with the waste collection group.

Robert: What problem?

Ian: Robert, surely you are aware that the group is resisting the change and that work bans are in place.

Robert: Off course I am aware of the bans and to be quite honest I don't know what their problem is. Whatever it is I am sure they will get over it by April. The bans won't last. They are trying a bluff, flexing the union muscles as usual. Give them a few days. We are not backing down that easy Greg. As a matter of fact they don't have a choice and we won't back down at all.

Greg: These blokes are facing pretty serious changes Robert. Council worker to contractor. I thought you would have taken them through a process or something. Didn't you discuss this with them weeks ago?

Daniel: We have given them a letter of offer with Tratcon Works, which is a process Greg. Honestly you would think we are dealing with children, these are grown men for goodness sakes, either they want the job or they don't. Can't tell them too much or it creates grounds for conflict. They will still be filling trucks with garbage at Tratcon, no great problem.

Greg: Might be the same work but as I said, there is a great gap between Council and contractor. It may help if you and Robert could go down to their worksite Daniel to discuss the changes and offer them some help to adjust. We need this change to go smoothly. Tratcon cannot build the waste unit on the back of industrial action and disgruntled employees.

Robert: I don't see why we should, the letter explains the offer of employment and they will keep the same rate of pay and working conditions for one year, all they need to do is put on the Tratcon Works uniform and continue on as they are.

Ian: It may be okay for one year but new workplace agreements will change their workplace drastically and they know that. Besides, this change goes a little deeper than that Robert, there is a big gap between a Council workplace and a contractor workplace. They are opposite ends of the scale. Come April, Tratcon will have to grow a commercial enterprise that will be seeded with employees that are digging in their heels to hang on to a Council

based mentality. These people want to remain Council employees and they believe that industrial action will help them to stay exactly as they are. What happens at the cut off date when the employees refuse to change and do not sign over to Tratcon Works?

Robert: Realistically, the change is inevitable. The CCT legislation has created the conditions. If the employees do not sign up with Tratcon, we are in a position to tender the service out anyway in which case they would be faced with the situation of tendering for the work against external service providers under commercial conditions. If they sign up with Tratcon there is at least one-year of adjustment. This would at least give them time to make the transition to contractors. I know these blokes, they will sign when its crunch time. They wouldn't get a job anywhere else. They have had it too good for too long.

Daniel: From a HCC perspective the options are fairly straightforward. Firstly, either all the garbage collection employees will sign over with Tratcon Works, secondly, some employees will sign over, a limited number may be redeployed to other positions, and some will be paid redundancy. Or thirdly, if all else fails we will tender the service out and they will have to take their chances against the open market.

Greg: So you blokes are seriously not going to bother trying to help them make the transition.

Daniel: Honestly Greg, I really cannot see what you would expect us to do. Eventually the group will not have a choice but to change. Let's face it, this group has had a cushy ride for a long time

compared to private operators. They have used the union to hide behind and it might be about time they faced reality. Besides it's legislation, they have to change. We have given the directive and they will have no option.

Greg: Time is critical here. Tratcon needs this transfer to go ahead as scheduled or we may miss tender deadlines. We are relying on this group to give us operational resource for our tender bids. This is the only way we can claim experience in the industry. We were under the impression that this situation was under control. The transfer of the employees is the HCC end of the deal here.

Robert: I agree with Daniel, I can't see what you expect us to do if the group does not want to sign over immediately. The garbage collectors have had us over a barrel for years, they run to the union at the drop of a hat and always get their way because garbage is a visual hot political issue. This time they don't have a choice. Eventually they will sign up or they won't have a job.

Greg: It sounds like you see this as a way of getting even for past issues Robert. This is not personal. The timelines may not be critical from your end but they are from a Tratcon perspective. You are their manager Robert, you need to assist them through this change. This may have a big impact on Tratcon.

Robert: I gave up trying to reason with the garbage collectors a long time ago Greg. We have systems in place to deal with any problems. That's why I have supervisors. Tratcon Works is really not our problem Greg.

Greg: Sounds like half the problem Robert, if you can't reason with them, how do you expect them to co-operate? And Tratcon is your problem because we are going to be providing you with collection services. If you want a good service then I need good employees.

Robert: They will be your problem soon Greg, let's see if you can do better with them. We have done our job, the rest is up to Tratcon Works.

Greg: What about the consequences if they don't sign over.

Robert: We will just wait them out, what can they possibly do? This is one group of people having to change. Let's not make to big a deal out of all this. There are no consequences. They will come around.

Greg: They can cost Tratcon a lot of revenue for a start.

Robert: As I said Greg, Tratcon is not our worry.

The meeting came to a somber end as the Tratcon Works' managers were becoming frustrated. As much as I tried to remain impartial to the event I left that meeting feeling somewhat frustrated. It felt as though the HCC management had adopted the attitude that the change would happen regardless of any protests from the employees and they were in a position where they did not need to worry about assisting the process. It seemed that the HCC managers were almost glad to see the garbage collectors facing inevitable fundamental change.

I was beginning to understand why these two managers, Daniel and Robert had been nicknamed the General and the Major respectively by the garbage collectors. It did not seem to matter to them that HCC was the sole shareholder of Tratcon Works and that problems were just being transferred rather than being solved. My impression was that the HCC management just wanted the problem off their hands. The garbage collection employees had instantly resisted the organizational change and the HCC managers just assumed that they were resisting to be difficult.

The union work bans which had been implemented by the garbage collectors were certainly generating customer complaints and creating enough pressure to attract the attention of the HCC Councilors. Frank Kingsley, Works Supervisor HCC received a call from Daniel Stroby, Director Physical Services HCC asking if he could meet with the garbage collection employees with the view to getting work bans lifted. Both the Director Physical Services and the Manager Waste Services seemed determined to avoid contact with the garbage collectors.

The political pressure was beginning to have some of the impact that the union had predicted, that is, it attracted attention from the Councilors and prominent business people within the municipality. Daniel Stroby was feeling the heat and delegated the responsibility down to the works supervisor knowing quite well that Frank needed to keep the depot working as well as possible through this change. Industrial action by the garbage collectors could easily spread to other sections. Frank Kingsley organized a meeting with the garbage collectors for Thursday 21-March-96.
Attendees were:

- Frank Kingsley   Works Supervisor HCC
- Tol Kanowski   Union Organizer MEU
- HCC garbage collection group   (40 employees)
- The researcher

Frank:	Thanks for coming boys, the reason for this meeting is to see how we might resume normal work practices while dealing with changes involved in transferring you blokes to Tratcon Works.
Tommy:	Can I say something right up front Frank?
Frank:	Certainly Tommy.
Tommy:	Look Frank, the boys and me don't have anything against you but why didn't those gutless (***) from the Civic Centre show up here today?
Frank:	I'm sorry, Tommy, but I don't have an answer to that right now, and does it really matter as long as we can resolve the situation?
Rick:	It bloody well matters to us Frank.
Tol:	Give him a chance to talk fellas. As you can see Frank, they are pretty upset at the proposed change to start with, and the way it has been handled so far by management leaves a lot to be desired.
Rick:	Those (***) gave us a letter telling us to become contractors in a few weeks or we don't have a job. We're not contractors, we (***) hate contactors. Some of us have been Council collectors for 20 to 30 years and we have done a good job because we love it. We are happy the way we are and we don't intend to change.
Frank:	I can see that this is a serious change but you need to understand that the CCT legislation will cause unavoidable change

throughout Victorian Council workplaces over the next few years.

Tommy: Have you got the authority to keep us the way we are now Frank?

Frank: No, I certainly can't promise you that Tommy.

Tommy: Then we don't want to continue unless those gutless (***) from the Civic Centre come down and talk to us.

Group: Vocal support for the suggestion.!!!!!!!!

Tol: It may be better that we get Daniel and Robert involved. We will continue with the work bans until they meet with the group. Is anyone opposed?

Group: Silence.

Tol: Sorry Frank but if that's what these blokes want, then that's what I will fight for.

Frank: I just can't see how industrial action is going to do anyone any good when the CCT legislation is not going away. One way or another changes are going to happen and eventually you blokes will be forced to tender for the garbage collection for HCC.

Tommy: You don't get it Frank. We're not going to become contractors. We are Council garbage collectors, always have been and always will be!!!

Rick: Frank, you tell the General and the Major to get out of their comfortable offices and come down here and face us. We never see them down here. They are totally oblivious to what goes on outside the bloody castle they live in. We just get orders when the heat is on or when they need something from us. Bloody gutless wonders.

The garbage collectors left the meeting followed by Tol Kanowski. Frank Kingsley sat at the table looking very disappointed and concerned. As disappointed as I was that the meeting achieved no outcome, I was relieved that it was over. This was a group of people who were more than happy to go to battle and there was a definite thickness in the air that was almost overwhelming. The level of emotion coming from the group was very intense and I could feel myself reacting to their emotion as I was starting to feel angry that the process had been handled so indifferently by HCC management. The pending changes caused obvious feelings of anger among the garbage collection group, but they seemed to be responding to the changes at a deep personal level that I could not fully understand.

Part of me felt that the garbage collectors were over reacting to the situation and that they should have the flexibility to move forward and work their way through the change process. I felt that although the HCC management could have worked closer with the employees and the union, the group was being given fair options (maintaining pay rates and working conditions for a one-year period) in a situation where a change was being partly externally driven by legislation. Other Victorian Councils were undergoing changes due to CCT legislation. I could see Frank Kingsley rubbing his chin as he reflected on what had just taken place. He turned towards me with a very worried expression on his face.

Frank: You know Joe, I have been here a long time, 27 years as a matter
                of fact and I probably know these blokes better than anyone. I
                never imagined a Council workplace could come to this,
                tendering for jobs. I really feel for them. Either way this goes,
                CCT will change things for good. If they sign over with Tratcon
                Works they become instant contractors and even if Tratcon
                Works did not exist the CCT legislation would soon kick in and
                they would be forced to tender for their jobs. If they were lucky
                enough to win the tender they will never be working under the
                same conditions again. You see, either way you look at it,
                eventually they will end up as contactors anyway.

Researcher: The group seems to be taking this very hard Frank. It's almost as
                though they are in a state of self-denial. I also feel for them but
                it's difficult to know what the best course of action is.

Frank: All I know is that I will do what ever I can to get these blokes
                through this whole thing in the best way possible. Management
                seems to be sitting back as always and just waiting for the
                problem to go away or for someone else to fix it. I know they
                have a job to do but I just wish they could be more pro active.

Researcher: The garbage collectors seem to respect you Frank but the
                relationship between the managers and the group appears very
                strained.

Frank: There is no relationship. Things broke down years ago when
                Daniel and Robert attempted a workplace reform where they
                wanted to cut resources and change working conditions. Instead
                of sitting down and talking to the group they took the big stick
                approach and just ordered them to change. There was huge

industrial action and the garbage collectors won in the end. Since then the group has taken more ground at every opportunity and management have resented the loss they suffered and have hated every gain the union has made since. In a way I think Daniel and Robert are happy to have these blokes over a barrel.

Researcher: It certainly is a shame. Frank I know that management, yourself and the group have agreed to my research through this change process but I am starting to feel a little intrusive.

Frank: Look Joe, this is a tense time at the moment but you are a familiar face here. You have been around for a couple of years now and the boys trust you. I think it might be a good thing to have someone a bit more neutral around. As a matter of fact I will make sure you are involved as much as possible.

There was a growing tension on the workplace as the garbage collectors seemed intent on resisting the organizational change. Their supervisor seemed to understand how the group felt and at the same time knew the change was inevitable. He was deeply concerned for their future and somewhat frustrated with the way management was handling this situation. I felt more comfortable knowing that Frank was comfortable with my presence. He seemed to be a powerful link between management and the garbage collectors. I was trying to remain as impartial as possible, however, I could feel myself being drawn into the emotional responses of the people I was observing.

CHAPTER 9:   PROTECTING IDENTITY

On Monday 25-March-96 Frank Kingsley Works Supervisor HCC met with Robert Nilson Manager Waste Services HCC with a view to arranging a meeting with the garbage collection group and the union organizer as had been requested by the group. It had appeared obvious from the start of the process when the letters of offer to transfer to Tratcon Works were handed to the garbage collection employees that management preferred to take an impersonal role. The reluctance to have face-to-face discussions with the group was again obvious from Robert Nilson.

Attendees were:

- Robert Nilson   Manager Waste Services HCC
- Frank Kingsley   Works Supervisor HCC
- The researcher

Frank: Robert, I don't think we can move anything forward unless you and Daniel meet with the group and give them the opportunity to express their concerns. The work bans are still in place and the blokes will not move their position. They insist on talking to management.

Robert: I just don't see the point of discussing something that is going to happen anyway. We did not create these changes and we certainly cannot prevent the legislation and the requirements. A decision has been made to transfer the group to Tratcon Works and even if that was not the case, the services would be put out to tender soon anyway.

Frank: I understand that Robert, but there seems to be a reluctance from management to even discuss the issue with the group. I feel this has been handled very badly right from the start. In a way I think you and Daniel are enjoying the fact that the garbage collectors are in a vulnerable position.

Robert: Come on Frank, you know as well as I do that these blokes scream union at the drop of a hat. The garbage collectors are the most militant union group in HCC and probably the state of Victoria. We knew that the group would not be happy about the changes and we are trying to minimize conflict. We thought the cleanest way was to give them letters and some time to adjust. I can't reverse the changes and I certainly don't want a face to face with an angry group of garbage collectors.

Frank: They may be union minded but at the same time management has always taken an arms length approach so the union has gained a lot of power. Maybe if you and Daniel developed a better leadership relationship with the group, they may not have needed the union as much. You never built any trust or respect with the group and they acted accordingly. To be fair Robert, this is a huge change for them.

Robert: This is a change for everybody Frank. Do you really think that CCT will not impact on management? This is about accountability at all levels of the organization Frank.

Frank: How will your job change Robert?

Robert: Daniel and I will have to manage contractors and administer contracts Frank.

Frank: But you will still be Council employees. You have been with HCC for 12 years now Robert, I wonder how you would feel if I shoved a letter under your nose and asked you to sign up with a private company within four weeks and then apply for your job every 5 years.

Robert: That's irrelevant Frank, this change is not about Daniel or myself, it is about the garbage collectors and quite honestly it is about time they realize they do not have a choice.

Frank: You and Daniel better do something Robert because this problem is not going to get better on its own.

Robert: Look Frank, I will talk to Daniel and see what I can organize. I am not promising anything. We have done our part, the rest is up to Tratcon and the garbage collectors.

Frank: You are the leaders here Robert, what do you mean you can't promise anything? I think you are gloating Robert. Any wonder the group gets frustrated. I wonder if the CEO and the Councilors feel the same way as you do Robert.

Robert: I hope that is not a threat Frank.

Frank: I have made a personal commitment to help these blokes through this and I will bloody well do what I need to do to achieve the best results.

I could feel Frank's frustration as we left the meeting. I found it difficult to understand why the HCC management was so reluctant to work with the group in order to achieve the required change, regardless of past history. A meeting

was arranged for Thursday 28-March-96 with management as requested by the garbage collection group. I don't believe that anyone who attended that meeting could have predicted the outcome. There was an uncomfortable tension before the meeting even commenced.

Attendees were:

- Daniel Stroby   Director Physical Services HCC
- Robert Nilson   Manager waste Services HCC
- Frank Kingsley   Works Supervisor HCC
- Tol Kanowski   Union Organizer MEU
- Garbage Collection Group HCC   (40 employees)
- The researcher

Daniel: The CCT legislation is driving changes across Council workplaces throughout Victoria and employees will have to tender for work they have been doing for many years. You people are not the only ones affected by CCT. The difference is that this group is facing the added complication of being transferred to a new subsidiary contracting company owned by HCC. There are current work bans in place, which have been implemented to demonstrate concerns regarding these changes. The work bans are causing concern to the ratepayers and they need to be lifted ASAP. You must understand that we did not create CCT, we are just trying to deal with it.

Rod: You mean the work bans are causing problems for management don't you? Otherwise you two would not be down here right now. We only see you when you need something from us.

Robert: HCC have made a decision to establish a subsidiary contracting company as a way of dealing with the CCT legislation and taking advantage of potential opportunities. Your transfer to Tratcon Works will give you the opportunity to maintain current pay rates and working conditions for one year while you negotiate new workplace agreements.

Tommy: Why can't we negotiate a new workplace agreement before we transfer?

Robert: It is up to Tratcon to negotiate your agreement under a contractor workplace, we cannot do that as a Council workplace.

Rod: We don't want to be (***) contractors!!!!!!!

Tol: The concern of the group is that firstly they do not want to become contractors and secondly a decision about their future was made without any consultation and without the opportunity for the group to find alternative solutions that might allow them to remain as Council garbage collectors. Most of the people in this room have been Council garbage collectors for anywhere between fifteen and thirty years and they do it because they are happy being Council garbage collectors. Some have their sons or relatives working here and have planned their future around the job. Some of the people in this room have had fathers and grandfathers working as garbage collectors on this very workplace. Most of the people in this room are planning to retire from this job. Now you are telling them that they have to become contractors overnight with new working conditions and work that will expire in three to five years.

Peter: My father fought for some of the conditions we have now. He fought for a cap on productivity rates and for better equipment. In his day they used to throw garbage into high-sided open trucks and you can imagine how hard that must have been.

Lou: My old man told me the same thing. He fought for better pay, better working hours and job security.

Robert: You will have the opportunity to tender for the work at the appropriate time and in the meantime you keep the same rate of pay and working conditions for one year. As Tratcon employees you will be able to tender for other Council waste collections and create future opportunity for the whole group.

Steve: The whole point is that we want to be Council garbage collectors not contractors. That's who I have been for nearly thirty years.

Tommy: What happens to our working conditions after one year? Contractors use driver only sideloading vehicles wherever possible so most of us would be replaced by a robotic bin-lifting arm in the near future. Where jockeys are needed the numbers will be reduced from two jockeys per vehicle to one jockey per vehicle. You are handing us over to become contractors and most of us will be made redundant anyway because Tratcon Works will not need all of us.

Robert: That's something that will be worked through with Tratcon Works.

Rod: What about all the conditions we have fought for over the years? Are you managers going to change your working conditions when we do?

Robert: Well…no…not in the same way, we will have to become contract managers but that is not the issue here and besides your conditions won't change that much.

Tommy: How can you say conditions will not change much? You are telling us we have to become (***) contractors. We are Council collectors and we have fought to keep contractors out of our area for years. We work three to a vehicle, we don't use driver only vehicles, and we do not even allow contract labour on our site. We stand to lose all the conditions we have fought for and work for less pay. Not change much!! You have to be bloody joking!! On top of that you want us to become contractors and take work away from other Council collectors.

Peter: Will we still be able to work a four-hour day with Tratcon Works? Will we get paid overtime after five hours?

Daniel: I doubt that very much. I think you are lucky to have that now.

Peter: But that is part of working conditions that we do have. We run for a straight four-hour period to get finished early and that has been the case for years. Some of us have part time jobs in the afternoon. We like our jobs and conditions as they are.

Dennis: Our working conditions and contractor working conditions are chalk and cheese. We stand to lose a lot by becoming contractors. But there's more than that involved as well. I am one of the people who has had a father and grandfather on this workplace. We have been driving and running through the streets of HCC for decades and generations. Many people on our collection rounds know us by name. In summer they give us cold

drinks and in the winter some go so far as tea and scones. At Christmas time we collect more beer, wine, cards, and gifts including money, toys, chocolates and puddings than we do garbage. This has been the case for as long as anyone can remember. We come to expect that now but people do it because they want to. We give them a special service because we are part of life within HCC and a part of each neighborhood we service. We do this job because we like being Council garbage collectors. Some of us have worked seven days a week for years on end. This is part of our lives.

Rod: We're not becoming contractors and we will (***) fight you all the way!!!!!

Daniel: This decision has been made and you have a limited number of options. You can sign up with Tratcon Works, you can seek redeployment for which there are limited positions, or you can take redundancy payment.

Ivan: There is no way that you are going to turn us into contractors. No way!

Frank: I need to say something here. I may be part of management but I am shocked at the attitude management has taken towards this whole issue. As managers you blokes have got to be kidding, you come down here and ask these blokes to put on a contractor hat and get on with life as though they are just some sort of machines that have no thoughts or feelings.

Tommy: Well put Frank, at least our supervisor understands where we are coming from. We will fight you. What can you do if we just

refuse to sign over when Tratcon Works starts in about a week's time?

Daniel: If you don't sign up we can put the service out to tender anyway, it may take a little longer but it will eventually achieve the required change regardless.

Rod: You (***)!!!!!!

Frank: Look I know you are upset fellas!! but maybe we should focus on how we can achieve the best………re…

The meeting came to an abrupt end as Rod hurled a polystyrene cup of hot coffee at the Director Physical Services. The coffee splattered on the wall behind the Director and sprays of hot coffee landed on a number of people. Some of the group shouted obscene verbal abuse at the managers. At that point Daniel and Robert left in a hurry.

Tol: That was not smart fellas. Now we are further behind than where we started.

Tommy: We don't care Tol; we are going to fight the bastards.

At that point I felt overwhelmed by the events in the meeting. There was extreme anger in the faces and voices of the garbage collectors. It was obvious that both HCC management and the garbage collection group were digging in their heels. Management felt that the change was straightforward and should just go ahead as planned and the employees were resisting the change in a most extreme fashion. I could partially see both sides of the situation without fully understanding the responses. I was trying to maintain an impartial position and not make judgements. I was starting to realize that the employees were resisting

the change at a deeper level than I had first assumed. I began to realize that as in a number of unsuccessful organizational change efforts I had previously witnessed, management had not put any effort into assisting the people to change.

On Wednesday 10-April-96 Daniel Stroby sent a letter to the waste collection employees and the union demanding that the work bans be lifted immediately as they were not justified and were creating serious problems for HCC. The official transfer date for the employees to Tratcon Works had now expired. Daniel advised the employees that the Council would be seeking legal advice if the bans were not lifted. The same letter advised that new letters of offer for Tratcon Works would be posted to the home address of each employee and that the signed letters of acceptance would need to be returned by close of business Friday 19-April-96. The bans were not lifted and if anything the letter of demand from HCC only seemed to add fuel to the fire as the garbage collection employees stood defiant and determined not to change. The mood among the group was tense and emotionally charged as the employees carried out their daily work.

CHAPTER 10:   TENSION WITHIN THE GROUP

On Tuesday 16-April-96 a group of some twenty garbage collectors were gathered at the undercover assembly area at the works depot after the completion of the daily shift. The discussion seemed tense and voices were starting to rise in volume. The topic was the letter of offer to join Tratcon works. As I moved closer to the group some tempers were already flaring:

Tommy: What do you mean you are thinking of signing up with Tratcon you turncoat bastard?

Paul: Listen Tommy, I still have to feed my family and pay my mortgage.

Tommy: So what, most of us are in the same boat you (***) idiot. If we fold now we don't stand a chance.

Paul: You really think you are going to stop this change with industrial action, and don't call me a (***) idiot. At least if we sign with Tratcon we will be working for the same pay and conditions for one year and we will have a job and income.

Tommy: That's all you wogs think about, money. This is about more than just money, we have been Council collectors for years and now we're being told to change to contractors. Do you really want to become a contractor?

Paul: Try living without money Tommy, and stop calling me names. I need to be practical, as long as they are paying me who cares if I am called a contractor.

Tommy: You don't get it you dumb wog, we create jobs and look after our members, contractors destroy jobs while they turn individuals against each other. We can only stay who we are if we fight for it. Once we sign over they will cull our numbers and we will change for good. If we stick together we have a chance to stay Council collectors.

Paul: I told you not to call me names Tommy.

At this stage Tommy and Paul were pushing each other around and several blows had been exchanged. Paul was bleeding from the nose and a cut had opened up over his left eye. His face was quite bloody. The rest of the group was not making any attempt to intervene. It was as though they were all somehow part of the fight that Tommy and Paul were acting out. I was not quite sure how to deal with the situation when I was relieved of the responsibility to do anything. Frank Kingsley, the group supervisor who was well above average height and weight suddenly had a hold of the two men and seemed to be shaking the temper out of each one.

Frank: What the hell are you blokes doing? You think fighting among yourselves is going to fix the problem?

Rod: Paul deserved it Frank. He wants to sell us all out and sign over with Tratcon.

Peter: We are fighting because we like being Council garbage collectors. We could all go out and look for other work but we enjoy who we are. Unless we fight as a group we will lose. We can't have people selling us out Frank.

Frank: Listen carefully you blokes, the next person I catch fighting will be out the gate and I don't care what the reason. I know this change is hard but you still need to work your way through it in the most sensible manner and within legal guidelines and workplace rules. Please go home and think before you act or you may do something you all regret. Paul in my office right now, I will clean you up before I am forced to bloody well follow disciplinary procedures.

Rod: Tommy is right Frank, we have to stick together.

Frank: Do you really think that fighting amongst yourselves is going to solve this problem Rod?

Rod: Believe me Frank, we are going to do whatever it takes not to become contractors and if that means some people get hurt, then so be it.

Frank: You blokes can't be serious. If you hurt each other you lose anyway. I should be standing Tommy and Paul down right now. Please go home and think about this very carefully. People have to do what is best for them Rod, not what you tell them to do.

Dennis: Most of us are proud to be Council garbage collectors and so were some of our fathers, grandfathers, and now so are some of our sons. This is who we are. I am known as Dennis the garbo at the cricket club, at the bowling alley and among my friends. I would say that also goes for most of us. We are fighting for something serious here Frank and we do need to stick together.

The group dispersed in a solemn mood and it was clear that the organizational change was beginning to impact at a deep level within the garbage collection group.

Researcher: The tension must be getting to them Frank. Tommy and Paul always seemed to be good friends.

Frank: This whole group is normally on very good terms Joe, it's a real worry to see this kind of conflict. There are father and son teams here and some of their children have inter married. Some belong to the same bowl clubs, cricket clubs, football clubs, and social clubs. This change seems to be affecting them in a serious way. To most of these blokes this type of change will change their way of life on the workplace forever and in some cases their way of life away from the workplace.

Researcher: Frank I can understand the change will change the workplace but how will it change life away from the workplace?

Frank: Most of them have planned their future, where they live and in some cases where their children will work around this job. Most of these blokes have planned to retire from this job, now suddenly they are being asked to sign all that away. Being a Council employee and being a contractor means two totally different things to these blokes.

I was beginning to realize just how deep this kind of change was impacting on this group of employees. Signing over to Tratcon Works would transform the workplace forever. This was a deep, fundamental change and they were resisting at a deep emotional level. They were resisting the change to maintain the current workplace situation as Council garbage collectors, which gave them

a sense of security and stability. This group was struggling to maintain the sense of identity they derived from the workplace and had felt for many years.

CHAPTER 11: A DEADLINE MISSED

The conflict among the garbage collection employees seemed to be increasing as time went by. It seemed that some employees were considering the job offer with Tratcon Works and the rest of the group were applying pressure to resist the change as a united group. Morale within the group was very obviously low. The work bans were still in place and the general performance of a once lively group of employees appeared to be sliding daily. The 19-April-96 came and went and no signed letters to join Tratcon had been submitted from the garbage collection employees. Tratcon was now under pressure from its Board of Directors to deal with this issue and HCC was under pressure from Tratcon Works and its Councilors to achieve the proposed change and negotiate an agreeable conclusion with all the garbage collection employees. A meeting was held on Monday 29-April-96 between HCC management and the Tratcon Works management to determine the next course of action to resolve the situation.

Attendees were:

- Daniel Stroby   Director Physical Services Haddon Council
- Robert Nilson   Manager waste Services Haddon Council
- Frank Kingsley   Supervisor Haddon Council
- Ian Montague   G M Enviro Services Tratcon Works
- Greg Williams   Manager Contracts Tratcon Works
- The Researcher

Ian: Daniel, we have a real serious issue here, the deadline for your garbage collection unit to sign over to Tratcon has passed twice and there seems to be no resolution in sight. My people need to chase several tenders in the very near future and the plan was to

use the group as a launching pad for our waste management expertise at the operational level. We look like missing the boat on these tenders and it could mean several million dollars per annum in revenue.

Daniel: I realize the situation needs to be resolved. I really thought that they would have accepted the change and just signed over by now. Their response has been unpredictable and I'm not sure why the group has resisted so radically.

Frank: They told you they do not want to become contractors. If you had spent the time to discuss the issue with them you would understand why and you would be able to deal with the problem. Is it so difficult to understand that they simply want to remain Council employees because this is what they have been for decades?

Daniel: We all have to do things we don't like Frank. We tried talking to them Frank and they physically attacked us. That is not acceptable behavior. How can you talk to people like that? We should have them charged with assault.

Frank: You are joking Daniel, that would really help things. Besides you didn't talk to them Daniel, you told them that they only had several options and it boiled down to change or be changed. When they told you why they wouldn't change you ignored it as though it doesn't matter.

Daniel: Well it doesn't really matter Frank.

Frank: It matters to them. Until you accept that, the problem will persist.

Robert: No matter how you put it Frank, those garbage collectors are unionized and when they don't like a management decision they turn to industrial action. They can only hold out so long.

Greg: You said they would sign over a while ago Robert.

Frank: Yes, I think it's a well-known fact that the garbage collection crew has a unionized culture but you can't keep blaming them for the whole problem. Management has not made a decent attempt to help them through this change.

Robert: This is a very straightforward situation, CCT legislation has changed the rules and employees need to adapt to the new game, I think they are being driven by union mentality as usual.

Greg: I don't see how that helps the situation. The question is, how do we resolve the situation quickly and achieve the best result all around? I don't want disgruntled employees starting with Tratcon on day one and I would like to maintain as much operational experience as possible to grow our waste management contracts.

Frank: I have watched the group from the time they received the first letters to join Tratcon Works. I think that part of the problem is the process that was followed, but I also feel that the group is resisting the change at a deeper personal level than we all seem to be aware of. Changing from a Council employee to a contractor is like changing a part of themselves. If this is to be resolved with the best outcome I think the group needs to be helped through the process if it's not already too late.

Robert: We are talking about a job for goodness sakes. They will be doing the same job for the same pay and conditions for at least one year. You are reading too much into this Frank.

Frank: I know these blokes better than anyone. You may think they are union heads Robert but from their perspective they have fought hard for excellent working conditions. Asking them to become contractors changes that for good. They really do want to stay Council garbage collectors and that's why they are resisting so hard. As managers you have not understood and you have not assisted them to change. The message you are sending is that you don't care.

Ian: My concern is that we resolve this ASAP and that we don't start day one with employees who do not want to be part of Tratcon Works. It seems that there are conflicting views as to why this group of employees are resisting the proposed changes. Could I suggest that we find some neutral ground with the employees and see if we can move things forward? We need to bear in mind that if the group does not sign over with Tratcon then we need to tender for new work under greenfield conditions with no current work in progress, which will make credibility difficult in the market. At some point in the future HCC will then need to tender out the waste collection services under the CCT requirements, so both our jobs become more difficult. I would like to suggest that we find a way forward ASAP.

Daniel: What do you suggest Ian?

Ian: From what I can gather these blokes trust Frank and he seems to know them better than anyone else. I think Frank should have an

informal meeting with the group and find out what it will take to move things forward.

Daniel: Anyone is welcome to try. I just think they are being pig headed as usual.

Robert: Look, they really do not have much choice. I am telling you all, they will eventually cave in and sign over to Tratcon.

Ian: Yes, that's all very well, but at what point do we call a cutoff date?

Greg: Why can't you offer them a compromise?

Robert: Such as Greg?

Greg: They are saying they don't want to change from Council employees to contractors right. Why can't you offer them all redundancies now and then let whoever wishes apply for a position at Tratcon? That way they get to make the choice.

Robert: No way Greg. I am not going to offer redundancies. Firstly you are talking big dollars and secondly why should we weaken when they don't have a choice.

Greg: They do have a choice. You have given them that option anyway. They could refuse to sign over with Tratcon and take a redundancy.

Robert: Yes but I know that there is no way that they will take a redundancy. I told you, they won't get a job anywhere else. Their skills are limited. We could legally force them to the wall now.

Greg: Legal proceeding could drag out forever Robert. If they were to all walk away from the job, who do you think is going to collect your garbage overnight. We need this to go as smooth as possible.

Robert: This is all speculation. I will tell you again, they will sign over soon.

There was general agreement that the next step should be a neutral meeting with Frank and the garbage collection employees as a way of finding a resolution to the current situation. I could not help thinking as I left the meeting that maybe all the current problems could have been avoided if the employees had been assisted to cope with this change from the beginning. It seemed to me that the HCC made a very simple assumption that a group of employees would respond as required after simply receiving a letter telling them that at as from a certain date they would need to change from Council employee to contractor. I wondered if anyone had considered what this depth of change might mean to the group.

The HCC management had considered this organizational change to be a simple isolated process that would work out as planned. The employees had not responded as expected and as a result HCC was dealing with industrial action, low moral, customer complaints, and pressure from Councilors. Conflict was escalating between the individual employees within the group and between management and the group. Tratcon Works was running behind schedule and was likely to miss the opportunity for several million dollars per annum of tender work. It seemed that a single response to an organizational change had

created many issues and left a number of stakeholders in an undesirable position.

CHAPTER 12: THE BATTLE ESCALATES

On Wednesday 1-May-96 an invitation was forwarded to the garbage collection group to meet with Frank Kingsley Works Supervisor HCC for discussions without prejudice where they would have an opportunity to express concerns and possibly find a process forward from the current position of total resistance. The invitation was declined and instead the group called for a formal union meeting with their organizer Tol Kanowski.

At the end of that meeting held on Tuesday 7-May-96 Tol Kanowski contacted HCC and announced that the garbage collection group were in dispute and had elected to commence immediate strike action. This action raised the situation to a new level and it was obvious that the group wanted to drive the current situation to a conclusion. Strike action was a desperate measure and meant to attract serious attention. The Council responded immediately with a demand for the employees to return to work or they would seek legal advice, this only strengthened the resolve of the group as it demonstrated that management was not even willing to negotiate.

A union picket line was established and the garbage began to accumulate in the HCC streets. The phones ran hot and the strike certainly attracted attention. A clear message was sent from the HCC Councilors to management. *Fix this problem and fix it now*. The HCC called the union to the table for an urgent meeting on Friday 10-May-96.

Attendees were:

- Daniel Stroby   Director Physical Services HCC
- Robert Nilson   Manager Waste Services HCC
- Frank Kingsley   Works Supervisor HCC
- Tol Kanowski   Union Organizer M.E.U.

- Tommy Lewis   Union Delegate HCC Garbage Collection
- Greg Williams   Manager Contracts Tratcon Works
- The Researcher

Daniel: This situation has escalated to crisis level and is certainly not a good position for any of us to be in. What is it going to take to resolve it so that we can all move forward?

Tol: We would not be here if HCC managers had dealt with this in an open and responsible manner to start with.

Greg: Looking for blame at this stage will not solve the problem.

Tol: The group does not want to transfer to Tratcon works as contractors; they want to remain as Council collectors.

Daniel: You must be aware that I cannot reverse the CCT legislation.

Tol: The CCT legislation does not require a transfer to Tratcon Works.

Daniel: That's correct but it was a decision that has been made by HCC and is not on the table for negotiation. The decision for Tratcon to take over the garbage collection unit as a seed for the Enviro Services Unit was a strategic business decision and will benefit the HCC in the future as the sole shareholder of Tratcon Works.

Tol: You cannot force this group of employees to sign over to Tratcon Works.

Daniel: We are not forcing them, we have given them a letter of offer for employment at Tratcon, and they have a choice whether to sign or not.

Tol: They have a choice of signing with Tratcon, limited redeployment or redundancy; I would say you are forcing them to transfer.

Tommy: Why can't we stay as Council employees and then tender for the work instead of signing over as contractors with Tratcon Works.

Robert: What possible difference would that make? If you loose the tender you are back to square one, that is you will be contractors or you will have no job.

Tommy: What makes you so certain we would loose the tender?

Robert: You cannot possibly compete against private contractors.

Tommy: The difference would be that we remain as Council garbage collectors until tender time. Let Tratcon Works submit a tender application when the tender is put out.

Daniel: That would interfere with the timelines for the Tratcon business strategy.

Greg: Could I suggest that if the group returns to work we could then work with them to help them with the change process and with the transition from Council employee to contractor? There is a lot at stake for all parties and the group may be risking their employment over the perceived difference between Council

employee and contractor. Even as Council employees the tender process will mean competing with the external market. In-house teams will in reality become in-house contractors. Signing over with Tratcon would give us some middle ground and at the moment there are not too many alternatives.

Tommy: We are better off taking our chances as we are. If we sign over with Tratcon we will be culled within the first year. Can you guarantee that we will all maintain jobs as contractors after one year? Not that we would anyway.

Greg: No. It will all depend on the new workplace agreements.

Tommy: We will not sign over as contractors.

Tol: I think that the alternative is to take this to Commission and take our chances.

Daniel: If this goes to Commission Tol, the group might end up right back at square one.

Tol: Or we may maintain the right to remain as Council employees for a longer span of time. Besides there may be a change of Government at the next election and CCT may change. We do not intend to just lay down and accept this.

Daniel: You may gain twelve months at the most before the CCT legislation kicks in and the waste collection will be put out to tender. If the group loses the tender at that point they may all be out of a job. If they sign over now they will at least have a job for five years. I cannot walk back from the current position.

Tol: We will have to go back to the group for discussion and a vote to work out the next course of action.

Daniel: We need to resolve this ASAP Tol. This situation is starting to have a lot of negative impacts.

Tol: You blokes should have thought of that when you started this whole process. Did you really think that the group would just change overnight on your say so and just go on as though nothing had happened? This is so bloody typical of the way you people have managed the garbage collectors for years. You forget they are people with feelings.

Robert: Come on Tol, you speak as though these blokes are angels who always do the right thing.

Tommy: We have played the game the best way we could to survive. You just cannot accept that we won the game for so long.

Tol: Regardless of what you may think these blokes have been Council collectors for years and they like who they are. Right now they're very angry because you threw a serious change at them without any discussion and they do not want to be contractors. I have known this group for many years and I can tell you that this change is affecting them at a personal level that I haven't seen before.

Robert: I think they are just trying to make things as difficult as possible because they don't have a choice.

Tommy: We have a choice, we can take a redundancy, we are fighting because we want to keep working as we are.

Robert: Be realistic Tommy, you know as well as I do that the group will not choose a redundancy over a job with Tratcon. They will sign over.

Greg: You keep saying that Robert, but we are worse off than when we started! Your residents hate you, the Councilors are angry, you have garbage on the streets, and Tratcon is behind its trading schedule. You two managers have not made any attempt to move this forward.

Robert: This is not the forum to be discussing these issues Greg!

Greg: Well I am sorry Robert but I am fed up with the approach you have taken towards this whole issue!!

Tommy: You really don't understand what this fight is about Robert. Don't underestimate what this means to these blokes.

The group voted to stay out on strike until the Commission hearing. An urgent hearing was requested and granted for Monday 13-May-96. The Commissioner ordered the employees back to work but did not make a ruling regarding the issue of transfer from HCC to Tratcon Works. However, the conditions were that the garbage collection group would return to work and the two parties (HCC and the garbage collection group) should try and resolve their differences over a six-week period and find their own solution for the transfer of employment issue. The parties would return to Commission for a review hearing on Thursday 27-June-96.

This decision was a bitter disappointment to the employees as they had been hoping for support and a decision that would allow them to continue as Council employees for an extended period of time. On Tuesday 14-May-96 Frank

Kingsley arrived at the works depot at 4.30 AM to organize the daily work and could not believe what he saw. The garbage collection vehicles looked like they had been involved in some sort of war. Tyres were slashed and vehicles were leaning sideways, broken glass from windscreens and mirrors lay all over the ground and some vehicles had offensive graffiti sprayed across the bodies. Some eighty percent of the fleet had been damaged in some way. Pools of engine oil were spread across the asphalt surface of the depot. Apparently some vehicles had been drained of engine oil and left to run destroying the engines.

It took three days to get the fleet fully operational at a cost of some $90,000 and meanwhile the employees came into work and played cards all day on full pay because they had returned to work as ordered but could not use the equipment. The assumption around the HCC workplace was that some of the garbage collectors had caused the damage to the vehicles, however, despite a police investigation it was difficult to prove. I was surprised by the vandalism and was in receipt of unofficial alleged information that some of the garbage collection employees were indeed responsible for the damage to the waste collection vehicles. I remember wondering how an organizational change could invoke such irrational emotional responses and impact on so many stakeholders. This was extreme action and left no doubt that the garbage collection group was determined not to change from Council employees to contractors.

The garbage was overflowing through the HCC streets and took a week to clean up when the garbage collectors finally got back to work. They worked considerable overtime for a week to catch up and made up the wages they had lost while on strike. The residents of HCC were extremely angry and put out as the customer service lines ran hot. The Councilors were angry and upset at the whole situation, not to mention the cost of vandalism and extra overtime.

CHAPTER 13: SUICIDE OF A MEMBER

Although the garbage collectors had returned to work things were certainly not as usual within HCC. Conflict within the group seemed to be escalating daily and the relationship with management was at an all time low, residents within the HCC area were irate because the constant industrial action had caused them enormous inconvenience and they made their feelings known to the Councilors. The Councilors were under pressure from their ratepayers and very unhappy with both the HCC management and the garbage collection employees. The union was flexing its industrial muscles and also applying a lot of pressure to the HCC management. What had appeared to be a simple change within the organization had turned into an industrial and political nightmare. The Industrial Commission had given the parties six weeks to resolve their differences and re appear for a review hearing. The gap between management and the employees seemed so enormous that I did not believe a mutual resolution could be reached.

At the end of shift on Thursday 23-May-96, Aldo Barillo asked me if he could talk to me privately. Aldo Barillo had been a driver with HCC Council for many years and was always smiling or cracking a joke that made other members of the team laugh. He had appeared to be depressed and somber for some time, as indeed most of the group had seemed to become since the organizational change process had commenced.

Aldo: Joe, do you really think the Council can force us to become contractors?

Researcher: Aldo I don't think this whole process was ever meant to force you all to become contractors. The State Government changed the legislation for Local Government service delivery and HCC made a decision to benefit from the opportunity of being able to tender for other Council work. Starting Tratcon Works is just a

way of protecting its own territory and potentially earning extra revenue.

Aldo: Me and the boys have been here a long time and we are happy here. We feed our families and pay our mortgages and we have planned to work here until retirement. We don't know how to be contractors and besides we hate contractors. We really want to stay Council collectors like we have always been.

Researcher: Why do you hate contractors?

Aldo: Contractors work only for money, they don't care about safety, they don't care about people, and they don't care about people's rights. Over the years we have fought to keep contractors out of our area and now management want us to become contractors and take other Council jobs away. How do we make long term plans when contactors work on a year-to-year basis? How am I going to look after my family if I don't have a job? I have been a garbage collector most of my life.

Researcher: Not all contractors work the same Aldo. At least with Tratcon Works you would have a chance to adjust before you need to re tender. The CCT legislation has changed Local Government and a lot of people in Council workplaces will need to change and adapt. It may not be so bad working as a contractor.

Aldo: To be honest I am afraid of the future and I think a lot of the other boys are the same. We have been Council collectors for a long time and this is a serious change because to be contractors we need to be different people. It seems that the only choice is to resist or agree to become something we hate, contractors. Deep

down I just don't think that it's fair, I can't be a contractor! they should just leave us alone.

Researcher: Aldo, are you afraid of change or are you afraid to be a contractor?

Aldo: Life would be totally different as a contractor. Working conditions would definitely be different, but I would have to change who I am inside to become a contractor. I feel like a Council garbage collector and I think the other boys are the same. What do you think will happen if we just keep refusing to sign over with Tratcon Works?

Researcher: Well, eventually I think you will need to sign up with Tratcon, apply for redeployment, or take a redundancy. At best you may be able to stay as you are for six to twelve months and then HCC will tender the services anyway.

Aldo: So either way it looks like we will end up as contractors or with no job. Some choice. I really thought the union could protect us but it looks like even they are losing power. Everything just looks so bad. You know Joe, we really believed we could just stay as we are until we retire. Some of the boys have their kids working here and others have their kid's name on the waiting list. What a joke, now it doesn't seem to matter anyway.

Researcher: I think that if you and the group are prepared to consider the change there are processes such as training and professional coordinators to assist you all to cope and adapt to the change for both the short term and the long-term benefits.

Aldo: We can never go from being Council collectors to being contractors. The whole thing is hopeless.

Aldo walked away from our discussion shaking his head and I felt like I had somehow failed at an opportunity to help an employee who had approached me for some kind of support. Aldo didn't seem angry, however he seemed to be extremely depressed about having to face the workplace changes that seemed inevitable. I wondered if the other members of the group were feeling the same as Aldo and what could be done to help resolve the situation. It seemed that the organization had been unprepared through this whole process since the group of employees had responded negatively to the organizational change. No resource had been put into helping the employees change their thoughts and feelings. Events had rolled out so quickly and affected so many parts of the organization and so many stakeholders.

Two weeks had passed since my conversation with Aldo and so far nothing had been done to resolve the issue as requested from the Commission hearing. I wondered how the group might be assisted to move beyond the emotional issues they seemed to be grappling with so that they could start considering a resolution rather than total resistance. On the morning of Friday 7-June-96 I arrived at the works depot and noticed that Frank Kingsley was looking very pale.

Frank: Hello Joe.

Researcher: Are you okay Frank? you don't look so good.

Frank: One of the boys is dead Joe.

Researcher: Dead……….. Who's dead Frank?

Frank: Aldo Barillo is dead.

Researcher: Aldo? I was just talking to Aldo not long ago; he was depressed about the changes and nervous about the future.

Frank: He hung himself last night Joe, he had not come into work for a couple of days but we all assumed he was taking sick leave, you know there's been a lot of that lately.

Researcher: Hung?………Suicide?……….How?………Where?

Frank: One of his sons, the sixteen year old I think, found him in the garage. Must be bloody awful for the family.

Researcher: He was depressed about the workplace Frank. Do you think it was related? I wonder if he was reaching out when he spoke to me. Maybe I missed the message, maybe I could have said or done something to prevent this. Jesus Frank, how on earth did things get to this? In all the time I have known this group I have never seen Aldo without a smile on his face. I can't believe he suicided Frank………

Frank: His family feels his death is related to the changes going on here. He loved working here and he had a way of making the group laugh a lot. I don't know why he killed himself, but I do know that the whole group is looking more and more strung out and depressed. Aldo was certainly feeling affected by the workplace changes.

Researcher: When he spoke to me he seemed to think the future was going to be a no win situation. Does the rest of the group know?

Frank: Yes, I told them this morning before they rolled out.

Researcher: How have they taken it?

Frank: I think they are stunned at this stage, although a few did pass comment about how the workplace had really got to Aldo lately. I'm feeling a bit numb and confused myself at the moment; I just wish we could resolve the whole business so everyone can get on with things. I know that the workplace is going to change but I think the process has been handled badly and I can't believe that management thought that a change this serious would just simply be accepted without some sort of reaction from these blokes.

Researcher: Do you think it might pay to get a professional counselor to talk to the group? I think they might need a hand to deal with Aldo's death and then we need to find a way to help them deal with the changes. They trust you Frank, I am happy to help where possible, maybe we can move them forward from where they are.

Frank: I will organize a counselor to be available and we can discuss the other matter later.

I found it extremely difficult to accept that Aldo Barillo had committed suicide, particularly as I had spoken to him only two weeks before. I searched deep down inside myself for justification that I could not have done anything to prevent what had happened. I knew that the workplace change had affected Aldo at an extreme level because he had discussed his frustration with me. I wondered how an organizational change could affect someone at such an emotional level. The garbage collection group had resisted the organizational change from the very beginning and seemed to be responding at a deep emotional level. I felt helpless that I had not been able to somehow help Aldo to

come to grips with his concerns and I wondered how the other members of the group were coping with the current workplace situation. I could feel anger deep down inside myself and a tendency to blame management for Aldo's death. I felt shattered by the news of the suicide.

CHAPTER 14:   SEEKING A WAY FORWARD

Aldo's suicide had left a dark cloud over the HCC workplace. I found it difficult to come to grips with and could only imagine how his workmates of many years must be feeling. I wished there was something I could do to assist the garbage collection employees to come to terms with the organizational change and move forward to a suitable resolution for all parties. I had discussed this with their supervisor Frank Kingsley. He agreed that something needed to be done for everyone's sake and planned to work with the group to try and break the current deadlock. On Monday 17-June-96 at the end of shift I bumped into one of the garbage collection drivers.

Researcher: Hello Dennis, how are things going?

Dennis: Not good Joe, the boys are tense and worn out. I can't believe what has happened to our workplace.

Researcher: Dennis, deep down, don't you think it would be better to sign over with Tratcon Works and move forward?

Dennis: I don't want to sign over.

Researcher: What are your reasons? It seems to me that the group was angry about the changes and decided to resist. I just wonder if you all know why you are totally resisting the changes. The way I see it there are not too many options, if you don't sign up with Tratcon you could be out of work and even if you manage to remain as Council employees you could still be out of work when HCC tender the services out to the market. The way I see it you would all be better of signing up with Tratcon and maintaining your jobs for at least one year. It would give you all a chance to seek alternatives.

Dennis: Look, at first we were all pretty angry at the way management just issued letters telling us we had to sign up with Tratcon or we would not have a job so we resisted the change. We are not angry now we are just frustrated at the way management is just ignoring the problem as though it will all go away and we will just do as expected in the end. The boys are not resisting the change because they are angry, they genuinely do not want to become contractors. I have a son that works here and so do some of the others, do you think we brought our children onto the job to turn them into contractors? If that was the case we would not have bothered, we always believed this was a good place to work because we are Council employees. That is the whole point; we want to stay Council employees.

Researcher: I can understand that but surely over time people will adjust? The CCT legislation will mean people in Local Government will have to adapt to change.

Dennis: If we go to tender as Council employees and lose then I think the blokes would accept that and adjust accordingly because they would be losing on their terms and they would move on and find other work that suits them or some of the older boys might even retire early. This change is different because they are being put in a position where they have to agree to become contractors who they hate or give up their jobs. Council employees and contractors are at opposite ends of the stick. We choose to work as Council employees because we believe in this type of workplace, we believe in the union, and we believe in taking care of each other. Contractors are hunters and we are defenders.

Researcher: I see where you are coming from Dennis, however at some point the practical reality must take over as people choose between a job or no job.

Dennis: Look Joe, a handful of people are considering signing up with Tratcon works for that very reason, because they would rather have a job than not and that is causing conflict between the blokes because the majority are calling them traitors.

Researcher: The group seems to be responding to this change fairly deeply Dennis, do you feel this has affected you emotionally?

Dennis: Signing up with Tratcon would give the workplace a contractor focus and that would be an enormous change to us, you bet it's emotional, you just need to have a look at their faces to see it's emotional. These blokes are struggling to hold onto who they have been on the job for anywhere up to thirty years. Have a look at what happened to Aldo Barillo and that should tell you how emotional this is to these blokes.

Researcher: Dennis, are you saying that Aldo committed suicide because he could not deal with these changes?

Dennis: I have known Aldo for a long time and I have never seen him like the past couple of months. He loved the job like most of the others. He always used to say that handling garbage may seem like a dirty job to some people but for his education level and skills he thought he was lucky to have a decent income, good conditions, and security. The majority of these blokes feel the same and they will tell you that they have planned to retire as Council garbage collectors. Aldo always made people laugh and

created a lively atmosphere among the group. That suddenly changed and he could not deal with the prospect of having to work as a contractor or maybe not working at all. Signing over to Tratcon means that we have to change how we think and what we believe in, that's not easy. Yes, I think that Aldo killed himself because of what was happening at work, and I think the whole business has been handled very badly all around. You ask Aldo's family and they will tell you that somehow he could not deal with the prospect of becoming a contractor.

Researcher: Surely he could have found other work Dennis?

Dennis: He probably could but he has spent most of his working life here being a Council garbage collector. He really enjoyed his work. His family says that he has been a different person since we first received the letters.

Researcher: The Commission is reviewing this case in a couple of weeks and the expectation is that the parties will return with a mutual solution to the problem. If the group refuses to move from the current position it could influence any ruling. What do you think the answer is?

Dennis: I really don't know, as I said a handful of people are considering signing over with Tratcon, but most of us are planning to fight to the end. The Commission ruling may still go our way.

Researcher: And if it doesn't?

Dennis: I don't know at this stage.

After talking to Dennis I wondered if there was any way forward from the current position. If Dennis was right and the rest of the group felt as he did it seemed very unlikely that the garbage collectors would agree to any resolution. Management seemed to believe that they had initiated the organizational change in the correct manner and that eventually it was inevitable. At this stage no attempt had been made by either party since the Commission hearing to resolve the situation.

I still believed that signing over with Tratcon Works would be the most sensible option for the garbage collectors as it would at least give them the opportunity to adjust to the organizational change and maintain their employment for a while. Frank Kingsley was in agreement and the concern was that the garbage collectors were jeopardizing their future employment prospects and missing the opportunity to develop adaptation skills as the whole Local Government industry was experiencing fundamental change due to CCT. Frank called the group in for a meeting on Friday 21-June-96.

Attendees were:

- Frank Kingsley   Works Supervisor HCC
- Garbage Collection Group HCC   (40 employees)
- The Researcher

Frank: Thanks for coming boys. I know things are tough at the moment and you are probably sick of meetings but I think we really need to find a way of moving forward. The Commission hearing is due this week and so far there has been no shift in position from either party. Let's at least explore the possibilities and see if we can't break this deadlock.

Tommy: Can you keep us the way we are Frank? can you help us to keep working as Council collectors?

Frank: No I can't give that commitment Tommy.

Tommy: Then I can't see the point of carrying on.

Frank: Nobody benefits from the current situation Tommy, it's important to resolve the issue for everyone's benefit.

Tommy: Not everyone's benefit Frank, we are the ones facing all the changes.

Frank: Look fellas, at first I was pretty angry at the way these changes were handled, but I think it's important now to resolve this, one way or another for everyone's sake. You blokes all look like you have been through the wars and the workplace is a shambles at the moment. Eventually something will give in a big way.

Tommy: The Commission might rule in our favour Frank.

Frank: The Commission expects management and yourselves to sort this out so you may be back to square one. You should really explore the possibilities now. Let's at least explore the situation as rationally as possible.

Rick: There's nothing to lose Tommy, let's get on with it.

Frank: Even though you may argue that the change process was handled badly by management I think that the HCC did consider the group's welfare in this whole process. They were faced with a

new CCT legislation where they would have no option but to tender out the garbage collection eventually. Establishing Tratcon Works as a solely owned subsidiary gives them the flexibility to deliver services under contract conditions without losing control of resources and it provides opportunities to create extra revenue. They could have put the waste collection services out to tender and you may all be out of work within six to twelve months. I think that the fact that HCC has offered this group a direct transfer to Tratcon Works is their way of finding a compromise point. Management cannot walk back from that position. At least this way you can adjust before you need to do anything else. We know that we would find it hard to compete with the private enterprise at this stage.

Peter: Just sounds like a slower way of turning us into contractors to me. The result is the same in the end.

Frank: Even so, it is a compromise. So far, you blokes have not even considered the offer.

Peter: There are some turncoats who have considered signing over with Tratcon.

Frank: That's hardly fair, calling people traitors for exercising their rights. This is a decision that will affect your future in some way or another. It is important that people do what they feel is right for them without feeling group pressure.

Rick: If we don't stand as a group we lose.

Frank: Come on Rick, you could loose either way, this has gone far beyond a union issue, you are all going to have to make decisions about keeping your jobs. You don't have the right as a group to force individuals into your way of thinking. If people want to sign over with Tratcon that is their right.

Tommy: As soon as one person signs over the rest of us are gone.

Frank: The point is that it is only a matter of time before you have to decide or the decision will be made for you anyway.

Peter: The fight's not over yet Frank.

Frank: Well maybe that is your compromise. What if you at least encourage the people who do want to sign over with Tratcon Works to come forward without having to feel that they have let the group down and then people can make their individual choices according to their own beliefs?

Wayne: Tommy I think we should see what the Commission decides first. If the ruling goes against us then we should all decide which way we want to go. If people want to sign over with Tratcon Works after that then we should all let it go at that.

Tommy: I will go along with that if we are all happy with it. Does anyone object to Wayne's suggestion?…I can't see any hands so I will take that as a no. I think that is as far as we are prepared to go.

Frank: I respect your decision but it still seems to me that you are somehow biting off your nose to spite your face.

Wayne: If we sign over with Tratcon then the workplace instantly becomes contractor turf, if we lose the tender process and an external contractor takes over; this workplace still becomes contractor turf. Either way we lose our workplace forever. We don't want to be contractors. We are fighting to stay in-house council workers and we can only do that if we tender as an in-house unit. We work here because we want to be Council collectors and that's who we are. All these blokes have been part of making this workplace what it is and it means something to these blokes.

Tommy: That's how we feel Frank. It may seem like we are just being stubborn but this battle is important to us. Either way things will move after the Commission hearing.

I left the meeting feeling that not much had been achieved and in a way the situation was right back at square one, however, I did at least feel that a resolution would only be a matter of weeks away. The atmosphere seemed to be more settled than I had seen in several months. I also had a better sense of what the group was fighting for. They did not appear angry anymore, just determined to hold their ground no matter what the outcome. As individuals they felt like Council garbage collectors and as a group they felt like the HCC garbage collectors. This was their identity on the workplace and they were resisting the organizational change to hold on to that sense of identity on the workplace.

CHAPTER 15:   JOBS RELINQUISHED

The Industrial Commission ruled against the employees at the review hearing on 27-June-96 on the basis that the employer had sought to ensure their employment for at least a one year period under the same pay rate and working conditions. The alternative was a possible loss of work through the tendering process. The Commissioner noted that the employer had acted in a manner not to disadvantage the employees given that the organizational change was driven by the CCT legislation. The ruling was handed down that all matters be settled within four weeks so that Tratcon Works could trade as planned with or without the existing HCC employees.

The ruling changed the mood and dynamics of the garbage collection group. They seemed almost lifeless as they carried out their daily tasks in a quiet mechanical manner; there was very little conversation and little interaction. The whole group seemed to fall into an instant state of depression and they acted like a war had just been lost. I felt an empathy for the group because they believed in what they had been fighting for, however at the same time I felt that adapting to the organizational change did not have to be a win or lose situation.

At that point I believed that the reality of the Commission ruling would encourage the group to review their resistance to the changes and realize signing over with Tratcon Works would be a sensible alternative to losing their jobs. I believed that when the group was faced with the final choice they would choose to continue their employment under the Tratcon Works Logo.

A meeting was arranged for Thursday 4-July-96 between HCC, Tratcon Works and the MEU with a view to making final arrangements regarding the transfer of employees from HCC to Tratcon Works.

Attendees were:

- Robert Nilson   Manager waste Services HCC
- Frank Kingsley   Works Supervisor HCC
- Greg Williams   Manager Contracts Tratcon Works
- Tol Kanowski   Union Organizer MEU
- Tommy Lewis   Union Delegate HCC
- The Researcher

Robert: Thanks for attending. The agenda for today is to sort out a process for finalizing the employment of the garbage collection group. I really feel that considering the Commission ruling we should settle this issue as ASAP.

Tol: You wouldn't want to rush it if you had lost Robert.

Robert: It should never have got this far to start with Tol, you know as well as I do that the CCT legislation will impact on all local Government workplaces. These blokes could have gone to tender and lost their jobs in six months. At least this way they still have a choice of work with Tratcon.

Tommy: We told you managers that we would not become contractors right from day one.

Tol: It was the way the changes were handled in the first place that I have a problem with Robert.

Greg: I think we are covering old ground now; the important thing is to finalize this process in the best possible manner. It should not come down to who won or who lost. It might help the employees Tol if you were to at least discuss the benefits of signing over with Tratcon Works with them. You are their union organizer and would have some influence.

Tol: I feel for these blokes and have known them for a long time. As Tommy just said, they never wanted to be contractors. I represent the group and I am compelled to act on their behalf. The group has driven the direction of industrial action. They have said from the beginning that they did not want to become contractors and that seems to have driven their resistance from day one. CCT means enough change to Councils to start with, signing over directly to a contracting company is a huge change for these blokes.

Tommy: We made our decisions based on how we felt about things and we do not regret our actions. The blokes will make their own choices about signing up with Tratcon.

Greg: I would still like to have a discussion with the group before they make any final choices Tol, can you arrange that and can you and Frank work with me for the benefit of the group.

Frank: I think that might actually be a good idea. It's important to give everyone the opportunity to make informed decisions. Things have been tense in recent times and we need some rational discussions.

Tol: I am happy to convince them to have a discussion session Greg, but I cannot advise them to make a particular choice as a union organizer. What do you think Tommy?

Tommy: Talking can't hurt now. They all need to decide which way they are going from here. But don't expect us to do any convincing either way.

Greg:	I can understand that. I just want to ensure that we are all doing the best for the employees as well as our respective organizations. So how do we proceed from here?
Robert:	I need to issue updated letters of transfer to each employee, once they are signed and returned we can finalize the arrangements.
Tol:	It might save some time and aggravation if you send me a copy of the letter before you issue it. I will make sure all their entitlements are correct.
Greg:	In that case Tol, if Robert then gives you the final letters for delivery you could arrange a session for discussion before they make their choices. Does that suit you Robert?
Robert:	I can't see a problem with that.
Tol:	Okay, just one other thing. How many positions are available for redeployment Robert?
Robert:	I have three positions in Road Maintenance and three positions in Parks and Gardens. Any applications from the group would be considered depending on suitability for each position.
Tol:	Tommy, do you think the boys might be interested in those spots.
Tommy:	I think you will get some interest. I think that the blokes should be given four weeks to make their final decision. At least that would give everyone a chance to have a good think and make a rational decision.

Robert:　　　I think that's a fair request given the circumstances. How does that fit with your timelines Greg?

Greg:　　　We are already way over our original timelines, I would rather know that anyone who signs over with us wants to be there.

Frank:　　　At this stage I think four weeks is more than reasonable. This is a life changing decision for these blokes.

As the meeting wound up I began to feel a sense of relief that things were drawing to a close. Although it was not an ideal conclusion for anyone the tension was easing and some progress was being made. As much as I had watched the garbage collection employees resist the organizational change and I had been told directly from a number of employees that they were resisting because they did not want to become contractors, it was difficult to believe that they had been willing to fight so hard for a workplace identity as Council garbage collectors.

The updated letters of transfer to Tratcon Works were issued to the garbage collection employees along with application forms for the six positions available for redeployment on Wednesday 10-July-96. Final responses were expected to be submitted by Friday 16-Aug-96. Tol Kanowski had convinced the group to attend a discussion session with Greg Williams from Tratcon Works before they made any final decisions. A meeting was arranged for Friday 19-July-96. The group was very subdued compared to previous meetings.

Attendees were:

- Greg Williams　　　　　　　Manager Contracts Tratcon Works
- Frank Kingsley　　　　　　　Works Supervisor HCC
- Tol Kanowski　　　　　　　Union Organizer MEU

- Garbage Collection Group HCC   (40 employees)
- The Researcher

Greg: Thank you for the opportunity to meet with you all. You have been issued with updated letters of transfer to Tratcon Works and this has been a difficult process to come to terms with. You are now faced with the choice of signing over with Tratcon Works, applying for a limited number of redeployment positions or redundancy. I think you need to carefully consider which way you go. At a minimum those people who are considering signing over to Tratcon should be encouraged to do so. I feel you would be better of signing with Tratcon rather than taking a redundancy payment.

Tol: I think you need to make it clear Greg that even people who sign over to Tratcon works may face a redundancy after one year when workplace agreements and resource levels are finalized. The last thing I want is to give people the wrong impression after all they have just been through.

Greg: I suppose it really depends on how many sign over with us. The intention is that as we win new contracts people would be absorbed into the new positions. Although there is some uncertainty Tratcon feels we can carry some slack for about a year.

Tommy: We have discussed the Tratcon option and as the union delegate for this group I have advised anyone who wants to sign over with Tratcon to do so. We all agreed that if the Commission ruled against us we would not pressure anyone to choose a particular direction.

Paul: There is a group of us that are considering signing over and Tommy is right, the rest of the group is not causing any resistance. Even if we do sign over with Tratcon we are doing it to keep a job not because we want to. Just like everyone else, I don't want to become a contractor.

Tol: I have been your organizer for a long time fellas and have always supported your decisions and actions over the years and we have gained a lot of ground as Council employees. There are going to be huge changes to Council workplaces caused by the CCT legislation. As much as workplace change is difficult, sometimes it is unavoidable. I don't want to influence anyone's choice in this matter but I would urge you to consider your choices carefully. Signing up with Tratcon Works will require you to become contractors, however, it gives you a job and time to adjust before you need to tender again or seek alternative work.

Don: In a few years time there may be another change of Government and the CCT legislation may be wiped out. The Labour Government would never have introduced CCT to start with. If the Government changes, things will go back to the way they were. If we could have held on for a few years we may never have to change. The in-house teams that can hold on might be able to stay Council employees if the Labour Government is voted back next election. Once contractors take a workplace over it will be impossible to return it in-house even if the Labour Government is re elected. Most of us don't want to change to contractors just to hang on to a job, we have been happy as Council employees.

Frank: My main concern is that individuals base their decisions on individual needs and feelings rather than choosing to do something that is expected from the group. From some of your comments I see that you have obviously had discussions amongst yourselves. If anyone needs to discuss the issue I am available and I am happy to arrange independent support services for anyone who needs further advice.

John: Aldo Barillo died because he could not face becoming a contractor, that's how strongly he felt about it. I think no one has understood why we refused to change. Changing from a Council employee to a contractor is not just a matter of changing your uniform and continuing on, you have to change who you are at work.

Tol: To be fair John, suicide is extreme and we don't know if that's the reason why Aldo killed himself. The reason for today's meeting is to make sure that each one of you makes a decision that is best for you as individuals.

John: We think this change is why Aldo killed himself and so does his family Tol. The best thing for us would be to stay as Council employees. We have worked with Aldo for a long time and he always made us laugh, this change affected him in a serious way. He slid in a big way since this whole thing started. What he did is extreme but my point is that we saw the deep affect that all this had on Aldo. We have resisted because it has had a serious affect on us as well.

Tol: Point taken John.

Frank: I understand that there are reasons why you all feel the way you do and that there are pros and cons regarding the CCT legislation and signing up with Tratcon Works. However, you are all faced with a decision which means serious change either way you decide. It is important that you choose wisely.

Greg: At least if you sign up with Tratcon you will have the opportunity to adjust and you might find that it's not so bad. I can understand that there is a big difference between being a Council employee and being a contractor but if you don't adapt to change you will not survive in the long term.

Dennis: It's not so easy to change who you have been for twenty to thirty years.

Greg: I agree that it is difficult but if you give it a chance you will adjust and adapt. Eventually you will start to feel and think like a contractor.

Tommy: But we don't want to become someone we have hated for so long.

Greg: What you want to do and what you may need to do are two different things Tommy.

Frank: Look fellas! I know that you all want to remain Council garbage collectors, but the reality is that it's not possible at HCC. You all need to make a serious decision and that decision needs to be based on your personal needs. Apart from limited redeployment, you have two real options at the moment, take a redundancy or

become a contractor. You may need to change who you are at work if you want to keep a job.

On Friday 23-August-96 the final arrangements were finalized and the garbage collectors completed their final shift as Council garbage collectors. I had watched the employees totally resist this organizational change from day one and I had seen extreme behavior and industrial action. I believed that when they were faced with a final decision the majority would still opt to sign over with Tratcon Works even though deep down the employees did not want to become contractors. The end result surprised me and many other people who had been part of the process. From a group of forty employees, the final results were:

- Sign over to Tratcon Works: 12 employees

- Redeployment: 3 employees

- Redundancy Payout: 25 employees

Twenty-five employees decided to walk away from the workplace rather than make the change from Council employee to contractor. The HCC workplace had changed forever as the garbage collectors went their respective ways. The change from a Council workplace to a contractor workplace could only take place when some of the HCC garbage collectors made the change from Council employee to contractor. The organizational change, which had been resisted for so long, could only be implemented when some employees changed their workplace identity.

PART THREE: SYNTHESIS

CHAPTER 16:   THEORY AND DATA

The focus of this chapter is to draw together concepts from the literature review in Part One and elements of the empirical data in Part Two. The application of the theory to the case study will demonstrate how this study answers the research question and achieves the secondary purpose; to demonstrate how a relationship exists between key aspects of organization.

Identity

The case study has numerous examples where the individual garbage collectors emphatically stated that they did not want to become contractors; they wanted to remain Council garbage collectors. They claimed it was who they were and who they wanted to be. The group strongly resisted the fundamental organizational change and constantly repeated that they were fighting to stay Council garbage collectors. Although the group may not have been consciously aware of their responses, they were defending their sense of workplace identity, which they derived from HCC where they had worked for up to thirty years in some cases.

Erickson has argued that as part of a continuous process, individual identity develops over time by interaction with other individuals or groups. Ashforth and Mael have argued that individual identity is shaped by social contexts including organization. Scott and Lane have argued that individuals develop a sense of identity through interaction with a salient audience in various social settings including organization and repeated interaction embeds an identity for a particular setting.

We can observe from the case study that the garbage collectors came together over a period of many years on the HCC workplace. The workplace became a powerful social setting for the group. In some cases these individuals came

together up to seven days a week as highlighted by Dennis. They spent time first thing each morning interacting while having their coffee and smoking cigarettes while vehicle engines were being warmed ready for the days work. They influenced one another as they chatted socially and shared personal details and discussed experiences on the workplace. Each collection crew spent a shift together while they completed their respective collection runs and then they came together again at the end of the day for more coffee, cigarettes and sharing of the day's experiences. When you add these daily interactions together over decades it amounts to a considerable period of time that individual garbage collectors spent in social interaction on the HCC workplace.

As noted by Frank, some members of the group had children married to one another and they belonged to various social settings outside of the workplace. This provided extra opportunity for social interaction and discussions about the HCC workplace. These constant interactions influenced the individuals within the garbage collection group.

Each morning year after year, before sunrise, this group of individuals filed out of the depot in HCC garbage collection vehicles and found their way into the streets of HCC. They drove and ran through the same streets and filled the garbage vehicles with garbage from the same households. They handled hundreds of garbage bins each day and smelled garbage for hours at a time. They dressed like garbage collectors, smelled like garbage collectors and looked like garbage collectors on the workplace. As we have seen in the case study, these individuals certainly felt like Council garbage collectors and this became their workplace identity.

Over the years of interaction the individuals embedded an identity, which they displayed in front of the group. They came to learn what was acceptable behavior as a HCC garbage collector. How to carry out the work, how to speak,

how to swear, what attitude to display, how to treat management, how to support solidarity, how to enact and carry out industrial relations and so on.

The acceptance of the individuals as part of the group depended on identification with the group and the display of a workplace identity according to the group norms. Individuals needed to support solidarity, union power, work practices, and so on. When the letters of offer to join Tratcon Works were first handed out the individuals responded as a group to resist the change. Tommy set fire to the letter in front of the group as a symbolic gesture of solidarity and the individuals responded according to their embedded workplace identity. Each individual acted according to how the audience (the group) expected them to.

The social context of the participant group was a Council workplace. The individuals made it quite clear, and Frank, their supervisor made it quite clear that they liked being Council garbage collectors and they did not want to become contractors. They all identified with the group who were Council garbage collectors and behaved like Council garbage collectors. This group of individuals did not arrive at the HCC worksite each morning and behave like builders, butchers, mechanics, or process workers; they behaved like garbage collectors because that is what they identified with. When Paul was considering signing over to Tratcon Works it caused a physical fight between Paul and Tommy. Paul had stepped outside of the Council garbage collector identity. Peter raised the point that Paul had sold out the cause and solidarity had to be maintained and that the battle should continue through the union. Their individual identity on the workplace was based around a particular context and group behavior. When the group took strike action the individual garbage collectors formed a picket line and behaved in accordance with their workplace identity as Council garbage collectors.

Hogg and Terry have argued that individuals derive an important sense of identity from organizations and that identification with a particular group

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reduces uncertainty and provides a prescription for attitudes, feelings, and behavior.

The case study demonstrates that the participants derived an important sense of identity from HCC. Tommy, Dennis, Aldo, Peter, Rod, Lou, Rick, Steve, and Ivan noted that they saw themselves as the HCC garbage collectors and apart from their continuous verbal expression that they would not become contractors in order to remain Council garbage collectors, their actions demonstrate the importance of this workplace identity. The garbage collectors went to extraordinary lengths to protect their workplace identity. They took industrial action over a six month period, they endured commission hearings, they were willing to risk having no job rather than relinquish their workplace identity, they endured workplace tension and conflict, they allegedly broke the law and damaged the collection vehicles and in the end some of the individuals did indeed give up their jobs but would not surrender their workplace identity.

Dennis highlighted the fact that some of the individuals had secured a position on the workplace for their children because it meant they could be Council garbage collectors. Some of the individuals such as Dennis stretched across four generations on this very workplace. They married, raised children, paid their mortgages, supported their families, and planned their retirement all around being a Council garbage collector. This workplace identity was very important to these individuals and certainly well embedded. For many years it had given them a sense of orientation each morning as they started their day. Dennis noted that asking the individuals to change from Council garbage collectors to contractors was like asking them to step out of their skin. This is a powerful metaphor, which emphasizes the importance placed on their workplace identity.

Aldo Barillo took his own life. According to his family and the garbage collectors, Aldo could not cope with the loss of his workplace identity as a Council garbage collector. Dennis and John expressed that they felt Aldo had

committed suicide because of the workplace change. He could not come to terms with being a contractor. Aldo identified strongly with the group and expressed uncertainty for the future as his workplace identity was eroded. He had been a Council garbage collector for most of his working life and experienced a deep distress caused by the loss of this workplace identity. This is indeed an extreme example, however, it demonstrates just how important the sense of identity that individuals derive from the workplace can be. Aldo Barillo experienced extreme emotional responses as his workplace identity was destroyed, he also strongly noted before his death that most of the group was feeling distressed about losing their workplace identity.

Viewing the case study also shows us that their sense of workplace identity also gave the group a sense of security and a particular attitude, a way of feeling, and a model for behavior. Frank and Tol noted that most of the garbage collectors had been with HCC for decades and indeed expected to be there for many years. Most of the individuals expected to retire from HCC as Council garbage collectors and as mentioned by Dennis they believed that they had a guaranteed job for life. Rick noted that being a Council garbage collector was as safe as houses. Identification with this workplace gave the group a sense of certainty.

The garbage collectors certainly had attitude. The attitude of the individuals that they could simply resist the organizational change was due to their workplace identity as they had been Council garbage collectors for many years and had managed to avoid fundamental change for a considerable period of time. They believed that they would not only prevent workplace change but that they would prevent the CCT legislation. They had the power of the union on their side because they were Council garbage collectors. Rick and Peter noted that the union would prevent the organizational change. How the group felt about the work, HCC, conditions, security, leadership and how they behaved on the workplace reflected their workplace identity. Rod noted that they would never change from Council employees to contractors. The group behaved accordingly

and just refused to change. They turned to the union and industrial action in order to resist the change. As Council garbage collectors this was the way they behaved to settle workplace disputes.

Grandfathers, fathers and sons of the garbage collectors had adopted the same workplace identity. Some members of the group had remained on a waiting list for several years at a time to secure a position at this particular workplace. Their workplace identity as Council garbage collectors served their needs and gave them a range of benefits. Their workplace served their needs of a regular income, sick leave benefits, annual leave benefits, superannuation benefits, and job security. They perceived added benefits from this workplace, which consolidated their identity, such as regular overtime, a four-hour day, overtime after five hours if worked, a thirty-five hour week, regulated productivity rates, and the protection of a powerful union. It is not surprising that they derived a highly salient workplace identity from HCC. Peter noted that the group had excellent pay and working conditions because they were Council Garbage collectors; changing to contractors meant a loss of all the perceived benefits.

Spence has argued that narratives constitute who we are and that experiences and events facilitate the development of one's identity through narrative emplotment.

The garbage collectors narratively constructed their workplace identity from the workplace narratives. As the individuals came together at HCC and interacted year after year they emploted their experiences and events into dominant workplace narratives. Narratives were created about work processes, working conditions, resource requirements, rates of pay, industrial awards, union power, management, and so on. The dominant workplace narratives became embedded in conversations, procedures, meetings, memos, letters, and so on. It is the dominant workplace narratives that were used by the garbage collectors to construct their workplace identity.

This is reflected in comments made by individuals in the case study. Tommy notes how the group fought for pay and working conditions. Dennis notes how the union had given the group a sense of security. Wayne commented on how all the individuals had fought to shape the workplace over the years. All the experiences and events, which occurred on the workplace, were part of the workplace narratives, which constituted the workplace identity of the garbage collectors. Peter and Lou noted how their father's had fought for better working conditions and equipment. Each day the garbage collectors at HCC continuously developed, influenced and contoured the workplace narratives, which in turn shaped and contoured their workplace identity. Workplace narratives were abound about the individual garbage collectors, about the group, about the leaders, about relationships, and about every aspect of life on the workplace.

The case study demonstrates how over a six-month period the workplace narratives of the group were destroyed. At the start the workplace narratives reflected how the garbage collectors would remain Council employees forever. As time went by the workplace narratives reflected a struggle for survival. In the end the workplace narratives reflected choices that individuals needed to make about signing over as contractors. As the workplace narratives altered, so did the workplace identity of the garbage collectors.

Kerby has argued that an individual identity is dependent upon the coherence and continuity of ones personal narratives; the question of identity becomes prominent in crisis situations.

The fundamental organizational change within the case study threatened the coherence and continuity of the existing workplace narratives. The change required the garbage collectors to change from Council garbage collectors to contractors. This would mean the destruction of existing workplace narratives and in turn the destruction of workplace identity. The case study shows that the

participants responded to maintain existing workplace narratives to maintain existing workplace identity. Comments such as we like being Council garbage collectors, we will not become contractors, the union will protect us, and we want to remain Council garbage collectors are all attempts to maintain coherence and continuity of workplace narratives and workplace identity.

The question of workplace identity consolidated for the garbage collectors in the face of a workplace crisis. The fundamental organizational change threatened to destroy their work life as they had known it for many years. The attack on their workplace narratives left the individuals feeling fragmented and certainly in a state of crisis. Responses from Dennis, Tommy, Rick, Wayne, and Rod that Council garbage collectors was who they were on the workplace would never have arisen if the workplace narratives were not facing destruction. When the workplace narratives were in danger of losing coherence and continuity the group responded to defend their workplace identity as Council garbage collectors. They took extreme action and caused an extreme deterioration of the workplace over a six-month period.

The workplace identity of the garbage collectors was also held in the narratives of management, the union, and other HCC employees. Dennis has noted within the case study that many HCC residents knew the garbage collectors by name. They would offer drinks and refreshments to the garbage collectors in the course of their collection rounds. As the garbage collectors ran through the streets of HCC collecting garbage bins, disrupting traffic, and yelling out to one another there would have been no doubt about who they were. The residents who offered refreshments knew quite well that they were talking to the HCC garbage collectors. A garbage collection vehicle with flashing lights and individuals running behind or standing on it's rear steps wearing brightly coloured safety wear is quite a noticeable sight. In the minds of the HCC residents these individuals were definitely the Council garbage collectors. This

constant interaction with residents served to re-enforce their workplace identity as Council garbage collectors.

Gadamer has argued that traditional narratives are passed onto individuals through generations essentially without choice or option. MacIntyre and Kerby have both argued that traditional narratives also influence one's identity.

Dennis noted that at Christmas time the garbage collectors had always been given gifts from the residents of HCC. The gifts included beer, wine, cards, money, toys, and sweets. This traditional narrative became part of the workplace narratives and indeed at Christmas time the garbage collectors expected to receive tokens of appreciation from the residents. Tommy noted that the group always fought management through the union power base. These are examples of traditional narratives passed on to new employees. As new employees passed through the garbage collection group over the years they were infused with traditional narratives, which in turn influenced their workplace identity.

The case study has demonstrated how employees derive a sense of workplace identity from the organization they are a part of and how workplace identity is important to individuals. It has also demonstrated that individuals narratively construct their workplace identity from the workplace narratives as they emplot their workplace experiences and events on a daily basis. In this way as workplace narratives are constantly shaped, developed, and refigured; workplace identity is constantly shaped, developed, and refigured.

Identity, Culture

It has been argued in Part One that culture can be seen as "The way we do things around here". The culture within Local Councils was unionized, competiveness was non-existent, accountability was minimal, and work practices were inefficient. The garbage collectors at HCC had formed a sub culture within the Local Government sector. Over the years the garbage collectors had developed their own culture, their own way of doing things on the workplace. The way the garbage collectors did things at HCC was certainly different to the way things were done by contractors.

Rick noted the differences between the HCC garbage collectors and contractors. The garbage collectors had a one man one job mentality, less productivity, more resource, and banned any contractors or contract labour from the workplace. There is no doubt from the comments and from the attitudes of the group that they existed in a very unionized culture. They believed the union ran the workplace, they believed they could not be sacked, they took as much as possible from the workplace for minimal return, as noted by Tommy and they had no regard for cost effectiveness and efficiencies, The garbage collectors had no desire for competition in any shape or form. Tommy quite openly stated that they deliberately pushed the boundaries and they were proud of the fact. As far as Tommy was concerned the garbage collectors were in control and management was powerless. Rick bragged about the fact that they could not be sacked because they were Council garbage collectors. So strong was their culture and so confident were they of past victories that the group believed they could continue as they were indefinitely.

For many years this group had lived in a culture which enshrouded them in a shield and in effect had separated them from the struggles, competition, and changes occurring within the world outside of HCC. They were protected by a powerful union, they had no regard for budgets and efficiencies, they had

productivity rates well below the privates, and working conditions unheard of at other workplaces. The garbage collectors were proud of their culture and the case study demonstrates how they had used it to their advantage. The culture of the garbage collectors had continuously driven industrial action and achieved a number of very beneficial Industrial Award conditions:

Garbage collection work could only be carried out by union members at HCC. This ensured that solidarity was maintained and supported the power base of the union. The closed shop policy kept the union culture alive and in control. Many private organizations would not allow closed shop policies on the workplace.

No contractors or contract labour was allowed on site. This created a spare pool of employees to back fill any shortage of labour due to sick leave, annual leave, long service, or injury. This created extra positions and extra numbers for the garbage collectors, which added to their strength and strengthened their culture. Private enterprise used casual contract labour to make up for shortfalls.

Productivity rates were set by the union and there was a limit on how many households could be serviced per collection crew. This increased the amount of equipment resource and labour resource required for the garbage collection services. Productivity rates were set well below private enterprise.

Collection vehicles must have 3 person crews. Again this impacted on numbers required for service delivery. Private counterparts ran two person vehicles and delivered higher productivity rates.

When the collection round was complete crews went home (4 hours per day average). In the case where extra work was required the garbage collectors were paid overtime after 5 hours. This was overtime within the already paid 8-hour day. These working conditions were unheard of in private enterprise.

The HCC garbage collectors received pay rates that were 25% higher than their private counterparts and they produced less.

Garbage collection is a smelly labour intensive job, which does not require high skill levels. Yet, this group of individuals had achieved excellent working conditions and rates of pay. This had not been achieved through skill or knowledge growth, nor had it been achieved through negotiation. It had been achieved through battle. The garbage collectors had used the union to fight their battles and they just kept stretching the borders. The case study certainly demonstrates that the group was more than willing to fight the establishment as they had always done. Fighting was also part of their culture.

"This is the way things were done by the garbage collectors."

Drummond has argued that organizational culture is composed of multiple workplace narratives, which shape the behavior of employees and in turn, employees shape the organizational culture.

The culture of the garbage collectors was not something that was instigated at a particular point in time, it developed over many years. The culture at the workplace existed within the workplace narratives. As the workplace narratives developed so did the workplace culture. It is noted in the case study by Rick that this was the way they had done things at HCC for years. Tommy notes that they had fought hard for their conditions. The way they did things was embedded in the workplace narratives.

Each time they experienced an industrial dispute; this was a workplace narrative with a beginning and an end. The narratives told of the dispute and of the outcome and any benefits gained, which was then integrated with existing workplace narratives. The way they carried out the work was a workplace narrative. The power of the union was a narrative. The Industrial Award was a

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narrative. Labour requirements, equipment requirements, and productivity levels were all narratives. Rates of pay was a narrative. All the things that contributed to workplace culture existed within the workplace narratives. The fathers and even grandfathers of some of the garbage collectors had shaped the culture and it had been integrated and contoured by the workplace narratives. Through the workplace narratives the culture influenced the behavior of the garbage collectors and in turn through the workplace narratives, the garbage collectors shaped the culture.

It is now possible to consider a relationship between identity and culture. Functionalistic and atomistic thinking has attempted to treat various aspects of organization as separate from one another rather that as parts of a whole where a dynamic relationship exists between them.

The case study demonstrates a link between identity and culture. Peter was quite definite that the group liked being Council garbage collectors. Rod was most emphatic that they would not become contractors. Tommy was also clear in sending the message that the group would defend their workplace identity by fighting the bastards (management). On the one hand the group was defending their workplace identity and on the other hand they were reverting to their workplace culture to achieve this. They did not consider negotiation options; they decided to fight the issue through the union, which was a cultural way of achieving what they wanted.

Rick noted that as Council garbage collectors they do things in a particular way on the workplace and that changing to contactors would mean that they would have to do things differently. To become contractors meant a change of workplace identity for the group and in turn a change of culture. The garbage collectors could only maintain their culture if they maintained their workplace identity.

Because the workplace identity and the culture of the garbage collectors both existed within the workplace narratives they were inextricably linked. When Tommy spoke of the way they did things he also noted that it was part of who they were. If we accept that workplace culture is composed of multiple workplace narratives, which influences employee behavior and that workplace identity is constituted by workplace narratives which influence attitude, feelings, and behavior; we can see that culture and identity flow in and out of one another through the workplace narratives. The same workplace narratives influence both identity and culture, so to some degree the workplace identity of the garbage collectors influenced their workplace culture and their workplace culture influenced their workplace identity. In turn their identity and culture influenced the workplace narratives.

Identity, Culture, Leadership

The Director Physical services and the Manager Waste Services had been responsible for the garbage collectors for many years and a considerable degree of history existed between the leadership and the garbage collection group. From the beginning the leadership appeared to take an instrumental approach to a fundamental organizational change implementation.

The Manager Waste Services simply delivered the letters of offer to join Tratcon Works to the garbage collectors and departed. There was no discussion, no explanation, or no process to assist the employees with the change. It was expected that the garbage collectors would read the letters and sign over to Tratcon and that would be that. Dennis noted that this was typical management style with minimal explanation and little face-to-face contact. The way the letters were handed out without warning or discussion angered the garbage collectors.

The leaders demonstrated a reluctance to have contact with the group throughout the entire process. The garbage collectors demanded a meeting with the leaders to discuss the transfer of employment to Tratcon Works. Frank, the works supervisor HCC and Greg, the Manager Contracts Tratcon Works needed to prompt the leaders to get more involved in the process. Frank noted that the Manager Waste Services seemed pleased that the garbage collectors were in a vulnerable position. The relationship between the leaders and the group was very obviously strained and as noted by Frank, the leaders had taken an arms length approach towards the group since losing a battle for workplace reform some years prior.

The leaders took the stance that the workplace change was straightforward and should just happen. Indeed the Manager Waste Services noted that all the garbage collectors had to do was change uniforms and pick up where they left off. There seemed to be no understanding of the impact such a fundamental change would have on the garbage collectors. They offered no assistance to the group. The Manager Waste Services indicated that he could not see what the problem was and that a shift from Council employee to contractor should not raise any serious concerns. The Director Physical Services took the position that if the group did not sign over to Tratcon Works then he would simply put the services out to tender and force the change anyway.

The Manager Contracts Tratcon Works noted that the leaders appeared to be using the organizational change to somehow get even for past industrial issues. When urged to talk to the group it was noted by the Manager Waste Services that he had stopped trying to reason with the group a long time ago. His attitude was that the garbage collectors would eventually sign over to Tratcon Works because they would not get a job anywhere else anyway. The leaders had little regard for how this fundamental organizational change was impacting on the garbage collectors as human beings. This type of attitude from the leadership was certain to have an impact on the garbage collectors over a period of time.

Dennis noted that the way the change was being treated as though it would have no impact on the group was typical of the way the leaders managed the workplace. He notes that they were not treated like people and contact was always from a distance. Rick noted that the leaders did not know what went on at the operational level and that they only heard from the leaders when they wanted something. The Manager Waste Services did not seem to have a problem with a lack of contact with the group and believed that their were systems in place such as a supervisor to deal with the problems at the operational level. The leaders were so isolated in their perspective of the workplace that they seemed oblivious to the fact that the workplace was in a shambles because no resource had been allowed to assist the people to change. Despite angry residents, angry Councilors, garbage on the streets, conflict, loss of revenue to Tratcon Works, and considerable damage to the collection vehicles; the leaders felt there was nothing they could do to assist the garbage collectors to change. The leaders appeared to have no comprehension of the human dimension of their organization.

Drummond has argued that leadership can be viewed as the creation or maintenance of narratives, which influence the actions of those who are required to follow. Followers may equally influence the narratives of leaders

From a historical perspective the case study demonstrates how the leadership influenced the workplace narratives. The Director Physical Services and the Manager Waste Services were nicknamed the General and the Major respectively, which gives an indication that they gave orders from a distance. Frank noted to the Manager Waste Services that if the leadership relationship was better the group may not have relied on the union as much. The leaders influenced the workplace narratives of the garbage collectors. As leaders it was their responsibility to build positive relationships with the employees and the union to ensure a positive culture and an effective, efficient operation. Instead they chose to drive a wedge between themselves and the garbage collectors.

Their actions sent a negative message and influenced the workplace narratives in a negative way, as the garbage collectors believed the leaders did not care about them. The garbage collectors turned to the union as a support base and the union gained the balance of power on the workplace. In turn the garbage collectors influenced the workplace narratives of the leaders. As a result the leaders lived in workplace narratives where they had very little positive influence on the garbage collectors.

The workplace identity and the workplace culture of the garbage collectors were developed over the years within the multiple workplace narratives. This did not happen in isolation, the development took place under leadership. The leadership of the Director Physical Services and the Manager Waste Services, who influenced the workplace narratives of the group for many years and to this extent, influenced the identity and culture of the garbage collectors.

When the leadership made a decision to transfer the garbage collectors from a Council workplace to Tratcon Works, a contractor workplace, they created a new workplace narrative. This new workplace narrative impacted on existing workplace narratives and in turn impacted on existing workplace identity and existing workplace culture. The group defended their workplace identity as Council garbage collectors and reverted to cultural behavior to do so. The responses from the garbage collectors created problems for the leadership as industrial action continued for some six months. The workplace narratives of the leaders were influenced by the actions of the garbage collectors as they were pressured by Councilors, residents, and Tratcon Works to deal with the problem.

Identity, Culture, Leadership, Conflict

We have been able to observe a wide range of conflicts from the case study. Drummond has argued that conflict may be interpreted as the experience of people as they compete to assert the dominance of their narratives. When one individual or group tries to impose their narratives on another individual or group there will be conflict between the individuals or groups.

When the garbage collectors received the letters from HCC leaders informing them that they would have to transfer to Tratcon Works it created a conflict on the workplace. The group was very angry as they tore up the letters and were very vocal in the protests against the change. The letter meant that the leadership was imposing a new narrative on the group. The new narrative required them to become contractors within a four-week period. This was a group of people who had been Council garbage collectors for decades. The individuals were quite adamant that they would not change their workplace identity from Council employee to contractor and responded with industrial action. Tommy, Rick, Dennis, and Rod all noted their anger and intention to fight the organizational change. This was a group of people used to battle and more than willing to sustain conflict. The leadership had created a conflict by imposing their new workplace narrative on the garbage collectors.

The garbage collectors implemented industrial action in the form of work bans to protect their workplace identity. Industrial action was culturally how they had always fought their battles. The work bans created a conflict between the residents and the Councilors of HCC as it meant that some rubbish was being left on the street. The Councilors were unhappy with the customer complaints and this generated conflict between the Councilors and the leadership. At this point customers were angry, leaders were angry and the garbage collectors were angry. This conflict was created through identity and culture as the garbage

collectors struggled to maintain existing dominant workplace narratives as the leadership imposed new workplace narratives.

When the leaders met with the garbage collectors to discuss industrial action the struggle for dominance of workplace narratives further erupted. This caused a deadlock situation where the leadership insisted that work bans be lifted and that the group would have to become contractors or they would not have a job. The group in turn refused and insisted that they be allowed to remain Council employees. Rod threw a cup of hot coffee at the Director Physical Services. This was an extreme act from Rod and shows the level of conflict which can result when narratives are in dissonance between two parties. This again demonstrates how leadership can instigate conflict through attempting to dominate workplace narratives.

As some members of the group started to consider the letter of offer from Tratcon Works and were thinking about changing their workplace identities to become contractors, in-group conflict broke out. There was a struggle between the two factions regarding which narrative was the best. Some members considered adopting the new workplace narrative as contractors with Tratcon Works and the remainder insisted that the existing workplace narrative remain dominant as it meant that they remained Council garbage collectors. The conflict over the best workplace narrative not only created tension within the group but indeed at one point it led to physical confrontation. Tommy and Paul exchanged blows and had to be physically restrained by their supervisor.

Tommy and Paul had worked together for many years and were good friends. These two individuals were punching each other in the face with the intention of harming one another because Paul was considering a change of workplace identity. The fight was about one individual imposing his narrative on another. This demonstrates how identity can create a serious level of conflict on the workplace.

The culture of the garbage collectors was to fight their battles through the union and industrial action. They insisted that they would not change their workplace identity. The group implemented full strike action and as garbage built up on the streets of HCC the leaders had to seek intervention from the Industrial Relations Commission. The strike action escalated the level of conflict on the workplace and caused extreme disruption to the residents and the leadership. This demonstrates how culture can lead to conflict on the workplace.

When the Industrial Commission ordered the garbage collectors back to work they were not happy about the decision. They saw this as a victory for the leadership and a huge step backwards for the group as they had always been successful when they took industrial action in the past. They bragged about the power of the union and past victories. Rick noted that management could never win because the union always won in the end. This was a severe blow to the garbage collectors. Mysteriously overnight an enormous amount of vandalism was caused to the garbage collection vehicles. Unofficially it was known that the damage was caused by some members of the group. This further demonstrates the level of conflict that can be created when leaders impose their workplace narratives on employees.

The case study clearly demonstrates that a decision by the HCC leadership to destroy and alter workplace narratives from: "This is a Council workplace" to: "This is a contractor workplace" created an enormous amount of conflict on the workplace. The struggle to dominate workplace narratives by the leaders and the garbage collectors created conflict on the workplace for some six months. Conflict was generated through identity, culture, and leadership.

Identity, Culture, Leadership, Conflict, and Change

Smith has argued that organizational change ranges from morphostatic change, which is cosmetic and for the sake of appearance where things remain basically the same; to morphogenic change, which is fundamental where things can never be the same again.

The organizational change faced by the garbage collectors was certainly morphogenic. Ian, GM Enviro Services Tratcon Works noted that a Council workplace and a contractor workplace were at opposite ends of the scale. Dennis noted that Council employees and contractors are like chalk and cheese. This was not a morphostatic change where some cosmetic re-arrangement was needed, this involved a group of people who had worked as Council employees for a very long period of time suddenly becoming contractors and working by a different set of rules. Things would never be the same again on their workplace.

The garbage collectors could not simply put on a Tratcon uniform and pick up where they left off the previous day, although the Manager Waste Services seemed to think it was that simple. The group needed to change the way they thought, felt and behaved. They would need to do more work for less pay, they would have to do more work with less resource, there would be little job security as they would have to re-tender for their jobs every five years, and the union power base would be non existent. The luxury of the four-hour day with eight hours pay was finished. The superannuation benefits would alter and retirement plans made around the Council workplace were no longer an option. This change did not just impact on their daily work life, it impacted on their future. To the garbage collectors, this was a life altering change. There is no doubting that the change was deep and fundamental. As noted by Dennis, the garbage collectors were struggling to hold on to who they had been on the workplace for many years. The change from Council employee to contractor was deep and fundamental.

Drummond has argued that to achieve a fundamental organizational change it is necessary to destroy existing workplace narratives and replace them with new workplace narratives.

The fundamental organizational change at HCC required the destruction of existing workplace narratives to replace them with new workplace narratives. It required a Council narrative to be replaced by a contractor narrative. The case study demonstrates that the garbage collectors refused to destroy their existing workplace narratives for six months. That in itself is an indication of the determination of this group of individuals to hold on to their embedded workplace narratives. Members of the group such as Dennis, Tommy, Rick, Peter, Rod, and Aldo noted throughout the events that they wanted to remain Council garbage collectors. The case study has many examples where the group made it quite clear that they were resisting the change because they did not want to become contractors; they wanted to remain Council garbage collectors. Changing part of one's identity is not like changing a set of clothing, it requires changing the way one thinks, feels, and behaves.

The destruction of embedded narratives is not a simple matter, as it requires deep internal change. The garbage collectors had come together at HCC for many years and lived within the workplace narratives, which provided a way of interacting, getting the work done, understanding their experiences on the workplace, and a way of making sense of their work life. Suddenly they were told that these narratives were no longer required and needed changing. This was a devastating situation for the garbage collectors because the destruction of workplace narratives wiped out their workplace identity, which they had developed over decades and used daily to feel, think, and behave on the workplace.

Albert, Ashforth, and Dutton have argued that identity allows the individual to situate themselves and gain some insight into who they are.

The individuals who constituted the garbage collection group used their workplace identity to situate themselves among the work group and to understand who they were on the workplace. The workplace identity provided a way of acting and behaving on the workplace in relation to other group members and in relation to the broader workplace environment. The workplace identity was a part of each individual and constituted a part of who they were as individuals. After a six-month struggle the workplace narratives at HCC were destroyed and replaced with new workplace narratives, which destroyed their workplace identity.

A minority of the group changed their workplace identity from Council employee to contractor. The majority took a redundancy rather that changing their workplace identity. A few individuals were redeployed in other sections of HCC. However, all of the individuals irrecoverably lost a workplace identity that they had maintained for many years. This was a devastating life altering experience for these individuals. If we were to forget part of our lives we would certainly have difficulty understanding who we are. Taking away a part of one's identity or substantially changing one's identity impacts on a person's orientation and sense of who they are in the world and particularly who they are in particular social settings such as organization.

The case study has served to answer the research question: *"What is the relationship between employee workplace identity and fundamental organizational change?"* We have seen that through workplace narratives a dynamic relationship exists between workplace identity and fundamental organizational change. Influencing one will have some degree of impact on the other.

When the garbage collectors changed from Council employees to contractors their culture was destroyed along with their workplace identity. As Council garbage collectors they had existed within a unionized culture where the balance of power on the workplace was held by the unions. Rick and Tommy noted they had the luxury of doing things differently to the contractors. Rick bragged how they could not be sacked. The contractor culture was vastly different to what they had been used to. Union membership was not compulsory, the union did not have the power base, people did get sacked in the contractor world, a full eight hour day was expected to be worked, and competitiveness was paramount for long term survival. This was a whole new language for individuals who had lived in a Council culture for so long.

The destruction of the workplace narratives also shifted the focus of the leadership at HCC. The Director Physical Services and the Manager Waste Services were responsible for the delivery of waste management services to the residents of HCC. They had achieved this for many years with in house labour and the management of the garbage collectors. The new workplace narratives required the leaders to become purchasers of services rather than deliverers of services. They would have to achieve an effective service delivery through Tratcon Works, the new contractor. This was a new type of leadership, as they would have to manage contractors and contract managers to get the daily work done. The flexibility of having in house resources was gone along with the ability to work outside of operational guidelines. Contractors work to contract specification and require a particular type of leadership to ensure the best results for the price. Any extra work is considered a variation and can incur extra cost. This was also a considerable change for the HCC leadership.

The destruction of workplace narratives caused more than a considerable degree of conflict on the workplace. Quite a number of specific examples of conflict from the case study have been previously listed. Over the six-month period while the garbage collectors were resisting the organizational change and

refusing to destroy their existing workplace narratives there seemed to be continuous conflict on the workplace.

The leaders viewed the fundamental organizational change in isolation and believed it was a simple matter of changing a group of people from Council employees to contractors without impacting on other parts of HCC. The case study has demonstrated how organizational change has a relationship with identity, culture, leadership, and conflict.

The Matrix Across the Case Study
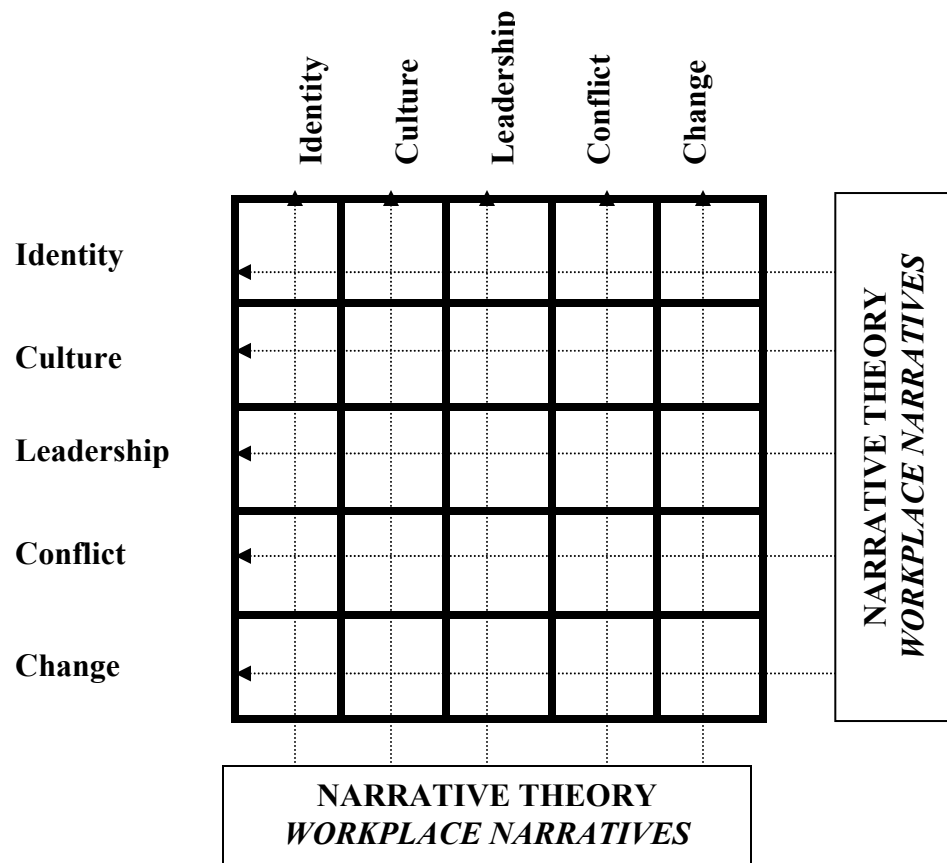
Figure 1. **Key Metaphors of Organization**

The five by five matrix in *Figure 1* (*For convenience repeated here*) can be used to view the case study in order to amplify how workplace narratives create a relationship between identity, culture, leadership, conflict, and change. When

we lay the matrix over the case study it allows us to gain a holistic appreciation of HCC and see how the humanness of the garbage collectors and the leaders created complex links across the organization.

We can apply the matrix as a metaphor for HCC and see that the workplace identity, culture, leadership, conflict, and change are represented as grids, which make up the whole matrix, in the same manner that the key aspects were all integral parts of HCC. The workplace narratives are represented as lines running across the organization and we can see that the workplace narratives extend across all the key aspects of organization. It is possible to see that the workplace narratives at HCC form a conceptual bridge, which connects the garbage collector's workplace identity and culture with the leadership, conflict, and change driven by the CCT legislation.

The power of the matrix as a lens to view organization lays in its capacity to illuminate the centrality of workplace narratives and allows us to consider the complexities within organization. Traditionally the organizational literature has treated identity, culture, leadership, conflict, and change more or less in isolation without consideration to how they may be linked. The matrix provides a holistic view of organization and allows us to see that narrative provides a promising pathway for understanding how these aspects of organization are linked. At HCC the boardroom, meeting rooms, coffee rooms, corridors, and water fountains where the leaders were located as well as the lunch rooms, offices, and depot where the garbage collectors were located were abound with workplace narratives of individuals, groups, relationships, relationships between parts of the organization, and the history of the organization. The history of HCC was held in the minds of the individuals in the form of workplace narratives with all the nuances and humanness that prevailed within the organization.

History tells us that traditionally nomad tribes of Aborigines roamed across Australia. The tribes would sit around the campfires and tell stories about their identity as a race, about their culture including rituals and customs, about their medicine, about their laws, about their art, and about their dreamtime. These narratives developed over time, traveled across the tribes and kept the race connected across the country. The narratives provided the Aborigines with a way of behaving; a model for action. The individual tribes were part of a whole race and the narratives kept individuals and individual tribes connected to the Aboriginal race. In a similar vein the workplace narratives were developed at HCC. The garbage collectors did not sit around a campfire and tell stories, however, they did tell stories in their lunch rooms, around the coffee machine, at union meetings, running through the streets of HCC, while sitting in their vehicles taking a break, and while socializing after work.

The garbage collectors told stories about what it meant to be a Council garbage collector, about how the work should be done, about the resources they should have, about the power of the union, about security, about working conditions, about the leaders, about Christmas gratuities, and so on. These stories developed over time and became dominant workplace narratives. The workplace narratives provided the garbage collectors with a workplace identity, a workplace culture, feelings about the leadership, grounds for conflict, an attitude and belief about organizational change, a basis for various courses of action, and a way of behaving on the workplace.

The Director Physical Services and the Manager Waste Services also created and told stories just as the garbage collectors did. The leaders stories may have been developed in boardrooms, meeting rooms, coffee rooms, and corridors; however, these stories also became dominant workplace narratives. Over the years the leaders workplace narratives influenced the garbage collectors workplace narratives and the garbage collectors workplace narratives influenced the leaders workplace narratives. The workplace narratives at HCC were

continuously contoured, blended and forged as they flowed across the whole organization.

The CCT legislation created a fundamental change at HCC, which required the destruction of existing workplace narratives. The leadership introduced a new workplace narrative, which required the garbage collectors to become contractors. This was a devastating change for the garbage collectors as it destroyed the workplace narratives which they had invested considerable time and emotion into developing. The destruction of their workplace narratives left the garbage collectors without a workplace identity and a way of knowing who they were on the workplace. It also destroyed their workplace culture and a way of doing things at work. As the leaders and the garbage collectors struggled to dominate the workplace narratives a considerable amount of conflict was generated. If we were to remove the lines from the matrix, which represent existing workplace narratives and replace them with lines representing new workplace narratives, we would see that the new lines still connect all the five key aspects of organization.

Viewing the case study through the matrix demonstrates that workplace narratives stretch across the five key aspects creating a dynamic thread between them. Influencing one of the key aspects will create a ripple affect through the workplace narratives, much like when a stone is thrown into a still pond and little ripples extend to the edges. The ripples are like miniature waves. The larger the stone thrown into the still pond the larger the waves that travel to the shore. The larger the impact we have on one of the key aspects of organization the larger the ripples through the workplace narratives become. The fundamental organizational change at HCC was like a large rock thrown into the center of a still pond. The waves to some degree washed over all the key aspects.

The matrix serves to demonstrate that the workplace narratives create a delicate, yet dynamic relationship between identity, culture, leadership, conflict, and change. A force applied to one will to some degree influence one or all of the others. The case study is about a group of garbage collectors in a particular organization, however, the five key aspects of organization exist across all organizations. To this extent, the case study may resonate with other organizations and the matrix could be applied across various organizational settings.

CHAPTER 17:   IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Contributions of the Study

There has been a tendency to treat parts of organization in isolation as though we can deal with parts without affecting the whole. This is a very simplistic and mechanistic approach to organization. This study pushes beyond the boundaries of reductionism where everything is reduced to its smallest part and demonstrates the complexity of organization as a whole. This study has dealt with five key aspects of organization; identity, culture, leadership, conflict, and change and demonstrated how a dynamic relationship exists between them. We need to view organizations as a whole to appreciate the complexity within them so that when we impact on one part of the organization we have an understanding that there will be a ripple affect in other parts of the organization.

The leaders within the case study did not understand the complexity of their organization. They took an instrumental approach to implementing a fundamental organizational change. They took no time to assist the people to change their feelings, thoughts, and behavior. The leaders just expected that the garbage collectors would just simply become contractors overnight.   This simplistic approach left the workplace in turmoil for some six months and possibly caused considerable loss of revenue to a new business. An understanding of complexity within organization would have provided the leaders with the capacity to assess the impact of the fundamental change on the whole organization. The steps in a more complex approach to the change may have been:

- Determine what the existing workplace narratives are
- Determine what the new workplace narratives need to be
- Determine the level of impact on the people involved
- Determine how the change impacts on other aspects of organization
- Involve the people concerned in discussions about the change

- Involve the people concerned to develop a process for implementation
- Determine resources needed to assist the people concerned to change
- Encourage the people to adopt the new workplace narratives
- Jointly implement the change

This level of complexity allows us to determine the depth and breadth that our actions may have when we act on organization.

The study deepens our understanding of human behavior. An appreciation for narrative and human action highlights the importance of the people who make up the organization. The study has demonstrated how workplace narratives create a bridge across the whole organization to link all aspects of organization. Those workplace narratives lead people to various courses of action on the workplace. The leaders in the case study did not have an understanding of workplace narratives. An understanding of narrative within their organization would have given them the capacity to know what the existing workplace narratives were and how those narratives were leading the garbage collectors to action. At the same time they would have had an appreciation of what the new workplace narrative might mean to the people involved in the change. An understanding of the workplace narratives would have given the leaders the opportunity to influence the workplace narratives in a positive way to avoid the workplace turmoil and negative impacts.

As human beings we constantly live in narratives. We think, feel, and act in narrative. It is the very essence of what makes us human, the ability to connect past, present, and future and to interpret experiences and events in our lives. Narrative is second nature to human beings and is as instinctive as breathing. Narratives put us in touch with our humanness. People can so easily interact with films, which are narratives. Films have the capacity to make people, laugh, cry, feel anger, feel empathy, understand plots, and identify with the characters.

Full picture theatres and millions of TV sets spread through households around the world is testimony to the importance of these narratives.

It is astonishing however, that when it comes to organization there seems to be a lack of appreciation for workplace narratives. It is as though when people come to work they somehow are expected to function outside of narrative. By losing touch with the workplace narratives, leaders also lose touch with the humanness of their employees. If we can appreciate the power of narrative outside the organization then we should have the capacity to appreciate narrative and humanness within organizations.

Knowing the workplace narratives that people live within would allow us to better understand their actions. It would also allow us to influence the workplace narratives to create positive actions and outcomes for the whole organization. Understanding that change has the potential to destroy workplace narratives gives us the opportunity to avoid the fragmentation that change has on the people within organization as their narratives are destroyed. Knowing how to minimize the fragmentation could allow us to prevent the organization from stalling when it is hit by unexpected change. Influencing workplace narratives could allow us to create necessary change for the benefit of the organization. This is of particular relevance to organizations that function in turbulent business environments.

Using workplace narratives; leaders, consultants, and researchers could find ways to release from people within the organization their understanding of organizational processes. Future policy, strategy, and fundamental change implementation could be built on information collected from the workplace narratives of individuals. The leaders in the case study could have assisted the garbage collectors to alter their workplace identity in accordance with the organizational change if they had a better appreciation for the workplace narratives of the group. Workplace narratives can be elevated above the

lunchrooms and corridors to a domain where they offer valuable insight into the humanness and connectiveness of the whole organization.

This study has demonstrated identity is indeed an important construct within organization. This aspect of organization has been given little prominence within the organizational literature and within organizational practice. The leaders within the case study certainly had no appreciation of identity. If they understood that the garbage collectors derived an important sense of identity from the workplace and that they used the workplace narratives to construct their workplace identity; they may have approached the change implementation somewhat differently.

Despite the fact that the group consistently verbalized that they wanted to remain Council garbage collectors and not become contractors; the leaders missed the message and continued with an instrumental approach. An understanding of the impact a fundamental organizational change would have on the workplace narratives and the workplace identity of the employees would have given them the opportunity to use a more complex model for the change. They could have assisted the group to alter their workplace identity and achieved the change in a more positive way without the negative impacts on the workplace.

Having an appreciation for how employees derive and construct a workplace identity could have implications for understanding how and why they identify with the organization. What we alter about the organization may impact on how employees identify with it. In turbulent business environments where change occurs frequently we may be able to develop more fluid workplace identities for employees so that they adapt to organizational change more easily. We may be able to influence workplace identity so that employees are able to drive positive change within the organization. Understanding that workplace identity has a dynamic relationship with culture, leadership, conflict, and change allows us to

more carefully assess how much influence we apply to workplace identity in particular situations.

The construct of identity has the potential to open up powerful new ways to view and understand the people who make up our organizations. Appreciating people's workplace identity allows us to grasp a far deeper understanding regarding their attitudes, feelings and behavior on the workplace.

This study has implications for the implementation of strategy within organization. The CCT legislation drove fundamental change through Local Government in Victoria. As a result, HCC adopted a new business strategy to establish a subsidiary contracting company. The new strategy required a fundamental organizational change for the garbage collectors. The new strategy had a very definite affect on the workplace narratives. The leaders did not understand these implications and proceeded to implement a new strategy using a simplistic approach. They simply lacked the appreciation of organizational complexity and the skills to deal with a complex strategy. The case study demonstrates the consequences of atomistic thinking. An understanding that new strategy implementation may impact on all aspects of organization would have allowed the leaders to take a deeper more complex approach to the new strategy and given them the foresight to envisage the consequences on the people and the organization.

When organization is seen as isolated parts a new strategy implementation can have devastating impacts. Implementing a new strategy to an isolated part of an organization may have negative impacts on other parts and cause damage to the organization as a whole. Workplace narratives may be used to align the whole organization and correctly prepare it to achieve the new strategy implementation. Creating appropriate workplace narratives would allow practitioners to: align individual identity, group identity, and organizational identity; create the required culture to fit the strategy; ensure the leadership style

is suited to the strategy and fits with identity and culture; remove any negative conflict or create positive conflict; and implement required changes without creating negative responses from employees. This would serve to align identity, culture, leadership, conflict, and change with the new strategy and assist implementation.

Limitations and Future Research

The organizational literature was very limited with regard to the topic of identity. Although the material available was of high quality and presented a range of theories and views, it was nonetheless constraining due to the limited volume available for review and analysis. The focus of this study has been individual identity within organization and the limited literature dealt with individual, group, and organizational identity, which reduced specific material even further. The material reflected Western thought and therefore a particular view of organization. It is possible that Eastern literature may offer different perspectives and theories about identity within organization.

The study was conducted in a single organization. Although there may be resonance with other organizations, it does however create a number of limitations. The participants in the study mainly involved one particular group of very like-minded people. The organization studied was part of a not for profit Local Government sector, which had focused in relative stability for many years. This may have limited the types of responses by participants during the study. A broader perspective could be gained by involving a number of organizations facing fundamental organizational change in order to compare responses across different business environments and industries.

The participants in this study worked at one level of the organization and limited the opportunity to take into account role theory. It may be that people at

different levels of the hierarchy have different identity responses when facing fundamental organizational change.

The main group of participants was not comfortable with the use of tape-recorded interviews or with the use of a tape recorder during the research. Although modern ethnography allowed for the collection of rich data, it did however create other limitations. The case study narrative was constructed from field notes and emphasized particular events. This emphasis provided an opportunity for discretion to the researcher. Apart from the participant group, my own narratives, perspectives, and personality could have an impact on the interpretation of what I heard and observed. I needed to select particular events for emphasis, discussion, and interpretation. The opportunity to interview participants on an individual basis was also limited.

The limitations of this study have the potential to open new avenues of research within the organizational studies to further develop identity theory. The application of identity theory in situations of fundamental organizational change may be a powerful tool for successful change implementation. Researchers may build on this study to increase our understanding of identity and complexity within organization and to further develop the concept of relationships between various aspects of organization.

POSTLOGUE: IMPACT OF THE RESEARCH ON THE RESEARCHER

I observed the garbage collectors struggle to come to terms with the destruction of workplace narratives, which destroyed their sense of workplace identity. I empathized with the group as they struggled at a deep emotional level with a fundamental organizational change that altered their workplace forever. One member of the group committed suicide during the process, which left me wondering if anything could have been done to prevent his death. I wondered how someone could respond so extremely to an organizational change. Aldo had left his family without a father or a husband because he could not cope with the loss of a workplace identity, which had given him orientation for many years. I realized how internally devastated and hopeless he must have felt to take a rope and hang himself. I rode the same emotional roller coaster as the garbage collectors for some six months and was left drained and somewhat frustrated by the events.

As I reflected on the research and the impact on the individual participants my thoughts focused inwards on my own emotions and personal circumstances. I realized that my own narratives were fragmented and in need of repair. The garbage collectors had taken extreme action to protect their workplace identity and it made me aware of my own identity issues. Just as the garbage collectors had resisted the destruction of existing workplace narratives, I had resisted the destruction of existing personal narratives under attack from the litigation to maintain my sense of identity. I was also feeling internally fragmented and hopeless. I realized that altering my personal narratives would allow my identity to alter and adjust to accommodate new circumstances. The litigation issues had been resolved just as the garbage collectors had resolved their workplace issues. They did not like the result of the organizational change just as I did not like the result of my personal change, however, just as they moved on with their lives, I too was able to move forward with my own life.

This study has challenged me intellectually beyond what I imagined prior to commencement. Undertaking a doctoral study has stretched more than my mind however, it has also challenged me both emotionally and spiritually. I have gained a deeper understanding of organization and new insights into the complexity within organization. The research has given me more than an understanding regarding a relationship between identity and change; indeed it has provided me with an intricate appreciation of the relationship between identity, culture, leadership conflict, and change.

As I have come to realize that workplace narratives create a link between various aspects of organization I have also come to realize that personal narratives create a link between aspects of myself. My narratives create a complex link between my mind, emotions, body, and soul. As my personal narratives became more in accord I regained health and my spirit lifted. As I found my own voice within this study I regained a new confidence and a new sense of esteem. New personal narratives have given me the awareness to approach life with brevity, precision, and depth.

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APPENDICIS

APPENDIX 1:   *ORGANIZATIONAL CHART HADDON CITY COUNCIL*

APPENDIX 2:   *ORGANIZATIONAL CHART TRATCON WORKS*

APPENDIX 3:   *TABLE OF CASE STUDY PARTICIPANTS*

HADDON CITY COUNCIL ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

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                            ┌─────────────┐
                            │     CEO     │
                            └──────┬──────┘
        ┌──────────────┬──────────┴──────────┬──────────────┐
┌───────────────┐ ┌──────────┐ ┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────┐
│ Director      │ │ Director │ │ Director     │ │ H.R.     │
│ Physical      │ │ Property │ │ Community    │ │ Manager  │
│ Services      │ │          │ │ Services     │ │          │
└───────┬───────┘ └──────────┘ └──────────────┘ └──────────┘
    ┌───────────┬──────────┴────────┬──────────────┐
┌──────────┐ ┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────┐ ┌──────────┐
│ Manager  │ │ Manager      │ │ Manager  │ │ Project  │
│ Parks    │ │ Waste        │ │ Roads    │ │ Manager  │
│          │ │ Services     │ │          │ │          │
└──────────┘ └──────┬───────┘ └──────────┘ └──────────┘
             ┌──────────────┐
             │ Supervisor   │
             │ Waste        │
             └──────┬───────┘
             ┌──────────────────┐
             │ Waste Collection │
             │ Group            │
             │ 40 EFT including │
             │ 3 Foremen        │
             └──────────────────┘
```
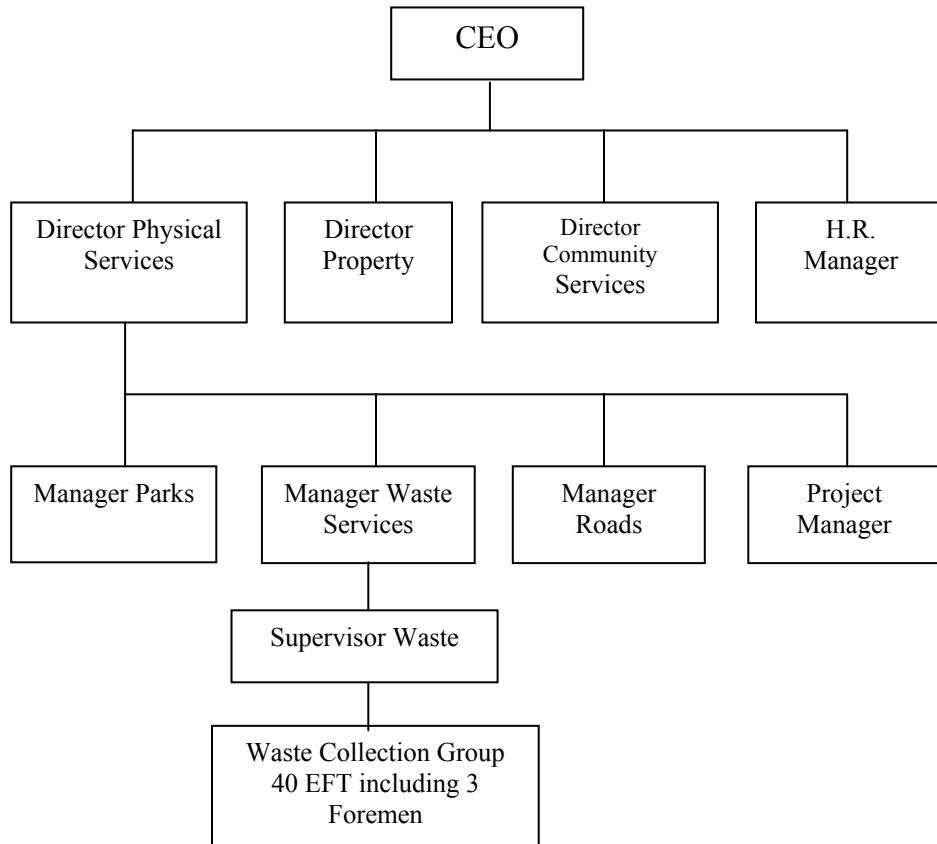
TRATCON WORKS ORGANIZATIONAL CHART
(SUBSIDIARY COMPANY)

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                              ┌──────────────┐
                              │     CEO      │
                              └──────┬───────┘
         ┌───────────────┬──────────┴──────────┬───────────────┐
   ┌──────────┐    ┌──────────┐          ┌──────────┐    ┌──────────┐
   │ GM Open  │    │GM Enviro │          │ GM Civil │    │HR Manager│
   │  Spaces  │    │ Services │          │Construct.│    │          │
   └──────────┘    └────┬─────┘          └──────────┘    └──────────┘
              ┌─────────┴──────────┐
        ┌──────────┐         ┌──────────┐
        │ Manager  │         │ Manager  │
        │Contracts │         │Contracts │
        └────┬─────┘         └──────────┘
   ┌─────────┼─────────┬─────────┐
┌────────┐┌────────┐┌────────┐┌────────┐
│ Haddon ││Contract││Contract││Contract│
│Council ││   2    ││   3    ││   4    │
│ Waste  ││        ││        ││        │
│Contract││        ││        ││        │
└────────┘└────────┘└────────┘└────────┘
```
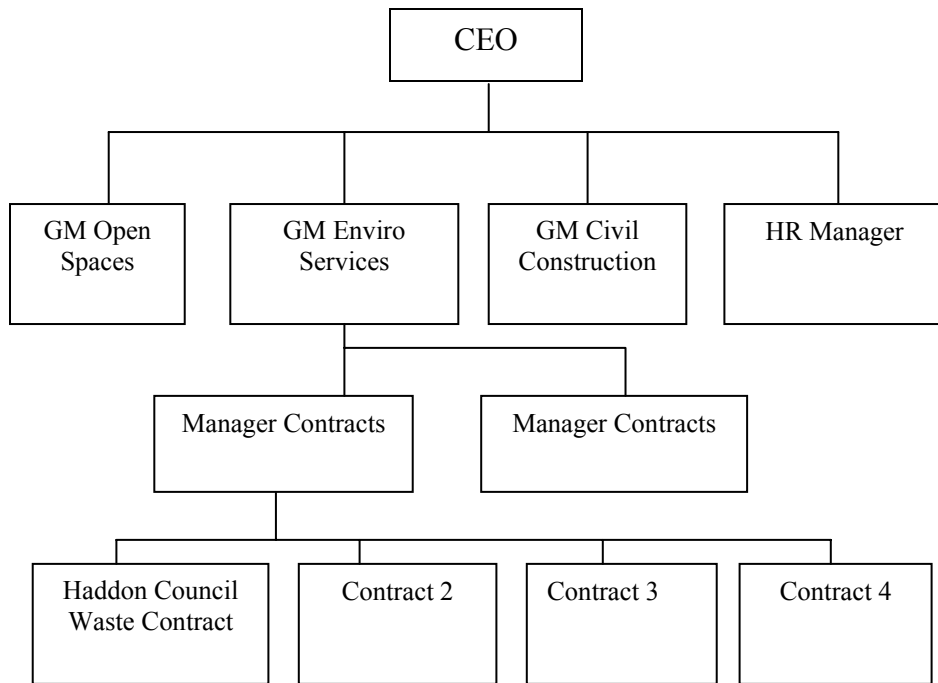
APPENDIX 3

The following table contains a list of case study participants. The names have been changed to ensure privacy and prevent identification of individuals.

NAME	ORGANIZATION	POSITION	YEARS
Stroby, Daniel	Haddon City Council	Director Physical Services	15
Nilson, Robert	Haddon City Council	Manager Waste Services	12
Kingsley, Frank	Haddon City Council	Works Supervisor	27
Kanowski, Tol	MEU	Union Organizer	17
Montague, Ian	Tratcon Works	GM Enviro Services	0
Williams, Greg	Tratcon Works	Manager Contracts	0
Adams, Lou	Haddon City Council	Driver Garbage Collection	24
Barillo, Aldo	Haddon City Council	Driver Garbage Collection	23
Bates, Don	Haddon City Council	Foreman Garbage Collection	19
Brown, Steve	Haddon City Council	Jockey Garbage Collection	27
Cussi, Tony	Haddon City Council	Jockey Garbage Collection	25
Camalleri, George	Haddon City Council	Driver Garbage Collection	29
Denati, Albert	Haddon City Council	Jockey Garbage Collection	8
Flannel, Harry (Father)	Haddon City Council	Jockey Garbage Collection	28
Flannel, Garry (Son)	Haddon City Council	Jockey Garbage Collection	6
Giankanlos, Con (Father)	Haddon City Council	Jockey Garbage Collection	25
Giankanlos, Jim (Son)	Haddon City Council	Jockey Garbage Collection	7
Hilton, Mark	Haddon City Council	Driver Garbage Collection	14
Kendle, Hayden	Haddon City Council	Jockey Garbage Collection	5
Laccardi, Dean	Haddon City Council	Foreman Garbage Collection	29
Lee, Kevin	Haddon City Council	Jockey Garbage Collection	4
Lewis, Tommy	Haddon City Council	Driver Garbage Collection	27
Lislo, Thomas	Haddon City Council	Jockey Garbage Collection	4
Lunardello, John	Haddon City Council	Jockey Garbage Collection	18
Nights, Rod	Haddon City Council	Jockey Garbage Collection	24
Panos, Angelo	Haddon City Council	Jockey Garbage Collection	5
Phillips, Geoff	Haddon City Council	Jockey Garbage Collection	17
Pitrovski, Ivan	Haddon City Council	Jockey Garbage Collection	13
Plough, Dennis (Father)	Haddon City Council	Driver Garbage Collection	30
Plough, Travis (Son)	Haddon City Council	Driver Garbage Collection	9
Pritchard, Scott	Haddon City Council	Jockey Garbage Collection	22
Russo, Paul (Father)	Haddon City Council	Jockey Garbage Collection	27
Russo, Eddie (Son)	Haddon City Council	Jockey Garbage Collection	12
South, Greg (Father)	Haddon City Council	Foreman Garbage Collection	31
South, Mike (Son)	Haddon City Council	Jockey Garbage Collection	11
Sanders, Dennis	Haddon City Council	Jockey Garbage Collection	29
Spiteri, Charlie (Father)	Haddon City Council	Driver Garbage Collection	24
Spiteri, Leon (Son)	Haddon City Council	Jockey Garbage Collection	5
Stevens, Len	Haddon City Council	Jockey Garbage Collection	3
Stranger, Jeff (Father)	Haddon City Council	Jockey Garbage Collection	21
Stranger, Gerard (Son)	Haddon City Council	Driver Garbage Collection	6
Stone, Rick	Haddon City Council	Driver Garbage Collection	22
Webster, Troy	Haddon City Council	Jockey Garbage Collection	23
Wilson, Peter	Haddon City Council	Jockey Garbage Collection	25
Whittingslow, Phil	Haddon City Council	Driver Garbage Collection	19
Williamson, Bruce	Haddon City Council	Jockey Garbage Collection	14

Table 1: List of Case Study Participants