Attempts to Bridge the Gaps

Opportunities and Challenges in the Communicative Constitution of Organizations

Therese Hedman Monstad

**UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET**

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Abstract
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Globalization and technological advancements continue to challenge contemporary organizations' aims to balance stability and change. As a response to this challenge, organizations often turn to empowerment and participatory processes. Current research emphasizes the need for enhanced communication in these processes. However, there is a lack of research studying how organizations practically enact this idea that these processes require *more* communication.

This dissertation is aligned with the Montreal School's CCO perspective and departs from communication theory seen as a dialogic of conversation and text, thus directing attention to coorientation and how organizational members coordinate in organizing processes. Based on this theoretical framework, the study aims to contribute to a better understanding – empirically as well as analytically – about the variety of texts that are a part of communicative initiatives aiming at enhancing communication, encouraging participation and empowerment processes.

The empirical material is based on how two organizations explicitly emphasized communicative initiatives throughout each organization's empowerment process attempts. One organization mainly used workshops to provide opportunities for communication, while the other organization incorporated an interactive video website for the same purpose.

This dissertation acknowledges that managers and subordinates are not equally capable of discursively constructing the organization. However, enhanced communication through empowering processes has been shown to facilitate members' abilities to contribute to the organizing process. Hence, the study combines two theoretical frameworks, the empowerment process model and the Montreal School's CCO perspective, extending both and thereby accentuating the communication-power relationship.

To further explore how conversations and text interact in the case organizations, the study enacts a tension-centered approach, arguing that tensions are produced, co- and reproduced and enacted through organizations' wills to empower their members through communication. The findings indicate a recursive and reflexive relationship between the *empowerment process*, *coorientation*, *tensions* and *participation*. In practice, this means that organizational members who have the opportunity to engage in conversations about matters of concern while perceiving themselves as taking part in an empowerment process tend to more actively identify and co-produce tensions. Tensions increase participation and lead to new insights. As members realize the value of their input, this further enhances the empowerment process.

Keywords: Organizational Communication, Communicative Constitution of Organizations (CCO), Empowerment Process, Coorientation, Ventriloqual Approach, Tension-Centered Approach, Tensions, Communication-Power Relationships, Participation

Therese Hedman Monstad, Department of Informatics and Media, Media and Communication Studies, Kyrkogårdsg. 10, Uppsala University, SE-751 20 Uppsala, Sweden.

To My Family

Acknowledgements

Writing this dissertation has been a long journey on a road that was both straight and winding, with lots of bumps and unexpected turns, offering new insights and energy and sometimes dead ends. It has been a fantastic but also turbulent journey, at times alone but most of the time in good company.

I have always had a genuine interest in people and communication. As a child I knew I wanted to work with people and I was convinced that I was not going to follow in my father's steps. Although I love books, his room had a little too many of them and too few people to talk to. But as these things tend to go, here we are some years later and somehow I have begun to follow my father's steps.

After completing my degree I worked in the management consultant business for a couple of years. During my years in this business I was fortunate to experience the growth, prosperity and, finally, the burst of the IT-bubble and all the issues, crisis and opportunities that followed in the wake of these turbulent times.

My interest for organizational communication grew stronger and I came in contact with Professor Emeritus Håkan Hvitfelt who encouraged me to commence my PhD journey at the Department of Journalism, Media and Communication, JMK, Stockholm University. Thank you Håkan! My PhD journey commenced with the research project, *Communication in Change Processes*. Thank you Professor Catrin Johansson for leading that successful project. Thank you Professor Mats Heide, Christina Grandien, Asta Cepaite, Assistant Professor Charlotte Simonsson and Professor Sven Windahl, for good collaboration throughout this project.

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PART I

1 Introduction

*Society (including organizations) exists not **by** but **in** communication.*
John Dewey (1916/1944)

[…] conversation […] is the site where organizing occurs.
(Taylor and Robichaud 2004:410)

Organizations continue to face a longstanding participation trend, which involves member empowerment and participation in organizational life. In order for organizations to be competitive on a globalized market with rapid technological advancements, it is essential that organizational members continually adjust their assignments, and for that reason they need to have mandate to make decisions concerning their specific roles (Stohl and Cheney 2001, Brummans et al. 2014, Miles and Snow 1986). Hence, many organizations strive to empower their members and encourage participation. Member empowerment and participation requires ongoing, extensive coordination carried out through complex interactions on all levels. These interactions require more communication between and among all organizational members (Stohl and Cheney 2001) – especially between senior managers and subordinates – than communication in organizational settings with traditional hierarchical structures where a transmission view on communication often is applied.

There are a number of initiatives and methods used to engage, empower and encourage members to participate in the organizational work. *Lean Manufacturing* or *Total Quality Management* (TQM), as it more often is referred to, is one example of an on-going change process in business organizations that seek to engage members and encourage them to participate and contribute with their expertise with the main aim of increasing the organization's flexibility. But it is not only business organizations that have initiated participatory processes. The trend can be found in many places in contemporary society. Hospitals, governments and non-profit organizations are also encouraging and incorporating member empowerment and participation. Swedish hospitals are providing patients with better access to their patient journals. By engaging patients in their personal treatments, the Swedish hospitals aim to improve patient care. This

requires enhanced opportunities for communication between doctors and patients. Swedish universities offer courses in how to better engage students in educational programs, which again demands more and different communication between lecturers, administrative personnel and students. Swedish day care centers aim to involve the children in the development of the organization through the posting of pictures illustrating daily activities. The idea is that the pictures remind the children of their activities and encourage them to talk about them; through the conversations the children can get ideas for creating new activities. These member engagement attempts are even found in the Swedish women's national soccer team. Pia Sundhage, who was introduced as the head coach for the team late in the summer of 2012, expressed in an interview[1] the importance of engaging all organizational members, including team players and administrative personnel, and requesting their input and expertise in order to reach organizational goals.

Technological advancements push the need for increased communication between and among subordinates, managers and senior managers (Cooren 2012). Not only because all organizational members need to have mandates – in their roles as the experts in their particular positions – to rapidly adjust their work tasks in accordance with external as well as internal expectations but also because, while senior managers have the formal responsibility for external communication and the organization's image, technological advancements make it easier for all members of an organization to communicate with the outside world.

If organizational members are engaged in the organization and have extensive knowledge about it, the chances are that their input on the extended society's image of the organization resembles the input given by the senior managers. This may contribute to providing a coherent picture of the organization and thereby avoid misunderstandings. However, this constant struggle between change – members' needs to rapidly adjust their work in response to the environment – and stability – senior managers' need to keep the purpose of the organization constant so that both the internal and the external environments know what to expect from the organization – causes tensions in the organizing process. Boris H. J. M. Brummans et al. (Brummans et al. 2014) as well as Stephen R. Barley (Barley 1996) refer to this as a division between the *authority of expertise,* held by subordinates, and the *authority of position* (the already-established organization), held by senior managers. We lack knowledge about how this "contrast of sources of authority" (Brummans 2014:188) is handled in practice and, hence, there is a

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[1] The interview with Pia Sundhage was broadcasted by the Swedish Public Service Radio (SR P1) on September 16, 2012 at 10.30 a.m.

call for research about the phenomenon, particularly in times of rapid technological advancements.

Theories relating to empowerment are born from a Marxist view of the concept of power and are developed within psychology and management science. Emphasis is then given to cognitive processes about empowerment and managerial steps to reach empowerment. A more recent definition of empowerment involves participating in decision-making although always with effects on the current power dynamics (Hardy and Leiba-O'Sullivan 1998). However, this literature gives little attention to or even excludes communication in the empowerment processes. So while it has been contended that empowerment and participatory processes require continual and extensive coordination in the form of comprehensive communicative interactions that facilitate conversations among organizational members, from which coordinated activities can grow (Taylor and Cooren 1997, Stohl and Cheney 2001), few scholars have looked at how organizations emphasize and invest in communication in these types of processes. As a result there is also little knowledge about the consequences of organizations' investments in enhanced communication in these participatory processes.

With more complex organizational environments, the interest for organizational tensions has increased among organizational communication scholars. A growing number of these scholars consider tensions to be inherent and ubiquitously present in organizations (Ashcraft 2006, Cooren et al. 2013), and, for good reasons, suggest that we should take on a tension-centered approach when studying organizing and organizations in order to get a more comprehensive understanding of these processes and, thus, aid theory building (Trethewey and Ashcraft 2004b, Ashcraft and Trethewey 2004). A tension-centered approach takes its standpoint in that organizations are conflicted sites of human activity (Trethewey and Ashcraft 2004b). Tensions appear as contradictions, paradoxes, ironies, dilemmas, double-binds, among other understandings (Stohl and Cheney 2001), and it is of interest to explore how these tensions emerge and are enacted in organizing processes aiming for member empowerment and participation.

This leads me to look at how organizations emphasize communication when aiming for empowering and participatory processes, where the focus is on *more* communication between all organizational members – in particular, between senior managers, managers and subordinates – and how tensions play into these interactions. It is also important to look at how these initiatives are perceived by organizational members and what the consequences are, meaning how these communicative initiatives contribute to the organizing process and to the organization as a whole. I take on a tension-centered approach, and I do not only take human activity into account but also non-human activity, and my perspective in this dissertation is that organizations emerge in the interactions between a plenum of

agencies (Cooren 2006), along with the idea that once an organization is given authority, i.e. an identity, it reflexively influences the communicative interactions (Taylor and Van Every 2000).

Using the ideas above, studies in two organizations in Sweden have been conducted, both emphasizing communication while encouraging empowering and participatory processes.

1.1 Organizational Communication and Organizational Development

Organizational communication has for some decades been given a more central position and focus in contemporary organizations. The reason is that communication seems to have a significant role in the constitution of organizations, or, as James R. Taylor (1999:22) phrases it,

> A distinctly communicational perspective has been taking shape over the past generation, and its core insight is that organization has its *basis* in communication.

However, the idea that communication plays a significant part in the constitution of an organization is not new. John Dewey (1916), the American logician, educator and sociologist, emphasized back in 1916 the importance of communication in society (this includes organizations), and Chester Barnard (1938/1968) repeated this idea in 1938 when he emphasized the importance of communication in organizations.

1.1.1 The organizational development in the industrialized world

Generally, organizations in the industrialized world began to implement democratic processes during the mid-twentieth century. Swedish organizational culture has since rested in a tradition of continual attempts to implement democratic processes and member participation in organizational management (Westenholz, 2003). These attempts were first referred to as quality of work-life (QWL) programs (Moch and Bartunek 1990), and to begin with they were an outcome of the demands from unionized workers to be ensured influence. Gradually, management realized the benefits of a decentralized organizational structure on efficiency (Westenholz 2003). The changes in divisions of labor and occupational structure prompted a horizontal distribution of expertise, which organizations had to take seriously in order to not only be efficient but also to be productive (Barley 1996). Hence, empowerment is often considered a key ingredient in democratic processes when organizations seek to enhance efficiency as well

as become flatter and more flexible (see for example Ahearne, Mathieu, and Rapp 2005, Simons 1995, Hales and Klidas 1998, Powell 1995, Miles and Snow 1986, Boonstra and Bennebroek Gravenhorst 1998, Hardy and Leiba-O'Sullivan 1998). But empowerment may be comprised of different things and take different forms in organizations (see for example Tengland 2008, Ahearne, Mathieu, and Rapp 2005, Hales and Klidas 1998, Boonstra and Bennebroek Gravenhorst 1998, Hardy and Leiba-O'Sullivan 1998). The concept has been defined differently over the years. The concept of empowerment will be further discussed in the following chapters.

Arie de Geus (1997) contends that the centralization of power is inappropriate for an organization and that it reduces the organization's learning capacity. Although the first decentralization, democratic and participatory projects were successful and, thus, ubiquitously present they never truly conquered the organizational structure and culture or convinced the stakeholders. The interest for this type of changes has therefore varied over the years. The first decentralization initiatives differed from those initiated today, with a few exceptions. One change project incorporated at Volvo in 1974 may, for example, be considered a progenitor to *Lean Manufacturing* or TQM (see for example Westenholz 2006:87,88). But overall, these first initiatives had more of a macro democratic focus, which meant that all organizational members were to take part at all organizational levels.

With an even more complex society caused by global competition, rapid technology advancements and a changing workforce[2] (Barley 1996), the interest for having engaged, empowered and participative organizational members has been renewed, and contemporary organizations continue to search for innovative organizational forms that are comprised of decentralization and participatory processes in one way or another. Unlike the early decentralization processes – with the macro-democratic focus – the idea with these contemporary change processes is to have a micro-focus, where organizational members are empowered in regards to their specific assignments, within their specific community of practice. It involves providing organizational members with the necessary tools that will help them meet their work expectations in an independent but also cooperative way. Senior managers are making the overall decisions and communicate the organization's mission and vision, while it is up to each individual, together with his or her immediate colleagues, to transfer this into the everyday work, with assistance from the senior managers.

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[2] A workforce that expects more "return on investments" from the organization than what previous generations have done and does not hesitate to change employer on a regular basis.

Geert Hofstede (1980) has described the Swedish organizational culture as having little need to avoid uncertainty and with small power distances. Organizational members are given a large amount of trust (Sjöberg and Tollgerdt-Andersson 1991). Participatory processes are in general more successful in organizations where the culture already bears traces of participatory goals (Stohl and Cheney 2001). But the Swedish organizational culture has also been described as being collectivistic in comparison to the more individualistic Anglo-Saxon organizational culture, and several of the attempts to empower individual organizational members have therefore failed (Westenholz, 2006). However, many recent empowerment and participatory processes focus on empowering the organization's communities of practice, which means that the group's behavior is the privileged level of activity (Stohl and Cheney 2001); this may change the impact these processes have on a Swedish organizational setting. Again, few scholars have looked at how organizations emphasize and invest in communication in these types of processes. No such more extensive study has, as far as I know, been carried out in a Swedish setting until now.

In general there are other circumstances when the issue of empowerment may challenge participatory processes, and those occur when organizational members are given more responsibility but not the tools, (in the form of, for example, time and knowledge) to handle this responsibility. Joanne Ciulla (Ciulla 2010, 2004), referred to this as *bogus* empowerment, a situation that embeds for tensions. Related to this is a situation when participation and empowerment are emphasized in talks between organizational members, but the practice still is dominated by instrumental values such as time and costs in the short-term perspective. This may cause frustration among all organizational members. Senior managers may give in and retreat to traditional, hierarchical leadership roles, and subordinates' trust in and loyalty to senior managers leaches when they do not practice what they preach (Simonsson 2002). Failure to fully incorporate the participatory processes may for example cause organizational tensions in the form of paradoxes. Cynthia Stohl and George Cheney (2001:357) provide a definition of organizational member participation that is both theoretical and operational:

> [W]orker participation comprises organizational structures and processes designed to empower and enable employees to identify with organizational goals and to collaborate as control agents in activities that exceed minimum coordination efforts normally expected at work.

This indicates that participatory processes require communication in a different form than the transmission process of communication, which traditionally has been the common communication approach applied in

organizations (Stohl and Cheney 2001). Members need to understand how their work affects the overall organization in order to more independently contribute to the organizing process. The idea is to give members freedom in combination with responsibility to make decisions that will develop their roles and their work tasks to bring their work as well as the organization as a whole forward to meet set goals. Taylor (2009:155) contends that Wittgenstein observed, long before the age of empowerment, that language "empower(s) people to work together to accomplish practical things," yet Karl Weick (2009:238) argues that:

> The power of conversation, dialogue, and respectful interaction to reshape ongoing change has often been overlooked.

We know too little about how organizations use communication to encourage organizational members to participate in the organizing and the constitution of the organization, which also involves closing the gap between *authority of position* and *authority of expertise*. Sara von Platen (2006:230) concludes her dissertation about change communication and sensemaking by posing the following questions: "What characterizes an organization in which the internal communication actually contributes to the change process by creating participation and new common ideas?" and "In such an ideal situation what are the conditions for the internal communication in regards to sensemaking processes and traditions?" With this as a backdrop I have been inspired to study organizational communication during empowerment and participatory processes.

1.2 Objectives and Purpose

This dissertation explores communicative initiatives aiming to enhance communication between organizational members – particularly between senior managers and subordinates – and thereby encourage member empowerment and participation processes. The overall purpose is twofold; the study aims to contribute to the field of organizational communication by providing insight in two areas: 1) How organizations enact the idea that the empowerment and participatory processes require *more* communication, and 2) How these communicative initiatives contribute to the organizing and the constitution of the organization.

This dissertation is written within the field of media and communication science, which is my academic background. Emphasis is on communication and, in particular, the field of organizational communication. The theoretical framework is built on a social constructionism perspective (Berger and Luckmann 1967) and influenced by Weick and his work on sensemaking

(Weick 1979, 1995a, 2001, 2009). I depart from communication theory seen as a dialogic of conversation and text (Taylor and Van Every 2000) and join the Montreal School's scholars (Brummans et al. 2014, Taylor 1999, Taylor and Van Every 2000, Cooren 2012), who are among the scholars that have developed Weick's ideas under the common concept, the Communicative Constitution of Organization (CCO) (see, for example, Ashcraft, Kuhn, and Cooren 2009, Brummans et al. 2014, Cooren et al. 2011, Kuhn 2008, McPhee and Zaug 2000, Putnam and Nicotera 2009, Taylor 1999). This concept's primary ontological perspective is the grounded in action orientation, though with influences from both the object and the becoming orientations (Fairhurst and Putnam 2004). Organizations are thereby considered communicatively constituted (Putnam and Nicotera 2009).

To further explore communication's constitutive process, I apply a ventriloqual approach – which refers to "[t]he activity that consists of making someone or something say or do something" (Cooren 2012:5). This approach encourages us to consider that not only human agents contribute to changing organizational practices (like routines etc.); non-humans agents are just as active. Hence, if we wish to understand the change process and its outcome, we have to take into account that the change process is contingent on how non-human agents enter into this process, both in regards to how they impose themselves on activity but also how human agents impose them (Kuhn 2012). From such a perspective Kuhn (Ibid) stresses that an important task for researchers within this field is to further understand the sources of variation; one of those identified by communication scholars is the myriad of organizational texts.

Based on this, the aim and ambition of this dissertation can thereby be further defined: 3) to contribute with an enhanced understanding – empirically as well as analytically – of the (sources of) variation of texts that take part in the communicative initiative aiming to enhance communication and encourage empowerment and participatory processes.

Further, from the conversation-text dialectic and the ventriloqual approach I adhere to the idea that the constitution of organizing and organization is happening at the intersection of *d*iscourse and *D*iscourses (Alvesson and Kärreman 2000, Fairhurst and Putnam 2004), a distinction that I will elaborate on in Chapter Two. Present in this distinction are tensions, which can take the form of paradoxes, ironies, dilemmas, contradictions, and double binds (Tracy 2004, Trethewey and Ashcraft 2004a, Stohl and Cheney 2001, Brummans et al. 2014, Cooren et al. 2013, Ashcraft 2006). I argue that how these tensions are produced, co- and reproduced and how they are enacted are particularly relevant in empowerment and participatory

processes, which provides the backdrop to the communicative initiatives that are in focus in this dissertation.

1.2.1 Methodological positioning

The CCO concept advocates and sets the stage for ethnographical studies (Putnam and Nicotera 2009). Hence, this dissertation is influenced by an ethnographical approach, but due to circumstances in the respective organizations, it was not possible to carry out this kind of study in its true sense. Since the actual time spent at respective organization was limited the observations may be considered as "passing organizational ethnography" (Cooren, Brummans, and Charrieras 2008). In order to provide a portrait of the studied phenomena – that is, the communicative initiatives that were planned by each organization and carried out in regards to each one's empowerment and participatory processes – I decided to use a mixed methods perspective and, in particular, the embedded design (Myers 2014) because the quantitative data is considered to be supplemental data rather than equally prioritized with the qualitative data. In order to explore tensions, I use organizational discourse analysis (Fairhurst and Putnam 2014).

Observations were conducted in order to study the actual communicative interactions that took place in each organization. Questionnaires were used to map the communicative interactions and how organizational members perceived these as well as the content and change communication in general. In one of the case studies, questionnaires were also used to compare the situation and the circumstances before and after the communicative initiative. In the same case study, focus groups were used to elaborate on the observations and results from the first questionnaire. Finally, interviews were carried out with members of both organizations in order to understand what James R. Taylor and Elisabeth J. Van Every (2000) refer to as the surface or text, that is, the overall organization, including the reasons behind the participatory initiatives, the given opportunities for communicative interactions, the circumstances surrounding these decisions and the perceived outcomes for each organization. The mixed methods approach with the embedded design and organizational discourse analysis helped me to zoom in and out and switch theoretical lenses (Nicolini 2009) in order to explore all relevant interactions.

1.3 Outline of the Dissertation and Reading Recommendations

This dissertation consists of three parts, with nine chapters all-together. The first part, which is comprised of Chapters One through Four, provides this introduction with a general background of this dissertation's work, a brief description of how organizational communication as a research discipline has emerged and developed, as well as the theoretical framework and methodological choices. For the reader who is not familiar with organizational communication as a research field or the concepts of empowerment and tensions, I suggest that you read Chapter Two, as it will provide you with a short but comprehensive overview of the evolution of this research field as well as a more in-depth description of the theories and concepts relevant for this dissertation than that which is found in the theoretical framework in Chapter Three. Scholars in the field may want to skip Chapter Two. The second part, Chapters Five to Eight, is comprised of a presentation of the empirical findings and the analysis, while the third and last part, Chapter Nine, presents the conclusions, elaborate the findings, suggestions for future research and practical implications as well as an epilogue.

2 Organizational Communication at the Intersection of Communication and Organization Theories

This chapter is a general overview of how the academic field of organizational communication has emerged as a research field, and it contains a description of some prominent theories in the field. The chapter begins with a presentation of the historical development and continues with a description of the relationship between organization and discourse. The last part of the chapter covers theories that either aim to explain the relationship between communication and organization or are of importance for this relationship as they explain other significant parts of communication, organizing or organization. The theories presented here build up this study's theoretical framework, which will be presented in Chapter Three.

2.1 Organizational Communication Emerges as a Research Discipline

Organized communication has been around as long as people have been communicating, and studies of organizational communication date back as far as to the antiquity (Salwen and Stacks 1996). But organizational communication as we define it today, has its roots in the emergence of large industrial companies, first and foremost in the UK and the USA during the nineteenth century. In the 1920s the need for communication practitioners was intensified and the practice therefore changed from being a consultant service on a need basis to becoming an in-house activity. To begin with, the focus was mainly on speech training for company executives (Putnam and Cheney 1985). Then focus moved toward internal communication issues. But it was not until the 1960s and 1970s that organizational communication became recognized as an academic research field (Taylor 1999). Taylor (1999) states that scholars from related fields saw Taylor and his fellow academics as limited to dealing with press, public relations, in-house messaging, effective speaking and interpersonal skills during these first years. The prejudices gave the field a low status in comparison to other

organizational theory fields such as sociology, social psychology and management theory (Taylor 1999).

W. Charles Redding – who is considered the "father" of the field (Mumby 2013) by some scholars, while others consider Chester Barnard as the founder of organizational communication studies (Ashcraft, Kuhn, and Cooren 2009) – Lee Thayer and Phil Tomkins announced the birth of a new field, *Organizational Communication*, in the 1960s and not long after, a number of American scholars, including Peter R. Monge, Linda L. Putnam, Leonard Hawes, George Cheney, Stan Deetz, Robert McPhee, Scott Poole, Cynthia Stool, Ted Zorn, Eric Eisenberg, Charlie Conrad, Gail T. Fairhurst, Larry Browning, Dennis K. Mumby, Kathy Krone, joined the field (Taylor 2013), where Taylor himself was already present.

In the late 1970s, Richard V. Farace, Peter R. Monge and Hamish H. Russell (1977) referred to organizational communication as an intersection between the study of human communication and the study of organization. This position has prompted scholars from various schools of thought to show interest in this discipline, which in turn has resulted in a variety of perspectives within the study of organizational communication. As a consequence, organizational communication scholars often consider their work to occupy spaces between and across disciplinary lines (Foster and Bochner 2008).

When discussing the development of organizational communication as a discipline, Mumby and Stohl (1996) contend that there has been an ongoing shift toward a greater recognition of the constitutive power of communication. But even though Dewey stated, "that society (this includes organizations) exist not *by* but *in* communication" back in 1916, it would take more than half a century before this idea was genuinely considered in the academic field. The idea was inspired by the linguistic turn in social theory. In the twenty-first century Taylor and Van Every (2000) describe the relationship between organization and communication as communication being the site where organization is continually negotiated.

One of the scholars with great influence on the development of organizational communication is Weick, with his groundbreaking book *Social Psychology of Organization* (1979) as well as his follow-up work, *Sensemaking in organizations* (Weick 1995a) and *Making sense of the organization* (Weick 2001) (c.f. Weick 1989, 1998, 2002, 2009, Weick and Quinn 1999, Weick and Sutcliffe 2001, 2003 2007, Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obstfeld 2005, Weick and van Orden 1990)

The social constructionist perspective, with roots in the work of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1967), *The Social Construction of Reality* in which the authors state that reality is socially constructed, has also had an important influence on the field of organizational communication. Berger and Luckmann developed concepts that placed communication processes in the front seat regarding how knowledge is transformed and generated in

society (Holstein and Gubrium 2008). However, it was not until approximately ten years after the publication of *The Social Construction of Reality* (Berger and Luckmann 1967) that this approach was reflected in communication research. First, the focus was on the products of construction, but over time the focus has moved to the processes of construction (Deetz and Eger 2014). Although this perspective is seen as useful it has also endured critique (Holstein and Gubrium 2008). The perspective has been criticized for not providing a convincing truth about social reality, and the term has been used as a label to categorize any and all research that has a qualitative emphasis (Taylor 1999). Nevertheless, communication scholars increasingly rely on social constructionism when studying processes of organizing. The leading idea within the social constructionist perspective regarding organizations is that organizational members actively construct the world of everyday organizational life and its constituent elements (Allen 2005). Or as Karl E. Weick, Kathleen M. Sutcliffe and David Obstfeld (2005:410) put it:

> A central theme in both organizing and sensemaking is that people organize to make sense of equivocal inputs and enact this sense back into the world to make that world more orderly.

Inspired by the work of Weick and that of Berger and Luckmann, North American management and communication scholars assembled in Alta, Utah in the US in 1981 to discuss alternatives to the functionalistic view on organizational communication, which is build on a foundation in positivism and focuses on predicting and controlling variable relationships (Ashcraft, Kuhn, and Cooren 2009). The assembly paved the way for an alternative view, the interpretive, where the focus is on understanding the meaning and significance of symbolic activities (Ashcraft, Kuhn, and Cooren 2009). It resulted in a volume, *Communication and organizations: An interpretive approach*, edited by Linda L. Putnam and Michael E. Pacanowsky (1983), that had significant influence on the development of the organizational communication field of research. However, the downsides of this perspective were that it encouraged a view of organizations as abstractions (Weick 1979) and a focus was placed on interpretations of the organization (Ashcraft, Kuhn, and Cooren 2009).

Some scholars within the field found this unsatisfying and instead began to study the interactive process of sensemaking (Ashcraft, Kuhn, and Cooren 2009). Gail T. Fairhurst, Marshall Scott Poole and Linda L. Putnam each developed various coding schemes for analyzing interactions in the 1980s and the 1990s, and this inspired their colleagues to also engage in studying interactions rather than using organizations as merely to make more general interpretations (Ashcraft, Kuhn, and Cooren 2009). With this reconsideration

of the methodological paradigms, scholars began to study interactions in everyday life, and the focus that had moved from individuals to relationships and communication was linked to the construction of social realities. For organizational communication scholars this resulted in a shift from viewing organizations as material entities to considering organizations as constituted cultures emerging through communication. These changes not only fostered an interpretive perspective, but they also embraced critical perspectives (Foster and Bochner 2008).

In 1988, at the 38th Annual International Communication Association (ICA) meeting in New Orleans, USA, ethnographers and criticalists discussed their respective standpoints. While the ethnographers accused criticalists of focusing too much on the text, that is, texts produced by members of the organization, ignoring what was really going on in organizations (the on-going conversations between organizational members), the criticalists accused ethnographers of focusing on the daily practice to the extent that they did not see the whole picture (Taylor 1999, Putnam et al. 1993).

Despite the differences, these two perspectives do have similarities. Both perspectives oppose positivism, they both favor an interpretive perspective, they emphasize the importance of meaning, they view research as a form of representation and they ground their research in texts (Putnam et al. 1993). The debate, with ethnographers on one side and criticalists on the other, convinced Taylor that the organizational communication theory that he was developing should include both perspectives because when studying organizational communication, conversation and text are equally important. With that, a theory situated in both a critical and an ethnographical perspective was born. This communication theory as a dialogic of conversation and text (Taylor 1999, Taylor and Van Every 2000) emphasizes and illustrates how organizations emerge in communication (Taylor 1999). Since this theory contributes to the theoretical framework for the present dissertation, it will be explored further in this chapter as well as in Chapter Three where the theoretical framework is presented.

2.2   Ontology, Theory, *d*iscourse and *D*iscourse

The ontological connection between communication and organization has been discussed in a number of metatheoretical studies with the purpose of further developing the theoretical field (Fairhurst and Putnam 2004; Smith and Turner 1995). Scholars develop theories for analyzing the relationship between communication and organization, often by focusing on organization and discourse (see, for example, Alvesson and Kärreman 2000a, 2000b; Fairhurst and Putnam 2004; Foster and Bochner 2008). Ruth Smith, Fairhurst and Putnam are among the scholars that provide a framework for

understanding how communication structures organizations (see, for example, Ashcraft, Kuhn, and Cooren 2009, Putnam and Nicotera 2009, Fairhurst and Putnam 2004).

A review of the literature on discourse suggests that this discourse term is used in a variety of different ways, and the definitions are just as varied or are simply not provided. I will elaborate on a discourse distinction that I find valuable and relevant for this dissertation work because it separates the analytical tools while, at the same time, joins them together for an overall analysis: It is the distinction between *d*iscourse and *D*iscourse developed by Mats Alvesson and Dan Kärreman (2000). Fairhurst and Putnam agree with Alvesson and Kärreman (2000) and distinguish between *d*iscourse and *D*iscourse with the following statement: "[…] *discourse* […] refers to the study of talk and text in social practices and *Discourses* as general and enduring systems of thought" (Fairhurst and Putnam 2004:7, emphasis in original). But *D*iscourses are also present in *d*iscourse (Taylor and Robichaud 2004). Fairhurst and Putnam (2004) contend that *d*iscourse and *D*iscourse need to be held in tension with each other and mention the work by Taylor and Van Every (2000) as an example of how the theory of organization as conversation and text has implications for the debate about *d*iscourse versus *D*iscourse. Alvesson and Kärreman (2000) encourage researchers to find ways to move from *d*iscourse to *D*iscourse when analyzing organizations because both these concepts are crucial. Taylor (2001b:19) outlines the challenge in doing this work by stating,

> Communication is thus an intrinsically hermeneutic science: what is visible is the interpersonal interaction; what is harder to get at are the multiple imbrications that constitute the infrastructure of the exchange: its organizationally embedded context.

Ruth Smith provided, in a conference paper[3] in 1993, an impressive review of the various studies focusing on the relationship between organization and communication (Putnam and Nicotera 2009, Ashcraft, Kuhn, and Cooren 2009). Smith divides the various studies into three categories or types of relationships and presents them as root metaphors (Ashcraft, Kuhn, and Cooren 2009). In the first category, the container metaphor, the organization is considered an object in which communication occurs. In the second category, the production metaphor – which is divided into three sub-categories: 1) communication produces organization, 2) organization produces communication, and 3) the two co-produce each other – addresses communication and organizations as two separate concepts influencing each other in various ways. The third category, the equivalence metaphor, approaches organization and communication as interrelated. As is common

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[3] It has unfortunately not been possible to get access to this conference paper, which was based on her dissertation work, as a first hand source.

within the academic life, these metaphorical categories have been criticized, particularly the third metaphor. Still, they laid the groundwork for Smith's fellow academics to explore and further develop the relationship between organizations and communication (Ashcraft, Kuhn, and Cooren 2009, Putnam and Nicotera 2009, Fairhurst and Putnam 2004).

Fairhurst and Putnam (2004) are among the scholars who have developed the work by Smith, and with their work on discourse and organizations they provide a framework for extending Smith's metaphor categories. They contend that organizations are discursive constructions, and, as such, they may be interpreted in three ways: 1) organizations as objects, 2) organizations as perpetual states of becoming, and 3) organizations as grounded in action. Although these three categories resemble the ones identified by Smith, they differ in that they have a broader scope and incorporate different assumptions, according to Fairhurst and Putnam (2004). The *organizations as objects* category or orientation, for example, considers the organization to be more than a container. The organization is an object. It is socially constructed, but once constructed it exists independent of its participants' interactions. Scholars within this orientation search for answers to the question, "What do we know about discourse within organizations?" (Fairhurst and Putnam 2004:9).

The second orientation, *organizations as perpetual states of becoming*, places focus on the process of organizing. Communication is considered a dynamic process that influences the being and the development of the organization, and emphasis is on agency rather than structure – which draws criticism for this orientation. This perspective is a reaction to the historical work of studying organizations from a functionalistic viewpoint. Scholars identifying with this orientation ask the following question, "What is organizing about discourse?" (Fairhurst and Putnam 2004:13).

In the third orientation, *organizations as grounded in action*, we find scholars who have been inspired by ethnomethodologists, structurationists, and actor-network theorists. These scholars aim for a balance between agency and structure. Organizations never emerge as individual or separated entities but as systems anchored in social practices and discursive forms. Language in use is privileged over power and/or knowledge Discourses. Scholars with this orientation attempt to answer the question "How is the 'organization' anchored in what Anthony Giddens (Giddens 1979, 1984) refers to as the *dureé* or the continuous flow of discursive conduct?" (Fairhurst and Putnam 2004:16, emphasis in the original). History is situated in the present, structure is found in action, action is found in structure, and the global is found in local settings (Fairhurst and Putnam 2004). Scholars that adhere to this ontology reject or are indifferent to any macro- or micro-

distinctions or levels. Deidre Boden (1994), for example, contends that there is only research that happens at different levels; society does not.

2.3 Communication, Organization and Organizational Communication Theories

As recently as 1999, Robert T. Craig stated that even though he saw indicators of a field of communication, he argued that, "communication theory as an identifiable field of study does not yet exist" (1999:119). What he meant was that there was no consensus on communication as a theoretical field of research, and there was no general communication theory that everyone referred to (Craig 1999). Instead researchers tended to stay loyal to their original disciplines and approach communication from that angle without considering other views. Since Craig's statement, new theoretical work on communication and, particularly, organizational communication has bloomed. Communication theory might not yet have become an identifiable field, but it appears that the number of indicators has increased. This section focuses on the most – for this dissertation – relevant theories that consider communication and or organization.

2.3.1 Communication and IT

The leading idea within the constructionist perspective is that organizational members actively construct the world of everyday organizational life and its constituent elements (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). The transmission view, which focuses on the effectiveness of communication – for example that the subordinates interpret the manager's message as intended (Shannon and Weaver 1949) – is hence considered obsolete. Instead focus is placed on the constitutive model, emphasizing the co-creation of meaning – that is, when a manager and a subordinate interact they jointly produce meaning (Ashcraft, Kuhn, and Cooren 2009). Karen Lee Ashcraft, Timothy R. Kuhn and François Cooren (2009) distinguish the differences between the transmission model and the constitutive model by posing a primary question of focus for each model. In a transmission model the primary question is, "How can communication meet situated goals, like a clear of display of authority?" (2009:4). In a constitutive model, the primary question is, "How does communication constitute the realities of organizational life?" (2009:5).

This does not imply that the transmission model is wrong or antiquated but, rather, that it is only partly true and that a more comprehensive model of communication is necessary in order to understand the relationship between communication and organization (Ibid 2009). Still, there are times and

situations where the transmission model is preferable. The transmission view of communication has often come into focus when discussing emerging communication technologies.

Weick (1995) highlights the importance for organizational members to have access to several cues, both in number and in variety of cues, in order to reduce multiple meanings and ease organizational members' coorientation with each other. That is also why he warns against a blind faith in IT, as IT tends to be characterized as lean rather than rich media. At the same he and his colleague Paul W. van den Orden (1990) argue that contemporary organizations present on the global market need to develop new forms of organizing that utilize new technologies in order to engage in sensemaking that is applicable for the organization as a whole.

The media richness model distinguishes lean and rich media using four criteria that define the information-carrying capacity of media: (1) instant feedback capability, (2) the use of multiple cues, (3) the personal focus of the medium, and (4) language (Daft and Lengel 1984; Daft, Lengel and Trevino 1987). Communication channels that have all or many of these characteristics are called rich media, whereas media that have few of these characteristics are called lean media (Daft and Lengel 1984; Daft et al. 1987).

The notion of the richness of media can then be combined with the notion of ambiguity, meaning that a theme with high ambiguity is better discussed with rich media, whereas a theme with low ambiguity preferably is discussed using lean media.

However, the choice of medium may also have a symbolic value on the message, which may differ from organization to organization, depending on the existing communication culture (Fulk, Steinfield, Schmitz, and Power 1987). Therefore it may be that a theme with low ambiguity still is discussed using a rich medium. Hence, research suggests that successful use of IT is dependent on the intertwining of both technical and organizational factors. With this in mind, IT and its effect on the sensemaking and participatory processes can only be fully understood by examining the ways it is activated in organizational contexts (Leonardi 2007).

Members of organizations often use IT in different ways than the managers or system designers intended (Orlikowski 1996). Individual media use is dependent on how colleagues are using certain media. When studying how organizational members use media, scholars found that members of a work group shared similar attitudes toward IT and used IT in similar ways (Fulk 1993; Fulk et al. 1987; Markus 1994;). Also, research indicates that richness or leanness are not inherent characteristics but emergent and may change depending on the use of the medium in organizational settings. Therefore the choice to use the most appropriate medium for a certain situation or content is not determined by rational decision-making but,

rather, is emerging over time and dependent on the medium's interface with users such as organizational members in an organization (Lee 1994).

2.3.2 The Montreal School and the Communicative Constitution of Organizations (CCO)

The emergence of organizational communication as a research discipline has been described above. Taylor is one of the scholars whose work has taken a leading role in the development of the field (see for example Taylor 1999, Taylor 2009, Taylor 2001a, b, Taylor 2013, Taylor and Cooren 1997, Taylor et al. 1996, Taylor and Van Every 2000, Taylor and Robichaud 2004, Taylor and Van Every 2011). In 1987 Taylor founded the Montreal School when a new doctoral program was initiated at the Université de Montréal (Brummans et al. 2014). Today there are many prominent international scholars who belong to the Montreal School. Taylor and Van Every's theory of communication includes both ethnographers' and criticalists' views on organizational communication. In addition, this communication theory takes a position on three theories, structuration theory, actor-network theory and activity theory, which have that in common that they all attempt to bridge the gap between the micro- and the macro-perspectives (Taylor 1999).

Taylor argues that, informed by these three theories, his communication theory as a dialogic of conversation and text provides a missing link in regards to institutionalization "in that the system of society becomes inscribed in the typifications of the language, and is stored in its texts" (Taylor 1999:41). An organization emerges in the conversation, and the text is the organization's surface—referring to the rules, handbooks, structures and other similar materials as the text. Taylor, along with François Cooren, Nicole Giroux and Daniel Robichaud (1996) contend that the interpretive activities that organizational members produce are constituting a conversation while the goal and the subject matter of these interpretations are the text. Further, these scholars contend that the communicational process is "a double translation, from text to conversation and conversation into text" (Taylor et al. 1996:1) Involved in this is,

> *distanciation*, by means of which the scaling up from the locally situated conversation to more complex networks of exchange is accomplished (Taylor et al. 1996:6).

Taylor et al. contend that their communication theory amounts to a discourse theory of organization (Taylor et al. 1996).

In a discussion about the challenge to develop a methodology that is consistent with the Montreal Schools theoretical commitments Taylor (1999:57, 58) makes a distinction between epistemological learnings, which he argues are either conversation-first or text-first. Methodology—wise,

Taylor (1999:57) contends that "it is possible to distinguish between approaches that are focused on the analysis of either text or conversation." He provides a two-dimensional matrix model in order to illustrate research orientations within the Montreal School approach. With this work the Montreal School of organizational communication continues working toward a view of the relationship between communication and organization that contributes to the notion of CCO, a perspective that this dissertation is predominantly informed by and one that I will describe in more detail in a following section.

Taylor's two-dimensional matrix model has been further developed by scholars of the Montreal School and provides an illustration of the various areas that these scholars' research embrace. The model is referred to as "Organization as a Dynamic of Four Translations" and consists of four manifestations: 1) Organization as a Network of Practices and Conversations, 2) Organization as a Collective Experience Through Distanciation, 3) Organization as Authoring Through Textualization and 4) Organization as Representation and Presentification (Brummans et al. 2014:177). The model focuses on four translations involving transformation both in medium and form. There is a translation from *practice* to *voicing the practice* to *authoring the organization* to *enunciating the organization's purpose* to *translating them back into practice*. Understandings in one manifestation are added in a new manifestation (Brummans et al. 2014:181). The model is conceptual, and researchers may focus on various manifestations and translations.
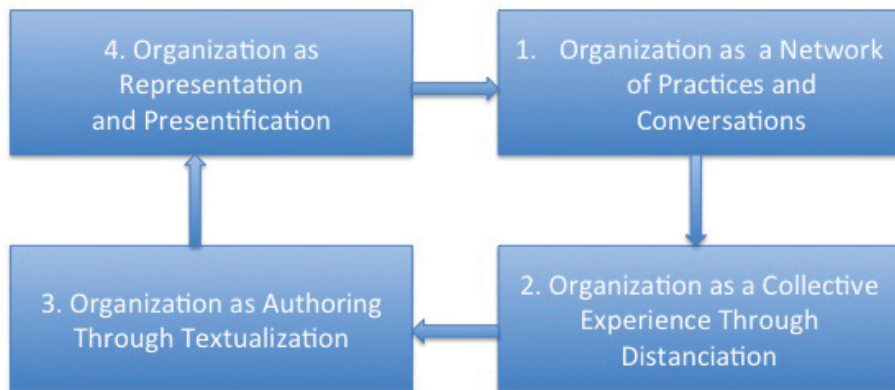
Figure 1. Organization as a Dynamic of Four Translations

Model adapted from Taylor (1999, 2000, 2001) and revised by Brummans et al. (2014).

One key contribution by Taylor and the Montreal School is the development of the concept of coorientation. Coorientation is about organizational members relating to each other through some common object of concern (Taylor and Van Every 2000). Taylor (1999) builds on Theodore M. Newcomb's work – the Newcomb model – from 1953 on communicative acts, and in Taylor's early model defining coorientation, he contends that the complex relationships of people to each other (A to B) and a common object (X) are conceptualized in coorientation. At the most basic level the model illustrates how people think, not only about an object, X, but also about each other's orientation toward X. This model has been further developed to include and focus on *context*, *interaction* and *translation*. Context refers to the situatedness of the communication: how organizational members are involved in juxtaposition with many relationships regarding both humans and objects, and how they are cooriented with larger social agents. Interaction refers to what is happening in the coorientation process. Taylor emphasizes the fact that agents do not only interact to reach an agreement; the coorientation processes may lead to a complementary view or even conflicts. Finally, translation refers to language used to translate organizational members' attitudes to one another (McPhee and Iverson 2013).

Taylor and Robichaud (2004:401) state that coorientation:
1) is negotiated through dialogue,
2) aims to produce coordination of belief, action and emotions with some mutually understood object, and
3) is mediated by text.

The heart of conversation aiming to encourage activity and participation is coorientation, according to Taylor, Van Every and Robichaud (Taylor and Van Every 2000, Taylor and Robichaud 2004). They contend that from an organizational perspective, the result of conversation is the achievement of coorientation. They continue by declaring that organizational members may be engaged in action, but if they are not cooriented, they are not organized and they will not produce a text. Coorientation is an activity and a process. It is a complex phenomenon that is not only dependent on the conversation at hand but also on organizational members' previous experiences as well as the ongoing experiences that are the result of members' engagements in a common activity (Taylor and Robichaud 2004). Taylor employs the ABX model, that is, conversation acts, to explain how the organization comes into being, the birth of the organization-as-entity. Any ABX unit

> …may be embedded within a larger structure where it figures as an X in a higher level A-B-X unit. The structuring principle is "fractal": units within units within units, each structurally isomorphic to the others, but embedded

to form complex configurations in which the levels are linked by means-end articulations. (Taylor and Van Every 2000:93)

Taylor and Van Every (2000) refer to this complex embedding as tiling or imbrication and they work to counter the macro/micro perspective by providing a "flatland" view with the dialectic between conversation and text theory. The "flatland" view aims to explain how the dislocal is present in the local and plays into the constitution of the organization. This is further explored with the ventriloqual approach to the study of organizational communication, an approach developed by Cooren (Cooren 2012, Cooren et al. 2013). According to Cooren et al., this approach take into account that humans as well as non-humans – that is, a plenum of agencies (Cooren 2006) – in the form of figures, participate in human interactions (Cooren et al. 2013, Cooren 2012). Figures are principles, values, norms, experiences, ideologies and interests that are operationalized to "accomplish particular goals or serve particular interests" (Cooren et al. 2013:2).

2.3.3 CCO

Organizational communication scholars, all heavily influenced by Weick (1979), have continued to study the relationship between communication and organization, claiming that communication is constitutive of organizing and organization. This claim joins a number of perspectives under the notion the communicative constitution of organizations (CCO). The CCO perspective focuses on grounding the role of communication in the ontology of an organization and applies this foundation to action orientation (Putnam and Nicotera 2010).

The CCO perspective joins Taylor's conversation-text dialectic theory in that it differs from the traditional view on communication as a transmission model (Brummans et al. 2014).

Scholars applying the CCO perspective aim to understand how specific world views and relational patterns are realized, and for that reason they found it valuable to analyze individuals' interactions (Cooren et al. 2013). Concepts such as "orientation" (how individuals orient to humans, non-humans or aspects of their context), "invocation" (what individuals put forth and emphasize when talking to other individuals), "definition" (how individuals define their interlocutors and the context in interaction), and "intention" (individuals' possible intentions in and with the discussion) are therefore important to study (Cooren et al. 2013:7).

The CCO concept is among the concepts within which communication and organization scholars meet. However, along with other concepts exploring the relationship between organization and communication, the CCO concept has also received extensive critiques, mainly for failing to be fully explained and for assuming that the concepts of organization and

communication should be considered equivalent (Putnam and Nicotera 2009). The concept has further been criticized for focusing solely on humans and their local interactions.

Mike Reed (2010) is among the scholars who have extensively criticized CCO research. According to Reed the CCO approach is comprised of ontological, analytical and methodological constraints since the approach, he argues, fails to consider that the constructions of organizations are not only or even primarily dependent on local interactions and interlocutors' ways of co-constructing situations but also on non-local relationships and resources. If scholars fail to acknowledge this, they also fail to describe, explore and explain what they aim to explain, which Reed (2010:155) refers to as "institutionalized structures of power (domination) relationships and the relative control potentials that they entail," meaning the organization and society. CCO scholars' (at least the ones associated with the Montreal School and the Luhmann approach) responses to this critique are that both humans and non-humans contribute to the communicative constitution of organizations as institutional structures of power relationships. Similar relationships are present in the local and thereby participate in the construction of the organization. Taylor and Van Every's "flatland" view and Cooren's ventriloqual approach illustrate how the Montreal School's CCO approach considers the dislocal and, hence, the institutionalized structures of power.

Although the generally accepted ontological standpoint within the CCO approach is the *grounded-in-action* ontology (Fairhurst and Putnam 2004), meaning that focus is on "organization as a process," there are scholars who find the approach applicable for other ontologies as well. For example, Anne Mayden Nicotera (2013) contends that the CCO approach holds a strong potential to answer the question, "What is an organization?" (Nicotera 2013:66), which refers to the ontological view of an organization as an entity or an object (Fairhurst and Putnam 2004). Even though there are promising and insightful implicit attempts to answer this question in, for example, the work by Brummans, Cooren and Chaput (Brummans, Cooren, and Chaput 2009, Robichaud, Giroux, and Taylor 2004, Cooren 2006, Taylor and Robichaud 2004, Cooren and Fairhurst 2009), Nicotera claims that scholars need to find an explicit answer to this question because related to this is the issue that there is a lack of "a conceptual connection between micro- and macroprocesses" (Nicotera 2013:75). Nicotera (2013) appreciates previous attempts to explain the relationship between micro and macro such as "lamination" (Boden 1994:51), "imbrication" (Taylor 2001b:9) and the discussion by Taylor and Van Every about "flatland-thinking" (2000:143), but she argues that scholars continue, at least implicitly, to view micro- and macro-levels as separate.

The CCO perspective as a concept is fairly new, and Brummans et al. (2014) describe its development by emphasizing three approaches to this

concept. One, the four flows framework, was developed by Robert D. McPhee and Pamela Zaug (2000) and has a structurationist approach; another is called the Montreal School's approach, developed by Taylor and colleagues; and the third was born from Niklas Luhmann's research. Although these theoretical perspectives on CCO vary (for illustrations of various views see for example Ashcraft, Kuhn, and Cooren 2009, Putnam and Nicotera 2009), they share the same foundation, as will be made explicit below. A brief description of McPhee's framework and the Luhmann approach are presented, though I elaborate more on the Montreal School's approach and will add some additional the Montreal School's thoughts since this is the approach that informs my work.

2.3.3.1 The Montreal School and CCO

Since much of the background and the early development of the Montreal School's approach to CCO are presented in the sections above, this section picks up where the previous ended.

Brummans et al. use the revised version of Taylor's (1999) two-dimensional matrix model to highlight some of the core research developed within the Montreal School's approach, led by Taylor and Cooren (see Figure 1). This model, "Organization as a dynamic of four translations," illustrates Taylor's "four translations" image of organizational communication (Brummans et al. 2014:9). The translations involve a transformation both in regards to form and medium, which differ from the moves between flows – which will be described below – in McPhee and Zaug's four flows framework (McPhee and Zaug 2000, Brummans et al. 2014). This illustrates the contrast between the four flows framework and the Montreal School's approach in that the flows framework advocates for a deductive approach, while the translations advocate for an inductive approach to communication (Brummans et al. 2014).

Cooren and Fairhurst (2009) contend that communication and interaction can only contribute to the constitution of an organization if the view of agency is extended. They refer to Actor Network Theory, initiated by Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar (1986) when discussing how agency also includes non-human entities. By only considering human entities scholars neglect what triggers sensemaking processes, which, according to these scholars, contribute to the social structure. They argue that if we acknowledge the contributions by both human and non-human entities it is possible to illustrate the notion that communication contributes to the constitution of an organization (Cooren and Fairhurst 2009). Cooren prefers to refer to human and non-human agents as "a plenum of agencies" (2006).

2.3.3.2   McPhee and Zaug's Four Flows of Communication Framework

In the article, *The Communicative Constitution of Organizations: A Framework For Explanation* (2000), McPhee and Zaug argue that the communicative constitution of organizations requires four types of communication processes or flows, as they prefer to call them. The reason is that organizations have four audiences that they need to have specific relationships with. These audiences include themselves, their individual members, organizational subgroups and, finally, other organizations or society in general (McPhee & Zaug, 2000). McPhee and Zaug (McPhee and Zaug 2009:11-16, McPhee and Zaug 2000) define these four communication flows and relationships as follows:

1. *Membership negotiation:* involves procedures to answers the question, "who are we?" and is comprised of identification and socialization processes.
2. *Reflexive self-structuring:* involves procedures to answers the question, "what rules and regulations do we operate by?" and distinguishes organizations from general groups in the structuring of the organization—setting up rules, organizational charts, procedure manuals, decision-making processes etc.
3. *Activity coordination:* involves procedures to answers the question, "how should we coordinate our work?" and focuses on the coordination of various work processes in order to reach organizational goals.
4. *Institutional positioning:* involves procedures to answers the question, "what should we do in order to legitimatize the organization externally?" and involves communication *at the macro level* in order to position the organization in its external environment and provide recognition for its existence.

This four-flows framework analytically distinguishes between four constitutive communication flows and illustrates how these interface with practical organizational problems.

   Critics of the four flows framework can be divided into two groups: those who find the framework to be an important contribution to the communication theory of the constitution of organization but believe that it lacks to some degree, and those who reject it. The scholars rejecting the framework are the ones who reject the concept of CCO as a whole (see for example Bisel, 2010; Reed, 2010). Despite finding the framework valuable, scholars associated with the Montreal School are also possibly the strongest critics of the four flows framework (Brummans et al. 2014). Cooren and Fairhurst (2009), for example, find the four flows framework too deductive and promote a more inductive perspective in order to bridge the gap between the micro, the local, and the macro, the global (Cooren and Fairhurst, 2009).

This is something that Weick (1979) has also been accused of in his model of organizations as interpretive systems (Cooren and Fairhurst 2009, Taylor and Van Every 2000). Taylor (2009) adds that the framework is missing an explanation of which communication theory to apply.

2.3.3.3   The late Luhmann and CCO

It is the work by the late Niklas Luhmann that is beginning to have the most obvious influence on CCO research. While Steffen Blaschke, Dennis Schoeneborn and David Seidlare are working to translate Luhmann's work into a theoretical framework suitable for the CCO perspective (Brummans et al. 2014) they have also begun applying this work in empirical studies. In one empirical study they incorporate the CCO perspective into a methodology that places communication at the center of network analysis (Blaschke, Schoeneborn, and Seidl 2012).

Luhmann (1995) developed his own systems theory that focuses on the existence and characteristics of self-referential systems. These systems have, according to Luhmann (Luhmann 1995, 2006), the ability to establish relationships with themselves while at the same time being able to differentiate these from systems with their environment. The self-referential systems are different in that they re-enact or re-constitute their own existences. Luhmann emphasizes the importance of communication in these systems by stating that they are not made of human beings but of communication (Luhmann 1995). He argues that only communication can communicate and defines communication by identifying a three-part selection process that involves information, utterance and understanding. This means "that communication happens when information that has been uttered is understood" (Luhmann 2006:47). Luhmann (1995) claims that communication is constitutive of social systems and that there are special types of communication, which he refers to as decision communications (Brummans et al. 2014). A suitable conclusion of the Luhmann approach to CCO is to state that for scholars – following Luhmann – organization is nothing else but a communication system (Brummans et al. 2014).

2.3.3.4   CCO summary

Brummans et al. (2014) conclude their description of the emerging field of CCO research by pointing to how the three CCO approaches, described above, differ in their view on what it is that organizations are constituted in and by:

1) The situated performance. For McPhee and Zaug it is the "human action," for the Montreal School it is the "conversation," and for the Luhmannians the situated performance is the "communication acts."

2) The result, that is, that which survives, that which becomes stable over time in comparison to the situational interactions. For McPhee and Zaug this is "structures," for the Montreal School it is "texts, material artifacts etc.," and for the Luhmannians it is "systems."

3) Their views of agency or authorship. McPhee and Zaug focus on human agency while the Luhmann scholars contend that communication is the only author of an organizational system. Finally, the Montreal School, with its four translations, emphasize multiple kinds of both human- and non-human agencies or a plenum of agencies to use the terminology Cooren (2006) prefers.

This means that even though the three approaches differ they subscribe to the same emphasis on the formative effect of language and speech on collective sensemaking and social coordination.

However, it is worth noticing that the CCO perspective has been criticized for not considering the fact that managers' and subordinates' capabilities of discursively constructing the organization differ due to different power relations (Cloud 2005, Zoller 2014), a criticism that still is relevant (Zoller 2014). The CCO's lack of recognizing power relations within organizing processes and organizations has influenced my theoretical choices and the framework I use in this dissertation.

2.3.4 Power, Empowerment and Tensions

This dissertation focuses on the communicative initiatives in regards to the empowerment processes in the two studied organizations This involves exploring the communication-power relationship, that is, how power is formed, distributed and or enacted communicatively in the communicative interactivities initiated in order to empower all organizational members. Hence, organizations have an interest in how discourse constitutes the distribution of power among organizational members as well as the forms of power on which organizational members can draw (Hardy and Phillips 2004). This part is comprised of theories and concepts that either aim to explain or further explore the relationship between communication and organization or are of importance to this relationship as they explore other significant parts of communication, organizing and organization.

2.3.4.1 Power and empowerment

Mumby (1988) contends that power is both a medium and an outcome in organizations, meaning that power is a product of organizational activity as well as the process through which activities are institutionalized. Michel Foucault (1980) would probably agree as he contends that power is an

integral part of everyday life. Be it a private or an organizational setting, a formal or an informal situation, power is ubiquitously present. As a result there are a number of schools of thought that consider power in organizations; see, for example, works by Karl Marx (1990), Max Weber (1978), Erving Goffman (1968), Anthony Giddens (1984), Michel Foucault (1980) and Henri Fayol (Wren, Bedeian, and Breeze 2002).

While the theories and ideas about power are widely different, one may divide them into two general and dominant perspectives, a functionalistic and a critical. Cynthia Hardy and Stewart Clegg (2006) contend that these two perspectives historically have dominated the study of power in organizational settings even though neither has stayed fixed, particularly not after having being influenced by postmodern ideas.

The work by Foucault has, for example, changed how critical researchers study power and resistance, though few functionalistic, that is, management researchers have taken Foucault's work into account (Hardy and Clegg 2006). The ones who have done so are managerial researcher focusing mainly on change.

The functionalistic perspective is derived from mainstream management ideas where power is considered formal. It legitimizes authority and is used to suppress conflict and/or resistance. The power structures in organizations have been taken more or less for granted within this perspective (Clegg, Kornberger, and Pitsis 2011).

The critical perspective originates from works by Karl Marx and Max Weber. Power here is conceptualized as domination, with resistance as the one thing challenging power. After Foucault's entrance within the power discourse scene there has been an ongoing debate about whether or not Foucault's and other postmodern ideas should be considered as a separate category from the criticalist category (see, for example, Alvesson and Deetz 2006, Hardy and Leiba-O'Sullivan 1998). However, no matter what perspective is applied in a study, research on power phenomena are in general characterized by polarities and contradictions (Fincham 1992, McNeil 1978) such as power versus powerlessness (Gaventa 1980; Hardy 1995), individual power versus collective power (Bradshaw 1998), oppression versus emancipation (Alvesson and Willmott 1992), obedience/complacence versus resistance (see, for example, Bradshaw and Wicks 1997; Hamilton and Woolsey Biggart 1985; Jermier, Knights and Nord 1994), manifest/surface power versus latent/deep power (Bradshaw 1998) and overt versus unobtrusive power (Hardy and Clegg 1996). Naturally they all provide just as many definitions of the concept of power.

Though the concept of resistance is identified as one separate polarity, it also permeates other contradicting concepts, and in the processes of studying power and organizational change focus has often been on a triangulation between the concepts of power, organization and resistance (Hardy and Clegg 2006). In such events power is considered as power over someone

rather than power with someone (Hardy and Clegg 1996, Bradshaw 1998, Hardy and Clegg 2006).

Even though the *power over* concept traditionally has been part of the dominant view of power, there are other views. In 1918, Mary Parker Follett (Kraft 1999)[4] introduced the concept of *power with* while focusing on how to democratize power. Follett distinguished between *power over* and *power with,* meaning that power is shared among all organizational members. Follett's work was initially introduced within the functionalistic and managerial perspective but even so her idea was that organizations create and organize power and that organizations should focus on developing the *power with* rather then the *power over*. This would lead to democratic organizations in which organizational members could exercise power at all organizational levels through participation, empowerment, education and pluralism. These organizations feed and enrich society rather than feed off society, something she argued that organizations characterized by authoritarian homogeneity do. But since the majority of scholars within the functionalistic perspective continued to consider power as illegitimate if used by subordinates and neglected to analyze the power held by the management, there was little interest to take Follett's ideas further. The functionalistic perspective implicitly takes the managers' power for granted.

However, more recent research emphasizes the necessity to consider *power with*. For example, research focusing on organizational change processes point to participating in decision-making and reducing uncertainty as two important variables when implementing organizational change (see for example Dozier, Grunig, and Grunig 1995, Broom and Dozier 1986, Dozier and Broom 1995, Grunig 1992). Both variables involve *power with* or empowerment and communication efforts. *Power with* has also been discussed in relation to empowerment by public relations scholar Bruce K. Berger (2005).

Empowerment and its related concepts participatory management, co-management, employeeship and co-workership have been reoccurring themes within a number of disciplines over the years (see for example Broom 1982, Ciulla 2004, Creedon 1991, DiFonzo and Bordia 1998, Greenbaum 1974, Møller 1994, Tengland 2007). Gretchen M. Spreitzer and David Doneson (2005) stated in 2005 that more than 70 percent of studied organizations had implemented some kind of empowerment initiative in at least part of their organizations.

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[4] I have unfortunately not been able to get access to Follett's original work from 1918, *The new state: Group organization, the solution for popular government.* New York: Longman, Green and Co.

Because the functionalistic, mainstream management perspective and the critical perspective have different connotations about power, they also have different ideas about what empowerment means. The functionalistic, mainstream management perspective emphasizes the transitive use of the verb empowerment—in that it can grant and bestow power—and that empowerment may be used to motivate organizational members to work to reach organizational goals (Hardy and Leiba-O'Sullivan 1998). The critical perspective, on the other hand, focuses on the reflexive use of empowerment, meaning that empowerment is used to gain or assume power over others, which implies that empowerment must be comprised of the means to battle the sources of domination (Hardy and Leiba-O'Sullivan 1998). As a response to these conclusions, the Foucauldian perspective proposes that the critical perspective should not be so rigid in its view because for some organizational members "empowerment may offer new, more meaningful identities and experiences" (Hardy and Leiba-O'Sullivan 1998:475).

The concept of empowerment had hardly been introduced before it was criticized (Boje and Rosile 2001). Critics argue that empowerment is yet another way to exploit workers through the use of humanistic rhetoric, which is in line with critical researchers' views on what empowerment means. These critics argue that successful empowerment implies that it is actually the managers that have become empowered by making subordinates more loyal to the management agenda (Røvik 2000). Ciulla (2004) elaborates the critique and discuss *bogus* empowerment, meaning processes where subordinates are given more responsibility but without further or extended control and no extra time. The opposite of *bogus* empowerment is *authentic* empowerment, which refers to empowerment processes in which subordinates are given control over outcomes so that they can be responsible for their work (Ciulla 2004). This is a relevant issue for scholars applying the critical perspective on empowerment (Spreitzer and Doneson 2005). When managers' interests for this theory decrease, the main reason has generally been the lack of positive effects when implementing empowerment in organizations (DiFonzo and Bordia 1998).

Despite the criticism, the empowerment concept is continually used and referred to, though not necessarily with the same meaning (see, for example, Conger and Kanungo 1988, Geroy, Wright, and Anderson 1998, Hackman et al. 1995, Honold 1997, Markey, Reichheld, and Dullweber 2009, Smith 1998). In a conceptual discussion about how to define empowerment, Tengland (2008) presents two complementary uses; one where empowerment is the goal and one where empowerment is viewed as a process or the means. It is the process definition of empowerment that is relevant to further explore the relationship between senior managers and subordinates and how they work to constitute the organization. This may

seem contradictory since Tengland himself argues that organizations are not able to work towards empowerment according to this definition. The reason, he contends, is the challenge to conceive how the reduction of power or influence is being achieved between the organization – in this case the managers – and the individual or group – in this case the organizational members.

Tengland argues that organizations set the agenda and provide funding, and with that indeed comes power and influence. Tengland's process definition is relevant in this study since the management's aim in each of the two organizations studied was not to fully remove the power and influence managers have over organizational members but, rather, to decrease it and, most importantly, give more power to organizational members to handle their work tasks autonomously (Brower, 1995), thereby participating in the constitution of the organization. The main aim for the managers was then to invite organizational members to become further engaged in their work and give them more responsibility and autonomy to reach presented visions and goals. This would lead to a process in which the power balance and relationships between managers and organizational members change (Conger & Kanungo, 1988) in a way that could be defined according to Tengland's (2008:93) definition of empowerment as a process:

> We achieve empowerment (in a combined sense) when a person (or group) A acts towards (in relation to) another person (or group) B in order to support B (by creating the opportunity and environment, and giving 'expertise' support) in gaining better control over (some of) the determinants (those relevant for the situation or profession) of her (quality of) life through (necessarily) an increase in B's knowledge (self-knowledge, consciousness raising, skills development, or competence), or health (e.g., autonomy, self-confidence, self- efficacy, or self-esteem) or freedom (positive and negative), and this acting of A towards B involves minimizing A's own 'power' (or influence) over B with regard to goal/problem formulation, decision-making and acting, and B seizes (at least) some control over this situation or process (goal/problem formulation, decision-making and acting).

Timothy Kuhn (2008) contends that theories of the firm[5] retain infertile ideas in regards to intra-organizational power and stakeholder relationships and, in so doing, lack tools to explore the social sides of organizations. Also, these theories are built on a transmission view of communication, according to him. Hence, he suggests "A Communicative Theory of the Firm" as an alternative to traditional theories of the firm, which he divides into either a "governance-based" approach or a "competence-based" approach (Kuhn 2008). Scholars adhering to theories of the firm aim to explore the reasons

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[5] Organizational scholars who are interested in the reason for firm's existence, how firms operate internally as well as externally, use theories of the firm to address these issues.

for a firm's existence, its internal and external operations as well as its boundaries. Kuhn's alternative theory, "A Communicative Theory of the Firm" is informed by the Montreal School's understanding of the conversation-text dialectic and the CCO perspective. Kuhn contends that there is a trend in contemporary organization studies to consider power as a feature that is both shifting and variable and present in all social relationships and systems. Power is present in all activity structuring and meaning production because "power does not reside exclusively in persons or offices, and material resources" (Kuhn 2008:1229). "A Communication Theory of the Firm" offers, among other things, an opportunity for scholars to understand organizational power, that is, how power is exercised in organizing and the power of organizations (Kuhn 2008).

This leads us to discover that dialectic power relationships between managers and subordinates are, first and foremost, interdependent but also asymmetrical, contradictory and contested. A flatter and more flexible organization means that organizational members are given more power, which affects the power relations between managers and subordinates. Hence, I find it relevant to discuss the criticized concept of empowerment, while acknowledging that this concept is widely recognized as a double-edged sword (Lewis 2007). One reason that has been mentioned already is that organizational members are often given more responsibility and more work but neither the freedom nor the time to deal with this responsibility—in other words, *bogus empowerment,* as Ciulla (2004) refers to it.

> What we know about reality is never more than what is expressed through language, which shows that knowledge and power are inseparable (Foucault 1980)

> Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere… power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society" (Foucault 1998, 93)

Cynthia Hardy and Nelson Phillips (2004) build on the work by Foucault and contend that discourse is comprised of the distribution of power among actors as well as the forms of power that may exist. This is fixed at times; then the discourse evolves again and the discourse power relations change. Hardy and Phillips contend that "discourse shapes relations of power while relations of power shape who influences discourse over time and in what way" (2004:299). Hardy and Phillip further state that much focus has been given to how discourse produces systems of power while little focus has been given to how power influences discourse (2004). Hence, they

encourage scholars to further explore this complex and mutually constitutive relationship between power and discourse.

Since the structure sharing of power creates challenging processes, tensions often occur. An increasingly complex modern society in general also leads to more organizational tensions. As a result a number of scholars consider tensions to be ubiquitous in organizational life and suggest a tension-centered approach.

2.3.4.2 Tensions

Stohl and Cheney use the term tension to refer to "the clash of ideas or principles or actions and to the discomfort that may arise as a result" (2001:353-354). Tension as a term, they contend, has a broad scope and include ironies, contradictions, conflicts, paradoxes and other similar complexities (Stohl and Cheney 2001). The interest for organizational tensions of all kinds has increased in recent decades.

A review of research literature discussing tensions suggests a change in attitude over time towards this phenomenon. While most of the early research on organizational tensions suggest that only problems result from tensions, later research suggest that tensions are inherent in organizations, inescapable, normal and may even be encouraged and are productive at times (see for example Tracy 2004, Trethewey and Ashcraft 2004a, Stohl and Cheney 2001). Previous CCO research, for example, appears to primarily have focused on studying organizational continuity, in particular the properties of self-structuring where tensions were considered to be disruptive or disturbing the continuity and, therefore should be avoided. Limited consideration was given to the role of tensions in organizational continuity and change processes (Ashcraft, Kuhn, and Cooren 2009, Brummans et al. 2014). More recent research, on the contrary, find that tensions do not necessarily have to be disruptive.

In fact, tensions are important because they contribute to the organizational constitution while also being powerful agents of change (see, for example, Cooren et al. 2013) Yet another difference between early and more recent research on tensions is that early research situates tensions as solely belonging to alternative organizations (Trethewey and Ashcraft 2004a). The decentralization and participation processes (discussed in this dissertation's introduction), with a more empowered workforce where coorientation is in focus, naturally make for an increased number of organizational tensions, as members from various parts of an organization, with various backgrounds and with various world-views, are involved in the organizing.

Stohl and Cheney (2001) have identified four categories of tensions in the form of paradoxes, each holding several subcategories, that are present in participative processes. The four paradox categories are structure, agency, identity, and power. These paradoxes are derived from Stohl and Cheney's (2001) definition of participation (for this definition, turn to the introduction, page 24) and even though the distinction between them have important heuristic and practical value, they all overlap and are interdependent.

When discussing the importance of addressing tensions as imperative properties explaining organizational continuity and change, Brummans et al. (2014:177) illustrate how the model – "Organization as a Dynamic of Four Translations" – that reveals the Montreal School's key commitments also suggests why tensions are inherent in organizations. They claim that while the activities illustrated in the two right-hand boxes of this model (see Figure 1) involve continuous work to meet the expectations of the internal as well as the external environment, an act that is particularly important when learning is continuous, such as in times of rapid technological advancements, the activities in the left-hand boxes are aimed at handling the public's view of the organization and the continuity of this presentation or "presentification" (2014:177). This causes – according to Barley (1996) and Brummans et al. (2014:31) – a discrepancy between the *authority of expertise*, which is developed locally by organizational members, and the *authority of position,* which refers to that which is already known (and must continue to be known) to the public about the organization. This is an area that mainly senior managers are responsible for.

Today, a number of organizational communication scholars – particularly within the CCO field – agree that tensions are ubiquitous in organizational life, and the reason is that tensions are inherent in any organizational form (Cooren et al. 2013) and, specifically, in organizational change processes (Seo, Putnam, and Bartunek 2004, Stohl and Cheney 2001). This realization has resulted in a call from Angela Trethewey and Karen L. Ashcraft (2004b:82) to adopt a "tension-centered approach to organizations." Trethewey and Ashcraft contend that "scholarship that denies the powerful presence of tensions neglects the basic character of organizational life" (2004:171).

Previous research exploring oppositional tensions suggests a dialectical lens that provides four categories of actions for managing tensions caused by dialectics (Ashcraft and Trethewey 2004:171). The four categories are 1) selection, 2) separation, 3) integration, and 4) transcendence. When applying the selection category, the parties involved ignore one side in favor of the other pole of the duality. The second category, separation, involves acknowledging the dualities but separating them as different levels of analyses, topical domains or temporal processes, thereby ignoring the

tensions. The third category, integration, combines the dualities in one of two ways, either by neutralizing them or by forcing a merger of the two. According to the transcendence approach – the fourth category – dualities are transformed into a new perspective or reframed. Myeong-Gu Seo, Linda L. Putnam and Jean M. Bartunek (2004) have explored underlying oppositional tensions in various types of planned change efforts, and as a result they refer to Bakhtin (2004) and Baxter and Montgomery (1981) while recommending a fifth approach for managing oppositional tensions. This approach is called *connection,* and it seeks ways to both embrace oppositional poles and draw energy from them while at the same time giving them equal voice (Seo, Putnam, and Bartunek 2004).

This chapter has provided a general overview of how the academic field of organizational communication has emerged as a research field, and it presents a description of some of the prominent theories in the field in order to provide a backdrop and situate the theoretical framework for this dissertation. In the following chapter, I will present my theoretical framework and explain how the research questions relate to this framework.

3 Theoretical Framework and Research Questions

In this chapter, I present the theoretical framework and elaborate on the research questions. I adhere to the idea that the conversation-text dialectic is the principal constitutive process (Taylor and Van Every 2000). Here I explain this and related theories that comprise the central concepts that inform my work and provide a framework that situates the research questions proposed to fulfill the aim of this dissertation.

3.1 The framework as a model for the research questions

The CCO approach views organizations as communicatively constituted (Brummans et al. 2014, Putnam and Nicotera 2010). Organizational members need to communicate in order to coordinate their activities. But communication is not superior to the organization, nor are communication and the organization equivalent; we communicate in order to organize, and we organize in order to communicate, which means that communication and organization are reflexively constitutive (Putnam and Nicotera 2010). This is in line with Taylor and Van Every's (2000) conversation-text dialectic. As such, the organization is not a static entity (Taylor and Van Every 2000).

Applying the CCO concept is to contend that organizations are constituted in communication, though this does not mean that scholars applying the CCO perspective are "reducing an organization to social interaction, language or discourse" (Putnam and Nicotera 2010:159), as critics have argued. The CCO perspective offers a sought-after approach to the micro-/macro-level issue that has been up for discussion and criticized, mainly from communication scholars' viewpoints on how organizational theory scholars apply this in studies of organizations (Reed 2010, Bisel 2010). The perspective does so in that it helps to examine how organizational rules and routines as well as material realities, that is, texts, are made present in interactions while, at the same time, examining how situated performances create text. In this chapter I will further illustrate and describe how this study's research questions address the conversation-text dialectic. Hence, the

Montreal School's approach to CCO serves as this study's main theoretical framework. The CCO approach applies the *grounded–n-action* perspective (Putnam and Nicotera 2009), which is also this study's main perspective. The *grounded-in-action* perspective takes the other two perspectives, i.e. organizations as objects and organizations as perpetual states of becoming into account, although on a narrower ground (Fairhurst and Putnam 2004). Therefore, in order to get a comprehensive understanding of the circumstances and interactions that this study explores, my research questions are formulated to also invoke the *object* and the *becoming* perspectives.

The research questions adhere to Taylor and Van Every's conversation-text dialectic, which is one of the theories that invokes all three perspectives (Fairhurst and Putnam 2004). This communication theory invokes the *object* perspective in that Taylor and Van Every contend that, once the text is authored, the organization becomes an independent object with material constraints. The *becoming* perspective is invoked when the focus is on examining the formative power of conversation and, in particular, that of coorientation. Finally, the *grounded-in-action* perspective is invoked as Taylor and Van Every contend that organizations exist at the intersection between conversation and text (Taylor and Van Every 2000). Fairhurst and Putnam (2004:21) state that addressing more than one orientation in the same study may prevent the failure of or neglect to consider important issues at either the *d*iscourse or *D*iscourse level.

As contended previously in this dissertation, we know that empowerment and participatory processes require more communication – in the sense that more members have to communicate more with each other about more things more of the time (Stohl and Cheney 2001). What we know little about is *how* communication is used in attempts to empower organizational members and encourage them to participate in the organizing and the constitution of the organization as well as how organizations work to enact the division between *authority of position* and *authority of expertise*. Since the two organizations that participate in this study emphasize communication between all organizational members – particularly between senior managers and subordinates – while implementing empowerment and participatory processes, these initiatives also provide an opportunity to explore how organizations communicatively deal with the contrast of the sources of authority, that is, this scission between *authority of position* and *authority of expertise* that illustrates why tensions in the form of contradictions are endemic in organizations (Brummans et al. 2014).

The management in both organizations intentionally changed the text because they wished to have a more empowered and participative workforce. In order to explore how the management's communicative initiatives contribute to empowering organizational members, encouraging

participation and influencing the gap between *authority of position* and *authority of expertise,* we need to have a comprehensive understanding of these initiatives but also of the circumstances around them. It involves a description of the larger social, economic and political environments at the *D*iscourse level, that is, the textual constraints and opportunities that have influenced the decision to make these intentional textual changes. Taylor (2011:1287) would refer to this as the "imbricated embedding." Thus, the study begins from an object orientation perspective and explores how the two organizations enact the idea that empowerment and participation processes require *more* communication. This is the focus in Chapters Five and Six, where each organization's attempts to increase communication between and among all organizational members as well as the reasons behind these intended organizational changes are described and explored. While exploring how organizations work in order to enhance communication, it is of interest to find out how organizational members perceive these attempts.

One of the organizations – which I refer to as BioB – is aiming to increase communication through the use of technology in a way that they have not done before. As will be elaborated further in Part II, Chapter Six, BioB is using an interactive video website to let organizational members tell their stories about how they work according to the organization's core values. The idea is that the narratives in these videos will encourage organizational members to engage in communication about the core values on the interactive video website. Research suggests that one way of engaging organizational members and encouraging the enactment process and the knowledge constitution is through storytelling (Boje, 1991). Storytelling is not used as a management tool but, rather, as a polyphonic approach to communication (Langer & Thorup, 2006), that is, as a tool for organizational members to share their stories about the organization.

Taylor and Van Every (2000) state that narratives are central in the constitutive process, as they reflect the interplay between conversation and text. Core values are considered abstract and difficult to enact into situated performances. Using narratives to present examples of how to enact core values in daily work has the potential to facilitate the execution of the core values and encourage interactivity between organizational members. The question is how this works via videos launched on an interactive website.

Weick (1995b) warns against blind faith in IT since IT tends to be characterized as lean rather than rich media, and Weick emphasizes the importance for organizational members to have access to several cues in order to reduce multiple meanings and ease organizational members' coorientation. But he is also among the scholars (see for example Brummans

et al. 2014, Weick 2009) who contend that contemporary global organizations need to develop new forms of organizing that utilize new technologies in order to engage in sensemaking that is applicable for the organization as a whole. The interactive video website may be considered a rich media (Weick and van Orden 1990), as it provides multiple cues: The organizational members can watch the narrator, listen to her/his talk and ask questions or add comments on the website. The interactive video website also provides opportunities for instant feedback– although it does not necessarily happen. Here it is important to state that the viewer cannot interact directly with the narrator. She or he can only interact with other viewers and the senior manager appointed to answer questions and respond to comments. The narrator uses natural language that organizational members understand. The majority of narrators speak Swedish, and the videos include English subtitles. If the narrator is not Swedish, she or he speaks English and the talk is subtitled in Swedish. The interactive video website might not be considered as having a personal focus, but it fulfills the other prerequisites for being a rich medium.

Drawing on the above, the use of the video website with its interactive features has the potential to, but will not necessarily, support communicative interactions that lead to coorientation. However, since research shows that the use of technology is not only dependent on the characteristics of the medium but also on the organization's communication culture and, in addition, that an individual's use of technology is influenced by how her or his colleagues use the technology (Fulk 1993), it is of interest to explore whether or not the intended use of the interactive video website differs from the actual use of it. This has led me to ask how the organizational members use this interactive video website. I also find it interesting to explore if there are any differences between communities of practice.

Taylor and Van Every (2000:40) contend that "conversation is the site of emergence of organization – where organization is enabled to disclose itself, to appear." Further, they argue that the midst of conversation is coorientation. Coorientation is the minimal communication unit exploring the ABX triad, operationalized as one member (A) talking to another member (B) about a topic or object of concern (X) (Taylor and Van Every 2000). Taylor and Robichaud (2004) emphasize that organizational members may be involved in communicative interactions but if they do not coorient they will never be coordinated. Tayor and Van Every's model also focuses on how the interlocutors think about the object of concern as well how each interlocutor takes the other member's orientation toward X into account, the situatedness of the communication, what is happening in the coorientation process and the use of language. Hence, the Montreal School's approach to CCO considers the ABX model to be the basic unit of analysis for

explaining conversation acts and how conversations become imbricated to form the text.

Taylor and Van Every's model is comparable and congruent with Tengland's process definition of empowerment. Tengland (2008) contends that a combined sense of empowerment is achieved when a person or group (A) interacts with another person or group (B) in regards to a topic or an object (X) with the aim to support the person or group (B) by increasing B's knowledge, health or freedom and minimize the power person or group (A) has over person or group (B) so that person or group (B) seizes at least some control over the particular situation or process.

Elaborating on research question number two leads me to ask if the studied communicative initiatives comprise instances of coorientation and/or empowerment processes? If yes, how is this done? If no, why not? These questions invoke the becoming perspective since they focus on exploring the formative power of communication. In Chapter Seven I identify instances of coorientation, empowerment processes and reasons why or why not coorientation takes place.

When organizational members from various communities of practice are involved in conversation, it means that more world views come together and need to be considered in order for the participants to reach coorientation. Stohl and Cheney (2001) contend that participation processes need more communication, meaning more communication between more organizational members about more things as well as additional ways of communicating. A consequence of having more organizational members involved in communication is that tensions of all kinds tend to frequently transpire (Stohl and Cheney 2001). For example, when organizational members join a conversation, they bring their own previous experiences, education, professions, prejudices, principles, values, norms, ideologies, interests and other aspects of themselves, and this adds to the communication puzzle, making it more complex.

Cooren et al. (Cooren 2012, Cooren et al. 2013) refer to these previous experiences, values and norms as figures. Cooren suggest a ventriloqual approach to identify figures. Figures can incarnate themselves or be incarnated in different ways depending on the individuals that ventriloquize them or the individuals that these figures ventriloquize or the situations or circumstances in which they are ventriloquized (Cooren et al. 2013, Cooren 2012). It is when these figures contradict or clash with each other that members experience tensions (Cooren et al. 2013). This means that the ventriloqual approach embraces human as well as non-human agents, meaning that non-human agents participate in human interactions in various ways. The ventriloqual approach provides an opportunity for the researcher to acquire deeper knowledge about who the agents are that contribute to the enactment of circumstances and situations (Cooren et al. 2013). The

approach also makes it possible to reconcile *D*iscourse with *d*iscourse, that is, explain how the dislocal is present in the local, as it provides the researchers with the opportunity to identify patterns of figures while also considering the details in each interaction (Cooren et al. 2013).

The globalized and dynamic world provides a number of *D*iscourse-related contradictions and ironies regarding organizational power distribution because while globalization suggests participatory processes, globalization also means the spread of multinational corporate control on a macro level (see, for example, Cooren et al. 2013, Cheney and Cloud 2006). In addition, Stohl and Cheney (2001) state that while organizational members are given more power, they are at the same time more controlled than ever through increased vertical (electronic) and horizontal (peer-based) monitoring of work.

Brummans et al. (2014) illustrate why tensions – in the form of contradictions – are endemic in contemporary organizations by pointing to the gap that exists between *authority of position*, those who are responsible for the organization's presentification, that is, sustaining the view of the organization (see the two boxes on the left-hand side of Figure 1 "Organization as a Dynamic of Four Translations"), and *authority of expertise*, those who are responsible for responding to external as well as internal changes by continually adjusting their modes of interacting and sensemaking (see the two boxes on the right-hand side of Figure 1). This contrast of sources of authority pinpoints the issues that the two organizations in this dissertation are facing. Both organizations are fully aware of the need for a more participative workforce in order to meet the challenges from contemporary society. The senior managers need to empower their subordinates in order to enhance participation, and they have concluded that this requires more of the kind of communication that involves coorientation and leads to coordinated activities and an organization that is radically decentralized, flexible and responsive to rapid change.

Applying a tension-centered approach may lead to a richer and more comprehensive understanding of how the communicative initiatives contribute to the organizing and the organization. For those reasons it is of value to study how tensions, inherent or not, are produced, reproduced, coproduced and enacted in the communicative interactions and how they influence participation. The tension-centered approach invokes the *grounded-in-action* perspective since tensions emerge at the intersection of conversation and text. Chapter Eight focuses on how tensions emerge, are enacted and influence participation and play into the organizing and the organization.

4 Research Settings, Methodology and Analytical Framework

This chapter is comprised of two parts. The first part situates the research with a presentation of the reasons for choosing these two particular case organizations as well as a brief description of each organization. This part contributes to a picture of the larger political, economical and social environment of the workplace in each organization, which is important as it is the backdrop against which all organizational members' sensemaking processes and discourse practices can be understood (Mumby 1987). I will describe and explore this further in the empirical chapters.

In the second part of this chapter I will account for and discuss my methodological approach and analytical framework. I use a combination of various methodological tools – together with the theories in the theoretical framework presented in the previous chapter – to zoom in and to zoom out (Nicolini 2009) of the organizing and the organization. The zooming in and out makes it possible to highlight certain aspects at one time while others are temporarily in the background and then switch. It provides an opportunity to study the communicative initiatives and explore whether or not these initiatives contribute to the organizing and the organization in that it highlights the relationships between the situated interactions, that is, the site and the text – or the surface.

4.1 Why these organizations?

The two organizations in this study aim to empower their members and encourage participation in the organizing process. What makes these organizations stand out is that they have made explicit that participation processes require enhanced communication between all organizational members. This involves communicative interactions that provide opportunities for sensemaking and coorientation (Taylor and Van Every 2000, Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obstfeld 2005). Since it is in the conversations between organizational members that the organization is formed and reformed, these organizations have decided to place a particular focus on communicative interactions.

The senior managers consider their subordinates to be experts in their respective positions while they themselves have the overall responsibilities for the continuation of the organization and are in charge of providing a coherent image of the same. Both management boards are of the opinion that this requires enhanced communication between members at all levels of the organization and not least between subordinates and senior managers. A division between senior managers and other organizational members may cause serious damage to an organization and even run the organization out of business, particularly in contemporary society where organizational members are required to rapidly respond to the ever-changing environment, according to the senior managers. This division between *authority of position* and *authority of expertise* is common in contemporary organizations, and Brummans et al. call for studies exploring how this contrast of sources of authority is worked out in practice (Brummans et al. 2014). Each organization has decided that it is time to facilitate and enhance communication between all organizational members and particularly between senior managers and their subordinates. I have strategically chosen to study these two case organizations because they both explicitly attempt to deal with this division while, at the same time, empowering organizational members and encouraging participation. Both organizations are present on the biomedical industry market, and though I was not prohibited to use each organization's authentic name, I have chosen to refer to them as BioA and BioB.

4.1.1   Why organization BioA?

In 2005 researchers from Lund University, Mid Sweden University and Stockholm University engaged in a discussion about a research project focusing on organizational communication during change processes. Members of a communication consultant firm were also involved in this discussion. A research proposal was sent to the Swedish Knowledge Foundation, and we were granted funding for a two-year project. Five researchers from the three universities made up the research team; in addition, we had a reference group consisting of one senior researcher, one professor and two consultants from a communication consultant firm – both of the latter had been part of the academic research world, one as a professor and one as a PhD student.

   Three organizations showed interest and agreed to take part in this research project. These organizations had recently, or were just about to, experience(ed) change processes, which the researchers were given permission to study. The project, Communication in Change Processes, commenced in 2006 and was concluded in 2008. One of the participating organizations was BioA. BioA's change process involved an empowerment and participatory process and included an aim to encourage and enhance

communication between senior managers and organizational members among and across all hierarchical levels. The senior managers were aiming for a more empowered workforce with increased engagement and participation in the organization, and they thought that one way of achieving this would be through increased communication. The research team was given the opportunity to follow the incorporation of the communication strategy process *Leading Through Communication* – aiming to encourage, facilitate and enhance communication – from the very beginning. Two researchers – one PhD and myself – were mainly involved in collecting data and exploring this process. The research project was concluded in November 2008 with a final presentation of the findings[6]. The whole research team and the reference group participated, and so did representatives from the three organizations. The presentation of the findings was followed by a workshop where the research team worked together with the organizations' representatives.

4.1.2 Why organization BioB?

In the spring of 2008 researchers from the Department of Information Science[7], Uppsala University, were asked to engage in a study of an interactive video website, which had the overall aim of enhancing communication among organizational members at all organizational levels in organization BioB. As already mentioned, the senior managers said they were aiming for a more empowered workforce with organizational members who participate in the organizing. They thought that one way of achieving this would be by encouraging communication, particularly between senior managers and their subordinates. They were of the opinion that communication has a significant role in the formation of the organization. The organizational members were considered experts that had lost their entrepreneurial spirit.

The interactive video website was produced by a business organization specializing in audio, video and website development. They received a grant from an agency of economic and regional growth and contacted our department to make a practical evaluation of the interactive video website.

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[6] The research project has been presented at conferences related to Organizational Communication and Media and Communication. The research project's findings are also published in a book, "Kommunikation i förändringsprocesser" [Communication in change processes] (Johansson and Heide 2008)

[7] In 2008 the department was called the Department of Information Science and consisted of four research fields, Human- Computer Interaction, Information Science, Media and Communication Science and Statistics. Since July 1, 2009, (after a reorganization in which Statistics formed its own department), the department name is the Department of Informatics and Media.

Seeing that the study was relevant for all research disciplines within the department, we formed a reference group consisting of a professor from each discipline, representatives from the company producing the interactive platform and the videos, representatives from the BioB – the organization where the interactive video website was to be incorporated – and two researcher – one post–doctorial researcher and myself. This reference group met on a regular basis, with more meetings during the initial phase of the study, to discuss the outline of the study, arising obstacles and opportunities, the results and the analysis. The research project was concluded on September 3, 2010, with a final presentation[8] (presented by myself and my research colleague) of the findings and a discussion of the same with representatives from BioB and representatives from the organization that produced the interactive video website.

4.1.3 BioA

BioA is an integrated biopharmaceutical company with a global presence, characterized as innovation-driven. BioA develops, manufactures and market prescription medicines for six areas within the healthcare industry: cancer, cardiovascular disease, gastrointestinal disease, infection, neuroscience, and respiratory difficulties & inflammation. Our study was carried out at one of the company's Swedish sites, which at the time was the company's largest production site with more than 4,000 organizational members and with global sales responsibilities. While 700 of the members were involved in the overall change process, aimed at implement *Lean Manufacturing,* only approximately 100 members participated in the pilot where the communication process *Leading through Communication* was initiated and the research project was carried out. *Lean Manufacturing* – hereafter called *Lean* – implementations had been initiated in parts of the organization before, but this was the first time it was going to be done with an overall perspective in mind.

The communication process was initiated in the pilot project with the plan that it was going to be initiated in the whole organization along with the *Lean* implementation. The 100 members worked in two different divisions, both manufacturing liquid medicine but with various foci. Approximately thirty of these members served as either senior managers or on the management board of these divisions. The communication process, *Leading through Communication,* will be described in further detail in the empirical chapter.

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[8] The findings from the research project have been presented at conferences related to Organizational Communication, Media and Communication and Information Systems. The findings are also published in an article in New Media and Society (Hrastinski and Monstad 2013).

4.1.3.1 Reasons behind the Implementation of the Change Process

The middle managers at the organization's manufacturing site attended a external course in 2004/2005 to learn about TPM, or *Total Production Maintenance/Management*, also known as *Lean* or *Total Quality Management*[9] (TQM), which more or less are synonymous with TPM. The organization suffered from intense competition both internally and externally, as several key licenses had expired and the organization risked closure because there were other geographic locations that could offer cheaper manufacturing. The middle managers realized that TPM could make the organization more competitive and started to sell the idea to their senior manager and the management board. Their senior manager agreed to introduce TPM, but he left the organization shortly after, and the implementation was never carried out. A new senior manager was appointed in the autumn of 2005. He responded positively to the idea. In September of 2005, he agreed to introduce TPM, and middle managers were given budget to acquire knowledge.

4.1.3.2 What does *Lean* mean?

Lean can be described as lean or resource-efficient production. Sometimes it is also referred to as *Lean Production;* as stated above, the general idea has many names and abbreviations.

The business concepts, principles and methods that fall under the overall concept of *Lean* are used in projects for systematic improvement in organizations. *Lean* aims to involve and encourage everyone in the organization to work towards common goals.

The *Lean* principles are often used in product manufacturing but can also be applied in all parts of an organization, including administrative processes.

A central issue within *Lean* is to divide time and activities into either a value-generating category or a non-value-adding category. The value-generating section is comprised of activities that create value for the customer. Focus within *Lean* is to eliminate the non-value-adding activities. Owners, organizational members and society are all stakeholders in the value-generating activities.

Lean originated in the automotive industry as a result of many years of intense competition. The automotive manufacturer Toyota is considered to be the founder of *Lean*.

A house or temple is often used as an illustration or visualization of an organization's production system. It shows how the principles, methods and tools that are included in the *Lean* process work together to create a cohesive whole.

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[9] Of the terms presented, *Total Quality Management* (TQM) is the most commonly used notion in the research literature.

In short, one of the basic ideas of *Lean* is that focus should be on the sole things that add value for the customers. Everything else is considered waste, or *muda*, as it is called in Japanese.

4.1.3.3   The procedure

The planning phase for *Lean* began on November 1, 2005. At the same time two *Lean* coordinators were appointed. They started their work with a situation analysis over a two-month period. The situation analysis was carried out in the two divisions that participated in the pilot. Managers, middle managers and organizational members were interviewed, and the interviews indicated that these various members did not share the same views; rather they had completely different ideas about the organization's business goals. The interviews also indicated that communication between organizational members differed in these pilot divisions.

In early 2006, the work to implement *Lean* commenced in the two pilot divisions, and in June, 2006, the work to create a communication strategy for the implementation of *Lean* within the pilot studies was initiated through the use of the communication strategy process, *Leading through Communication*.

By mid-October, 2006, the implementation of *Lean* was underway in the majority of the factories in this manufacturing organization. From then on the work to implement *Lean* in the rest of the organization intensified, and a so-called *Lean* team was formed, consisting of the two *Lean* coordinators from the pilot divisions, one *Lean* expert from a consultant firm and four factory managers.

4.1.3.4   A Communication Strategy for *Lean*

A communication strategy for the new business organization was developed by the management group leading the *Lean* implementation and with the communication practitioners as facilitators. The strategy has its foundation in the assumption that change communication should follow a specific process, focusing on relevant stakeholders and channels, and answering the questions why, what and how in regards to the change process. The goal of the communication strategy is to support the implementation of *Lean* and gain knowledge about attitudes and/or behaviors in regards to *Lean* among involved organizational members.

The situation analysis conducted prior to the *Lean* change process showed that communication processes differed between the pilot divisions, and it was therefore concluded that an educational effort concerning communication was necessary. The approach to this educational effort was, first, to create a uniform level of knowledge about organizational communication among senior managers leading the *Lean* change process. This was to take place simultaneously with the development of the

communication strategy. The next step would then be to train middle managers and other managers and communication ambassadors – these communication ambassadors will be identified when the empirical examples are presented – and at a later stage all organizational members.

4.1.4 BioB

The organization studied in the second case study project is a biotechnology and medical device organization that primarily develops, manufactures, markets and sells medical products. It was founded in 1987 and grew rapidly until the spring of 2009. In October, 2008[10], the company had 454 organizational members at the company's head office and the production facility in Sweden. The number of organizational members was reduced to 359 – at the head office and production facility – by February, 2010, when our last questionnaire was launched.

4.1.4.1 Organizational Structure

When the research project commenced, the Swedish head office was divided into seven units; Supply Chain, Medical Affairs, Research & Development, EMEA (sales), Quality Assurance, Strategic Marketing and Stab (consisting of HR, Corporate, Legal, Finance & Administration). By the time the second questionnaire was launched, organizational changes had taken place and the organization had two additional units, Regulatory Affairs and Project Management.

All organizational members except the ones working on the assembly line have their own computers. The assembly line members use computers, but they do not have access to computers at the production site. The production site is located on the ground floor, and the assembly line computers are located on the floor above. The assembly line members need to access computers to find information about changes in the planned production and to fill out forms and checklists. Once the members have carried out these work tasks they either start, return to, or finish their shifts on the assembly line. Hence, organizational members working in other divisions have more regular access to computers because they are assigned either their own desktop computers or laptops.

   The company is continually working with changes toward decentralization.

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[10] At this time the company had a total of 750 employees, with subsidiaries in almost 20 countries and distributers in more than 60 countries.

4.2 Research choices

When beginning a research process, a researcher has to make a number of choices. The most obvious choice is, of course, the research field and area of interest. It is also important for the researcher to choose theoretical framework and how to methodologically approach the research material. Different researchers choose to approach projects differently. They can choose an inductive-, deductive-, or abductive–reasoning approach, even if these approaches intersect each other. I would define my research as mainly based on inductive reasoning as I work bottom-up with the constitutive role of organizational communication, although I initially start out with the text in the form of the change processes. Once I had defined my research area, the aim and my research questions, I searched for theories and methods that I could use as tools to explore and acquire knowledge about the field. During my work I realized that additional theories were applicable and necessary, which again affected my empirical examples, my area of interest as well as my research questions. Throughout the remainder of my work process I went back and forth between the empirical examples and applied theories.

Since this dissertation is comprised of studies of two organizations, I will present the methodological choices for each of them in separate sections. The two organizations have the same overall aim with their communicative initiatives, and I have used similar methodological tools. Nevertheless, because the empirical settings are somewhat diverse, there are differences in when and how the methods have been applied in each study. By describing the use of the methods in each case study, I aim to point out the differences and yet again show that by adjusting the methods to the empirical examples – in regards to both time and space – I am able to collect data to analyze and fulfill the overall aim of this dissertation.

This study's main ontological perspective – the *grounded-in*-action orientation – views the relationship between organization and communication as complex, exemplified here by Stanley A. Deetz's (1982:144) statement; "Organizations are composed of a multiplicity of texts." This, in combination with the fact that communication encompasses a great portion of tacit knowledge, suggests a number of methodological challenges and therefore lends itself the use of several methods. Hence, my methodological choices are influenced by my ontological standpoints, though they are determined first and foremost by my research questions. But as Giddens (1984) states, the methodological choices are also dependent on the "number of cases" being investigated. A qualitative method may be favorable when the number of cases to be studied is few, while a quantitative method might be to prefer if the number of cases is extensive. The most common objections against qualitative methods come from researchers

within the quantitative tradition and vice versa. The issues quantitative researchers put forward are questions about reliability, validity, and the potential to generalize from the results.

Given that I approach my work with a social constructionist perspective, the reader may assume that I apply methodologies of a qualitative nature (Fletcher 2006), which I also do. Individual interviews, focus groups and observations are all qualitative methods that are applied in this dissertation. However, in addition to these methods I have also used questionnaires, resulting in empirical data that is collected using both qualitative and quantitative methods, which I will discuss more explicitly in this chapter. After considering these conditions, I applied a mixed-methods approach, and my dissertation rests on a so-called embedded design, making it a unique set of data. While the qualitative methods are considered primary, this design permits a comparison not only between qualitative data but also between the quantitative and the qualitative data sets (Myers 2014).

Once I chose my methods, my epistemological view influenced how I approached and used each one. I applied a localist approach (Qu and Dumay 2011, Alvesson 2003) to my qualitative examples, meaning that I made myself aware of additional and alternative understandings of the interview process, be it individual interviews or focus group interviews, which can provide me with additional insights. A tape recorder was used when carrying out the observations, the individual interviews and the focus group sessions. Shortly after each session I wrote down my reflections. The material was transcribed. The details about the analyzing processes for each section are described below. The thoughts that came to mind during the analysis of the raw data were presented in memos.

Observation seemed as a relevant method in this study, as the overall aim was to explore communicative initiatives aiming to enhance communication between organizational members. Thus, observations were used in order to explore whether or not these communicative initiatives contributed to each organizing process and the organization as a whole. I also needed to find out how the organizational members perceived circumstances and situations, and for that reason I use questionnaires, individual interviews and focus group sessions. Focus groups are also valuable, if not indispensable, in order to, for example, identify and gather knowledge about possible post-exposure activities in BioB where the interactive video website is incorporated. I was able to follow the communication on the interactive video website and observe the number of questions and comments posted on the website, but since I did not have the opportunity to spend a lengthier amount of time in the organization in order to observe post-exposure activities, I decided to use focus groups. In the focus group sessions the participants helped each other to remember possible informal or formal communication that could be

explained as a result of visiting the interactive website and viewing the videos.

My research approach has much in common with and is inspired by an ethnographical approach. An ethnographical study involves long-term observations in a cultural setting. Because of a mutual focus on long-term observation, the ethnographical approach is often considered synonymous with anthropology. However, the idea behind an ethnographical study is to illustrate how social actions can be understood from a particular cultural viewpoint (Silverman 1985).

David Silverman (1985) considers all research involving observations in natural settings that also take into account the interdependency between theory and empirics as belonging to the ethnographical perspective. If I were to apply Silverman's definition on my work, it would be considered an ethnographical study. However, since the length of my observations in each organization is somewhat limited, I adhere to Cooren et al.'s (2008) suggestion of "passing organizational ethnography," which is based on Helen B. Schwartzman's (1993) notion of organizational ethnography in combination with Nick Couldry's (2003) suggestion of passing ethnography.

Couldry builds on developments within cultural anthropology and suggest a theory of passing ethnography. He argues that contemporary researchers do not have the luxury to spend extensive periods at a particular site when they are studying complex, multi-site phenomena with a large number of agents involved. These researchers cannot claim to know more about the object of study than the people connected to this object, but they can still make a valuable claim, according to Couldry. Passing ethnography suggest that researchers conduct studies over a limited period of time, and during this time the researcher seeks to engage with as much context as possible, with the complicity of the people at the site (Couldry 2003).

Both organizations generously provided each research team with any information that either they or we thought would be valuable. We were given guided tours of the various departments and access to documents as well informal talks. These data in addition to the questionnaires, the individual interviews, observations and focus groups sessions provided us with much knowledge and an intimate familiarity with the specific contexts in each organization. Therefore, I believe that I have worked around this issue of not have been able to spend extensive amount of time in each organization, and I am reasonably confident that I have been able to study what I have aimed to study.

4.2.1 Designing the BioA case study

In order to explore BioA's communicative initiative our research team decided to use a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. For this case study we found it relevant to use one questionnaire, observations and individual interviews.

Since the larger political, economic and social environments impact organizational members' sensemaking processes, it is valuable to explore this environment in order to get a comprehensive understanding of the communicative initiative at BioA. Hence, we searched for information about the organization in general, knowledge about the organization's communication culture, how organizational members perceive the internal communication and how engaged members perceive themselves to be in the organizing process. This required the use of a questionnaire, as the target group consisted of approximately one hundred employees. Data from the questionnaire revealed the organization's communication culture, employees' preferred modes of communication and other similar information. These results were valuable knowledge when observing the workshops, and they were also used when forming the interview questions.

Observation was the most suitable method to study the communicative initiative and the sessions aiming to enhance a team spirit among the participants. Observations were carried out in the senior managers' and managers' workshops, the so-called *Message testing and Message integration* workshop and the so-called *Team-twirl* workshops. In order to get a thorough understanding of the organization and its workings, we visited the organization's production site as well as other parts of the organization. These visits provided additional information about the organization while at the same time facilitating the analysis of data collected using other methods. Apart from the visits in the organization we also got access to various documents, which helped us to get a more comprehensive picture of the organization as a whole.

   The workshops that focused on enhancing organizational members' knowledge about communication (in the communication strategy process *Leading through Communication*) mainly targeted senior managers, managers and informal leaders, with the idea that they would take the knowledge about communication and pass it on to the members of their departments or divisions (both in the sense that these managers and/or informal leaders should use the knowledge when communicating but also to teach their colleagues about the role of and possible implications of conversation). Since we believed that the outcomes of these workshops would – to a great extent – depend on these individual managers' and informal leaders' perceptions of them, we found it important to use

interviews. We did not want these managers and informal leaders to influence each other when discussing this. Also, the workshop participants may have had very different experiences and may feel these experiences would be too personal to share with colleagues (Esaiasson 2007, Silverman 2006). For these reasons we chose individual interviews. The interviews provided the ability to elaborate on results from the observations. We were also interested in the communication practitioners' individual ideas and perceptions about their new way of working, information that also lends itself to interviews.

4.2.1.1 Questionnaire

One questionnaire was used in the BioA study. The responses from this questionnaire aimed to reveal 1) members' attitudes toward the communication and information regarding the implementation of *Lean*, 2) members' knowledge about the purpose of the change project, 3) members' perceptions of their own involvement and engagement in the *Lean* process and 4) members' preferred ways for communicating within the organization. The questionnaire also included descriptive data, such as number of employment years, age, gender, education and other personal specifics. The questionnaire was administered in the fall of 2006 and the spring of 2007. The target group was organizational members who were part to the pilot project and had experiences with the communication processes aiming to encourage empowerment and participation through conversation. The questionnaire was handed out to the target groups on four different occasions in connection with group meetings. I attended two of these group meetings and a research colleague attended the other two group meetings. We introduced the research project and explained the reason for the questionnaire. Most of the meeting participants were already familiar with the research project. It was estimated that 100 organizational members participated in the pilot project, and 77 members completed the questionnaire, representing a response rate of 77 percent.

4.2.1.2 Observations

A total of eight observations were carried out in this study, together with a couple of visits or, rather tours around the organization's various sites. Five of these were observations of workshops that aimed to enhance members' knowledge about communication as a tool to reach organizational goals. The other three were observations of workshops focusing on teambuilding. The reason for observing the teambuilding workshops was that they were part of the empowerment process. In addition to observing the workshops, we also visited various departments or divisions of the organization. We visited the communications department, where the communication practitioners' work tools were presented to us, and the assembly line, where we could follow the ongoing production as well as see examples of *Lean* implementations, such

as a communication board, a tool board where tools have been painted on the board to make it easier to see where to hang a tool and to quickly identify the tool that is missing.

If the organization has a concierge desk – where a visitor has to announce her arrival – this is a place where the researcher can learn things about the organization. People are coming, going and waiting for each other, and there can be a numerous discussions going on in the reception. Throughout my experiences with the two organizations, I made sure to come early so that I would have to wait by the concierge desk. That gave me an opportunity to study people coming and going (particularly if my visit was scheduled early in the morning, at lunch time or in the late afternoon). Of course, I didn't know if I was observing organizational members or consultants coming and going. But even if it was consultants that I saw, they could give an indication about the organization's dress code, for example, particularly if they were attached to the organization to the extent that they had their own keycard to access the building.

I was the one carrying out the observations, and while doing that I used a tape recorder so that I could rely on the audio material together with my notes and written comments. These observations resulted in approximately 90 pages[11] of single-spaced transcripts. The more informal observations by each organization's concierge desk were not tape recorded.

4.2.1.3 Interviews

Structured and semi-structured interviews were conducted with 21 organizational members. Five of these interviews were phone interviews while the remaining 16 interviews took place in meeting rooms in the respective member's work environment or in her or his office. I carried out eleven of these interviews and these are the ones included in this dissertation. After discussing the interviews carried out by other research colleagues, I realized the gatherings were so similar that we had reached saturation.

The purpose of our first five phone interviews that were carried out in June, 2006, was to get a better picture of the situation and help us to come up with additional as well as more specific questions (Robson 2002, Strauss 1998). We therefore consider the data from these interviews to belong to what Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin (1998) would refer to as microanalysis data. The five organizational members that were interviewed over the phone had participated in the workshops held by the communication practitioners that aimed to enhance knowledge about communication. Two

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[11] The transcripts from the observations and interviews at BioA were unfortunately almost all lost when my computer crashed in 2008. I had copies saved on a USB-stick that was smashed two weeks before the computer crashed, and I simply forgot to save the transcripts on a USB-stick again.

of these members were the project leaders for the change process *Lean*, and the other three were senior managers at divisions or departments that took part in the pilot study.

The 16 individual interviews were carried out in the fall of 2006 and the spring of 2007. The interviewees were plant managers, group managers, communication practitioners, *Lean* coordinators and a *Lean* coach. Representatives from the management group were chosen because they were directly involved in and affected by the communication initiative. The communication practitioners were interviewed in order for us to better understand the reasoning and ideas behind their work strategies and the actions within the communication process plan. Discussing these interactions, both from the communication practitioners' points of view as well as from the general managers' view points, could be more challenging in groups. Therefore, we chose individual interviews, as this method gives members the opportunity to include opinions that they often prefer to express in more private settings (Silverman, 2006).

The interview guide for the interviews with the managers is comprised of questions about the pilot project, organizational communication, the actions taken by the communication practitioners, questions about organizational knowledge and learning in regards to change processes. The questionnaire also comprised questions about the interviewee's background. The interview guide for the interviews with the communication practitioners is comprised of questions about the change process, their work tasks, competence and status within the organization as well as questions about the interviewee's background. The interviews lasted between 30 and 68 minutes. They were audiotaped, and the interviewer also took notes. The eleven interviews that I carried out resulted in approximately 99 pages of single-spaced transcripts [12].

4.2.1.4   Document analysis

We were also given access to relevant documents and working material. An analysis of these has worked as a supplement to the methods presented above. This information has served as background data and provided us with deeper knowledge about the organization's structure, communication culture and other related information. A greater familiarity with this data did aid the analysis of the data from the questionnaire, the interviews as well as the observations.

4.2.2   Designing the BioB case study

Similar to the BioA study this study encompasses a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. For this study the research team found

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[12] See footnote number eleven for information.

it valuable to use two questionnaires, observations, focus groups and individual interviews.

In order to fulfill the aim of this study we wished to identify the overall organizational implications of the launch of the interactive video website. For that reason we found it relevant to gather information from all organizational members. We were interested in finding out how familiar members were with the core values before and after the launch of the interactive video website and whether or not they had implemented the core values in their daily work after the launch of the interactive video website.

This line of questioning lent itself to the use of a questionnaire, as the number of organizational members was extensive (>400) and individual interviews would be overly time-consuming. Hence, we designed two web questionnaires. We also decided that questionnaires were one valid method to gather knowledge about the organization's communication culture and about the members' attitudes toward the interactive video website.

By comparing the results of the two questionnaires, it was possible to explore the impact of the use of the interactive video website on members' attitudes toward and knowledge about the core values. Data from the two questionnaires revealed the organization's communication culture, members' preferred modes of communication and whether or not this preference had been affected by the implementation of the interactive video website. In addition, the second web questionnaire gave us information about the members' communicative interactivity, that is, their communication and maybe even conversations about the core values, their engagement in the process to incorporate the core values in their daily work as well as their attitudes toward the interactive video website as a mode for internal communication (as compared to other modes of communication).

Observations were made to explore the interaction on the website, and we were given access to the interactive video website from the time it was launched and throughout the research project. This gave us the opportunity to continually observe the interactions taking place on the website, ratings, number of unique viewers and other kinds of information.

Since little interaction took place on the website, we decided to use focus groups as a method to potentially track post-exposure activities. Even though few interactions took place on the website, it was possible that communication about the core values took place in other settings. Focus groups discussions can assist participants in recalling incidents and experiences that they may not recall on their own (Wibeck 2000). The focus group sessions also offered an opportunity to elaborate on the results from the questionnaires, discuss knowledge about the core values and discuss the extent to which these participants perceived themselves as working according to these core values, modes of communication, and the organizations' communication culture. It also gave a forum for the members'

opinion about the interactive video website as an organizational communication channel as well as the perceived outcome of its use.

When the project commenced we were given the reasons to why BioB had chosen the interactive video website as a mode of communication. Nevertheless, throughout the research process we found that these reasons might not be commonly shared among the organizational members. If the reasons for organizational changes—in this case the launch of the interactive video website—are not clear or appear different among organizational members, this may have an impact on the outcome or result.

Focus group discussions implied that organizational members possessed various views about the reasons behind the launch of the interactive video website because the managers had provided different reasons. Consequently, we wished to find out how great the discrepancy was among the reasons the senior managers had adopted and spread. We realized that it could be sensitive to discuss this issue since senior managers might feel uncomfortable if they realized that they might not have shared the same understanding of the reasons behind the incorporation of the interactive video website. Therefore, we chose individual interviews, as this method is preferable when discussing sensitive issues (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2008, Silverman 2006).

4.2.2.1 Questionnaires

The first questionnaire was distributed prior to the launch of the interactive video website, and the second one was distributed after the launch of the fourth and last video. We chose online questionnaires because we wanted to reach as many organizational members as possible. The first web questionnaire was conducted in October of 2008, and the second web questionnaire was conducted in February/March of 2010. The initial idea was that the videos were to be launched every other month beginning in May of 2008, with a break in July (due to summer holidays[13]) and continuing again in late August, with the last video launch in December, 2008. However, due to organizational turbulence in the form of three downsizing initiatives, a bribing scandal that was revealed and depicted by media during this time, turbulence in regards to the founder and CEO's wishes to sell BioB – just to mention a few of the events occurring throughout the same period as this project – the launch of the videos was postponed a number of times, and the time between each launch varied. The first video was launched in the late fall of 2008, and the last video was launched approximately one year later, in the fall of 2009.

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[13] The statutory number of vacation weeks in Sweden is between four and six (on rare occasions less than four weeks, and sometimes even more than six weeks) and most Swedes take at least three weeks of vacation during July and or August.

The first questionnaire collected descriptive data about the respondents and their preferred modes of communication. It also included measures on cognition and behavior in relation to the organization's core values. Stohl and Cheney (2001) claim that participation is not a cognitive phenomenon, although it often involves changes in attitudes, beliefs and values. Because this particular participation process involved changes in attitudes and beliefs and an aim to enhance knowledge about BioB's core values we found it necessary to measure cognition and behavior.

The second questionnaire included the same information together with measures of engagement and participation in the conversation about the core values as well as members' satisfaction when using the interactive video website. All measures were reported on a seven-point Likert scale.

To look at "cognition," we drew on the concept of cognitive development (Fiol and Lyles 1985), defined as developing shared understandings among members of an organization (Hedberg 1981). To make sense of uncertain circumstances and contribute to the organizing, it is vital that members gather and share ideas (Weick 1995b). However, cognitive development does not necessarily reflect behavioral development (Fiol and Lyles 1985). For example, the use of the interactive video website might support an increased awareness of BioB's core values, but this does not necessarily mean that members' behaviors will change. The measure included six items and showed a high level of reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.90). For example, one item stated, "I can describe the organization's values to a friend."

For "behavior," we built on the concept of behavioral development (Fiol and Lyles 1985), defined as the change of behaviors and actions of members of an organization (Daft and Weick 1984). But the converse of the assertion in the paragraph above is true, too: behavioral development does not necessarily reflect cognitive development (Fiol and Lyles 1985). For example, the use of the interactive video website might stimulate members to reflect on work practices, but behavioral changes do not necessarily reflect members' understands of BioB's core values. We created eight items to measure this. This measure also showed a high level of reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.86). For example, one item stated, "I work on the basis of the organization's values."

We also included a measure on "satisfaction" in the second questionnaire. It is important to assess whether or not organizational members enjoy using the interactive video website. If members do not want to use the website, it is unlikely that it will support sensemaking, coorientation and an overall mutual understanding about the company's core values. The measure mainly included items adapted from Webster and Hackley's (1997) survey instrument. Once again, this measure showed a high level of reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.86). For example, one item stated, "I will not use the website in the future" (reverse-coded).

Finally, we also included a measure on "participation" and "involvement" in the second questionnaire. We were interested in exploring whether or not the use of the interactive video website supported participation, where members contribute and share ideas, which are key dimensions of organizational learning and sensemaking (Robey, Boudreau, and Rose 2000, Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obstfeld 2005). This measure was also inspired by Webster and Hackley's (1997) survey instrument. Extensive research within the field of information technology and organizational learning (OL) (see for example Robey, Boudreau, and Rose 2000) suggests that online learning requires members' engagement and participation. This was measured as whether the respondents felt engaged, appreciated the opportunity to comment, provided comments and enjoyed communicating with colleagues on the website. As with previous measures this one also showed a high level of reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.90). As an example, one item stated, "I felt engaged in the discussion about the organization's values."

A total of 454 organizational members were located at the Swedish site when the first questionnaire was distributed. Out of these, 280 members completed the questionnaire, representing a response rate of 62 percent. When the second questionnaire was distributed, 359 members were part of the Swedish site due to downsizings. Out of these, 147 responded which represents a response rate of 41 percent.

Information about the first questionnaire, which included a request to answer the survey and a link to it, was sent out on, October 2, 2008, by email to members at the Swedish site. Included in this email was a letter from my colleague and me. In this letter we introduced the research project and explained the reasons for our study, ethical issues and encouraged members to contact us if they wanted more information about the research project. Two emails were sent out a few weeks apart to remind organizational members about the research project and encourage them to fill out the questionnaire.

When it was time for the second and last questionnaire, we asked the same person, the head of internal communication, to once again email the information to all members at the Swedish site. The head of internal communication had just been informed that she was on the list of members who were to be laid off. Despite this she was very helpful. The information with a link to the second survey was sent out on the morning of February 17, 2010. The first reminder was sent out two weeks later, and it was almost three weeks after the first reminder had been sent before the second and last reminder had been sent out. The head of internal communications left the company shortly after the first reminder was sent out, and it took us some time to get the new head of communication to put our research project on her agenda.

The response rate for the first questionnaire can be considered high. 62 percent of the members who were sent the link answered. However, only 41

percent answered the second questionnaire. I will discuss the possible reasons for this in the following chapter where I present the results.

Table 1. Descriptive data for respondents at BioB.

	Responses	Females	Age range (mean)	Years of employment range (mean)
First questionnaire	280 (62%)	170 (61%)	24-63 (40)	0-17 (5)
Second questionnaire	147 (41%)	87 (59%)	24-60 (41)	0-13 (6)

4.2.2.2 Observations

The organizational members' communicative interactivity, that is, their comments, questions and conversations on the interactive video website, was continually observed from the time that the website was launched until March of 2010. Members were able to comment or ask question anonymously but all commentators included their first names and many also stated their surnames. The website provided information about quantitative data such as how many unique viewers each video had and the members' average ratings of each video. The interactivity on the website was stored, meaning that it was not necessary for us to continuously make observations in real time. It was possible to see what date and time an interactivity had taken place. But since the information about the unique viewers did not include times and dates, we thought it would be interesting to continuously follow the interaction. On the day that a new video was launched we visited the website throughout the day. The following days we visited the site at least three times a day. Before a week had passed, we had decreased our observations to once or twice per day. The number of unique viewers was highest around the launch, which was expected. When analyzing the interactivity we did not find anything unique and of particular interest that was connected to a certain time. The 21 comments/question that were posted on the website were saved in a word document.

   As was stated when describing the design of the BioA study, a concierge desk is a place where a researcher can learn things about the organization. Just like in the BioA case I made sure to come early when visiting BioB so that I would have to wait by the concierge desk. During the time I spent by the concierge desk at BioB, I got to know one of the concierges. He told me that he had been asked to work as a concierge while having other work tasks within the organization. The reason, he claimed, was that he was very social and good with people. After having observed him by his concierge desk numerous times, I could only agree. This concierge told me a number of stories about the organization once he knew the reason for my presence. Many of the stories confirmed narratives from the focus group sessions.

4.2.2.3 Focus Groups

Focus groups were used in order to let organizational members elaborate on their opinions about the interactive video website and to identify post-exposure activities, that is, to find out if the content, comments, questions and conversations generated conversation between members outside this website. The purpose of the focus groups was also to clarify the results from the questionnaires and the observations. The focus groups took place May 18 and 27, 2010. They lasted between 50 minutes to one hour and 10 minutes. I used both audiotapes and written notes to record these meetings, as I was the moderator for four sessions. The audiotaped material was transcribed, and the notes were used for considered. The transcripts came to a total of 62 single-spaced pages. The original idea was to organize six focus groups into three segments (Windahl, Signitzer, and Olsen 2009): research and administration in one segment, managers and middle managers in another segment and members from the assembly line in a third segment.

We chose these segments for two reasons: because we were interested in finding out if there were any response differences depending on where in the organization members were working, and because we wanted the members to feel at ease, which is usually easier if they find themselves in a group of peers (Morgan 1997, Morgan and U. 1999). However, due to reorganizations and redundancies taking place at the same time as our study, it was not possible to ask that many members to set aside time to participate in the focus group sessions. Instead we carried out four focus groups arranged as two groups with members from the assembly line, one group with members from research and administration and one group consisting of members from management and middle management.

The total number of focus groups participant was 15, and the number of participants in each focus group varied from two to five. The reason there were only two people in one focus group was related to the reason why the assembly line segment had two groups: At the first focus group session with the assembly line members, only two people showed up. Since a focus group with only two participants may be questioned from a research perspective, we decided that we had to call members from the assembly line to a new focus group session. We could have disregarded the focus group with only two participants, but after having analyzed the intense conversation that these two individual engaged in, we decided that this data was too valuable to leave out.

A member of the HR department selected the individual focus group participants in accordance with the given prerequisites. They were called to attend via email, or, as one focus group participant (a quality engineer) put it (with a smile on his face), "It was marked in my calendar so I just showed up".

With the exception of the one focus group – where only two members from the assembly line showed up – everyone who was asked to join the sessions showed up and participated in the focus group discussions.

The transcripts and notes were read and re-read, and the data was presented to the three segments of organizational members described in the focus group section above. As we were interested in identifying potential similarities or differences across groups, we analyzed segment diversifications in the arguments and descriptions (Soderstrom, 2011). The results were structured according to the three segments, including differences and similarities between segments.

4.2.2.4   Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with six senior managers – three female and three male – in order to gain more in-depth information about the processes that had initiated the implementation of the interactive video website in the organization. During the focus group sessions, we realized that senior managers possibly did not share the same opinions regarding to reasons that the interactive video website was implemented. For that reason we chose individual interviews, as this method is to prefer when discussing sensitive issues or possibly uncovering discrepancies, as discussed in a section above.

The senior management's perceptions of the outcomes will naturally have implications for whether or not the interactive video website will be used again and therefore it is of value to explore their view on the initiative. The interviews took place in October 2008, October 2009 as well as in March and May of 2010. They lasted between 30 and 60 minutes and, as with the other interviews, they were recorded by audiotape and with written notes. This resulted in 60 single-spaced pages of transcripts. The interviewees were; the CEO, the head of human resources (HR), the head of Communication, a senior manager, a communication practitioner and the head of internal communication. The main reason for choosing these respondents, (with the exception of one), were that they had been involved in the project to incorporate the interactive video website, although (as we realized along the way) possibly for various reasons.

The one respondent who had not been involved in this project was selected because we were interested to hear her views on the project and its outcome. This respondent was working in the organization when the project was launched, but as she was located abroad at the time, she was not directly involved nor affected. The interview guide is comprised of the same questions as the focus group guide and in addition it is comprised of questions about the reasons for implementing the interactive video website as well as questions about the interviewee's background.

4.2.2.5 Documents

My research colleague and I got access to general information about BioB, such as a pamphlet describing the history and the development of the organization in more detail than the *History* video provided. We also had access to yearly reports and other related information. These documents were never analyzed, but they served as background information for us to better understand the organization as a whole and the reasons for the communicative initiatives that we studied.

4.3 Analyzing the data while designing the study

The general assumption is that the process of analysis starts when the researcher has selected and gathered relevant data for the study at hand. Although I agree that the true or possibly the more comprehensive process of analysis begins when the material has become data or even knowledge, which, for example, occurs during the process of selection, I would like to argue, with support from, for example, Strauss and Corbin (1998) that the process of analysis commence long before that. This study's process of analysis started as early as the initiation of the research projects. When planning both case studies, the process of analysis was one point of consideration. Once the material had become data (through the selection phase) the process of analysis involved going over the data again and again. The fact that I was the one collecting the qualitative data in both studies (expect for 10 interviews in BioA) and the one that transcribed all focus group and interview materials that are part of this study also encouraged the ongoing analytical process. It gave me the opportunity to analyze the material even while collecting it, that is, in the interview process, in the focus group sessions, while observing workshops and the interactive video website, while reading documents and while visiting various organizational divisions and departments. Throughout these processes my research colleagues and I continually discussed the findings and the analysis.

I apply a discoursive-near rather than discoursive-exclusive approach, meaning that I do not claim that the results from my case studies are representations of any other organizations than the two organizations I studied. However, the lessons learned from these studies can be useful for other organizations. My intention is to defend claims on the level of practice with observational studies, claims on the level of meaning with ethnographic evidence, and claims on the level of talk with conversational evidence. The mixed method approach with the embedded design – where the qualitative data is most important – was used to provide data to reach these levels of analysis.

The use of mixed methods and the embedded design also strengthen the validity of the study. In order to ensure the validity of data, the questions and discussion points have been informed by each other, meaning that data from the questionnaires have been elaborated on in the individual interviews and focus group discussion and vice versa, depending on the order that these methods were used. For example, if we found interesting results when going through the results from the SPSS process of the quantitative data, we elaborated on questions from these results for the focus groups or the individual interviews – or as in the BioB study – for the second questionnaire. From the first questionnaire in the BioB study we found interesting correlations – for example, that older organizational members appreciated the website more than younger members – that made us formulate hypotheses, which were then tested in the second questionnaire.

A comparison of the data from the two questionnaires at BioB was used to explore whether or not organizational members perceived themselves as more familiar with the core values and worked in accordance with the core values to a greater extent after the incorporation of the interactive video website than before. In another example from the study at BioB, the reasons for implementing the interactive video website were presented to the research team before the project started, but as the focus groups provided complementary information concerning the reasons, this information was further explored in the individual interviews.

In general, all involvement with each organization resulted in additional material.

4.3.1 The analytical process

The process of analyzing the qualitative data involved reading and re-reading the transcripts and forming themes and categories (Wetherell, Taylor, and Yates 2001). Most of the time I also turned to the recorded interviews, focus groups or observations to re-listen. But before putting together themes and categories, I considered and critically evaluated all the empirical data in order to identify situated meaning versus meaning that could be transported beyond the local context and used for comparison. This was done in order to carry out an analysis *beyond* language, as Alvesson and Kärreman express it (2011). Once this was done I identified a number of broad categories, which were narrowed into more specific categories.

Some of the categories were discarded only to be taken on at a later stage when they proved important despite initial interpretations. For BioA's study the process of analysis was in part assisted by the use of a software program – Atlas.TI – that handles qualitative material. But I should not underestimate the role of highlighter, (for paper as well as for computer transcripts) and paper and computer transcripts, covered with pen and pencil notes and inserted comments.

The collected material was organized in chronological order for each study. Analyzing the material to answer each research question was not a separate process but, rather, interrelated because while looking for answers to one question, I identified results that helped answer another question. For example, in the processes of exploring and describing each communicative initiative I wrote a timeline for each initiative. While doing that, I also marked instances of coorientation in the transcripts as well as situations where potential tensions were identified or situations where figures actually clashed, that is, explicit tensions. Also, the ventriloqual approach was not only used to identify tensions but also to facilitate the process of identifying figures that organizational members found important, that is, what she or he is ventriloquized by and also how she or he ventriloquizes something.

Exploring and describing how the two organizations emphasize communication and how members perceived these initiatives involved analyzing the material from all the methods used in this study. This meant going back and forth along the time line of occurrences while writing a chronological presentation of each initiative, the circumstances surrounding each of them, how members perceived these initiatives and how BioB's members used the interactive video website. The analysis for this section was done using open-ended and then focused thematic coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Since there was also an interest in identifying potential similarities or differences across groups in BioB, I searched for diversifications in how the three groups perceived and used the interactive video website. The communicative initiatives, how these are perceived by the organizational members and how members use the interactive video website in BioB are described and explored in Chapters Five and Six.

To explore if the communicative initiatives contribute to the organizing and the empowerment process, I searched for instances of coorientation, and this was done by identifying the ABX triad.

In the theoretical framework I argue that Taylor and Van Every's model is comparable and to some extent also congruent with Tengland's process definition of empowerment, although the models are by no means isomorphic. Hence, while identifying instances of coorientation I also searched for empowerment processes and communication-power relationships. Once I identified instances of coorientation and sometimes also empowerment, I went back and studied the overall timeline of occurrences and additional information about the motives behind why the communicative initiatives were implemented in order to see whether or not it was possible to trace these instances to coordinating activities and changes of the text. Studying the overall timeline was also useful in the aim to identify the reasons certain conversations reached coorientation and empowerment processes while others did not.

The tension-centered approach (Trethewey and Ashcraft 2004b) is an attempt to further explain and explore the communicative initiatives and how – as well as why – they may or may not contribute to the communicative constitution of each organization. During my encounters with the empirical data I identified and wrote down markers, that is, important topics, issues, ways of talking, practices and other aspects that defined ways of talking and acting of the various groups of organizational members. It is through these markers that figures are expressed, implicit or explicit (Cooren et al. 2013). Again, I turned to the situated performances and identified figures as well as tensions, that is, "[…] the clash of ideas or principles or actions and […] the discomfort that may arise as a result" (Stohl and Cheney 2001:353-354), using the ventriloqual approach. The identified tensions were categorized thematically.

Putnam and her colleagues (2014) work to examine tensions has inspired my analysis in that once all tensions were thematically organized, I identified two primary dialectics or tensions: the *Multivocal –Univocal Dialecti*c, and the *Conversation – Text Dialectic*. These two primary oppositional tensions were selected because they are directly linked to tensions, contradictions and paradoxes that emerge in BioA and BioB and that have consequences for the empowerment and participation processes. I used the dialectical lens with the five strategy categories to analyze how the tensions within each primary tension's category were enacted and played into members' empowerment processes and their participation in the organizing.

To conclude, overall this whole process of analyzing meant going back and forth between transcripts, field notes, organizational documents and recorded material again and again. For reasons that I have explained above, some of the transcripts (from the BioA study) were lost, and in these cases I turned to the recorded material and my field notes. A researcher that has taking part in the entire data gathering process may also rely on his/her own memory and on field notes taking during observations, interviews and focus groups and check this against collected material as well as with organizational members who are willing to answer additional questions. This was a method I used frequently. Each research team also frequently discussed and compared the collected material.

4.3.2 Methodological reflections

My findings are limited considering that the data is situated, partial and contingent and that it is not possible to claim a complete and exhaustive understanding of the studied material since social practices are immensely complex (Wetherell, Taylor, and Yates 2001). However, because I am not positioning my research in a positive tradition I would argue that my

findings have implications for future practice since I am reasonably confident that the examples provided here may be used to learn more about communicative initiatives in empowerment and participatory processes.

4.3.2.1 The role of the researcher

It is crucial that the researcher considers her role throughout the research process. Depending on the type of research the importance of the researcher's self-awareness may vary, but the researcher can never fully ignore her or his own role as an actor within a particular context (Wetherell, Taylor, and Yates 2001). This involves everything from how to approach individuals and groups to how to dress. For example, before meeting the management I visited each organization's website and looked at other information – such as media coverage and other accessible sources – about the organization that I came across in order to get a pre-understanding of the culture and dress code. Before carrying out the focus group sessions, the interviews and the observations I also carefully considered the dress code.

When interviewing managers and while observing their workshops I chose either to dress formally or, as I understood, the way they considered or expected a stereotypical researcher to be dressed, which was in a more bohemian style. When observing workshops with members from the production line I chose to dress less formally. During my various observations I received spontaneous feedback on my appearance. After observing one workshop session focusing on communication activities I got spontaneous feedback from two people, one of whom was in charge of the workshop and the other person, a participant. Neither of them heard the other person's comment. The person in charge of the workshop provided the following feedback:

> You have an amazing way of blending in. I keep forgetting that you're present and then when I count the participants I have to count twice because I do not understand why I get one too many. Also, at times I start to wonder why that person [referring to me] is alone, not participating in any group discussion.

The workshop participant comment my presence as follows:

> When you were introduced I got a bit nervous. Although I have participated in workshops before, this was a new setting and with a researcher present too, well, that did not make me really comfortable. However, I must have forgotten you instantly, probably because the session was really interesting but also because you were such a natural part of the setting.

These comments are, of course, welcomed from a researcher's perspective. I felt that I got a stamp of approval, that I carried out my work in an appropriate way. However, I was also faced with an uncomfortable situation

and comments related to that. The following was an unpleasant experience, but from this I learned the importance of not giving in to others' requests when I know that what they ask for is outside of my role as a researcher and that giving in can hurt rather than help my position.

In order to get a better understanding of the empowerment process, in BioA, I observed a series of workshop sessions with members from the assembly line. The purpose of these workshops was to increase collaboration, to create a spirit of teamwork among the colleagues and to empower them. These workshops were carried out in two sessions on successive days and on one day a couple of weeks later. My presence was acknowledged at the beginning of the first workshop and I gave a short presentation about the reason for my presence. Closing this workshop involved an evaluation of how the participants perceived the day. Quite unexpectedly, one of the participants asked for my opinion. I answered that it was not part of my research to evaluate their work and emphasized, once again, the reason for my presence. The participants were not satisfied with this and demanded an answer from me. I was not given any time to consider how to address this demand, as the manager of the workshop (an external consultant) provided his support for the participant's request. Given the situation I felt that I needed to say something.

At the beginning of the day I had noticed that there were a lot of tensions between and among the participants. People provided short responses when someone asked them something, and there were quite a few minor disagreements going on between many people. I also observed ambivalence toward the workshop in itself when participants talked to each other before the workshop started and questioned the point of being there, wasting one day. The workshop manager had to work with the group throughout the day to earn its trust and ease the tensions. As the work progressed I noticed a more positive attitude, toward the work itself as well as between colleagues; I could even feel how the tension in the room eased. I felt that this was such an obvious observation that there would be no harm in mentioning it.

Before providing my comment I once again said that I could not provide any comments from a research perspective, only as an observer of any kind. I said that I had noticed tensions at the beginning of the day but that this had disappeared throughout the day and that I was impressed with all the new ideas and work plans that the various groups had come up with. It would be an understatement if I would say that this was not appreciated! There was almost an outrage toward me. How could I say such a thing, there were no tensions in this group of colleagues? The workshop manager added that this might say more about me than about the group. I was speechless. I should add that during the breaks, the workshop manager had commented to me that this was a really difficult group because of the tensions and suspicion among them.

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As should come as no surprise, it was with mixed feelings and an upset stomach that I left the workshop and returned the next day. The following day I had to work to regain respect and trust from the participants, something that is not easy when I was supposed to observe the session and not take an active part. I realized that part of the frustration and disaffection that the colleagues had felt towards each other now had been transferred to me. Now they had a common enemy, which helped them to unite. It took me most of the day with intense work during every break to regain my position as a respected researcher. I was exhausted when I left the workshop the second day, but I did it with a comfortable feeling that I had been able to repair the damages from the day before.

Because I approached the two organizations using a number of various methods, I have been given the opportunity to get close to each organization, and in many ways I often felt that I was a part of the organization. This became particularly obvious when I read news stories about the organizations. During our research projects, both organizations were in the limelight several times for reasons varying from redundancies processes and sale of the business to bribing scandals. It was while reading these stories that I became aware of the feelings that these news reports brought to me, and I realized that I had more knowledge about the particular situation than the journalist, at least according to the way the journalist chose to angle respective story. Therefore, even though I have not been able to carry out extensive ethnographical studies but rather "passing organizational ethnography" (Cooren, Brummans, and Charrieras 2008), I feel confident that I have been able to meet my aim to recognize figures that were more or less implicit in certain situations.

PART II

To Intentionally Redefine the Meaning of Text: Communicative Interactions, Coorientation and Tensions

Chapters Five and Six

The organizational changes at BioA and BioB's are identified and described in Chapters Five and Six. This is where I establish a foundation in the *object orientation*, meaning that I – at this point in the study – view organizations as authored texts where the change takes place. In order to explore the communicative interactions I found it necessary to first identify the new or "to be built" environment that acts as anchor for these interactions (see, for example, Stohl and Cheney 2001). Hence, Chapters Five and Six are organized to illustrate the organizational changes and how they evolve in a chronological order in each organization. Although the two case organizations share the same aim with their change initiatives, they differ in their actions and, for this reason, these initiatives are presented in separate chapters in order to show how rules, routines and material entities enter into accounts of interactions in each organization.

Chapters Seven and Eight

In the interest of understanding whether or not these communicative initiatives contribute to the organizing process and the constitution of the organization, I started from the *becoming orientation* and set out to explore if instances of coorientation could be identified and looked for the circumstances that facilitate or hinder coorientation. This process is explored in Chapter Seven.

Tensions are endemic and ubiquitously present in organizations and considered to be important agents of change. However, we know little about how tensions emerge and are enacted and what tensions do to the process of participation. Hence, in Chapter Eight I apply a tension-centered approach with the aim of exploring how tensions are produced, reproduced and coproduced in the communicative interactions, how tensions are enacted and how they then contribute to the organizing and the constitution of the organization. This involves exploring how tensions influence members' participation. As previously discussed, since the focus is on tensions at the intersection of conversation and text, the study invokes the *grounded–in-action* orientation.

5 BioA: Communicative Interactions and Text

BioA's senior managers approved the incorporation of the communication strategy process, *Leading through Communication*, with the overall aim of enhancing communication between all organizational members to thereby facilitate an empowerment process and encourage participation. What are the reasons behind this change initiative? How is *Leading through Communication* put into action? How do organizational members use it? How do they perceive the process? These areas will be explored in this chapter.

5.1 BioA sets the stage for communicative interactions

The manufacturing unit of BioA was founded four years before this research project commenced. An interview with the communication strategist revealed that at that time the communication practitioners were spread throughout the organization and their collaboration was almost non-existent. The communication practitioners assisted their specific units in transmitting information and answering questions about communication. She adds that these practitioners all felt that they had so much more to offer. When they occasionally met, they discussed what they could do to better support the organization. They sought to work more strategically, more as consultants with communication, which involved walking away from the channel-driven assignments (that is, transmission-focused), to become business partners with the senior managers and the organization as a whole. They finally convinced the CEO that in times when organizations aim for an empowered and more participative workforce, there is a need to change the communication efforts from a focus on transmission to a focus on conversation. Hence, during the establishment of the manufacturing unit, the communication practitioners were gathered, and one sole communication department was founded. The communication strategist was given the mandate to develop a new work process for the communication practitioners. BioA's head of business communications talks about these changes:

> We are no longer only supposed to contribute with knowledge about communication. We need to understand the organization's needs. You are expected to know what a trend supply is [for example]. You need to know how the presidential election in the USA impacts the pharmaceutical industry […]. I see that communication practitioners are facing completely different expectations today than we did three or four years ago.

When forming the new manufacturing unit, the CEO stipulated that the communication department should be represented on the management board. The communication strategist and the head of communications both contend that access to the management board – though not necessarily a position on the board – has been instrumental for the further and future development of the communication department's strategic work. When they were asked about this work transformation, the head of business communications says:

> The communication practitioners are able to focus on entirely different issues today than in the past. Today it is more about strategic planning and advice to managers and less about producing information. In addition, there are many requests for lectures focusing on an enhanced understanding of organizational communication, both from within the organization as well as from other organizations.

The new approach to handle and work with communication was named *Leading through Communication*.

The head of business communication and the communication strategist both state that the overall aim with *Leading through Communication* is to provide an environment where communication is a tool used to meet business goals in an environment were all organizational members are empowered, engaged and participate. This means primarily three changes for the communication practitioners[14]: 1) a move away from a channel and transmission focus towards providing a management communication tool with conversation in focus, aiming at achieving sensemaking, coorientation and, with that, coordinating activities. This also involves attitudes and behavioral changes or, in the communication strategist's words, *know*, *feel* and *do*; 2) from a number of different services offered to a distinct communication process – the communication practitioners work with standardized methods and tools; and 3) from being responsible for sending out information to becoming a communication partner or facilitator who hands over the ownership for communication to relevant stakeholders.

The communication practitioners work to support the core business's goals. This involves ensuring that the senior managers are well aware of

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[14] When I refer to the members of the communication department in general I will call them communication practitioners or the communication department. Only in situations where I find it relevant will I refer to them with their respective and specific title.

their responsibilities to communicate the overall organizational picture and – as a joint task with the communication practitioners – to encourage organizational members' participation.

In this particular organization at this particular time the communication department consisted of five members: three communication/business partners, one communication strategist and the head of business communication. The communication strategist provided some examples of how she and her colleagues gradually changed their work tasks. The following three quotes each refer to one of the three primary work task changes:

> Every time a manager came to us and asked, "Can you post this text on the web?" he or she was met with the question, "Why, what is it you want to achieve?" The answer to this question often resulted in a very different communication effort. Most of the time the manager realized that he or she would achieve the set aim much better through conversation.

> We needed to develop a common toolkit, which also could offer self-help, as we had tremendous communication challenges [referring to the participatory change process] ahead of us.

> The third part was about to actually handing over ownership of communication to the senior managers and managers, as they *are* the most important interlocutors for the other organizational members. This was the toughest journey, both for the senior managers and managers who were wondering if the communications department would no longer support them, and perhaps above all, mentally for the communication practitioners who did not really dare to let go.

The communication strategist contends that the communication process *Leading through Communication* is grounded in theories about how engagement, participation and ownership are established. She says that the idea is that this process gradually will create an understanding of what communication is, an enhanced understanding of why communication is a valuable strategic management tool and a clear view of how managers can use communication to achieve organizational goals. The process includes training in three steps: facilitation in regards to creating a communication strategy, integration of messages and the implementation of a network of communication ambassadors. This is carried out through lectures and workshops.

The communication strategist contends that this communication process offers a new way of working which is less resource-demanding. More technical communication channel assignments, such as updates of the intranet, have been outsourced.

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When asked about the response that the communication practitioners were met with when *Leading through Communication* was first launched, the communication strategist says:

> Just like any other change process, this one was met with skepticism as well as criticism. Managers who had not yet participated in the workshops had very different reactions to this new way of working with communication. One comment that the communication practitioners often had to respond to was: "Well then, what is Communications [referring to the Communications department] up to now?" However, so far our experience tells us that when managers are faced with the effects of the process and the benefits of the tools, there is an understanding and an acceptance for the new way of working with communication.

But it was not only the middle and senior managers that were recalcitrant towards the changes in the communication department (changes that were to effect the whole organization). The communication practitioners themselves were also hesitant. Nevertheless, after having struggled to settle in their new roles as communication practitioners, they finally felt that they had adjusted. The positive feedback they received after the workshops also encourage them to continue on this new road to work as communication facilitators and partners with the management group and other stakeholders. One communication practitioner described her experience as follows:

> What's most amazing is to see how managers adopt the communication tools that are presented to them, and how they start planning their communication activities with tremendous enthusiasm. A demand for communication tools has been established, and managers who would like to participate with their teams in the workshops and other parts of the communication process are incessantly contacting the communications department. Even managers from outside the pilot studies are contacting us.

Other departments have also gone through structural changes to incorporate *Lean* ideas, which have had an impact on the collaboration between units and departments and the opportunities for communicative interactions. For example, when one of the communication practitioners was asked how they collaborate with the human resources department, she provided the following extensive answer:

> Our department collaborates with HR [human resources department] through a so-called strategic improvement area called *Leadership and communication in change*. Three strategic areas for improvement guide our overall organization's goals and action plan, where *Leadership and communication in change* is one of them. The reason is that the senior managers have discovered that these strategic improvement areas make it easier to work with the action plan to reach the set goals. *Leadership and communication in change* is led by a steering committee, in which three managers from

different production units are represented, along with the head of business communications and head of HR. The head of HR is chairman of the steering committee. All decisions related to communication and HR-questions are discussed in this steering committee. A communication practitioner reports to the steering committee on the on-going progress of the developed communication process strategy. Sometimes the progress is also reported directly to [BioA's] management board.

This practitioner's explanation points to the fact that the BioA management board has been ventriloquized by a figure that emphasizes that communication is vital in organizing. Consequently, the management carries out intentional changes with the aim to emphasize communication. *Leadership and communication in change* is one such example of an intentional change.

5.1.1   *Leading through Communication*

The communication strategy process *Leading through Communication* is the foundation in the work to enhance communication and, thus, facilitate empowerment among all organizational members at BioA. *Leading through Communication* is mainly built around a number of workshops. Like many workshops in general these start with lecture-like sessions and then turn into forums where participants are encouraged to involve in conversations in order to be organized. The communication efforts in *Leading through Communication* are continually evaluated by the communication practitioners throughout the change process. Once the change process project has come to an end – the change process itself may be ongoing with no ending, like *Lean* for example, but the change project that started this change will end at some point in time – the communication practitioners carry out a more comprehensive evaluation of the communicative initiative. Lessons learned are gathered in order to be used in the next change process.

To get a comprehensive understanding of *Leading through Communication* and how the communication practitioners apply this process to *Lean*, I asked the communication practitioners to explain how *Leading through Communication* is put into action. It consists of four overall steps: 1) Analysis, 2) Planning; 3) Executing and 4) Evaluation & Follow up.
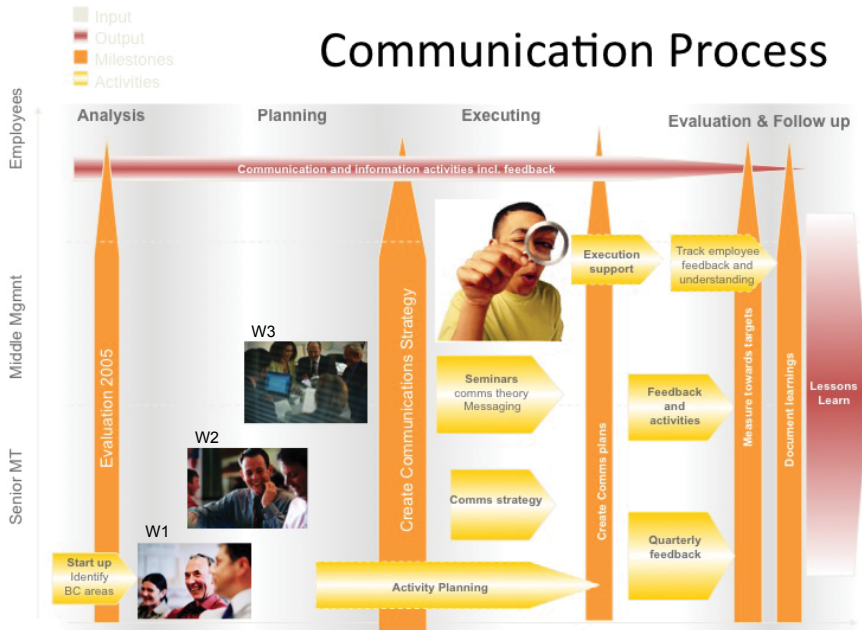
Figure 2. The Communication Strategy Process *Leading Through Communication*.

The Communication Strategy Process, Leading Through Communication, was developed by Anna Lezis Lindberg.

The communication practitioners argue that the extent to which they are involved in organizing and change processes may vary from time to time, depending on the circumstances. Sometimes they may be the ones initiating a change process, while at other times they are asked to carry out a situation analysis to identify potential needs and opportunities for change. They are also invited to participate in a change process after it has commenced and a situation analysis has already been carried out. The latter applied when the work with *Lean* commenced. The results from the situation analysis concluded that the knowledge about communication as a way to enhance empowerment and encourage participation was uneven throughout the organization. An educational effort was therefore initiated. The idea behind the educational effort was first to create a uniform level of knowledge about communication among the managers leading the change process *Lean*. This was to take place simultaneously with the development of a communication strategy. The next step then was to train other managers and, at a later stage, all organizational members.

The management training is carried out in three workshops. The purpose is two-fold, according to the communication practitioners: 1) to enhance knowledge about communication and provide an understanding for how communication can be used as a management tool to create engagement,

empower organizational members and encourage participation; and 2) to facilitate the creation of a communication strategy, where the managers develop and produce the communication strategy with assistance from the communication practitioners. During the first workshop the participants were introduced to communication theories, definitions, stakeholder analysis and other related information. The idea is to create a common understanding of constitutive communication concepts and to create an understanding of why communication should be planned. In the second workshop participants are trained in how to work strategically with communication, they learn about compliance/commitment, and how to lead a change process, which includes communicating it, communication styles, what active listening means, the rhetoric curve, and a memory test. In the third and last workshop, participants work to develop communication around the change process. They produce one main message and supportive messages while also identifying counterarguments.

When asked why the specific theories and tools had been chosen, the communication strategist answered that some of the tools that the workshop participants are introduced to are derived from work by the philosopher Confucius (551-479 BC), which goes hand in hand with empowerment and participatory processes such as *Lean* since these processes to a great extent are based on Confucian philosophy, according to her.

The communication strategist continues by relating Confucius philosophy to the notions *know*, *feel* and *do*. The workshops are, in part, constructed around the following interpretation: *Know – Feel – Do*→ *Information – Communication – Relation*. These are the founding concepts of communication, according to the communication strategist. *Information* involves strategic messages to increase organizational members' knowledge about something, and *communication* refers to a process of messages that forms attitudes and or approaches, while *relation* means mutual engagement or common commitments that lead to actions and results. To have the ability to get other people to *know* = to enhance knowledge about something, *feel* = to get them to think about something and have an opinion about it and *do* = to get them to act in relation to *know* and *feel*—that is to lead and that is what planned communication or strategic communication is all about, according to the communication strategist and her colleagues. The communication strategist based her development of *Leading through Communication* on these ideas and states:

> Everything we do is based on this. The training of the communication practitioners, who are going to assist management teams and projects, is built on these notions. The overall communication process is structured according to this, and even the communication strategies and individual activities that are the result of the communication process are constructed accordingly. It is all about what channels and approaches we choose, depending on what results we want to achieve: *Know, Feel,* or *Do.*

In the analysis it is useful to compare the communication strategist's descriptions of the ideas behind the *know*, *feel*, *do* with Taylor's (Taylor 1999) A-B-X-model in combination with Tengland's (2001b) empowerment process definition. The *know* action may be similar to communicative interactions such as transmitting information where no coorientation is taking place, while the *feel* action may be compared to the A-B-X-model, meaning that conversation occurs that may involve coorientation and the beginning of an empowerment process. However, the communication strategist's description of the *feel* action is not enough to analyze if it is comparable with instances of coorientation, so an analysis of an actual *feel* action is therefore needed. However, the *do* action is comparable with instances of coorientation and even empowerment, as it aims to get members to act in accordance with each other and with what they know about the object (X) and their own opinion about how to go about dealing with it (X), which also follow the empowerment process according to Tengland's (2008) definition.

The communication strategist described how organizational members who had been identified as important informal – and sometimes also formal – leaders and positioned at various hierarchal levels participated in the *Message testing and Message integration workshop*[15], which is part of step number three, "Executing" in *Leading through Communication*. These organizational members are called communication ambassadors. In the workshops the participants learned more about communication and the role of communication in organizations with the idea that they will assist the communication practitioners in the work to improve organizational communication. The communication ambassadors were given the opportunity to challenge the change communication set up by the lower, middle and senior managers. All comments, critiques and revision suggestions by the communication ambassadors were collected and presented to the management. They considered the information and adjusted the communication in an applicable way. This was done in an attempt to make sure organizational members at all hierarchal levels understood the messages.

   The communication strategist emphasized the idea that the communication ambassadors would act as the "senior managers' ears" throughout the organization, meaning that they would provide the communication practitioners and senior managers with feedback regarding how messages are perceived by organizational members and also verify if, and if so to what extent, messages change on their way through the hierarchical levels. According to the communication strategist, she and her

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[15] The *Message testing* and *Message integration* workshop were set up as mini- and compressed versions of the three workshops for management training described above.

colleagues also examined on a regular basis the internal communication via questionnaires and phone interviews with the communication ambassadors.

In informal talks communication ambassadors stated that they felt that they knew more about the organization outside their own work environment after participating in this workshop and other gatherings with the communication ambassadors. Getting to know colleagues from other divisions, departments, assembly lines and/or hierarchical levels turned out to also facilitate the participants' future work. One of the communication ambassadors described how he was able to solve an issue before it grew too big because he had gotten to know an organizational member in another division:

> We had an issue on our assembly line that we felt was caused by decisions made over our heads. Since I had gotten to know X [referring to a person at another division] I felt comfortable calling her to find out what they knew. It all turned out to be a mistake. I am really glad that I contacted her because this issue could have grown into something much more difficult to solve. Now it was just a quick fix.

At the end of the *Message testing and Message integration* workshop, the participants discussed their perceptions of the value of attending this workshop. They argued that the workshop and the communication ambassador role gave them an opportunity to better understand where their work is positioned within the organization and in relation to the vision statement. They also emphasized the importance of including all hierarchical levels in this change communication effort, or, as one assembly line member[16] describes:

> I think these workshops are very important because after all, we are the ones working at the end of the line and if the message does not reach us or has changed on its way to us, you cannot expect us to do the right thing.

The analysis of this workshop and of the interviews indicates that this workshop involved the most difficult of the four translations (Brummans et al. 2014), which was the translation of the organization's purpose into the many various communities of practices. The workshop participants were given the opportunity to test the messages – produced by the senior managers – with the aim of considering how their colleagues may perceive these messages in their particular communities of practice. The participants perceived that they got an enhanced understanding of the organization as a whole as well as how their particular work tasks contribute to the organization when the communication practitioners shared the background

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[16] This assembly line member had been appointed communication ambassador, as she was identified as an informal leader, whom members of the assembly line respected and listened to.

information about the messages with them. They were also given the opportunity to discuss this with other communication ambassadors. One reason why the Montreal School considers this to be the most difficult translation is that there are many worldviews involved when the organization's purposes are to be translated into every community of practice that the organization is built up by. The workshop offers a chance for the communication ambassadors to learn more about the organization and to acquaint themselves with colleagues from other divisions, departments or assembly lines.

While talking informally to the *Lean* coordinators and the communication practitioners and while observing the workshops I noticed that the *Lean* coordinators and the communication practitioners often referred to a RAG-analysis when talking about how the planning of the activities in the communication process were coming along. A question regarding this was therefore added to an interview [17] with one of the communication practitioners. An Excel-based tool was used to position the activities in *Leading Through Communication* in relation to each other. These activities involved, for example, how to handle and approach stakeholders, goals and messages. They were also given various priorities in a timeline with the use of this so-called RAG[18] analysis. One communication practitioner provided a comprehensive description of the tool:

> With this tool the activities are marked red, amber or green depending on how the work with these activities are going. This means that an activity that is coming along as expected is marked green while an activity that is marked red needs immediate attention. Once an activity marked red has been taken cared of, the responsible person adds information about why this was an issue, actions taken to deal with the issue and the outcomes. The tool has the ability to calculate and carry out the RAG analysis. This makes it easier for organizational members to make sure that they are focusing on the right activity at the right time.

A project group that is in charge of carrying out the communication strategy process registers all the necessary data in the Excel tool. At an early stage in the communication process, some activities, such as stakeholder groups, were marked according to RAG so that all participants in the project group were well aware of who to target first and with what kind of communication. As have been mentioned, this tool is used on a regular basis and in daily work. In addition it is used to evaluate how communication with the stakeholders progresses on a quarterly basis. The progress is discussed with the management group, and communication activities are executed

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[17] This interview was carried out to clear up some question before a presentation that I was giving while attending a conference in May, 2007.
[18] RAG is an abbreviation for the color names Red, Amber and Green.

according to decisions based on this information. When the project and management groups evaluate the communication activities vis-à-vis the stakeholder groups, they focus on whether or not the goals for *know*, *feel* and *do* have been reached. Success and failure stories are shared in this tool together with contact information for those involved. That way organizational members can easily learn from each other's successes or failures.

Exploring the process *Leading through Communication* revealed an indication that the underlying building blocks of this communication strategy process are built on the idea that text influences the situated performances, and if these performances result in conversation and coorientation they in turn will influence text, as they lead to coordinated activities among organizational members. Take the RAG tool analysis, for example. This tool is part of the organization's text, which the project group uses in order to record their work assignments. The reports about these work assignments are then influencing the following/new assignments, that is, situated performances. It appeared that the comments posted in the Excel document did lead to interactions, even though there is no immediate face-to-face communication but, rather post-exposure interaction. Project members who read the comments took them into account when carrying out their own work, and they often communicated with the contact person to discuss an issue or reasons behind a success.

The question, which will be answered in Chapter Seven, is if these situated performances actually led to conversation and coorientations and empowerment processes.

The workshops seemed to involve empowerment processes. Take, for example, the *Message testing and Message integration* workshop. When the vision and mission statements as well the as the Q&As were shared with the communication ambassadors, knowledge was shared. But just because knowledge was shared does not mean that an empowerment process follow. However, in this case it appears as if an empowerment process is taking place and that management share *power with* (Kraft 1999) other organizational members when the management let the communication practitioners share the organization's mission and vision statements and the Q&As with the communication ambassadors and asked them for their input. This indication grew stronger when considering statements by the communication ambassadors who say that they act more independently, as in the example where one communication ambassador contacted another communication ambassador in order to sort out misinformation. There is always a risk that empowerment processes lead to *bogus* empowerment (Ciulla 2010) where organizational members are given more responsibility but not more freedom and time to carry out their new assignments. Also

appointing representatives involves the risk that the appointed members start running the errands of the management and forget that they are representatives of their particular community of practice. This involves the paradox of identity and specifically the paradox of representation (Stohl and Cheney 2001). In order to find out if *authentic* empowerment (the opposite of *bogus* empowerment) was taking place and whether or not the identity paradox was a significant factor, I will further explore these interactions in the following chapters. But first I will explore how BioA's organizational members perceived *Leading through Communication*.

5.2   Outcomes and perceptions of the changes

How do the communication practitioners define successful communication, from which they contend that they have developed the communication strategy process *Leading through Communication*? How much do organizational members perceive that they know about *Lean*? How do organizational members perceive *Leading through Communication* and organizational communication in general?

5.2.1   Thoughts about communication in participatory processes

The communication practitioners discussed knowledge, awareness, engagement and participation with the participants in all their workshops. They described how they work in order to have different target groups reach various levels, meaning that some groups may only need to know about a change, while others need to have knowledge, be aware of and have an opinion about the change, while yet others need to be engaged, change their behaviors and participate in the change processes.

The communication practitioners talk about the *Road to commitment* and *information*, *communication* and *relation* as three steps on the *Road to commitment*. When organizational members only have to know about an upcoming change, it is usually enough to inform them, in text or orally. If their opinions about the change are important, then there is a need for increased interactivity with the organizational members. In that case a meeting together with additional communicative activities may be relevant. The highest degree of commitment, according to the communication practitioners, is when everyone involved create something together. At this stage there is a relationship between involved parties, and everyone is engaged and participate. One communication practitioner contends that one has to take into account that this is time-consuming. She says:

> This [commitment] is time consuming; there is no getting away from that. But if you work with change and you want to reach commitment there are no shortcuts.

The communication practitioner stresses that the highest degree of commitment leads to successful change if used in an honest way, but if this way of working is used to manipulate organizational members, they will feel they are being held "hostage," as she refers to it.

The process may also involve an empowerment process, as members are encouraged to create something together which would involve the sharing of decision-making. Also, organizational members are learning more about the organization while being asked to contribute with their expertise. On the other hand, if these actions are used to manipulate members, as the communication practitioner mentions, this would lead to *bogus* empowerment.

5.2.2 Knowledge and awareness

The organizational members who responded to the questionnaire appeared to be aware of the reasons for implementing *Lean* and the aim of this change process. The responses from the questionnaire revealed that one fourth of the assembly line members considered themselves to be able to describe the aim *very* well, and almost 70 percent stated that they can describe the aim *fairly* well.

When asked about the aim of *Lean* those interviewed provide various responses although their answers share the same overall theme; to lower the manufacturing costs and to increase efficiency. Their answers also involved getting a safer assembly line and a more engaged workforce who are to be given more responsibilities to carry out the work in the best way they think is possible. Other commonly shared ideas about *Lean* were that by tidying up and getting things in order, the various processes would be simplified and more productive. The interviewees also often refer to the so-called *Lean* slogan, "we should run smarter, not faster".

There was a common understanding among those interviewed and those attending the workshops that the implementation of *Lean* is a necessity, possibly even a requirement, for the organization's survival. One of the *Lean* coordinators illustrate the importance of *Lean* with the following statement:

> The key message is that we are not implementing *Lean* to get rid of people but to survive as an organization and continue our work.

The majority of the questionnaire respondents also share the opinion that the implementation of *Lean* is necessary. About 95 percent of the respondents

were of the opinion that it was very or quite necessary to initiate and carry out this change process.

When the respondents answered the question about whether or not they are satisfied with the information they have received and still are receiving about *Lean*, 14 percent stated that they were *very* satisfied while 77 percent answered that they were satisfied. Eight percent were *quite* dissatisfied. As many as 70 percent felt that there have been and still are conversations going on about the change process.

5.2.3   Engagement and participation

Organizational members contended that the communicative initiative had facilitated their understanding of what *Lean* means and why this change process is necessary. But did they perceive that they participated in the communication about the change and in the change process itself? Has the communicative initiative influenced the text, that is, have members changed their routines, for example?

One middle manager provided the following statements about how the workshops held by the communication practitioners have affected his daily work.

> Before the workshops I was aware of the power of communication, and I knew that I was a good communicator; colleagues and supervisors had told me so. That is also one reason why I have a leading position today. I do not have any formal education, but I am good at handling and communicating with people. [However,] the workshops further enhanced my knowledge about the power of communication and provided me with additional tools. For example, if I need to talk to members on an assembly line, I prefer to gather the group around the assembly line itself rather than in a meeting room. I have noticed that this encourages communication since the members feel more comfortable in their own work environment than in a meeting room.

This middle manager further explains that the "tools" he refers to are, for example, knowledge about what situations people in general have the best ability to acquire new information and that one effective way is to communicate with people is in an environment where they feel at ease. This also encourages conversation. The manager argues that this not only improve conversation, which may result in coorientation and increased creativity, and thereby leading to better opportunities to identify areas of improvement, but that it also make the work more efficient, as less time is spent on going to and from a meeting room.

As a supplement to *Leading through Communication* there were additional efforts aimed at encouraging organizational members to become more engaged in their work. One was a set of three workshops referred to as *Team-twirl* sessions – an original and inventive name used to emphasize the aim of the workshops –, which was to encourage participation and help organizational members build the foundation of a tight community of practice. The first two workshops were held two days in a row, and the third one, after a couple of weeks to follow up on the agreed-upon work process changes. In these workshops organizational members were provided with tools and assignments that aimed to create a team spirit among them.

The analysis of the observations of these workshops indicated that the focus during the three days was to build stronger teams or communities of practice and to improve work processes. One participant from the assembly line said that she – after attending the third workshop – felt that her and her colleagues in the assembly line group were even closer to each other and that they were more engaged in their work after attending these workshops:

> I enjoyed going to work before, but now it is even more fun because everyone is so engaged in the work and enthusiastic. It is also fun to see that we can actually implement the improvements that we suggested and the line has had fewer stops.

This statement indicates that the workshops had an impact on the assembly line group's ways of working. During my observation of these workshops I identified instances of coorientation and a number of tensions. These workshops will be further explored in Chapter Eight since the tensions are of central interest.

5.2.4   Outcomes and perceptions of communicative choices

When the interviewees were asked about their understandings of the reasons for implementing *Lean* and of who initiated the implementation of *Lean*, there seemed to be a consensus that the senior managers initiated the change process. One plant manager stresses:

> The senior managers are requiring the change. But how we implement *Lean* in our daily work is up to us. […]. If anyone knows where the problems lie and where improvements can be made, it's operational personnel – those who work with it every day. It's not really about revolutions, but it's been... making this small steps at a time.

The work to enhance knowledge about communication did, at the very beginning, meet resistance from just about everyone – regardless of hierarchal level – in the organization. However, when the managers who

attended the three workshops were asked what they thought about the workshops, they provided the following statements:

> This is really what the middle managers [referring to himself as well] need to know [about communication].

> Now they [referring to the communication practitioners] really work *lean* with communication.

> These tools are absolutely outstanding!

> Now I finally understand how they [referring to the communication practitioners] can support the core business.

> The workshops have helped us to lift and bring communication to our management agenda. Now, one of our focuses is *how* to communicate this change project.

These middle and senior managers also provided examples of how they applied this new knowledge in their daily work. One of the factory managers argued, for example, that his encounters with the communication practitioners have given him a lot of new insight. He has revised his previous knowledge and changed communication procedures that he had been using, now realizing that the former procedures may not lead to enhanced knowledge among organizational members:

> Some parts are definitely new, for example *selling* – the fact that you have to put much effort into clarifying the value of the change process and to sell the message. Furthermore that it is imperative to discern the importance of various groups and to meet their particular needs.

Despite the efforts to improve and enhance communication and provide opportunities for conversations between and among all organizational members, the organization continued to face challenges related to communication. In October of 2007, a status meeting for the whole research project (which the BioA study was part of) was held at Mid Sweden University in Sundsvall, Sweden. Representatives from all participating organizations were present as well as the entire research group. At this meeting one of BioA's communication practitioners described the progress of the change process and the communication efforts. One of the challenges that she mentioned concerns communication and the lack of opportunities for coorientation and sensemaking:

> What is needed is that managers not only say things but also act. There is a tendency that the managers do not dare to show that they do not really understand what the change process is all about. We still have a long way to

go on this trip... We need a more positive attitude – not everyone is convinced. There have been some issues at [division X] as some of the managers there are of the opinion that this [referring to *Lean*] should be a separate process to be kept apart from the regular work rather than to be implemented.

The last quote is somewhat incongruous with the previous quotes by the managers. From the managers' quotes it appeared that they were ventriloquized by a figure stating the importance of communication. The manager's statement that the manager and colleagues now focus on *how* to communicate the change process even indicates that not only have the managers been ventriloquized by this figure; the managers ventriloquize their environment and contribute to the imbrications of this figure in the organizing process. But the statement by the communication practitioner says something different. The communication practitioner was of the opinion that the organization was still lacking opportunities for members to be involved in conversation and sensemaking processes. Were there opportunities for organizational members to become involved in conversations that lead to sensemaking and opportunities for coorientation? This will be further explored in Chapter Seven.

5.3   Concluding Remarks

BioA's management board wished to empower organizational members and increase member participation in the organizing process. The organization was facing a more competitive environment and needed to become more efficient, which involved speeding up its actions. From the communication practitioners the management board had learned that enhanced communication between them, the *authority of position,* and their subordinates, the *authority of expertise*, may result in a more flexible organization because this communication may empower members and encourage them to work more independently and thereby be able to quickly respond to internal as well as external changes. The management board asked the communication practitioners to work to enhance communication between members at all organizational levels. The communication practitioners developed a communication strategy process, *Leading through Communication*, with the aim to increase knowledge about the role of communication in organizing processes and also to enhance communication between everyone in the organization. *Leading through Communication* mainly consisted of workshops where communication was in focus. In addition to this communication strategy process there were also a number of other workshops that focused on enhancing the team spirit among participants.

Members who participated in these workshops as well as in other parts of the work to enhance communication and increase the team spirit stated that they enjoyed it, that they learned more about communication but also that they got a better understanding of how their work tasks contributed to the organization as a whole. They contended that they could see how improvements in their work environment had a positive impact on the organization. They perceived that communication was enhanced and that this contributed to make them feel that they participated in an empowerment process. However, there were indications that the organization was lacking opportunities for members to be involved in sensemaking processes and engaged in conversations to the extent that they reach coorientation. So even though statements by the organizational members indicated that they engaged in conversation to the extent that they reach coorientation, thereby coordinating their work and independently contributing to the organizing process, was this what happened in the situated performances? Did members coorient? Were empowerment processes initiated? There were also a number of indications that tensions existed in these processes. How did they play into the communicative attempts? These are areas that will be further explored in the following chapters.

6 BioB: Communicative Interactions and Text

What are the reasons behind the BioB management board's decision to incorporate the interactive video website, what characterizes this website, how is it used by organizational members and how do they perceive it? These are areas that will be explored in this chapter.

6.1 BioB sets the stage for communicative interactions

The management board and, in particular, BioB's CEO wished to regain an entrepreneurial spirit in the organization, and in order to do so the organization needs an empowered workforce. The management board realized that an empowered workforce that independently participates in the organizing process requires enhanced communication between them and the management board.

During BioB's first years the CEO arranged meetings with all organizational members, where everyone was involved in discussing relevant issues. However, over the years, as a result of the organization's growth, these meetings have evolved into so-called town hall meetings, large meetings where the CEO and management announce and describe key corporate decisions and/or developments. This transmission style leaves little room for conversation between and among the senior managers and organizational members. The growth in the number of organizational members makes it difficult to provide a conversation mode, and individuals also tend to be more hesitant to share their ideas or views on a topic, when there are a large number of meeting participants. Despite little room for conversation, the town hall meetings are very popular among organizational members. The main reason put forth in the individual interviews, during the focus group discussions and in informal conversations with organizational members is that the organization's founder, who is also the CEO[19] is considered – by the organizational members – to be a very charismatic,

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[19] BioB's founder served as CEO until the spring of 2010. The new CEO had just recently been introduced when the focus group sessions took place. The new CEO was to begin in her position shortly after our research project ended.

interesting, innovative and fun leader to listen to. As one focus group participant said with a smile on his face:

> You never know what he [the CEO] will come up with so you do not want to miss a [town hall] meeting.

The town hall meetings are usually scheduled between 2.30-3.30 p.m. to facilitate participation from assembly line members. Even though the hour makes it easier for these organizational members to participate, it also results in some limitations. In a focus group session one of the quality engineers pointed to the fact that since it is the last thing before going home, she believes this to be one reason why few people engage in conversation or ask questions. People simply prefer to go home rather than communicate about company issues in the late afternoon. Also, even though important issues are brought to the table during the town hall meetings, organizational members are not given an opportunity to discuss and reflect on them in their communities of practice, among their immediate colleagues. The reason is that everyone leaves to go home when the meeting has finished, and the next day there is no time to discuss it. The qualitative engineer concluded her thoughts by stating:

> […] So, this is something I miss at times, that in some way people… scatters and leave and then the next day there is no opportunity. […] It is a pity because sometimes you have your thoughts and then everyone leaves… but at the same time it may not work to have [the town hall meetings] at a different hour; this is the best [the senior managers] have done somehow. Tried to find the best solution.

Hence, it is not only the senior managers who consider these meetings to be town hall meetings; members in other positions in the organization apparently do as well. Organizational members at various levels in the organization seem to be missing a communication forum where there is an opportunity for conversations between everyone. Senior managers argue that if they are to regain the entrepreneurial spirit and have empowered members who participate in the organization, they need to find new communication forums where conversations are better supported and encouraged. Another reason why the town hall meetings are no longer sufficient is the organization's geographical expansion, nationally as well as internationally, which puts limitations on members' possibilities to attend physical meetings. The implementation of the interactive video website is therefore an attempt to encourage conversation among all organizational members.

   The CEO emphasizes that the aim with the interactive video website is not to replace the town hall meetings; they still fill a purpose for members working at the Swedish site, the organization's head office. Rather, it is an attempt to find a substitute, an alternative mode for communication, one that

encourages conversation and helps close the gap between *authority of practice* and *authority of expertise.* Hence, senior managers search for additional communication forums to the ones that already exist at BioB. They decided to use an interactive video website to communicate about the organization's core values, which are *Simplicity*, *Innovation* and *Business Sense*.

6.1.1 An interactive video website and core values to encourage participation

The idea with the interactive video website is to create an ongoing and stable way for organizational members to interact throughout time and space, which is something that Weick (2009), for example, argues that contemporary organizations need to do.

Four videos, one video describing the organization's history[20] and one video for each core value, were produced and launched on the website. A video website is preferred over streaming video because of the former's potential to support communication and contributions from organizational members. The length of the videos varies between five minutes, six seconds, and seven minutes, 40 seconds. The plan was for the videos to be launched every other month, but due to redundancy processes and other turbulent issues occurring during the same period, the videos were launched on an irregular basis over a period of more than one year.

Figure 3. The Interactive Video Website

Figure 3 shows a screenshot of the interactive video website with the *History* video open. The face of the person has been blurred in order not to reveal who the person is.

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[20] The video about the organization's history was produced in two versions, one Swedish and one English.

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The senior managers had a long list of issues they had identified as important to talk about with the organizational members to facilitate for a more empowered and participative workforce and to regain the entrepreneurial spirit. Finally the group agreed to focus on the company core values, *Simplicity*, *Business Sense* and *Innovation*. When interviewing the organization's founder and CEO, he contended that the core values have been present in the organization since it was founded and that they are part of the reason behind the organization's success because they have fostered an entrepreneurial spirit in the organization. He was of the opinion that organizational members were more empowered during BioB's first years. This was confirmed by one of the organizational members in the video presenting the organization's history:

> You were given a lot of responsibility. Do what you can and that is good enough.

More than twenty years after having founded the organization, the CEO believed that the knowledge of how to apply the core values in daily work had been neglected. There was a strong believe among BioB's senior managers that the organization's core values are important for empowering and encouraging members to participate in the organization. They believe that if organizational members adjust their work according to the core values, the organization will regain its entrepreneurial spirit. The management's explicit desire to empower organizational members and enhance participation was manifested in their aim to provide opportunities for conversations about the core values. Organizational members would discover that it is up to them to act and that they have the freedom to find the most appropriate ways to carry out their work. The CEO and the senior managers believed that this would further encourage members to become more engaged and participate more actively in the organization, and by doing that the organization would regain the entrepreneurial spirit. Therefore, the CEO's suggestion was to focus on the core values. This suggestion was acknowledged and accepted by the senior managers.

There were departments where members already perceive themselves as engaged in their work and empowered to carry out their work the way they find most appropriate. The senior managers asked representatives from the organization that produce the interactive website and videos to use these members' stories in the videos as examples of how the core values may be implemented in daily work, hoping that these narratives would generate conversations about the core values and, in the end, that other organizational members would be inspired to implement the core values in their daily work the way they found most appropriate. The stories in the videos work as texts,

as they illustrate ways of carrying out work tasks that set a precedent for how organizational members normatively enact rules, routines and space.

For example, in the video discussing the core value *Simplicity* an organizational member working with marketing provides the following description of how her team has actualized this core value in their work:

> In X [a country where the company is present] we have a very simple philosophy and that is that we are all one team regardless of what our job titles might be. Eh, and we have the same objectives and that is that we all work to achieve our business targets. And, for me, being responsible for marketing, the way that we work with training, with sales, is to make sure that we collaborate with them in developing marketing tactics. And so we have monthly meetings where we invite representatives from other departments to come along. And the reason we do that is that it makes the decision making that we have to do as a team in marketing simpler. And most of all of course, we do have a very simple objective and that is to make our customers successful because through their success ours is built.

The CEO and organizational members who worked with the organization at its inception provide vivid descriptions of the founding and the organization's development in the history video. These stories include everything from the breakthrough with the first gel, as described below, to stories about sawing curtain rods and more professional assignments. The CEO describes how he, while hosting a dinner, constantly sneaked out to check his test tubes in the lab (at this time the lab was located next to his home). He states with a glimmer in his eye that his guests probably thought he was sneaking out for some stronger liquor. Finally, when he went out to check the test tubes and turn them, he saw that the content had turned into gel, exactly what he was waiting and hoping for:

> I got so happy when I finally saw the gel because that meant that months of failure had paid off.

As was stated above, the four videos were published and launched one at the time. The first video launched was the *History* video (one Swedish and one English version). While there were two versions of the *History* video, the other three videos were in both Swedish and English, always with English or Swedish subtitles, depending on who was talking. Once each video was launched it was available on the website, and members could choose which video they wanted to watch. Members were informed about the launch of a new video via email.

The results from the observations show that the number of unique viewers decreased for each video, (with the exception that the *Simplicity* video – launched after the English *History* video – had more unique viewers than the English *History* video). The first video, the one presenting the organization's

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history (the Swedish version) was viewed by 676 unique viewers, which is more than the number of members working at the Swedish site. The reason for that is that these videos were accessible to just about all members in the organization. 419 unique viewers watched the English *History* video. Then, there was an increase in the number of unique viewers, as 566 members watched the first core value video focusing on the core value *Simplicity*. 325 unique viewers watched the video about the core value *Innovation*, and 265 unique viewers watched the last core value video, the one focusing on the core value *Business Sense*.

There were a total of 21 comments and questions posted on the interactive website along with the videos. The number of comments also decreased with every video. They ranged from 10 for the first video to one for the last video. Members who watched the videos are able to rate them. The average ratings varied from 3.9 for the first video to a 2.7 rating for the last video. With 5.0 being the highest possible rating. Unlike the steady decrease of unique viewers (with one exception) and comments/questions, the ratings went up and down with each new video.

Table 2. Number of unique viewers, number of comments, conversation, coorientation per video and the rating of the videos.

Video	Unique viewers[21]	Questions/ Comments	Conversation	Coorientat ion	Rating
History (Sw)	676	10	x	x	3.9
History (Eng)	419	7	1	x	4.0
Simplicity	566	2	x	x	3.6
Innovation	325	1	x	x	4.3
Business Sense	265	1	x	x	2.7

6.2 Outcomes and perceptions of the changes

The CEO was convinced that the entrepreneurial spirit would reappear in BioB if organizational members became empowered. He and his colleagues were of the opinion that enhanced communication between all organizational member about the organization's core values would empower employees. The interactive video website was used to enhance communication. Did organizational member perceive that they knew more about the core values after the launch of the interactive video website? Did they perceive that they

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[21] All the figures on unique viewers also include viewers outside the Swedish physical work site, that is, the headquarters.

worked according to the core values? How did they perceive the interactive video website? These are areas that will be explored in this chapter.

6.2.1 Thoughts about communication in participatory processes

Considering the size of the organization and the geographical dispersion, the management board believed that the interactive video website would be a good complement to the already existing town hall meetings. The management group said that they believed that the interactive video website would encourage communication and conversation and, with this, coorientation would also improve among all organizational members. They argued that an entrepreneurial spirit among all organizational members requires that the members are and feel empowered, and this, in turn, requires enhanced communication. Since core values are abstract and often difficult to put into practice, the group was convinced that storytelling – letting members who already have incorporated the core values in their daily work tell their stories – would provide organizational members with ideas that they wished to discuss and share with their co-workers. The management board was therefore convinced that using the interactive video website would result in enhanced communication between all organizational members, which in turn would lead to empowerment and thus encourage participation.

6.2.2 Knowledge and awareness

When asked – in the questionnaires – about how they received information about the core values, organizational members identified a number of different communication channels, as can be seen in the table below. More than 50 percent of the organizational members answering the first questionnaire stated that they had received information via town hall meetings, intranet and/or in workshops. There had been communication about the core values before the launch of the interactive video website, and therefore it was of interest to also find out more about how this had been done. Prior to this study, one web video had been distributed to organizational members by sending a link by e-mail. In this video, the CEO discussed the future of the organization and the company's core values. Almost half (41%) feel they gained information concerning the company's core values through the web video, while this figure increased significantly to 67 percent after the interactive video website initiative (Chi-square (d.f. = 1) = 25.3, $p < .001$).

In general the amount of information appeared to have increased, and information about the core values was spread via all other channels as well, with the exception of newsletters and emails. Surprisingly, only 31 percent received information personally from their manager when the first questionnaire was sent out. A slightly higher percentage (47%) of

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organizational members stated that they had received information in person from the manager when the second questionnaire was sent out. Could it be that the interactive video website resulted in post-exposure activities in the form of conversations? Why did members perceive that they got less information via emails when that was the way that they were informed about the next launch of a new video? These questions needed to be further explored in the focus groups and the interviews. This table shows how members perceived that they became aware of the company's core values. Members were able to mark all channels that they receive information via.

Table 3. How organizational members perceive that they gain information

	Before	After
Town hall meeting	58%	74%
Intranet	53%	47%
Workshop	52%	54%
Web video	41%	67%
Personal with manager	31%	47%
Newsletter	28%	17%
E-mail	15%	12%
Other	11%	12%

Given that there were 359 members working at the Swedish site at the time when the second questionnaire was sent out and that 137 members responded that they had seen one or several videos, I know that at least 38 percent of the organizational members were aware of the videos' existence. What I do not know is how familiar the rest – more than half (62%) – of the organizational members are with this communication effort. Have they seen any of the videos? Are they familiar with the interactive video website and its functionalities?

The focus group conversations confirmed that the awareness of the videos and the website was low. When discussing the videos in the focus groups, some organizational members admitted that they had not seen the videos or might not even be certain as to what was referred to when the conversation moved to the topic of the videos. It seemed to be difficult to find the website, as some focus group participants reveal here:

> I have not seen any [videos]. Process Operator, 1

> What videos are we talking about? Is it with [the CEO]? Process Operator, 2

> I did not have a… is there a particular website where everything can be found? Qualitative Engineer, 1

> I actually looked for it before this [the focus group session]… I did not find it. Manager X

When focus groups participants from the production line discussed the use of the interactive video website, one issue that continually surfaced was that this group had limited access to computers, and the time period that was set aside for computer work was reserved for getting information about the planned production and filling out forms and check lists. Once this was done, there was hardly any time available to spend accessing the interactive video website and watching the videos. The fact that the computers are located on the floor above the production site also limits the accessibility, according to the members working on the assembly line. One assembly line member describes the difficulty to find time to watch the videos:

> It is difficult for you if you have a day with only production [working at the assembly line].

The senior managers and in particular the CEO were of the opinion that the organizational members had little knowledge about the company's core values, and this was something that the management group wished to change. However, the results from the first questionnaire indicate something different. The results from the knowledge measure, displayed in Table 4, indicate that organizational members are quite aware of the core values (M=5.2) before the launch of the interactive video website. But notably, there is quite a drop for the statements "I have good knowledge of the company's values" (M before=5.8; M after=5.4) and "I can describe the company's values to a friend" (M before=5.3; M after=5.0).

Table 4. Descriptive data for the cognition measure.[22]

	Before		After	
	Mean	**Std. Deviation**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**
I have good knowledge of the company's values.	5.8	0.9	5.4	1.1
I can describe the company's values to a friend.	5.3	1.2	5.0	1.3
I can describe the company's value *Simplicity* to a friend.	5.1	1.4	5.1	1.3
I can describe the company's value *Business sense* to a friend.	5.1	1.3	5.1	1.3
I can describe the company's value *Innovation* to a friend.	5.2	1.3	5.0	1.2
I think that most employees at the company are aware of the company's values.	5.1	1.3	4.9	1.2
Total	5.2	1.3	5.1	1.2

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[22] Table 4 shows descriptive data for the cognition measure (Chi-square (d.f. = 7) = 22.5, p < .005).

These are interesting results for at least two reasons. First of all, the discrepancy between the members' perceived knowledge about the core values and the management's thoughts about how familiar members are with the core values before the launch of the interactive video website indicates that the management lacks knowledge about their subordinates and their work tasks as well as about the organization. The results suggest that organizational members consider the core values in their daily work to a greater extent than the management thinks. This points to a gap between the *authority of position* and the *authority of expertise*, which is quite common in contemporary organizations, according to Brummans et al. (2014) but something organizations need to deal with in order to be competitive on a globalized market. Enhancing communication between authority of position and authority of expertise may contribute to diminishing or even closing this gap and possibly also lead to a greater entrepreneurial spirit in the organization since extensive research points to the fact that participatory processes require more communication between all organizational members (Brummans et al. 2014).

Second, why does organizational members' knowledge about core values appear to decrease during the period – the fall of 2008 and the spring of 2010 – when the interactive video website is launched and the project carried out (between the first and the second questionnaire)? Is there a knowledge difference across communities of practice and hierarchical levels? If so, why? In order to answer these questions and to further explore if and, if so, where conversation and coorientation takes place, additional methods in the form of focus group sessions and interviews were used.

Three focus groups were chosen. The participants were divided into groups, depending on where they work in the organization: one group with members working as managers at different levels, one group with members from the assembly line and a third group with members from research and development. The divisions were chosen to make it possible to analyze segment diversifications in the members' arguments and descriptions (Söderström 2011, Wibeck 2000). The decreasing knowledge about the core values was confirmed when discussing this in the focus groups. From the focus group conversations it seemed that the knowledge about the core values differed between the focus groups. As seen below the managers struggled to recall the three core values, though they were finally able to identify all three.

> Middle Manager A: We said, right before I was coming here. Oh, maybe we should repeat the core values. We came up with one each [laughter], that's how good we were [laughter] but, we did recall them.
>
> Middle Manager B: So which are they?
>
> Middle Manager A: Well, there are … [laughter]

Everyone: [laughter]

Middle Manager B: Novelty, innovation and…

Middle Manager A: Business Sense.

Manager C: Simplicity.

Middle Manager A: Simplicity.

Manager C: Yes.

Middle Manager B: Four.

Middle Manager A: No, there are three.

Middle Manager B: Three … [laughter]

Manager C: I think that novelty and innovation is the same thing…

In the assembly line groups, the participants struggle even more. In one of these groups, the members managed to identify only one of the core values, while one of the qualitative engineers in the other assembly line group recalled all three, an accomplishment that impressed the rest of the group. The members in this group did not refer to the videos when talking about how the qualitative engineer obtained knowledge about the core values but, rather, to a number of workshops that were introduced in 2007. However, the qualitative engineer emphasized that she did not work for BioB at that time. According to her, she gained knowledge about the core values from listening in on conversations between colleagues. Part of the conversation among the focus groups participants that followed after the qualitative engineer had managed to identify the three core values is included here:

Qualitative engineer 1: It sounds about right [laughter].

Everyone: [Laughter and talk among themselves. Not possible to make out what they are saying].

Qualitative engineer 2: …Yes, I came up with them myself.

Qualitative engineer 1: Then I guess you were present [referring to the workshops in 2007].

Qualitative engineer 2: No, I did not attend but I recall that people were talking about them when I started [her employment with the organization] so… But, I have not gotten it from higher up [referring to the management

board] to put it that way, not more than the emails that have arrived every now and then… a couple of times.

When talking about the interactive video website and the core values, participants in the research and administrative focus group agreed that watching the videos probably enhanced knowledge about the core values to some extent but that this was also supported by other projects. Similarly to the focus group participants from the assembly line, this group referred to the previous project. This project was apparently initiated a year or so before the launch of the interactive video website, and it had a similar aim. When talking about this project the focus group participants said that this was a project aimed at enhancing knowledge about the core values. Workshops and posters (just about everywhere – in the elevator, the restroom, hallways, lunch room and other locations) were some of the tools used in this project.

When specifically asked if they (the participants in the research and administrative group) believed that the interactive video website project contributed to enhancing awareness about the core values among the organizational members, there was hesitance.

> Logistics Manager: Yes, well, to some extent. … Maybe there has to be something more but I don't know.

> Clinical Operations Manager: I am not sure that it is the movies … but everything contributes with something.

Considering that these quotes are from the research and administration group, the segment that appears to be most familiar with the core values, this suggests that the interactive website and the videos had little impact on organizational members' awareness about the core values.

6.2.3 Engagement and participation

In one of the meetings – prior to the launch of the interactive video website – representatives from the website and video production organization discussed the possible features of the interactive video website and the content with BioB's CEO and representatives from the communications and the HR department. The CEO was very insistent that he did not want organizational members to be able to post questions or comments anonymously. He argued that anonymity would only result in negative communication. He was of the opinion that no constructive conversations would occur if organizational members were allowed to act anonymously. This discussion went on for some time, as all the other participants were more hesitant toward the idea of not opening up for the option to be anonymous. The communication

practitioners and the HR representative argued that organizational members would be more hesitant to provide comments if they realized that they had to post their names, even though the majority of them would understand that the option to be anonymous was not truly real because they know that they can easily be traced if necessary. The representatives from the production organization contended that their experience from previous work was that although members were given an option to be anonymous, they seldom chose that option. The reason, they argued, was that organizational members who get involved in communication do so because they are interested in improvements and care more about the issue at stake than the anonymity option. Finally, the CEO agreed that members should be able to interact anonymously on the website. The results from studying the website and the interactions show that everyone who participated stated their first name, and many also included their surname.

The CEO makes a statement at the end of the *History* video, (the first video to be launched), where he encourages organizational members to interact on the platform and engage themselves in the conversation. However, he discourages criticism, saying that no one likes critics and instead encourages constructive suggestions on how the organization can change to become even better:

> One might want to comment and contribute with ideas and be involved in the conversation, and we do, of course, encourage that. And there are great opportunities to do that if you click there, [he points to his left to show the interactive field on the platform], you will find comments to read and you can also post your own and have [the question] answered, etc. But, eh, well, there should not be any criticism [He ends this sentence with a smile on his face and smiles while saying the following]. Well, criticism is of course welcomed but criticism is not fun. It is more fun with constructive suggestions on how we can become even better.

Hence, the organizational members are given the opportunity to anonymously comment on the videos, become involved in the conversations, ask questions and rate the content. It is not obligatory to use the interactive website, and the discussions are not moderated. After the launch of the fourth and last video there were only a limited number of comments posted on the website. The number of comments ranged from one to ten for each video and decrease with every new video. Did the CEO's statement affect the interaction on the platform? There is no indication that his statement had anything to do with the low interactivity. No one in the focus groups or any of the interviewees recalled the CEO's statement, though they recall a number of other startling statements made by him.

Members who did state that they perceived themselves as active participants in the interaction about the core values also states that their knowledge about the core values had increased. This confirms existing

research that engaging in interactions about an object of concern facilitates the enactment process (Weick 1995a). In addition these members rated themselves as positive towards the interactive video websites initiative. However, many organizational members responded that they did not feel that the web videos led to increased discussions at work, outside the platform about the core values. This finding was also confirmed in the focus groups, here by one of the managers:

> Well, conversations… No, not really [about] the content but more, Have you seen the movie? It is well done, how fun, and similar comments. Manager C

There was a similar descending trend when studying the results focusing on the incorporation of core values in daily work. When the second questionnaire was sent out organizational members stated that the core values influenced their work to a lesser extent than what they stated in the first questionnaire. As shown in Table 5 below, the total mean for the behavior measure decreased significantly (M before=5.0; M=4.7). We can see quite dramatic decreases of the means for the statements "I think that the company's values can influence its future positively" (M before=5.5; M after=4.9) and "The company's values influence my daily work" (M before =5.2; M after=4.7).

Table 5. Descriptive data for the behavior measure[23]

	Before		After	
	Mean	**Std. Deviation**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**
The company's values influence my daily work.	5.2	1.1	4.7	1.3
I work on the basis of the company's values.	5.4	1.1	5.1	1.2
I feel that it is difficult for us to work on the basis of the company's values. (reverse-coded)	4.1	1.5	3.7	1.6
I think that the company's values can influence its future positively.	5.5	1.2	4.9	1.4
I think that most members work on the basis of the company's values.	4.3	1.4	4.1	1.2
The company's value *Simplicity* affects my work.	5.2	1.3	5.0	1.3
The company's value *Business Sense* affects my work.	5.1	1.4	5.0	1.4
The company's value *Innovation* affects my work.	5.1	1.3	5.0	1.3
Total	5.0	1.4	4.7	1.4

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[23] Table 5 shows descriptive data for the behavior measure (Chi-square (d.f. = 7) = 61.4, p < .001).

Conversations in the focus groups confirmed that members adjusted their daily tasks according to the core values to a lower degree when compared with the period before the launch of the interactive video website. The results also point to segment diversifications because although the incorporation of core values in the daily work is low across groups it does vary. The extent to which organizational members have implemented the core values in their daily tasks varies depending on their organizational positioning, as illustrated in the quotes below. When discussing whether or not the organizational members on the assembly line have implemented the core values in their daily work, one process operator says:

> Well, that is very difficult since we have a very detailed workday on the assembly line. … We are sort of timed to the minute.

Even though the conversation in the middle managers' focus group came to a similar conclusion regarding lack of behavioral effects, these middle managers were of the opinion that at least the *Simplicity* video did have an impact on their behaviors and on the organization as a whole. Two middle managers made the following statements:

> […] you are not supposed to overdo things and so on and I believe that you are more… in general that you are more aware of that.

> […] *simplicity* is really something that the whole company has embraced.

The fact that organizational members perceived that they had better knowledge and worked according to the core values to a greater extent before the launch of the interactive video website than they perceived that they had and did once the last video had been launched may have something to do with the previous core value project – which was built around workshops – that focus group participants referred to. It appears that the interactive video website did not lead to instances of conversation, and that may be one of the reasons why the knowledge about the core values not only stayed the same but even decreased during this time. Comparing the workshops in the previous project with the interactive video website project – the workshops may have provided instances of conversation while the interactive video website may not have done so – would confirm previous research stating that members need to interact in order to enable the sensemaking process (Weick 1995a), particularly when the object of concern is abstract. Also if members are to be able to coordinate and contribute to the organizing process, they need to be involved in conversations to the extent that they reach coorientation (Taylor and Robichaud 2004). Thus, it may have been that the workshops offered an opportunity to do just that, but the interactive video website did not.

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6.2.4 Outcomes and perceptions of communicative choices

The organizational members were asked in the questionnaires, which means of communication they preferred (see Table 6, below). Most members preferred other means of communication as compared to the interactive video website, and there was a slight but statistically significant decrease in the percentage of members that preferred web videos as means of communication (Chi-square (d.f. = 7) = 28.4, p < .001) after the launch of the interactive video website.

Table 6. Preferred means of communication (reverse coded)[24].

	Before		After	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
Face to face with manager	2.4	1.6	2.5	1.7
Mass meeting	3.0	1.8	2.8	1.6
Intranet	3.1	1.6	2.9	1.4
Email	3.7	2.0	4.2	2.0
Web video	4.5	1.8	4.3	1.7
Newsletter	4.4	1.6	4.5	1.5
Workshop	5.7	1.9	5.3	2.2
Other	7.7	1.1	7.5	1.4

After the first questionnaire there was a correlation between age and appreciation of the videos in that older organizational members were more positive towards this new way of communicating. This was a surprise, as I expected that younger members would appreciate the video and the interactive website, considering that they in general use the Internet and YouTube more often. This led to the hypothesis that the interactive video website was considered an old media for the younger generation. I intended to explore this further in the focus groups and the interviews, but the correlation was not found when analyzing the answers from the second questionnaires.

When discussing the preferred means of communication, the focus group participants agree that face-to-face meetings, in one way or another, are usually preferred. However, sometimes email, a phone call or other means of communication might be more suitable, according to the focus groups participants. It all depended on the content and how much engagement that was expected from the involved parties.

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[24] Organizational members were asked to mark all the means of communication they preferred with numbers. Number one being the most preferred means communication.

E-mail can be a good way to establish contact. However, there are often questions on what's coming … so the ultimate contact is often at a meeting where you have the opportunity to ask questions. (Manager D)

In the theoretical framework I state that the interactive video website did have the potential to be considered either rich or lean media by the organizational members depending on the circumstances, that is, the text. The results from the questionnaires and the data from the focus groups point to the fact that the interactive video website is not considered a rich medium by BioB's organizational members. This appears to be dependent on the complexity of the content but also on how members were made aware of the existence of the interactive video website as well as their access to it, that is, the text. BioB's members are used to – and seem to prefer – face-to-face communication. Even the town-hall meetings, which encourage a transmission focus on communication, seem to be considered by the members as a rich media because it is, in a way, face-to-face.

The organizational members seem ambivalent about the benefits of the interactive video website initiative. The total mean for the satisfaction measure is 4.5 (see Table 7 below). Overall, they slightly agree that the interactive video web site is appropriate for learning about the company's core values (M=4.7) and that it is a good channel for internal communication (M=4.6). But in the end, (as Table 6 shows above), organizational members prefer several other means of communication as compared with the interactive video website.

Table 7. Descriptive data for the satisfaction measure.

	Mean	Std. Deviation
I would recommend the video web site to a colleague.	4.3	1.5
I will not use the video web site in the future. (reverse-coded)	3.8	1.7
The video web site was suitable for learning about the company's values.	4.7	1.4
The video web site is a good channel for internal communication.	4.6	1.5
Total	4.5	1.5

When discussing the benefits of the interactive video website among the focus groups participants, there were a number of suggestions for how to use this tool when communicating internally. Several participants suggested that it would be a perfect tool to introduce new members of the management board. As one middle manager explains:

Middle Manager A: […] you hear the voice, you get a different [impression], you see gestures and so on. You get a full impression, just like in reality.

Other suggestions were to use this tool to help members to better familiarize themselves with various parts of the organization and the products they produce:

> Middle Manager B: […] maybe you can make movies about the organization, for example, the production. I have been there once, but if I hadn't, I wouldn't have a clue about what they do in the plant. You are not allowed to go in there without protective clothing. Why not make a movie that shows the production, the part that is not secret.

> Quality engineer: I think [the videos] would be suitable for showing the products' usability areas … we would not want to have the whole company entering the production area, as this is a clean room environment.

> Logistics manager: It would be quite fun to see X talk about the business in Italy. I would watch that.

Both middle managers "A" and "B" added that if the interactive video website was used to introduce new members, it would be possible for everyone to also ask the new member – of the management board or of a specific department – questions and add comments.

Another suggestion was to use the interactive video website to communicate about organizational changes, which, in fact, was the intention in this case. However, the difference between this suggestion and how the interactive video website was used in this project is that the member suggests that the interactive video website should be used to inform members about organizational changes within a certain department and that it should be the members of that department that participate in the video. Organizational member A suggests:

> […] and then maybe when changes occur, well, within one department, then you could use it.

The focus group participants contended that it was due to the unusually turbulent times that resulted in little awareness and knowledge about the core values. The organizational members simply placed their focus elsewhere and forget about the core values, despite the interactive video website. Also, members stated that the information about the existence of the interactive video website disappeared in favor of information about redundancy processes, bribing scandal, the potential sale of the organization and rumors that the CEO and founder was leaving BioB. The interviewees agree that the turbulent period was the main reason why the interactive video website did not fulfill its purpose. Senior manager B states:

Then the timing of the videos was really bad, and that is something you do not know in advance, since [the time when the platform was launched] was right when the redundancy processes were carried out.

Yet, another senior manager argued that turbulent times might instead cause increased interactivity on the platform. When people are upset they tend to want to have their voices heard. Senior manager A illustrates what he means:

[…] it may just as well lead to increased communication because people are angry, and this is an available channel to express themselves: 'right, so you have *Business Sense* as a core value, how much *Business Sense* is there in letting people go in order to increase the profitability in the short run?'

Three interviewees also believe that another significant reason – as to why the interactive video website did not become a success – is that the project itself was never fully completed and that the movies – due to the redundancies carried out at the same time, were launched on an irregular basis and over too long of a period of time.

It also seems that even though organizational members were fairly acquainted with this kind of technology, the website might have needed a more comprehensive introduction. Organizational members did not understand the intentions with the interactive video website.

This quote reflects a general rejection of this platform as a means for communication. Other comments also suggest that the interactive video website was not thoroughly introduced and the management did not consider BioB's communication culture and the fact that members working on the assembly line have limited access to computers.

6.3 Concluding Remarks

BioB's management board wished to regain an entrepreneurial spirit in BioB and the members argued that this required an empowered and participatory workforce. They came to the conclusion that the work toward creating an empowered and participative workforce challenged the existent organizational communication. Hence, the management board decided to incorporate an interactive video website with the aim of changing and also enhancing communication. The management board believed that more communication, particularly about the organization's core values, would facilitate the empowerment process. Some of the organization's members already worked independently and according to the core values, and the management wished to use these members' stories to enhance knowledge about the core values among other members.

Four videos were produced, focusing on the founder's and other members' narratives about the launch and development of BioB as well as member's narratives of how they have incorporated the core values in their daily work. The plan to launch the four videos every other month was hindered by organizational turbulence in the form of redundancy processes (the first ones in the history of the organization), bribing scandals, discussions about selling BioB to international stakeholders and the charismatic founder/CEO's wish to leave BioB with the potential sale. Consequently, the launch of the videos took place on an irregular basis over a period of almost a year and a half. The videos were launched on an interactive video website, where organizational members were able to be involved in communicative interactions by discussing the video content, that is, the core values, posting questions and comments about the content and rating each video.

An email was sent out to inform organizational members about the first video, the interactive platform and the whole project. Since a number of organizational members participated in the videos they were natural information disseminators. Every time a new video was launched, information was sent out via email, and information was also posted on the intranet. However, due to the turbulent times, information about the website and its videos seemed to get lost. Focus group members also informed me that hardly anyone visited the organization's intranet because it was under construction. No one really expected to find anything on the intranet at this time.

Organizational members who had seen any or all of the videos enjoyed them and suggested how this media could be used for future organizational communication. Some members did not have an opinion about the interactive video website, simply because they were not aware of its existence. One reason for this appears to be that BioB does not use the communication channels that the organizational members are familiar with in order to inform them about the interactive video website's existence. Town hall meetings have traditionally been used to introduce changes and anything else new in the organization, but the announcement about the interactive video website was mainly done via email. There are also structural challenges that may hinder some members from accessing the website, watching the videos and interacting on the website. For example, members on the assembly line have limited access to computers, and during the time that they do have access, they have a number of tasks to fulfill before they can visit the website.

Knowledge about the core values and how to incorporate them into daily work decreased during the period when this study was conducted. The focus groups participants brought up another project focusing on the core values before the interactive video website was launched, and that project included

workshops. Weick and his colleagues (Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obstfeld 2005) discuss the importance of giving people the opportunity to get together and talk in order to facilitate the sensemaking process and encourage action in organizations, and Taylor and Robichaud (Taylor and Robichaud 2004) contend that organizational members can get involved in conversations, but if they do not reach coorientation they will never be coordinated and hence will not contribute to the organizing process.

Core values are abstract and usually hard to grasp. The workshops in the previous project gave the organizational members an opportunity to involve in a conversation about the core values, and that may have increased the knowledge about the values at that point. Even though the intention with the interactive video website was to encourage organizational members to become involved in conversations about the core values, this did not happen, at least not to the extent that the management planned for. The fact that members rarely seemed to get involved in conversations about the core values through the interactive video website may be a reason why the knowledge about the core values did not increase during this time. If we also take the turbulent times into account, together these may be reasons why the knowledge about the core values did not stay the same but, in fact, decreased during the time of that the interactive video website was launched.

The management hoped for the organizational members to engage in conversation with each other in order to get a better understanding and provide suggestions for how they could implement the core values in their daily work. But the overall purpose with the incorporation of the interactive video website was to enhance communication between all organizational members and, in particular, between *authority of position* and *authority of expertise.* The CEO and the senior managers wanted to encourage conversation in order to engage members in coordinating work assignments, and by doing so they were hoping to regain the entrepreneurial spirit.

Taylor and Van Every (2000) state that narratives are central in the constitutive process as they reflect the interplay between conversation and text. Using narratives to present examples of how to enact core values in daily work had the potential to facilitate the enactment of the core values and encourage interactivity between organizational members. But the interactive video website did not enhance conversation, neither on the website nor in other circumstances, and the reasons for that will be further explored in the following chapters. Were there any indications or explicit instances of enhanced communication between organizational members that could be linked to the interactive video website? Did members reach coorientation in their conversations about the core values, either on the website or in post-exposure activities? How did tensions play into these communicative interactions and thus influence the organizing and the organization? These are also areas that will be further explored in the following chapter.

7 Communicative Interactions with or without Instances of Coorientations and Empowerment Processes

Taylor and Robichaud (2004) contend that organizational members can engage in action, but if there is no coorientation, members will never be organized. Considering this statement, I will explore whether or not the communicative initiatives implemented at BioA and BioB may lead to instances of coorientation, and I will look at the circumstances around the possible outcomes. Since the change processes at both organizations aimed to empower organizational members, I also raise the question of whether or not the communicative projects initiate empowerment processes.

   To identify instances of coorientation I searched for situations where members were involved in conversation and considered not only their own view but also their interlocutors view on a specific matter. This involves studying the situated circumstance of the communication, what is happening in the conversation, how text plays into the conversations and how language is used. Identifying any empowerment processes that are initiated means following the steps of identifying instances of coorientation while also exploring whether or not there are any changes in the power relationship between the interlocutors.

   Moreover, using the ventriloqual approach (Cooren 2012) makes it possible to identify figures that may be indicators of previous conversations—figures that have been distanciated, imbricated and changed the text, or other figures that are to bring about changes through present conversations.

7.1 BioA

The examples that I present here have been selected because they provide vivid illustrations of how BioA attempted to facilitate conversations between members, how members were involved in communication, how they may or may not have reached coorientation and whether or not empowerment processes were initiated.

7.1.1 Attempts to facilitate coorientation and empowerment processes

The first excerpt illustrates how BioA's communication practitioners and the Swedish CEO worked with the aim of facilitating the empowerment process and encouraged the workshop participants to further engage and participate in the organizing and the organization. They emphasized the value of the workshop participants' expertise. The excerpt includes quotes by the Swedish CEO as he gives an overview on why *Leading through Communication* was initiated for the *Lean* change process. It provided information about the background and the conditions that set the stage, and he aimed to provide opportunities for organizational members to be involved in conversation and coordinate their work while also working to bridge the gap between senior managers, that is, the *authority of position* and their subordinates, that is, the *authority of expertise* to empower organizational members. The excerpt also illustrates how the CEO is both ventriloquized and also is ventriloquizing figures that referred back to conversations in previous workshops. The way the CEO ventriloquized some of these figures indicates that previous workshops included instances of coorientations. These workshops will also be considered.

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It is 8:45 a.m. on Friday morning, January 19th, 2007. I am in a meeting room in the main building at BioA, about to participate as an observer in a workshop where the participants are communication ambassadors. Focus during this workshop is on the newly appointed communication ambassadors' role in the organization. The aim of this workshop is to provide the participants with background information as to why they have been appointed communication practitioners, to enhance their knowledge about communication tools and to give them an opportunity to work with the organization's change messages or, rather, slogans. Q&As are to be used in order to introduce *Lean* as the upcoming change initiative.

The workshop is to begin at 9:00 a.m., and participants are starting to gather in smaller groups. These participants are organizational members from various divisions as well as from various hierarchical levels. Their friendly greetings and opening exchanges about life and their whereabouts tells me that many of these people have met before. From the talks it is sometimes also possible to understand when, how and why these people have met before. Some of them have worked in the same division, others have met at union discussions and still others regularly see each other in the cafeteria and take the opportunity to chat.

The two communication practitioners who will lead the workshop walk around greeting the participants and ask them to find their seats but not to sit

down, just to find where their names are so that once the workshop begins they will already know where to be seated.

The communication practitioners met in the meeting room at 8:00 a.m. to prepare for the day. This involved moving tables and chairs so that there are now three tables in the room. Around each table there are six seats, all with nametags on the table in front of the seats. On the table there are scissors, several magic markers, sticky tape and blank posters.

When the clock reads 9:00 a.m., one of the communication practitioners welcomes everyone and introduces herself. The other communication practitioner introduces herself and turns the discussion back over to her colleague. She presents the agenda for the day and asks if this is in accordance with the participants' ideas of what the workshop will focus on. Everyone nods and you can hear "yes" coming from several places around the room. The atmosphere in the room is filled with expectation and a feeling of genuine interest.

The communication practitioner continues by elaborating on why the participants are gathered. These organizational members have been selected to attend this workshop because they are informal (some are also formal) leaders in their divisions, amongst their co-workers, and with others. The communication practitioners and the senior managers have identified these people as informal leaders and therefore very important organizational members. Other members listen to and respect these members' ideas and viewpoints.

But also, these are individuals who listen to their co-workers and express that they feel responsible and have the courage to bring issues and ideas to decision-makers' agendas. They know their organization and their co-workers well, and they share their organizational views with their co-workers. The communication practitioner explains that those are the reasons why these people are present at the workshop. All of them are aware of and have – to some extent – been involved in the planning to incorporate *Lean*. They have been asked, and everyone present has agreed, to act as communication ambassadors in the organization.

Being a communication ambassador means to assist senior managers and communication practitioners in the work to communicate *Lean* as a change process. This is the first time they are all meeting as a group, and the workshop continues with a presentation of communication as a field of importance for organizations, the development of this field and a presentation and explanation of communicative tools that may come in handy when planning and working with communication. The atmosphere is positive and encourages participation, and the communication practitioners' talks are often interrupted with questions or comments from the workshop participants. This is in accordance with the wishes from the communication practitioners, who emphasize that they want the participants to interrupt the

lecture-like session, which is the first part of the workshop, with questions and comments. One of the communication practitioners states:

> Before we reveal the messages and Q&As that have been produced by the senior managers, I will provide you with a brief history of communication as a field and its relationship to organizations. I will also present some communication tools that will be useful in your position as a communication ambassador. Please do not hesitate to interrupt me with comments or questions while I talk.

The participants are introduced to communication and rhetorical tools. This part is not as comprehensive as it was in the previous workshops since the main focus here is the *Message testing and Message integration* session.

The participants also gain knowledge related to psychology. For example, the participants learn that some people are early adopters and enjoy almost any type of changes. Others detest changes no matter what; it makes no difference if they dislike their current situation. One of the communication practitioner contends that organizational members usually prefer to be informed and communicate with various colleagues at various times throughout a change process. For example, most members prefer to get information about an upcoming change face-to-face from their immediate managers. As the change process moves along they may prefer to talk about the changes with a close colleague that they trust and respect. This lecture-like first part of the workshop also includes short exercises.

Context is important in coorientation processes and includes – among a number of things – the material, social and linguistic environment. This first part of the workshop appears to offer a context where communication is encouraged since participants are asked to reflect on communication but also to engage in the lecture by carrying out exercises and by asking questions or commenting on what is said. This part of the workshop also bears traces of the beginning of an empowerment process in that the communication practitioners share knowledge about communication, rhetoric and psychology with the participants with the aim that they will become more knowledgeable about how to engage in conversations with all organizational members and, with that, simplify and improve their work situations.

During the lecture-like session a man enters the room. The communication practitioner ends her talk and introduces the man as the CEO of BioA, Sweden (this business unit was comprised of approximately 4,000 employees in January of 2007), while emphasizing that he really does not need much of a presentation since she is certain that everyone in the room knows who he is. Before she gives him the floor she refers to their first meeting with each other when she wanted to know about the communication

challenges and opportunities that he had on his agenda. She says that one thing he thought of as very important but that he found the organization was lacking was opportunities for conversations between the senior management group and other organizational members. He thought it was very difficult to find out what was going on "on the floor," and for that reason he wanted to establish enhanced communication opportunities between senior managers and all other organizational members. He also told her that he felt that this was important in order for the organization to coordinate its activities. One way to initiate communication between members at all organizational levels could be to reach out to those that "had their ears to the ground," meaning that they knew what was going on at the production site, for example. The communication practitioner points to the workshop participants while looking at the CEO and says:

> Here are your "ears"!

When the CEO is given the floor, he says that he is delighted to see so many familiar faces. He says that when he was appointed CEO almost eight years ago, he knew very few people, and he found that enormously frustrating. He realizes that he will not know all 4,000 members by first name, but he recognizes that he, by now, knows approximately eighty percent of them. He continues by relating back to his previous answer to the communication practitioner's question about communication:

> […] communication and knowing what's going on in the organization is quite interesting, I… Last week I was fortunate to meet our international CEO [his name]. I have to say that in the one year that he has been the international CEO I have met him four times. And in the previous seven years I worked in the company I met [the name of the former international CEO] one time, and it was most reluctantly he came and looked at [a particular production site]. So this is an enormous difference in how the top management […] emphasizes the importance of knowing what is going on in the business.

The Swedish CEO contends that this is an example of how much the global management's interest for what is going on in the organization has changed, and the reason is – according to the Swedish CEO – that the global management group realizes that they need to know more about all parts of the organization in order to form an organization that moves fast and thereby is able to compete in the globalized market. The Swedish CEO emphasize this by stating:

> So there is a great difference in how top management now places an emphasis on being "out there" in order to understand what is going on in the business.

The Swedish CEO underscores that the global CEO and he himself are struggling with the same challenge, which is to handle filtered information that they receive from their subordinates. The Swedish CEO explains why they both are facing this challenge by referring to how the global CEO explained the situation when the two met:

> [We are] positioned far from the business. He doesn't know what's happening in the business, what topics are up for discussion, how things are perceived, the employees' views of the future, how they perceive the messages from the senior management... HE does not know. And he expressed a great frustration regarding the fact that he is positioned so far from the activities in the organization, and he needs to know how the organization is perceived [by the employees].

The Swedish CEO continues by emphasizing that it is particularly important to know what's happening internally: how things are perceived by organizational members, what topics are up for discussion, members' views of the future, and how they perceive messages from senior managers, in times when the organization is facing challenges and, in particular, when the organization is facing these type of challenges. He refers to how the global CEO described BioA's situation:

> He very briefly described it something like this: We have a product pipeline that does not deliver... and we know that it takes ten, eleven years to develop a new product and if I have virtually no products in phase three, then I know that I have four or five years before I even have a new product on the market. That... we know that. And then there is only one way to compensate for this. Or... yes, there are a couple of ways. There is one way, that is to buy companies, but he said that it is extremely difficult and extremely expensive and extremely risky. We might pay an awful lot of money for something that does not turn out. And you... you can see that he goes into different deals. And the other... it is not possible to do less research, but you have to do more research, you really have to develop more products and the only way to have the strength to do more research - when you have a situation where the price is pressed and the existing products are exposed to patent infringement and the revenue tends to decrease - it is really to go after your costs and create better margins. Hence he needs to create better cash flow in the business so that he has money to finance the research. This was his great concern. And then... a sense of urgency. You can understand the challenge that... how can anyone... then feel that this company that earns – if I am to guess, this earnings statement will report a profit of 60, 65-70 billion in profit – that you can walk around with a feeling that this is a company in crisis? But is a little like, and I relate to my previous industry, a pharmaceutical company that works with research and does not have any new products, it is a little like a mining industry, a mining company without an ore base, it is only the grey rock left, then it's the end. You have to find a new future. And with that scenario as a backdrop we started to think a little at [BioA], how are we going to handle this? [...] Because we are also put up on a pedestal.

The CEO continues by stating that senior managers struggle to find time to visit the business, and no matter how much time they spend "on the floor" it is hard to "capture the mood in the organization." This involves identifying what members think about changes, how they perceive them and how they talk about them. This is where the communication ambassadors can play an important role and assist the senior managers in "capturing the mood," according to the CEO.

The Swedish CEO contends that organizational changes often start at the top, which is natural since senior managers control the tools, such as income statements, external connections and other means, which make them aware of the need to carry out change. He emphasizes this by stating:

> It is not that senior managers are smarter and have seen the light, that is not what it is about but the signal systems are usually set so that the management feels the pressure first.

He continues by saying that when this happens the senior managers need to act. Usually they start to plan and create a change strategy. It is generally easier to react and adapt to positive news than negative. Negative news is often questioned, and it may take time to accept and react to it. Once people have accepted that there is no way around the change, they usually start to adapt, and in an ideal world negative news is handled the best way possible. The important thing is that everyone is given time to "make that journey," he argues.

> And there we have what we usually call an information gap, meaning that we in the management, often… not because we've seen the light more than you, for you have… many times, seen the light before us. But because we – perhaps due to the signal systems that exist, realize that we have to make a change and when we see that – then… the organization must be allowed to take the same mental step. The discussion about the need to make these changes also occurs in the management group. It's not that everyone in the management group jumps on the boat immediately and thinks that [the change] is necessary. Even our global CEO [his name] described this very openly, that they have this discussion; even [the management at the headquarters] … those members need to take this step. Therefore it is extremely important for the management to feel, what… wherever you are positioned, that you get behind the ideas, meaning that you have to carefully produce your messages but you also need to consider the timing. In addition you have to understand how the organization perceives the message and have we given the organization and our co-workers the opportunity to understand this… enough time? Because it is more or less a curve, I know, you probably know this classic *crisis curve,* this type of curve, without dramatizing, is really almost always the type of progress that we as human beings follow when we are confronted with news or a change. That's why it becomes so extremely important to understand what is happening out there.

The other thing is… the reason… besides understanding timing and understanding how the messages are perceived, that is, as a senior manager or as a leader, and that I think that you yourself know or have felt… several of you, it is not a given that you're served the truth. It is not a given that the employees are brave enough to tell the truth, even though you as a manager might want them to. I mean, I have to confess that I very carefully consider what to say when I meet with more senior managers at [BioA], I am more careful than when I meet with a colleague at work out at [name of site] or if I talk to my secretary or if I talk to any of my co-workers. I think about what to say and sometimes, when I do that, I may filter things that perhaps I shouldn't filter but, rather, which I should convey and stand up straight and say, "but this is how it is, I really mean that this is how it is." But then in real life you also have to choose your battles. Life is always like this but what we are afraid of, or what we feel anxious about from the management's point of view is that we do not get access to the messages and ideas that are out there in the organization. And that we do not get fair feedback concerning the decisions and the changes we make. And why is that? Well, we're possibly somewhat burdened by the fact that [BioA] is an organization that has been very successful and we, both management and other organizational members, are quite inexperienced with the types of changes that we are facing now. It's possible that several [senior managers and other members alike] have experience from other organizations, who have undergone this. That experience exists in our organization. But we as an organization are beginners. That is why, and this is [the senior managers'] argument, that this is a very good initiative. That you [the present communication ambassadors] can connect [act as a link between senior managers and other organizational members], gather information, assess the mood in the organization and provide [the senior managers] with feedback so that we are on the right track.

This has been part of the background discussion that we have had when we started this, initiated this change. […] are we doing the right things or are we way off? […] There is a tendency that the management group consists of people who drive very fast and accept changes because you are forced to accept changes. No matter if you are positioned at a high level or a lower level the tendency is that the manager who leads the change is easily speed-blinded. You [referring to himself and the management group] risk becoming totally disconnected from the organization. So that is why we try to close this gap and make sure that we say the right things at the right time […]. That is very important for us. That is the background [to the initiative with the communication ambassadors].

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This extensive excerpt provides a vivid description of the challenges that exist for both the *authority of position* and the *authority of expertise* as well as between these two. The Swedish CEO's talk continued the empowerment process since the talk focused on emphasizing the important work that the workshop participants were carrying out and that management was in need of their expertise. The Swedish CEO provided examples of how the workshop participants contributed to the organizing and the organization.

His talk also included a number of figures that may be traced to previous conversations that took place in the first three workshops. The quotes by the Swedish CEO indicate that he has been ventriloquized with the idea that communication is vital in the organizing process.

Since I was present in the three previous workshops, I was aware that this figure, that is, the vital role of communication in organizing processes, was thoroughly discussed and considered during these workshops. So even though the CEO might have considered communication to be important even before the implementation of *Leading through Communication*, his reference to the "crises curve" indicates the impact the previous three workshops appear to have had on the organizing process. In these workshops the communication practitioners presented the "change curve"[25] – as they refer to it – and they gave participants the opportunity to discuss what this means in terms of communicating with organizational members during change. Senior managers learned about communication, the relationship between communication and organization, and about the role of communication as an organizational tool.

Conversations generate, reify and change texts and that is what seems to have happened in the three previous workshops. The idea that communication is vital in the organizing process became an object in the coorientation that took place among the participating senior managers. The CEO and his colleagues were ventriloquized with this figure, and when the CEO referred to the "crisis curve" at this point, it indicates that the figure – that communication is vital in the organizing process – had become imbricated, meaning that a focus on communication was now part of the text. Senior managers now share the opinion that communication should be considered at all times when planning organizational changes in BioA. The CEO's presence at this particular workshop is, in itself, a sign of this belief. A CEO's schedule is usually full, particularly if the organization is facing a number of challenges, as in the case of BioA. By giving priority to this meeting he shows the organizational value of it. The fact that he took time to come and talk to this group indicates that previous conversations focusing on the importance of communication have been distanciated and imbricated and thereby changed the text so that communication is emphasized.

The indication that the organization now considers communication to be vital in organizing processes was strengthened when senior managers – during individual interviews – also referred to the "crises curve," sometimes with other names, for example, the "change" or "development curve" but with the same meaning. Some senior managers explicitly stated that they learned about this "crisis curve" during workshops facilitated by the communication practitioners and that they had never thought about this

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[25] For a description of this 'change' curve, see (Elrod and Tippett 2002)

earlier. Other senior managers talk about this as if it were the most natural thing to consider when communicating during a change process. One senior manager referred to it as the "development curve" when he – just like the CEO – talked about the fact that even senior managers may be hesitant towards change:

> […] you feel that you have control because you are senior. Then someone comes and says we should do it differently, in a way that does not fit your perspective. Then you start to defend yourself, 'what the hell is this nonsense!' You know this whole development curve from denial to anger and some sorrow to 'maybe one should at least try,' and 'this wasn't too bad,' you know all that…

This senior manager talked – in an interview – about issues related to change processes that he argues can be handled through enhanced communication as well as enhanced knowledge about how individuals may react when confronted with an organizational change. He attended the communication practitioner's workshops, and the way he talked about these themes indicated that he had also been ventriloquized by the figure that communication is vital in organizing processes. He says that he and his colleagues are taking this into account when planning changes. The senior managers have discussed the role of communication to the point that they have reached coorientation and, thus, begun to coordinate around it and consider it in the organizing process.

During an informal conversation with the communication strategist, I asked what she and her colleagues thought about the fact that it appears that the senior managers are ventriloquized by the idea that communication is vital in the organizing process but that some of them do not seem to realize that their attitudes toward communication have changed because of the work by the communication practitioners. The communication strategist responded by saying that she and her colleagues have succeeded with their work if senior managers find communication to be vital, and if they do not recall that they just recently realized the importance of communication, then that is the best proof the communication practitioners can ever get that they are doing their job. It shows that the knowledge has been truly integrated when a person does not even remember where it came from.

The product and production challenges that the Swedish CEO described when he spoke to the communication ambassadors is an illustration of how globalization increases competition and demands decentralization and empowerment processes. When the Swedish CEO was given the floor at the *Message testing and Message integration* workshop he emphasized the importance of closing the gap between *authority of expertise* and *authority*

of position and argued that the appointment of the communication ambassadors comes one step closer to doing this. While talking about the issue of closing this gap the CEO also refers to the challenge of standing up for your ideas, daring to speak the truth about the actual situation and choosing your battles. This relates to one of the paradoxes that Stohl and Cheney (2001) have identified – the paradox of representation[26] – which refers to the paradox that often occur when organizational members are appointed to represent their group or community of practice. These members often become co-opted by the management's interest instead of their community of practice's interest. From having been representatives of their community of practice these organizational members lose their own "voice" and often say what they believe the management expect or wants to hear even though they insist that they still represent their community of practice.

Through this talk the CEO sets the stage for making the empowerment process a natural and necessary part of the organization's future and competitiveness. He even made the participants aware of the possible challenges they may face in their new roles as communication ambassadors.

One of the workshop participants – with the title "Developer" – shared her thoughts about the communication ambassador initiative, and these were in line with the CEO's talk about the need to become more competitive:

> I was very exited when I heard about the concept of communication ambassadors. I think we really need to tighten this firm up, if not we will not have a job to go to tomorrow. We have been spoiled not even having to worry about production stops. Do you know that our line is at times standing still eighty percent of the time! It is ridiculous; you cannot run a company like that!

This "Developer" also said that she believes that the communication ambassador role will contribute to enhanced communication between the management group and the production site and that enhanced communication between these parties will make the work and the organization more efficient because the parties will be more honest with each other.

Once the CEO had provided the background of why he, senior managers and communication practitioners had decided to appoint communication ambassadors, he left the room to head for another meeting. The workshop continued in a "lecture-like" way until it was time to test the messages that the management team had produced with support from the communication practitioners in the first three workshops in *Leading through*

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[26] This will be further explored in Chapter Eight.

Communication. The management team had created one main message along with some additional, more explicit messages that they thought were appropriate to use as a starting point in order to further inform all organizational members about the change process and the reasons for it. All organizational members had previously been informed about *Lean* as a change process.

The purpose of these additional messages was to place *Lean* in the organizational context and explain why this change was necessary for BioA. The management team had also provided answers to a number of questions that they believed members may raise. The management team was now – via the communication practitioners – asking the communication ambassadors for help regarding the messages. How did this group perceive the messages? Did this group think that the majority of the organizational members would understand the reason for this participatory change process? Would they accept it?

This act could be considered the next step in the empowerment process, as the management team invited participants to comment on their work. It was an act that increased members' power in regards to their own work situation while diminishing the management team's power over these members.

Hence, the main purpose of this part of the workshop was to discuss the participants' different worldviews on this matter and try to consolidate them in order to provide a message that all, or at least a majority, of the organizational members would understand and accept (though they may not agree with it). The idea, finally, was that this would result in redesigned and coproduced messages that the management team could agree on and accept, at least with only minor adjustments. These messages would then be used to represent, point to reasons, and work as an illustration for the upcoming change process.

This attempt by the management team to facilitate the translation of the text, that is, the organization's purpose, into the various communities of practice in the organization, is one of the most difficult translations, according to the Montreal School, because the text must be made to fit local circumstances (Brummans et al. 2014, Robichaud, Giroux, and Taylor 2004). The management team did this by letting the communication ambassadors interpret the messages in order to convey, identify and deal with any obstacles that could hinder the interpretation of the messages once they were sent out to all communities of practice. The communication ambassadors were invited to talk about the messages and engage in conversation and sensemaking while being asked to make necessary adjustments to the messages. The management team initiated a move between text to

conversation then back to text, hence considering the "self-organizing loop" (Taylor and Van Every 2000:210-211) that is part of the text-conversation dialectic.

The workshop participants were invited to work in groups of six for 30 minutes to discuss the messages suggested by the management team. Before they started they were asked by the communication practitioners to introduce themselves (within the group of six). Comments on how and when some of them had met before, a spontaneous sharing of thoughts, and discussions about the upcoming changes followed the introductions. After the short "get-comfortable-with-each-other" session, the participants started to work with the messages presented to them, and a murmur arose in the room as the participants began the discussion. The participants were also provided with a number of questions with the purpose of making them consider the circumstances around the production of these messages.

When the 30 minutes were up, one of the communication practitioners asked how the communication ambassadors perceived the messages. One participant offered to share his group's ideas and reactions towards the messages. His group interpreted the internal message – conveying the idea that they should sharpen production – as a message saying that everyone needs to think about how they carry out their work. If everyone does that, it will be possible to make something good out of the situation. The internal message involved the word "sharpen", and to sharpen a pencil, for example, means to make it more efficient, but it also means making it shorter. The message then means – according to him and his group – that the work to make the organization more efficient involves redundancy processes and other similar measures. This group interpreted the internal message as a positive message, though it included threats. He said that the group believes that the management team wants to convey the serious situation that the BioA is facing. He says:

> If we make something good out of the situation we will be fine. If we do not do anything there will be trouble.

The workshop facilitator confirmed that this is what the management team had in mind when they produced this "slogan", as she refers to it. As a response to this discussion another participant raised the following question:

> Why do [the senior managers] turn to the manufacturing? For me, manufacturing is directly linked to… and we have had a discussion here, there are apparently some differences between X [the name of one division] and Y [the name of another division]. For me, manufacturing is part of the production. And the production unit consists of, according to me,

manufacturing, packaging, lab, analysis, staff. Manufacturing... really, I
think... an operator who reads this is going to... ok, what about the others?

Both communication practitioners answered that this is an important
comment, and one of them added that she and her colleague needed to bring
this to the senior managers' attention because otherwise there was a risk for
misunderstandings. Another participant added that there are cultural
differences between units when it comes to, for example, what they include
in the production unit.

The presentation of how one group had interpreted the messages and
compared the word "sharpen" to what it means to sharpen a pencil points to
the idea that these group sessions involve instances of sensemaking and
coorientation. This was further emphasized when more participants engaged
in the conversation by saying that they had discovered that there were
different worldviews represented in their groups, which all appeared to differ
from the management's worldview. Depending on what community of
practice the participants belonged to, they defined "manufacturing"
differently. Through the communication practitioners' acts of
acknowledging this – by saying that they would bring the comment to the
senior managers – they continued the empowerment process. They
acknowledged the participants' knowledge and expertise and indicated that
the participants had the power to change this message.

The discussion continued in regards to why they were to use the word
"sharpen" instead of "efficiency." Since all 4,000 employees had attended
the *Lean* training, where focus was on efficiency, participants raised the
question of why they would not follow up on that.
    One participant also questioned why there were two slogans or messages,
one internal and one external. Why not one consistent slogan? Several of his
colleagues agreed. He argued that while an internal message may stay
internal, an external message also becomes an internal message, and that
way there would be two internal messages, and they were supposed to
convey the same thing. One of the communication practitioners
acknowledged the comment, and the participant continued:

> You [pointing to one of the participants who preferred the word "efficiency"
> above "sharpen"] were onto something regarding efficiency and the external
> message. Maybe we should use that internally instead. We should consider
> this. So, that [the messages] don't diverge.

The communication practitioner responded:

> Absolutely! And that... I don't know if anyone noticed that but the external
> message only says BioA [referring to the organization as a whole]. What

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happened was that… because these were messages that were used in the media [to announce an upcoming redundancy process], ehh… a month or so ago, as you know… in December… it was December 12th. What happened then was that some members from R&D thought that they were affected as well because some newspapers did not write that it was only the company's production [site], that was affected but wrote "BioA is scaling back on staff."

In this quote the communication practitioner refers to circumstances involving the challenges that may rise between the local and global practices. In this case it relates to cultural challenges when working to translate the organization's purpose into the local practices. This involves tensions in that the local and global practices are not compatible and comes out of the multivocal – univocal dialectic. This challenge will therefore be further explored in the next chapter.

The conversation continued and the participant who suggested the use of the word "efficiency" instead of "sharpen" said:

But isn't that the message? I mean, it includes… exactly what we have been talking about here, what's the production, isn't that everything?

The communication practitioner responded again:

Well, in that particular case R&D wasn't included, these 450 [employees within the production line]…

The participant continued:

No, no, ok, if you relate it to a specific number. But the message that we need to streamline and make the business more efficient is applicable [in the whole organization], right?

Members engaged in an intense conversation about the messages' content. It was so intense that the communication practitioners had trouble bringing it to an end. They finally announced that it was time for a break, and when the participants returned, the next task was to come up with messages that they thought would be appealing to a greater audience, that is, the whole organization. Each group was asked to agree on one message that they would present to the other groups.

After the break the participants introduced a number of suggestions to each other. One example was:

We need *Lean* in order to be competitive. (Researcher)

The whole group would then pick one of these messages, either as it was or with modifications. The winning message read:

> We're implementing *Lean* in order to become the obvious choice.

The message was later presented to the management team, who accepted it. After this was done, it began to spread throughout the organization.

These acts illustrate how the text, here the organization' messages, are translated into the local communities of practice – in this case to representatives of the local communities of practice. The representatives engaged in conversation resulting in coorientation, which made it possible for them to coordinate their work and provide new versions of the messages that they believed would be easier for their colleagues to interpret. The participants and the communication practitioners used metaconversations to distanciate the local conversations and reformulate the messages that became the text once the management team had accepted them. This seemed to involve both coorientation and empowerment processes in an interdependent way. When participants were given the opportunity to discuss these messages, the act itself engaged participants in conversation. The messages that were introduced to the workshop participants provided information about the organization's situation. That way the management group also shared knowledge with the participants, which prompted the participants to state that they not only felt, but also actually became, more empowered. The empowerment process appeared to continue when the participants were encouraged to discuss the messages from their standpoint, with their community of practice's worldview, and they realized that their ideas and input regarding these messages and statements did have an impact.

There are also implications that these communicative interactions did not just lead to instances of coorientations between the present workshop participants. These communicative interactions also appeared to lead to coorientation between workshop participants, that is, the communication ambassadors, and the senior managers, even though there was no actual, face-to-face interaction between them during the workshop. When the participants engaged in coordinated activities around the messages and statements, they considered the management's standpoint and their ideas about these messages and statements. Later, when the reformulated messages and statements were presented to the management team, coorientation took place again because the senior managers considered the suggestions and the arguments from the communication ambassadors. The conversations among the senior managers about the communication ambassadors' suggestions resulted in an agreement to accept the messages and the statements more or less without changes. So even though the

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workshops did not lead to immediate and face-to-face coordinated activities between the two groups, the *authority of expertise* and the *authority of position*, coordinated activities seemed to take place between the groups. Hence, this may be considered an attempt to close the gap between *authority of position* and *authority of expertise*.

The communication practitioners appear to play an important role in this process as well since they were the ones in charge of the implemented communicative interactivities. But according to them, this would not have been possible if they did not have access to the management board; they needed to involve the management in coordinating activities. This, in turn, was most likely made possible because the Swedish CEO was ventriloquized by the figure that communication is vital in the organizing process. He had placed this figure on his agenda, which was further prioritized by the newly appointed global CEO, who also aimed to diminish the gap between *authority of position* and *authority of expertise* and wished to do so through communication. The communication practitioners' work appeared to contribute to the organizing processes and to the changing of the text once they themselves had been empowered, that is, given the mandate from the management board to initiate the communication strategy process *Leading through Communication*.

The idea behind the *Team-twirl* workshops – which focused primarily on creating a team spirit among participants from particular communities of practice – was to facilitate and encourage an empowerment process on a group level and, hence, encourage participation. When the first workshop session commenced, the participants initially did not agree on how to carry out their work tasks. To begin with, their disagreements seemed to hinder them from focusing on their work tasks as the object of concern. Instead they started to accuse each other of not fulfilling their work assignments in the correct way. The workshop facilitator got involved in the discussion and encouraged the workshop participants to focus on finding new ways to carry out their work tasks and not on each other's personalities.

Once the participants turned their focus to the work tasks and this became their common object of concern – still disagreeing – they managed to become involved in conversations, which were further intensified to the extent that they started to consider and take into account each other ideas about how to carry out their work tasks. It appeared that their disagreements about how to carry out their tasks intensified the conversations and got them more engaged in coming up with additional ways on how to do their work.

Coorientations may lead to complementary views, agreements and sometimes disagreements (Taylor and Robichaud 2004), which was what appeared to happen here, at least throughout the most part of the first *Team-*

twirl workshop. After some time disagreeing, the group began to come up with ways that they all found useful to carry out their work.

When these participants realized that they could influence how their work should be carried out, they became more engaged, and this appeared to lead to further conversations and more instances of coorientations. This indicates that an empowerment process was initiated, which in turn seemed to lead to further engagement and coorientations among the group members. During the workshops the participants stated that they felt more empowered and more interested in participating in the organization, which suggests that empowerment and coorientation processes may, under certain circumstances, be interdependent in that when one process progresses, the other one does as well. But coorientation is always required in order to begin an empowerment process.

Overall, the effort of letting organizational members from all hierarchical levels in the organization – and particularly from the production site and assembly line – participate in the workshops seemed to have an impact on these members' interest and willingness to be involve in communication and participate in the organizing process. The Swedish CEO's visit and talk in one of the workshops symbolized the importance of the communicative initiative and the participants' role in it. This, in turn, seemed to encourage organizational members to participate. It also indicated that the figure, *communication is vital in the organizing process*, was imbricated in the organization.

7.1.2 BioA – Concluding Remarks

The communicative initiative at BioA appears to be comprised of situated performances, where the participants engage in conversation and coorientation processes and therewith are able to coordinate their activities. After attending the workshops participants referred to various communication tools that had been introduced to them during these sessions. The interest among participants to become better interlocutors and provide opportunities for their colleagues – co-workers as well as subordinates – to become involved in conversations seemed to increase. A number of senior managers, the Swedish CEO included, referred, for example, to the "change curve" when they talked about how to communicate during change processes, which illustrated how participants were ventriloquized by the figure *communication is vital in the organizing process* and how the participants in return ventriloquized their whereabouts, that is, their organizing activities, with this figure. The figure was imbricated and changed the organization, as new routines evolved that emphasized the role of communication in the organizing process.

The decision to implement the communication strategy process *Leading through Communication* could be seen as a confirmation of this although that particular decision was made earlier. The management board approved *Leading through Communication* after the communication practitioners had introduced communication tools to the group. The management board stated that the work that the communication practitioner presented to them convinced them to approve the implementation of *Leading through Communication*. The management board was further ventriloquized by the figure *communication is vital in the organizing process* when they themselves participated in the workshops.

The communicative initiative also seemed to involve empowerment processes, as members were encouraged to act independently, and the management board specifically asked for input from them in a way that diminished management's power while increasing the subordinates' power over their work tasks and their roles in their community of practice. During the empowerment process the gap between *authority of expertise* and *authority of position* appeared to diminish. Coorientation seemed necessary for an empowerment process to commence, but once the empowerment process had started it appeared to encourage further instances of coorientations.

7.2   BioB

Similar to BioA's examples in this chapter, the examples from BioB were selected because they provide illustrations of how BioB's members attempted to involve in conversation, how they did or did not start to coordinate their activities and whether or not empowerment processes were initiated.

7.2.1   Attempts to facilitate coorientation and empowerment processes

The interactive video website was a new way for BioB to use technology for its organizational communication. The management board wished to regain the entrepreneurial spirit among organizational members, which involved empowering them. This, in turn, required enhanced communication between all organizational members, and that was the reason for the implementation of the interactive video website. The management board was of the opinion that more communication, particular about the organization's core values, would facilitate the empowerment process, encourage participation and result in sparking an entrepreneurial spirit throughout the organization, a

spirit that was part of the organization at the beginning and the reason to why it was founded.

The videos were comprised of narratives about the organization's history and the core values, *Simplicity*, *Business Sense* and *Innovation*, with the intention to facilitate the enactment process for those members who were not familiar with the core values and illustrate how the text fit local practices. In all four videos, narratives were used in order to share stories about the organization and the organization's core values and to reflect the interplay between conversation and text. While watching the videos, organizational members could rate the content, post comments, ask questions and engage in interactions.

The first video, the *History* video consisted of narratives that focused on stories about the founding of the organization, how it came into being and continued to re-form over the years up until the present time. In this video the founder and CEO has the role of the macro-actor (Robichaud, Giroux, and Taylor 2004), meaning that he speaks for the organization with the aim of translating the purpose of the organization into the various communities of practice represented by the organizational members watching the videos. Organizational members who had been working for BioB since the beginning accompany and support the CEO's narratives with their own narratives.

A narrator voice was added to the videos, translating these narratives to represent the purpose of the organization. The idea was to enhance members' knowledge about the organization and to illustrate how the entrepreneurial spirit was the seed of the organization's success. and the senior management wanted to stress that the core values have contributed to the organization's accomplishments since the start. By considering the core values in daily work – a practice that used to be more prevalent – the entrepreneurial spirit would prosper, and the organization would continue to experience success. If the CEO together with his colleagues were successful as macro-actors, they would exert power by black-boxing the definition of the organization and how it would continue to be successful.

However, the narratives are missing the organization's vision, and this may have influenced the outcome. Consider Weick's (1995a) anecdote about the Hungarian soldiers who were lost in the Alps in a snowstorm and found their way back to camp with the help of a map from the Pyrenees, believing this to be the correct map. The bad weather made it difficult to compare the real environment with the map but the map lulled the soldiers and encouraged them to move on. The anecdote suggests that people need to have an image of where they are as well as where they are going in order to act. If they have both, this will facilitate and encourage action. Two

organizational members also make this observation in their comments posted on the website. These two members call for vision statements.

The following three videos each focused on one core value and were local narratives in the sense that organizational members who already work according to the core values described how they consider the core values when carrying out their daily work tasks. These members worked in different communities of practice and at different hierarchical levels. The idea here was to provide multiple contexts and examples in order to illustrate various ways of considering the core values and encouraging members to find alternative ways to consider the core values in their daily work. This was the second step in an attempt to translate the purpose of the organization into the many communities of practice within the organization.

The observations showed that 21 comments – of which one includes a question – were posted on the website and that little other interaction took place. Comparing this number of comments with the fact that a total number of 2,251 [27] unique viewers watched the four videos confirms that the interactivity was low. Comments posted on the website focused mainly on the organization's history – 17 of the comments were posted with the *History* videos [28] – and issues related to that and the organization's future, vision and values in general, which were similar to the themes discussed outside the platform, according to the focus groups participants. The commentators on the website were also more focused on the content composition, that is, the number of videos, in what order the content should be presented and how, rather than on discussing the core values. So even though there was little focus on the core values, some interactions took place on the website, and some of these interactions are presented here. But were there any instances of coorientations?

Organizational members who have seen any or all of the videos seem to enjoy them, and many of the comments posted on the website are statements confirming this. These comments are in its original English:

> Very good! It is fun that everyone gets the opportunity to hear [the name of the CEO's] own story. Nice video!
> Organizational member Z. Posted December 02, 2008 at 1:52 p.m.

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[27] The reason why the number of unique viewers is higher than the number of organizational members working at the Swedish site during this time (the number of members working at the Swedish site varied between 450 in 2008 and 359 in 2010 largely due to redundancy processes) is that members outside the Swedish site were also able to access the website and watch the videos.

[28] As stated before, there were two versions of the *History* video, one in Swedish and one version with subtitles in English.

> Fun with an overall view of how the organization was started.
> Organizational member W. Posted December 05, 2008 07:46 a.m.

The one question that was published may very well be rhetorical but even so, it might have also engendered interaction. This comment is in its original English:

> Even the interior at [BioB] gives evidence of simplicity and of beauty in form. There is a danger that the simplicity disappears if the employees lose focus in their tasks and make the tasks their own project. Is this happening at [BioB]?
> Organizational member V. Posted: March 02, 2009 at 7:14 p.m.

Neither the positive comments nor the question led to interactivity or instances of coorientation on the website. The focus group discussions and the interviews did not indicate that there were any post-exposure activities related to these comments, and no one seemed to recall the question.

One organizational member commented with input in regards to what she or he thought about the chosen spoken language in the Swedish *History* video. This comment is in its original English:

> Hi, Our Business language is English! and we know all of the people interviewed has no problem to speak English. The Salescompanies with their new people - they are the ones that needs to know about "The History". We have passed the Swedishness/Uppsala focus I hope - and we should do all we can to reach out to the other parts of [BioB] outside Sweden. IF we have worries about filmbudget - why not use the common language English and then do subtitles? Content great! the comment Hanna makes on sales vs investments OR about Ulrika setting up curtains - are just great!! kr [short for hug in Swedish]
> Organizational member R. Posted: December 15, 2008 at 09:32 a.m.

Senior manager "X" who is part of the management group and who was in charge of monitoring and responding to comments and questions, responded to this comment by sharing the management's ideas when planning the video production. This comment is in its original English:

> We had discussions about the language. For most people there is a new situation to be in front of a film camera and tell a story. We didn't want the language to be an obstacle for them to do the filming. On the other hand, I do not want the language to be an obstacle for all the people watching either - so we really need to make sure that we dicuss the laguage in the following films. Let me know what you think!
> *Senior Manager X.* Posted: December 15, 2008 at 10:25 a.m.

About one month later another organizational member commented on both the language choice and the content. This member suggested that the organization's vision should be included in the videos. This comment is in its original English:

> Hello, I really like the film. It shows pretty good where we come from and where we are now (and that is great!). I don't see the problem with the language - we are an international company. Even if the film shows the history of [BioB] I would love to have some of our visions for the future in it because that is what peolpe need to become part of the idea and to invest themselves…
> Organizational member Y. Posted: January 12, 2009 at 9:12 p.m.

This time manager "X" once again responded by sharing the management group's ideas behind the interactive video website and the video production. This comment is in its original English:

> In the first step we have planned to produce 4 films; History, Simplicity, Business Sense & Innovation. But I would like to add a film about the future, the vision and perhaps discuss our objectives for the coming 1-2 years. I suppose it all depend on what you think of the films... and if you think this is a good way of communicating values. Please – let me know what you think! Kind Regards senior manager X.
> Senior manager X Posted: January 14, 2009 at 2:58 p.m.

Four days after manager X's second response, a third member commented on this response. This comment is in its original English:

> First of all I think that this films are a very good possibility to transport values, ideas, visions and so on. I would not split the history and the future objectives in two films. It is something that should be together in one film because it belongs together. Where we want to be, what we want to achieve is a logical step that has it's origin in our history. I would maybe shorten some parts of the film and include the visions instead. The interviews are good but to long in the first part of the video.
> Organizational member Q. Posted: January 18, 2009 at 8:48 p.m.

All three commentators posted their objects of concern. The concerns of the first two commentators become the object of concern for them and manager "X" to interact around. The first commentator focused on the choice of language in the videos and the second commentator focused on the need for more knowledge about the organization's future and vision while also commenting on the language choice.

   The fact that members interacted via the website challenges the identification of whether or not they engaged in dialogue because a dialogue requires – apart from at least two interlocutors – that when one interlocutor is speaking, the other silently listens and waits for her/his/their turn. The

responses by manager "X" show that there was interaction between parties although the second commentator had to wait more than two days for a response. Manager "X" responded to the comments by providing background information on why the spoken language mainly is Swedish and also what the future plans were in regards to content for upcoming videos. Manager "X"'s explicit concern and interest in the commentators' ideas in regards to languages choice and content indicates that manager "X" not only consider her or his own standpoint but also the commentators' view on the matter. This suggests that a dialogue was initiated.

The third member's comments on one of manager "X"'s responses indicates further interaction in regards to the second member's matter of concern, but neither manager "X" nor anyone else responds to this comment, and the interactivity stops. In order for the parties to start coordinating their work, they would have to further engage in dialogue about the matters or objects of concern. Since this does not happen, the parties do not coordinate.

An English version of the *History* video had already been produced, and the decision to use subtitles in the three core value videos had already been made when these members posted their comments. If this were not the case, we could have speculated if the comments did have an impact on the text. Even if no coordinated activities took place on the website they may have occurred as post-exposure activities between these members or other members who had read the comments and, with that, initiated these changes.

The comments from the first two organizational members have a polemic edge, the first one more than the second. The language issue is the reason. At this point it does not seem very controversial, but with further knowledge about the organization it will be an issue we will revisit.

Despite, the lack of instances of coorientations on the website it is possible that the videos and the comments on the website encouraged conversation and coordinated activities outside the website, for example, in the lunchroom, over a cup of coffee, or in formal and informal meetings. Did this initiative at some point provide opportunities for members to engage in dialogue and reach coorientation?

A few members who had seen the *History* video stated that they appreciated it, as it gave them a better understanding of the organization as a whole and helped situate their own specific positions and tasks in the organizing process; they got a better understanding of how their work tasks influenced the text and vice versa. This indicates that the *History* video may contribute to beginning an empowerment process in that the members gain more knowledge about the organization and gain a better understanding of how they can contribute to the organizing process. This understanding may also

encourage members' willingness to contribute to the organizing just like the members suggest in their posted comments. The ones who watch the *History* video recommended colleagues to do the same when discussing the videos in the focus groups. Some interest for the video content was also voiced among organizational members who had colleagues participating in the videos.

But even though some members appeared to have engaged in commencing an empowerment process, the fact that many organizational members did not visit the website or watch the videos suggests that members generally did not feel engaged or empowered. The respondents to the second questionnaire stated that they did not feel that the videos led to increased discussion at work, outside the platform and the focus group participants and the interviewees recalled only a few interactivities about topics that could be linked to the website and its content.

In fact, the knowledge about the core values decreased throughout the organization during the time when the interactive video website was launched. Members were less familiar with the core values after the launch of the website and its videos than before this communicative initiative. There were also differences regarding knowledge about the core values between communities of practice, in that members on the assembly line appeared to be less familiar with the core values than managers and members working with research and development. Members did not use the interactive website as it was intended by the management group. There appeared to be a number of reasons for this outcome, such as limited knowledge about the existence of the interactive video website as well as its characteristics and limited access to it.

Hence, the discussions among the focus group participants and the information from the interviewees reveal that the chances that the video content generated instances of coorientation, outside the platform, are minimal. Overall this communicative initiative did not enhance communication between BioB's organizational members, nor did it contribute to an empowerment process.

7.2.2 Reasons behind low interactivity and few coorientations and empowerment processes at BioB

The focus group sessions and the interviews provided an opportunity to elaborate on the results from the questionnaires and the observations of the interactivity on the website and identify reasons as to why there appeared to be no instances of coorientation, neither on the website itself nor outside it and no empowerment processes.

Few organizational members appeared to be aware of the existence of the interactive video website, and not everyone that was aware of its existence was familiar with its characteristics. One reason why it appears that few organizational members were aware of the interactive website and the videos is that there was little communication about it. This seems to a large extent depend on how the management team prepared for and introduced the interactive video website. The organization's communication culture and the type of media that the interactive video website may be characterized as also influenced members' awareness and knowledge about this communication technology. Focus group participants and interviewees stated that the most common and preferred communication channels when it came to communicating about organizational matters were town hall meetings or face-to-face meetings with an immediate manager.

The information about the interactive video website was sent out via email, and notifications were posted on the intranet, but it was rarely discussed during town-hall meetings, which were meetings that most organizational members attended. However, 74 percent of the 147 members who answered the second questionnaire stated that they had received information about the core values at town hall meetings. The focus group participants on the other hand, did not recall much communication about the core values from the town hall meetings and the managers in charge of the interactive video website project argued that they used other means to communicate about the website and its videos, such as email and the intranet. The focus group participants stated that the intranet had been under construction for some time, so they rarely thought about checking it. Related to this is the fact that members who worked in the assembly line had limited access to computers and during the time they did have access they had to complete a number of assignments before they could visit the website, which meant that they rarely had the time to do that. The interactive video website was a new communication technology for the organizational members. This indicates that organizational members needed comprehensive communication about it.

It seems that the turbulent times also had an impact on why the interactive video website did not enhance organizational communication, lead to empowerment processes and encourage participation.

The participants in the focus groups believed that organizational members focused more on whether or not they would still have a job to go to than about a website where they could discuss the core values. The focus group participants stated that they did not care much about the core values when they were at risk for losing their jobs.

The manager who was in charge of the interactive video website project, manager "X," was also responsible for regularly monitoring the interactivity on the website and responding to questions or comments, although the plan

was that members should interact with each other, and manager "X" was only expected to interact when someone did not receive an answer to their posted question or comment. As it turned out, manager "X" and the one member – who commented on manager "X"'s response – were the only ones responding to comments posted on the website. The remaining comments were reactions to the videos.

Manager "X" was also responsible for the internal communication, and although this person was engaged in the project, he or she probably had to prioritize other communication challenges throughout the interactive video website project, as the organization experienced a number of redundancy processes, bribing scandals, rumors about the CEO leaving the organization and the potential sale of BioB. All this happened shortly after the launch of the interactive video website and continued throughout the whole project. These other significant events may be the reason why manager "X" did not respond to the last comment posted by one of the organizational members.

One of the final things that happened was that manager "X" was made redundant around the time of the launch of the fourth video. The newly appointed Head of Communications had higher priorities – considering the circumstances – than focusing on the empowerment process and the core values. Still, focusing on enhancing communication in general was a high priority during these turbulent times.

7.2.3 BioB – Concluding Remarks

It appears that the interactive video website did not fulfill the aim of enhancing communication between all organizational members and, thus, empower them and boost their participation in the organizing process in order to regain the entrepreneurial spirit.

Only two dialogues were initiated on the website, in which members begin to coorient around the choice of language in the videos and for the organization as a whole as well as about the need for presenting the organization's future plans and vision, which would encourage members' empowerment processes and participation, according to one of the members who posted a comment on the website. However, the dialogues stopped, and members never coordinated their work around these objects of concern.

There are indications that empowerment processes began as a few participants in the focus groups stated that their knowledge about how their work fit into the organization increased while also stating that they – at times – considered the core values in their daily work to a greater extent than they did before. However, there was only a handful of focus group participants who stated this, and none of them worked on the assembly line. This suggests segment differentiations between groups at different organizational levels in regards to the empowerment process, participation and knowledge about the core values, which may be explained in part by the fact that the

organizational members had different access to computers. However, there seemed to be a lack of enhanced communication throughout the organization.

Even though there seemed to be some instances of coorientations and initiated empowerment processes, there were no overall changes in the organization, that is, the text, that was a result of the use of the interactive video website. There were no indications of a regained entrepreneurial spirit, for example. As discussed, the reasons are many, such as turbulent times, communication culture, knowledge about the website and the videos existence and accessibility. Hence, it does not seem that the low interactivity on the website or the few post-exposure activities necessarily had anything to do with the functionalities of the interactive video website but, rather, circumstances around it.

7.3 Conclusion – Communicative Interactions with or without Coorientations and Empowerment Processes

In the introduction to this chapter I state that in order to find out if the communicative initiatives implemented in BioA and BioB contributed to the organizing process in these organizations, I ask whether or not these initiatives may have led to instances of coorientations and empowerment processes and what the circumstances around the possible outcomes may have been. The analyses of these communicative initiatives show that they had different outcomes in the two organizations in regards to both coorientation and empowerment processes.

The analysis of the empirical material from BioA indicates that BioA's members – at least the ones participating in the communication strategy process work *Leading through Communication* were provided with opportunities to become involved in conversation and coorientation. These members stated their views on matters while also considering their colleagues' views, and they come up with solutions and suggestions on how to bring the organizing process forward. The revised vision and mission statements are examples of how the conversations in the workshops were imbricated and distanciated to re-form the text once the management had accepted these statements. Also, when these vision and mission statements were first presented to the communication practitioners in the workshops, they were examples of how the text was translated into the many communities of practices, here represented by the communication ambassadors who were involved in conversation about these. Sensemaking

and coorientation took place, and the conversation and the text form a "self-organization loop" (Taylor and Van Every 2000:210-211).

Empowerment processes also appeared to be part of the organizing processes because some of the coorientations led to instances where members learned more about their particular work assignments – for example, how their work contributed to the organizing process and the organization as a whole – while also getting feedback from the management representatives that their knowledge and expertise was needed. The management urged these members to raise their voices. With this enhanced understanding of the organization and the fact that their knowledge and contributions were respected it was easier for these members to take charge of their work tasks and carry out their work the way they found most appropriate (which means that their managers' power diminished in regards to these particular matters).

Hence, the findings from BioA indicate that the efforts to enhance communication between organizational members were fulfilled, at least in the parts of the organization where instances of coorientations were identified. The findings also indicate that the communicative initiative contributed to the organizing and the constitution of the organization since the findings indicate a number of textual changes.

The analysis of the data from BioB shows that there were no coordinated activities on the interactive video website even though conversations were initiated. These ended before members began to coordinate their work. The information from the focus groups and interviews as well as the data from the second questionnaire showed that only a handful of the participants stated that they, at times, considered the core values in their daily work. These members also stated that they had a better understanding of how their worked contribute to the organization as a whole, which suggested that they had engaged in empowerment processes as post-exposure activities, but these processes also seemed to have ended because even though their statements indicated imbrications, there were no explicit textual changes.

Hence, the findings from BioB indicate that the effort to enhance communication between all organizational members was not fulfilled, and there were no textual changes in the sense that the organization did not seem to have regained its entrepreneurial spirit.

The analysis of the empirical material indicates that coorientations also seem to be necessary for an empowerment process to begin. The act of achieving empowerment means that a person (or a group) A provides an opportunity and the expertise and support to another person (or group) B in order for this person (or group) B to gain better control over – as well as knowledge about – the particular situation, and this act also involves minimizing A's power over B (Tengland 2008). In order for B to gain control and knowledge,

sensemaking is required. However, the act of minimizing A's power over B requires coorientation between A and B, because if no coorientation takes place these parties will not be able to coordinate their work, and there will most likely be a misunderstanding of who has responsibility for what and where the limits of one person's responsibility ends and the other person's begin. Therefore, if there are no instances of coorientations, there will not be an empowerment process.

However, an analysis of the situated performances indicates that once an empowerment process has commenced, it may have a positive influence on coorientations. Because it appears as if the perception of being empowered in combination with members' actions as empowered members encourage further engagement, that is, increased participation, in the organizing process, thus, more instances of coorientations take place where the text in the form of previous conversations is considered. This leads to coordinated activities and imbrications and, eventually, changes of the text.

Throughout the work to identify instances of coorientation, a number of figures were identified. At times the figures clashed and caused tensions. These appeared to contribute to the organizing and the communicative constitution of the organization in various ways and will therefore be further explored in the following chapter.

8 Tensions at the Site and the Surface

In my tension-centered approach, I put forth two primary oppositional tensions, the *Multivocal – Univocal Dialectic* and the *Conversation – Text Dialectic*. These primary tensions were selected because of their affinity and source to tensions, such as the contradictions, paradoxes, double-binds and other tensions that surfaced in BioA and BioB and that had consequences for the empowerment and participatory processes aligned to what is discussed in chapter seven. By highlighting these two primary oppositional tensions, it is possible to both show how tensions emerged, how they were part of communicative interactions and how they played into the site and the surface. I use the dialectical lens with its five strategies to analyze how organizational members enacted tensions.

The *Multivocal – Univocal Dialectic* relates to the general view of an organization shared by many researchers and practices alike. The organization is referred to with the *organization-as-actor* notion, meaning that an organization is featured as a single actor with one identity and represented by its spokespersons. The entity is comprised of a number of interrelated parts such as, for example, communities of practice that need to integrate and coordinate with each other to constitute the organization. Accordingly, an organization is conceived of as simultaneously pluralistic and unitary, that is, multivocal and univocal (Robichaud, Giroux, and Taylor 2004). Robichaud et al. (2004) acknowledge that this may lead to the appearance of a paradox if organizational communication scholars do not work to identify the process through which the multivocal, that is, the many voices from various communities of practice, are translated in to the univocal, that is, an organization as one single actor with one identity, and vice versa. The latter translation – the one that translates the aim of the organization into the local communities of practice – is the most challenging translation that the Montreal School focuses on, according to Brummans et al. (2014). While identifying and analyzing these translation processes in BioA and BioB I found that the processes themselves involved tensions in the form of ironies, paradoxes and other contradictions. These are analyzed in the first part of this chapter.

The second part of the chapter focuses on the situated activities that aimed to accomplish the work of the organization. These activities involved

transactional protocols that enabled coorientation between communities of practice (Brummans et al. 2014). Since the communicative initiatives in BioA and BioB involved the aim to empower organizational members, it means that the situated activities also indirectly centered on changing the transactional protocols between the management group and other organizational members. This was a challenging task and involved a number of tensions. The examples provided here focus mainly on how the text, that is, material artifacts, rules and procedures, impact the possibilities for coorientation in regards to the empowering processes, and how the tensions that rise are enacted.

Nevertheless these two primary tensions are not all exclusive but, rather, interdependent, demonstrated by the example of how BioA's managers chose to share the content from a management meeting with their subordinates. The example is selected to represent the *Conversation – Text Dialectic* since that is the source of the tension. It illustrates how the organizational procedures influence opportunities for coorientation. But the example also conveys the *Multivocal – Univocal Dialectic* in that the interactivity involves the translation of the organization's aim into the many communities of practice.

8.1 The Multivocal – Univocal Dialectic

The tensions in this category arise from the competition between the local communities of practice and the unified organization, that is, between *authority of expertise* and *authority of position,* and it involves the struggle between centralization and decentralization as well as between stability and change. This section explores how tensions arise and are enacted in situations where the aim is to translate the many voices of the communities of practice into one organization, and the one into the many. More specifically, this section explores attempts to translate the unified organization's identity and aim into the many communities of practice and to study tensions in situations where the aim was to diminish the gap between the senior managers and all other organizational members. This corresponds with the call in Brummans et al. (2014) for studies on how organizational members work to narrow the gap between the *authority of position*, that is, managers who are responsible for the "presentification" and the continuity of the organization, and the *authority of expertise*, that is, organizational members whose work is to constitute the organization while being responsive to the internal as well as external environment and continually adapt their modes of interacting and sensemaking.

8.1.1   Language choices and cultural communication

Language preferences cause confusion and frustration in both organizations. Both BioA and BioB were established at a time when Swedish was the natural and preferred business language in a Swedish organization. Both organizations are now international, and along with the globalization trends, language has become an issue for discussion in these organizations, just as in most other Swedish organizations[29]. Global organizations aim to unify their various sites for a number of reasons, including efficiency and control. For BioA the language issue became particularly relevant when the organization merged with a foreign organization already during the 1990s, while BioB gradually became aware of the issue as the organization grew outside the national borders. In contemporary society Swedes learn English at an early age, but Swedes are not bi-lingual. There are also differences between generations, in that older Swedes might not always be as comfortable with English as younger generations are. The pressure for a common language in an international organization therefore causes tensions in various situations and at various times.

The following example is from BioA and comes from the second workshop, W2 (see Figure 2), in the series of workshops in *Leading through Communication*. The workshop participants were senior managers, and in this workshop communication practitioners talked about the role of communication in the organizing process and the relationship between organization and communication. Senior managers were introduced to communication tools. One tool was a mapping grid, which is used to divide organizational members into various groups depending on how much senior managers want or need these members to participate in the communication about *Lean* and in the change process itself. The communication practitioners explained and defined each category and gave specific examples.

   The mapping grid consisted of five categories: *sponsors*, *advocates*, *agents*, *targets*, and *others*. The idea was that the senior managers could adjust their communication with organizational members depending on which category their colleagues belonged too. Senior managers were also expected to plan their communication in accordance with the *know*, *feel*, and *do* concepts (presented in Chapter Five). For example, when communicating with members in the *advocate* group, senior managers had to think about what this group needed to know about *Lean* in order to feel confident about the process and the team leading it. The *advocates* were organizational members who act as spokespersons for *Lean* and promote *Lean* throughout

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[29] How Swedish as well as other Nordic European organizations are impacted by English as the dominant language has been a focus in earlier studies: (see for example Höglin 2002, Johansson 2006)

the organization. Compare this with the category group *agents*. *Agents* were the ones carrying out the changes, those whose daily tasks were directly affected by how they chose to implement *Lean*. The *agents* needed to know why *Lean* was necessary, what *Lean* meant for them in their particular situation – to the extent that this was possible considering the characteristics of *Lean*. Not only did the *agents* need to understand what *Lean* meant; they needed to feel committed to *Lean* and give priority to *Lean* in their daily work.

Since everyone – workshop participants and communication practitioners alike – was Swedish, they spoke Swedish, but the categories in the mapping grid were in English. The reason was that the communication practitioners were asked by global management to produce all their work material in English. Once the communication practitioners had explained and defined the categories in the mapping grid, the senior managers were asked to identify all organizational members that they needed to communicate with in order to make the implementation of *Lean* possible. When this was done, they were encouraged to discuss among themselves and decide in which category each target member should be placed. At this point, confusion arose although it would still be some time before anyone realized it.

The senior managers translated the category *advocates* into *lawyers* since the word for *lawyer* in Swedish is *advokat*. After some time discussing among themselves, the senior managers were asked to present their work. The communication practitioners used a white board, on which they had drawn the mapping grid and the categories. Now they wrote names under each category as the senior managers presented the name and category. Some individuals were more difficult than others to place in a certain category, and the communication practitioners then returned to their previous examples to help the senior managers position the individual in the right category.

Some time passed and the translation error was still not uncovered but the participants were becoming more and more confused and frustrated. The hesitance increased, and the communication practitioners realized that something was wrong. But it was not until their metaconversation – used to sum up the exercise – that they understood that the participants were defining the category *advocate* as *lawyer* (despite the previous discussion about how to define the various categories) and that this appeared to be the reason behind the workshop participants' sudden changes in attitude and behavior, from being positive and eager to showing hesitance.

Hence the workshop was practically over before the communication practitioners understood the reason for the change in attitude among the participants. It is noteworthy that previous encounters with the communication practitioners had been helpful and instructive – according to interviewees – and the participants had been ventriloquized by a positive experience, which was noticed during the beginning of the workshop. But as

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the confusion increased, the positive experiences diminished. One workshop participant described this experience:

> The workshops provided new knowledge about communication; it was really like a Kinder egg! But one of the activities in the second workshop was quite confusing and that made me a bit hesitant towards the following workshop. […]

The communication practitioners discussed this once all the participants had left the room. They agreed that they did not feel comfortable with how the session ended and they realized that they had to go back and describe the categories in more detail. They also came to the conclusion that they should translate the categories for this exercise from English to Swedish themselves. In order to avoid more misunderstandings they decided to take a second look at the material and activities for the following workshop. The next day senior managers and communication practitioners met again for the third and final workshop. The communication practitioners opened this workshop with a detailed explanation of the mapping grid, even though that had not been the plan according to the agenda that was presented at the very first workshop. The communication practitioners had translated the category names into Swedish, and now they went through and explained each category again. The participants were given plenty of time to discuss each category and to redo the work from the previous day. Murmur arose among the participants, and one said:

> Oh, now I think I understand!

Once the tool was presented – now in Swedish – and the participants were well into the exercise, their attitudes became more positive. When talking to the participants after these workshops they said things like:

> I have worked with the communication practitioners before and was looking forward to these workshops, but I have to admit that when leaving the second workshop I was quite hesitant and I did not feel the same enthusiasm for attending the next workshop. But [the communication practitioners] handled it quite well in the next workshop, and my interest came back. I just do not understand why they use "Swenglish."

The workshop participant who compared the first workshop with a Kinder egg and then thought that the second workshop was a disappointment had this opinion about the last workshop:

> […] The following workshop, however, exceeded expectations.

BioA's communication practitioners' discursive practice "Swenglish" (the act of mixing Swedish and English) hindered the sensemaking processes for the workshop participants in this example, and this began a coorientation process that was based on a misleading point of departure, as the participants were orienting with an incorrect definition of the object of concern.

When using metaconversation, the communication practitioners were not only joining the many voices to one, scaling up from the many to the one, but this was also an opportunity to find out if participants perceived the outcome the same way. When they did not, this signaled that something was not right. The communication practitioners took this seriously and carried out changes. The three workshops finally led to coorientations and brought the organizing forward. The senior managers used their newly gained knowledge about communication in their interactions with their coworkers, which resulted in organizational changes. This series of workshops also resulted in additional structural changes because the management decided to implement these workshops in other situations and for other communities of practice as well. Tensions in regards to language choices made the communication practitioner review their work and make changes wherever possible.

The "Swenglish" discourse that the communication practitioners had developed was a response to the univocal and multivocal dialectic. Starting as an organization present in one country, the organization has now become globally present, and in order to unify the organization the global management decided that the corporate language was English. It meant that the communication practitioners were obligated to produce all their materials in English. This was not only a strategy to unify the organization; it was also for efficiency purposes, says the Head of Business Communications in an interview. In their struggle to meet this language challenge, the communication practitioners used integration in a way that appears to be a forced merger. They tried to neutralize the language differences by using both languages, English in the presentation material while they spoke Swedish and explained and translated the English material. After this incident, the communication practitioners chose to use separation to handle the language tension, in that they prepared their material in what could be described as two levels or two versions, one Swedish and one English. This was probably time–consuming, and as we will see, they did not continue this work.

Even though BioA's communication practitioners tried to avoid similar incidents by reviewing and adjusting their work, the tension reappeared in a later workshop when the communication practitioners once again used their "Swenglish" discourse with an English PowerPoint presentation while speaking Swedish to the workshop participants. Hence, they continued to use integration to deal with the language tension, which appeared as a forced

merger and caused confusion and irritation among participants. One of the participants asked the following question:

> How have you decided to choose this much English material? Is it because words like "commitment" are not possible to translate?

He was interrupted by one of the communication practitioners who said:

> You mean in this presentation?

The workshop participants said yes and continued:

> If this is internal communication, I think we need to choose a path, are we going to use Swedish or are we going to use English? Otherwise I think that throughout the organization members will think "but what is this about?"

The communication practitioner answered:

> As a comment to this we… we will be seeing even more PowerPoint presentations in English. We have to produce just about all our material in English now because we need to have it approved by [the name of the global management board] so we have…

Her colleague from the communication department interrupted her:

> It is a problem we deal with all the time. We work just as much in English as in Swedish. And… we believe that if we explain the pictures [in the PowerPoint presentations] everyone will understand anyway… I mean...

The first communication practitioner continued:

> But it is a very interesting issue, the organization's language. […] the phase that we are entering… I… I cannot find a better word for it than centralization, and I know that it is an awful word but, but, when it comes to attempts to achieve greater coherence and… ehh, so I think that we will have more English, I think. Then there are both disadvantages and advantages with that. It is something we probably will have to discuss again in regards to materials that we are presenting to the organization, yes.

When the communication practitioner explained that she and her colleagues needed to produce their material in English in order for the global management to be able to access it, she implicitly points to the paradox that Stohl and Cheney (2001) refer to, namely the *paradox of power* and, more specifically, the *paradox of control,* where the organizational members are encountering less, not more, freedom in the participation process. The communication practitioner even refers to this process as a centralization phase even though the change process – for which they are working to

enhance communication – is about empowering employees and encourage participation. This language directive from the global management seems to be their attempt to unit the various national sites, that is, communities of practice, while at the same time increase control and efficiency.

In BioB the question of language choice becomes a figure that ventriloquizes the organizational members to the extent that they place focus on it instead of on the core values. It appears to be a tension that has been inherent in the organization for some time although it has been given limited attention. It was one of the things that the organizational members commented on, and one of the senior managers in charge of the incorporation of the interactive video website responded to the comments with an explanation. The reason why the preferred language in the videos was Swedish, with a few exceptions, was that the majority of the organizational members who tell their stories are Swedish, and the senior manager argued that it was a conscious decision to let these individuals speak Swedish. The interactive video website project group thought that the individuals felt more comfortable and more at ease when given the opportunity to speak their native language. The senior manager contended that it was not every day that members were asked to talk in front of a camera. The group in charge of the video production was apparently aware of the language challenge, as this senior manager states that they made a conscious decision to let the Swedes speak Swedish. Since they used subtitles, they chose to handle the language challenge the same way as BioA's communication practitioner, that is, through integration or a forced merger. This act may have been accepted if the figure had not yet arose to produce a tension, but at this time – as indicated by the comments on the interactive website – the language figure had become a tension. Both Swedish and non-Swedish members stated that it was time to convert the organization's language to English. It appears challenging to solve this tension, as one of the commentators suggested that the tension should be handled the same way as before although by trading languages so that English was the preferred language and Swedish was used in subtitles, which means to stay with the forced merger situation. In addition to this, the English quotes published on the website by Swedes tell us that there are language obstacles among organizational members. Judging from the quotes the organizational members do not seem to be as fluent in English as they think they are.

The language tension appears to be challenging in these organizations, and both of them use integration as a way to deal with this tension, which does not solve the situations. The analysis indicates that the language tension in both BioA and BioB increase members' participation – except in the first example in BioA where it instead caused so much confusion that the participants started to hesitate. However, the participation took different

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forms. In BioA the language tension seemed to increase member participation in the conversations about how to organize their work. The activity on the website in BioB did not lead to coorientation around and about the choice of language, but, nevertheless, the tension ventriloquized the commentators to the point that they acted and posted their comments.

In an interview, BioA's Head of Business Communication provided another example of a tension that involves the *Univocal – Multivocal Dialectic*. The Head of Business Communication described a situation where the global accountant needed to make a reservation in the budget, and in order to do this legally, the reservation needed to be announced to the whole organization. The communication practitioners chose to do this by sending out an information package to senior managers and managers, who then were to inform their subordinates. But this was not sufficient, according to the global accountant. The situation required a written statement to all members. The communication practitioners then chose to use the intranet, although this was against the Swedish communication culture. The Head of Business Communication said that they had never before posted this kind of message on the intranet. She argued that the fact that the choice of communication channel for such a message was unusual in combination with the fact that the message was not intended for the ones receiving it made the message completely incomprehensible to the Swedish members.

    This caused turbulence in the organization. The Swedish members were used as a target group, although the message was not intended for them, and there was nothing the communication practitioners could do about it because this was something that had to do with global legal issues. The Head of Business Communication said that this was the only time that she and her colleagues had felt that they were forced to do something that was absolutely against their principles. She continued by stating that this was the first time that this type of tension occurred but probably not the last. Related tensions occurred all the time. The reason, she said, was that the Swedish communication culture in general – and this organization's communication culture in particular – was characterized as being open and frank, "straightforward and clear." The communication practitioners wished to continue being straightforward with the members, but this did not always suit the English communication culture in which the global office was situated. Sometimes the head office had reacted to how the Swedish communication practitioners worked. Tensions occurred because the Swedes wished to be straightforward, but the head office wanted them to embed messages in "corporate nonsense," as the Swedish Head of Business communication referred to it. She added that this was part of being a global organization, and she foresaw more tensions arising because she and her colleagues wished to continue being straightforward with their colleagues.

The first tension that emerged, due to the need to deal with the legal issue and the reservation in the budget by communicating it in a way that was unfamiliar for the Swedish practice, was primary handled as a separation by the communication practitioners. They recognized that they needed to do something, but instead of sending out a written message to everyone in the organization, they chose to send out information to managers and let them inform their subordinates. This was done in an attempt to follow the Swedish communication culture and prevent the rise of more tensions. But since the Head office contended that this was not sufficient they had to follow orders and ignore the Swedish communication culture. This meant that they chose one communication culture over the other, even though they were well aware that this could cause turbulence within the organization. The Head of Business Communication referred to this action as "acting with their hands tied behind their backs."

The second thing that caused tensions and probably will continue to do so was the challenge that the Swedish communication practitioners are ventriloquized with an idea that organizational communication should be straightforward and clear, and that does not suit the communication culture in which the organization's head office is situated. In this case the Swedish communication practitioners obscured the opposition, selected their view and their ideas on how organizational communication should be carried out and simply ignored the other extreme, at least until they were rebuked by the head office. From the Swedish Head of Business Communication's statement it appears that this is how they will continue to handle this tension. She said that they have accepted that the struggle with this tension is part of being a global organization.

8.1.2 The paradox of identity and empowerment processes

The *Message testing and Message integration* workshop is an example of a conscious and explicit attempt to translate the overall purpose of BioA's organization so that it fits the conversations within the local communities of practice. This is the most problematic translation, according to Brummans et al. (2014), because it involves making the text fit the local practices and circumstances. Hence, it is expected to involve a number of tensions.

The idea with the appointment of the communication ambassadors at BioA was that they were going to be "the management's ear to the ground," as the CEO explained it when meeting with the group for the first time. The communication practitioners would ask the communication ambassadors how they thought that messages were perceived throughout the organization over time. This also meant that the communication ambassadors were participating in workshops to test the vision and mission statements and the Q&As– all related to the change process – produced by the management

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group. In addition, these organizational members were asked to support colleagues who, at any point in time, did not feel comfortable with the change processes currently taking place.

The part of the *Message testing and Message integration* workshop where the communication ambassadors are working with the vision and mission statements and the Q&As is extensively described in Chapter Seven. The communication practitioners' idea with this session is to connect the management's knowledge and ideas with organizational members' knowledge and ideas. By connecting these different world-views, which is happening when the communication ambassadors are reformulating the management's messages, the communication practitioners aim to use the power of the knowledge from the two parties, *authority of position* and *authority of practice* to produce vision and mission statements and Q&As that are meaningful for all parties involved in the organizing process.

The aim with the participation process *Lean* is to empower organizational members so that they can make their own decisions in regards to their own – and, for example, their assembly line's – specific work tasks. However, being a communication ambassador means that the management group has tighter control over these members through peer control. When the communication ambassadors discussed this among themselves they did not consider it peer control but, rather, as an opportunity to get their voices heard, and therefore they understood this as part of the empowerment process. Throughout the workshop the participants acted as if they were pleased and honored to have been appointed communication ambassadors. With this runs a risk of "[b]ecoming co-opted by dominant interests" (Stohl and Cheney 2001:360), which relates to *the paradoxes of identity* and suggests that members who are to represent their coworkers may instead start to represent the management group. They become the voice of the management while sturdily confessing an affiliation with their co-workers, even though they are not considering the co-workers' interests (Stohl and Cheney 2001). They are ventriloquized by the management voice.

The management board had worked to avoid this paradox, and the CEO discussed this risk while presenting the reasons why they have chosen to appoint communication ambassadors. The CEO contended that the management wanted and needed the truth from these communication ambassadors. Later in the workshop one of the communication ambassadors called attention to this idea again, while discussing how to legitimize the role of the communication ambassador. She said that it was important to keep in mind how easy it is to filter what you say when you are supposed to convey messages from your community of practice to the senior managers.

The workshop continued with the communication practitioners' talk about the fact that the information and the messages that the communication

ambassadors would discuss during their meetings would almost always be considered as confidential since it was information that they would work on and then present to the organization at a later stage in the change process. This led to a discussion about whether or not the role itself was confidential and how this role should be announced throughout the organization. Everyone agreed that the way it was announced would affect the network's legitimacy. One of the appointed communication ambassadors [number one] said:

> … Because this role isn't particular… it's new, not very many people know about it and… and in order to inform the business about this role, in order for [the role] to be useful, you have to be able to talk about [the role] and talk about what we are doing and […] advertise so that people feel "oh, ok, I can say what I think and that can even reach [the name of the CEO]."

One of the communication practitioners emphasized that the role in itself was not a secret and the meetings and what they did in their roles as communication ambassadors was no secret. It was the information or, rather, the messages about the change that they discussed in this group that needed to be confidential since the idea was that the communication ambassadors were to help the management group to bring about messages that would be more easily understood by the majority of the organization's members. Once the messages were agreed upon, they would be presented to the members at a later stage when the time had come in the change process for that particular piece of information. Another communication ambassador [number seven] added:

> But at the same time… How much does the business know about us, our existence? I mean, we are eighteen in comparison to over 4000. Isn't it good that there is knowledge about our existence in the business?

The discussion continued regarding the importance of legitimizing the role and moved on to discuss the *paradoxes of identity* (Stohl and Cheney 2001). Six communication ambassadors and one of the communication practitioners added the following ideas:

> But at the same time I think it's important that, if we're to be the "ear to the rail" [ear to the ground], it's important that someone makes us official. I mean, I can come to you and say [inaudible] and then you say "ok, but why should I speak to you?" So, I mean, so… I think it's important that there is an official… someone that makes us official.
> Communication ambassador number three.

> And the purpose of us. The things that [the name of the CEO] talked about, what's our purpose. What can we do and what can we contribute with?
> Communication ambassador number one.

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And in some way also… If we're the "ear to the rail" [ear to the ground], and are given the respect and the trust to… you're in some way an ambassador out in the business, somewhat dispersed, then there has to be some kind win-win situation, that if you are given information by being the "ear to the rail" , then [the members in the organization] have to feel that something comes out of this, that they get something back… that what they have given in confidence is taken cared of… so that they continue to give. Otherwise there will be suspicion for our role. [The role may be questioned] "Are [the communication ambassadors] favoring the management's case?" 'Is there a hidden agenda?'... This cannot happen.
Communication ambassador number four.

But one should not see us as some kind of Stasi-patrol that reports to the top, but you are something… [he is interrupted by laughter from the rest of the participants and the participants are talking and interrupting each other for a few seconds].
Communication ambassador number five.

No, of course not, rather the opposite.
Communication practitioner number one.

It's a about selling the opportunity. How often does an operator or another member get the opportunity to tell [the name of the CEO] what she or he thinks and feels about the situation? "How often am I, as an individual (on the floor, furthest out in the business) asked?" or "How often does [the name of the CEO] ask me what I think?" So, it's a little about how you sell [the role of the communication ambassador]. I really do think that many would like the opportunity to be able to provide their feedback, praise and criticism alike, all the way up to [the name of the management group]. It does not happen very often.
Communication ambassador number one.

And with only one intermediate instead of…
Communication ambassador number five.

Yes… because how do you otherwise get that information all the way up? To your group manager, to your plant manager, to… No, really… and things are filtered. No, I think… this should also be correctly sold to the co-workers.
Communication ambassador number one.

While considering how to legitimize their new roles, one of the interactants brought up the fact that they have to be aware that the information they get may be filtered. These led the interactants to engage around the fact that the filtering of information goes both ways, meaning that information coming from the senior managers is naturally filtered through the many hierarchical levels on the way down to the employees "on the floor," and the information that the communication ambassadors will get from their colleagues will most likely also be filtered.

But at the same time we cannot rely solely on the information we get either. It's like… our co-workers will end up in the same position that [the name of the CEO] talked about. They will filter the information and think about how they should behave towards us […] they also want to be politically correct […] So, we need to work very hard […]
Communication ambassador number six.

[The communication ambassadors] are positioned at very different levels […] I am actually positioned at the very bottom. There are several hierarchical levels between me and [the name of the CEO]. And I mean, the information is filtered several times before I get the information that is sent out by [the name of the CEO] for example.
Communication ambassador number seven.

But I think that that is what [the CEO] wants to know....
Communication ambassador number one.

Yes, that's right.
Communication ambassador number seven.

…How filtered [the information] is?
Communication ambassador number one.

Yes, that's right. But my gang, we are laboratory technicians; we analyze the shit so to speak. So that…
Communication ambassador number seven.

But what [the CEO] also mentions is that being political correct is possibly not what we want… I mean, it is really good to encourage those who are NOT politically correct.
Communication ambassador number five.

The participants agreed that these were issues and potential risks that they had to seriously consider in their future work. They had to continue the discussion about how to introduce the communication ambassador role, and the communication practitioners promised to contribute. So even though there were indications of the *paradoxes of identity* – and particularly that of *representing* – it seemed like this conversation, influenced by previous conversations, would help participants to avoid this paradox. The fact that the communication ambassadors openly talked about the risk of acting as a representative might impede this paradox. In this case the communication practitioners and the CEO used transcendence to avoid the paradox since they reframed the characteristics of this role and, with that, illustrated the challenges that might be experienced when taking on this role. In addition they encouraged the communication ambassadors to discuss this.

Another factor that had the potential to prevent this paradox was that the communication ambassadors were encouraged to provide their input on the messages produced by the senior managers. The first time the communication ambassador group was gathered they were asked to adjust the vision and mission statements and the messages produced by the management board so that these messages were better targeted toward their own communities of practice. These workshops appeared to encourage the participants to take on the role as representatives, and at the same time the exercise seemed to help avoid of the *paradoxes of identity*. The communication ambassadors stated that when they realized that their expertise was valued – that their feedback on the messages and the vision and mission statements was seriously considered and taken into account by the management board – they felt a collective identity with their community of practice.

It appeared that the message exercise in combination with the participants' understanding that the management board appreciated their work involved an empowerment process because the communication ambassadors emphasized that they felt encouraged to state their opinions and initiate work in their communities of practice the way they and their co-workers found to be best. The analysis of the workshop indicates that the communication ambassadors participated in an empowerment process because when they worked with the messages, knowledge about the communication was shared with them, and the work in the workshop encouraged their participation to contribute to the organizing process with their knowledge and expertise.

This session gave the communication ambassadors the opportunity to engage in conversation, and they started to coordinate their work. In this process a number of potential tensions arose. It appeared that the more engaged the communication ambassadors became the more potential tensions were identified and discussed. They worked to avoid future paradoxes, such as representing their community of practice but with the voice of the management, that is, the *paradox of representation*. These actions suggest that tensions have an impact on the organizing process even though no tensions seemed to emerge since they play a significant role in the coordination of activities that the communication ambassadors engage in. This also impacts the future work of the communication practitioners as well as the senior managers work. The planning of the announcement of the communication ambassador role was one example of how the discussions about potential tensions influenced the organizing process. This also indicates that when members are given the opportunity to engage in conversation, more tensions arise and are enacted, either by using a transcendence or a connecting approach, and that the rise of tensions in such settings encourage participation.

8.2 The Conversation – Text Dialectic

The tensions in this category arose from the recursive interplay between organizing as conversation and organization as text, that is, how conversations constitute the text and vice versa. This involves a number of agencies, humans as well as non-humans, that is actants or a plenum of agencies or figures as Cooren (2006) prefers to refer to them. The *Conversation – Text Dialectic* is in itself held together through a recursive process that Putnam (2013) describes as one where both conversation and text are continuous and evolving while also having staying power. Hence, just like the *Multivocal – Univocal Dialectic*, this dialectic also involves the struggle between change and stability. The examples in this section suggest how material artifacts and texts challenge or hinder interactions, the constitution of transactional protocols and coorientation, even if the intention is to encourage change, that is, conversation. This causes tensions and how these tensions are enacted is illustrated here.

8.2.1 Applying a transmission model to rich and complex content with few opportunities for sensemaking and coorientation

Let us return to the workshops at BioA. Approximately an hour into one of the workshops, W4, there was a theory session where the communication practitioners emphasized the importance of planning communication. Participants were asked to share examples of when communication had failed due to lack of planning. They were given time to discuss this in their groups. When time was up they were asked to share their stories with the whole group. One of the participants referred to a senior management meeting in her example. These were meetings where a number of ideas were discussed, and the content was gathered in an information package. The information package was sent out as a PowerPoint presentation – this was comprised of up to 50 or 60 slides – to managers, who had fifteen minutes to share the information with their respective teams in a status meeting. Since the time was limited the managers usually chose a maximum of ten slides. The manager was then supposed to explain the content to the team. The problem was often – as this workshop participant argued – not only the limited time but also the fact that the manager who was supposed to explain the information may not have understood the content. This resulted in that few team members understood the content, according to the workshop participant:

> So the team members leave [the team meeting], without having understood what it is all about. "Ok, hmm, ok, that was very interesting, let's go back to

work." But there was a lot of good information [in the information package], that all of us would have needed to know. But this, I think, is where we fail.

This story indicates that managers at both levels are using selection to deal with the tension between complex content and time limitations. First by choosing to gather information discussed in a meeting into a 50- to 60-page PowerPoint presentation and then hand this over with what seems to be little communication with the manager at the next hierarchical level, who then chooses a number of slides to present to a team, suggests that all managers choose to use selection to handle the situation. The content is complex and the time is limited, but the managers seem to ignore the complexity of the content. The first group chose to create a PowerPoint presentation and leave it to the manager to present, with little support or opportunity for sensemaking. This manager continued the transmission focus, selecting a few slides and within fifteen minutes presented the content to the team. This was intended as a cascade, but it does not seem successful, as the workshop participant confirmed. It challenges opportunities for creating transactional protocols.

When the communication ambassador told her story, other workshop participants nodded their heads and a murmur arose, which indicated that they were familiar with her story. On what grounds does the team manager choose the ten slides if this person has not understood the content? This seems strange. There are probably a number of reasons in addition to the time limit. It indicates that various teams receive different information from the senior management meeting since it is likely that the team managers do not choose the same ten slides to present to their respective teams. It may be as the workshop participant says; the information does not influence the practice, but it may also be that other teams consider the information, and the organizing process is influenced. The fact that the information does not influence the practice indirectly suggests that the practice is influenced because the actors may miss out on valuable knowledge about future plans, for example. Without this knowledge a particular team or community of practice may move and plan their work in another direction.

8.2.2 Materiality, Site and Agency

The interactive video website incorporated at BioB did not enhance communication between organizational members nor did it enhance member participation. Only 21 comments were posted on the website and no coorientation processes were identified although dialogues were initiated. One question – which may be rhetorical – was posted, but it did not receive any response.

Could it be that the technology was too complicated for the members? When beginning this case study I took into account that the technology may be perceived as appealing to a younger workforce but may exclude an older workforce who is not used to Internet – and, for example, YouTube – as much as the younger members are. But a correlation from the first questionnaire reveals that older organizational members were more likely to prefer the interactive video website for gaining information[30]. This, together with the other data from the questionnaires, the discussions in the focus groups and interviews, indicates that no organizational members were excluded because they found the technology to be too complicated. The correlation suggested the hypothesis that the tool was too simple for the younger generation. However, data from the second questionnaire did not support this correlation, and the hypothesis was discarded.

A comparison of the results from the two questionnaires reveals that the core values did not influence organizational members' work as much as they used to do (compare, for example, "The company's values influence my daily work". M before = 5.2; M after = 4.7). The results also reveal that organizational members' knowledge about the core values decreased during the period when the interactive video website was launched (compare, for example, "I have good knowledge about the company's values". M before = 5.8; M after = 5.4).

How can it be that members appear to be familiar with the core values before the interactive video website initiative, when the management board guessed in interviews that they were not? Why did the knowledge about the core values decrease during the time when the interactive video website was launched? The results do not clarify the disconnect between the members' beliefs about their knowledge and the management boards' beliefs about the members' knowledge.

But the conversations in the focus groups revealed that there were initiatives focusing on the core values prior to the launch of the interactive video website, and we could speculate that the management board initiated the first core value project, but no one ever evaluated the outcome, and so the management board never saw the results. Not one of the focus groups participants recalled what happened with this project, and some believed that the video website project was a – somewhat late – continuation of the first project. The information from the focus group participants suggesting that no one knew what happened to the first core value project may support the speculation that this project was never evaluated. The first core value project was carried out in the form of workshops, posters in the hallways and other efforts to raise awareness. Since it comprised opportunities for face-to-face communication it may have facilitated coorientation.

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[30] The interactive video website had been used once before but not to the same extent as this time and few organizational members recalled it.

The results from the two questionnaires in this case study show a decline in regards to awareness about the core values between the launch of the first and the last video. This may indicate that core values are too abstract to discuss using an interactive website with the help from the video content only. These findings are in line with previous research stating that simple content is preferred when using videos to increase engagement and participation (see for example Shifman's (2012) study). Limor Shifman found that videos that were simple and focused on ordinary people were more likely to generate user engagement. The focus groups participants also suggested that the videos should be used for simple content in the future.

> I think [the videos] would be suitable for showing the products' usability areas… we would not want to have the whole company entering the production, as this is a clear room environment.
> Quality engineer
>
> It would be quite fun to see X talk about the business in Italy. I would watch that.
> Logistics engineer

However, the analysis of the whole interactive video website project indicates that it may not be the characteristics of the interactive video website that were the sole reason behind why the project did not enhance communication and participation. The website did, in fact, provide opportunities for interaction, but richness and leanness are not inherent characteristics in a medium but rather emergent and may change depending on the use of the particular medium in organizational settings. Hence, previous research suggests that successful use of IT is dependent on the intertwining of both technical and organizational factors. In BioB it appears to be a number of organizational factors that influenced the use of the interactive video website.

Both focus group participants and interviewees in BioB stated that the turbulent times affected their interest for the core values. Turbulent times, such as redundancy processes, bribing scandals, rumors about acquisitions and rumors about a new CEO, are difficult for a project team to foresee. The senior managers considered these challenges at times and delayed the launch of the videos. These actions indicated that the senior managers used selection to handle the oppositional tensions between organizational issues – in this case, the wish for enhanced incorporation of core values, that is, member empowerment in the eyes of the senior managers – and redundancy processes. While these are obstacles difficult to foresee, there are also other obstacles that the management team could have foreseen, such as the organization's communication culture and the accessibility to computers throughout the organization.

Focus group participants and interviewees stated that organizational news is usually announced in town hall meetings and in face-to-face meetings with an immediate manager. But the announcement of the launch of the website was made via email. Information was also posted on the intranet, which few members visited because it had been under construction for some time; some members even thought that it was not in use, according to the focus group participants. Why the project group selected email and intranet in favor of town hall meetings and other meetings is not clear; none of the interviewees who were part of the project group could provide reasons for this choice. It may be that the existence of the interactive website with its videos was announced at one time during a town hall meeting. It indicates that the project team made an implicit selection when they chose to announce the existence of the interactive video website via email and intranet. These choices had a likely impact on the use of the interactive video website since the announcement apparently did not reach all members. But knowledge about the website and the videos was not the only obstacle. The functionalities of the website – the fact that it was possible to interact on the website – was also not known to many organizational members, not even to those who were aware of the website and the videos' existences. In regards to the accessibility of computers throughout the organization it seems as though the project team did not take into account that members in the assembly line had limited access to computers. As one assembly line member said when asked if he visited the website and watch the videos:

> It is difficult for you if you have a day with only production [working at the assembly line]

It may be that the project team implicitly or explicitly chose to use selection in this situation as well. The interactive video website may have been in focus in the project planning phase, and discussions about the website itself may have dominated to the extent that the team forgot, and hence did not consider, that some organizational members had limited access to computers, which meant that opportunities to visit the website and watch the videos were delimited for this group. However, whether or not the project group made an implicit or explicit selection in regards to these tensions, their choices caused contradictions in that the idea behind the interactive video website was to encourage participation and enhance communication, but these choices, in fact, hindered participation and communication.

One plant manager at BioA who had attended the first three workshops in *Leading Through Communication* talked about how he worked to encourage communicative interactions and how he changed his routines after having gained more knowledge about communication. For him participation meant having an engaged and empowered workforce who shared their opinions,

and that is what he aimed for in his manager role. Before he attended the workshops, he used to gather his subordinates in a meeting room to talk about potential and possible changes on the assembly line. During these meetings there was little interaction, and the plant manager had to do most of the talking himself. He said that this made him very frustrated because he believed that he had a good relationship with his subordinates and that they felt that there was an accepting atmosphere, meaning that they were encouraged to state their points of view and contribute with ideas on how to carry out their work. He knew, from his own experience during informal meetings and visits along the assembly line, that there were many opinions and ideas "out there," as he said. But these were rarely brought to the table during the meetings. The plant manager never understood why.

After the plant manager had learned more about communication he decided to incorporate some changes in his community of practice. The plant manager moved meetings with the assembly line members from the meeting room to the assembly line site. He said that he was stunned by the positive change. It appeared that by letting the assembly line members stay in a familiar environment, they were more eager to raise their voices and be involved in conversation, and the meetings were therefore much more constructive, according to the plant manager.

He concluded his story by stating that there was also another positive synergy effect of moving these meetings to the assembly line. The assembly line stops were shorter since members could start the line as soon as the meeting was over; there was no time wasted in going to and from the meeting room.

This example indicates that the plant manager has been ventriloquized by the figure "communication is vital in the organizing process" from the workshops and that this figure influences how he chooses to carry out his work. This figure helped him to deal with the tension that although the plant manager himself feels that he encourages participation among assembly line members, they do not participate. The plant manager chose to transcend the tension by reframing the situation. Instead of calling to meetings in meeting rooms he chose to invite members to meetings along the assembly line, which is an environment where these members feel at home and at ease. The plant manager said that his subordinates have stated that they feel more comfortable in that environment and that this encouraged empowerment processes and participation.

In Chapter Four I describe an uncomfortable situation that was a result of me not being true to my role as a researcher and not standing up for the researcher's integrity. When the group insisted that I give my opinion and the workshop facilitator supported their request, I gave in, thinking to myself that if I provide a general comment about the day, a comment that I felt was obvious and which also the workshop facilitator had discussed with me

during breaks throughout the day, it will not cause any harm. As I stated in chapter four, this was apparently such a sensitive issue that they all reacted immediately – and negatively. At this time all the dichotomies within the group and work environment were transformed into something new through the making of me as their common enemy, and this may have helped to unite the group, including the workshop facilitator. However, since they already had begun to change their attitude towards each other and were beginning to collaborate during this first workshop it was difficult to say how much this incident would influence their future attitudes. The following day they continued to engage in conversation and coordinate their work at various levels.

As I stated in Chapter Four, I had to work really hard to regain the participants' trust, which was quite challenging when as a researcher I was not supposed to be involved but, rather, observe the work in the workshop. It was only during the breaks that I could really communicate with the participants, and it was not until towards the end of this second day that one workshop participant told me that my comment the day before was correct and that there had been many internal issues and a non-encouraging environment in this team. At the very end – on their way out of the workshop – more workshop participants stopped to talk to me about their internal issues. The reasons for the challenges within this assembly line group were many: personality issues, turbulence in the management team, an unpopular substitute system for long-term substitutes – even though it was supposed to account long-term jobs on the assembly line, it often changed without further notice, and this made the substitutes insecure about their situation. On top of this, a redundancy initiative had been announced in the media the same day as the first workshop. 500 members were to be made redundant, and no one knew who that would be.

8.2.3 Previous changes – those that never were completed or evaluated

Organizational members from the assembly line at BioA expressed surprise but also delight when selected to attend the *Team-twirl* sessions. They describe how they had heard about *Lean* as a change process but did not pay much attention to it, as they were certain that the change process would never reach them. Their experience was that senior managers' interest in a change process diminished as the change filtered down through the organization. When senior managers lose interest in a change processes, no one else takes charge and continues to carry out the changes; therefore, changes rarely reach the assembly line, which is organizationally positioned furthest away from the senior managers (see, for example, Johansson 2003). This example suggests that previous unsuccessful changes ventriloquize

organizational members in such a way that they act indifferent when new change processes are introduced. This is a tension that senior managers ignore all together, likely because they simply forget about the change or lose interest in it and move on to something else. In that sense it could be argued that they choose selection because they select something else in favor of the initiated change process. Hence, this action appears to lead to resistance among subordinates to implement new change processes.

When discussing the information and communication about the core values in the focus groups at BioB an issue that arose was that of a previous project about core values. Some of the focus groups participants believed that the interactive video website with its core value content was some kind of extension or follow-up of this previous initiative. Others referred to the previous initiative when discussing the core values and did not seem to be aware of the interactive video website. Some members wondered if this was a continuation of the previous initiative or not, which made them wonder about the purpose of the interactive video website. What these organizational members have in common is that they did not know how or if the previous core value project ever ended. This apparently caused confusion in regards to the interactive video website project. Also we should consider that the results from the first questionnaire indicate that organizational members believed they are familiar with the core values, which does not seem to match what the management believes. If management had evaluated the first core value project, the focus might have been different, and other areas might have been emphasized instead. When analyzing this it appears that the senior managers at BioB handled change project much in the same way that the senior managers at BioA do, meaning that at some point in time during the change process they lose interest or find something that is more relevant and select that instead, leaving the change process with no real end. As a result, tensions emerged that influenced members' opinions about, interest in as well as willingness to contribute to future change processes.

Previous change processes that had not been ended or had not had an official closure, at least not so that organizational members were aware of, became a figure in both organizations. BioB's focus group participants, for example, talked about previous changes and tried to recall what really happened with these change processes. If they did not recall what happened, they drew the conclusion that these changes were not successful. Organizational members positioned themselves as being constrained by this figure. The figure had a negative effect on organizational members' attitudes toward the present change processes for at least two reasons. First of all, because this figure influenced organizational members' engagement, they appeared to have developed resistance, or at least hesitance toward change, as one member describes it:

> You do not feel like putting in extra effort for a new change process when your experience tells you that [the change process] will not have any effect anyhow.

Secondly, the figure caused confusion about the purpose of present change processes. Previous change processes that had not come to a clear end left organizational members with an experience and a feeling that changes were not that important since they were rarely followed up on or may not even have reached all of the organization's communities of practices. Take, for example, the surprise among BioA's assembly line members when they were asked to participate in the *Team-twirl* workshops. This may lead to the paradox of *participating by not participating* (Stohl and Cheney 2001), which means that the present change processes each encouraged participation, but experience from previous change processes told the organizational members that there was no value in participating. Both organizations were struggling with this paradox *participating by not participating*. Hence, previous organizational changes that never saw an end became textual imbrication attempts that organizational members brought into the conversation as past conversations (coorientations). This was their experience with organizational changes. The organizational members showed a negative attitude towards changes, and this became a figure that ventriloquized them.

8.3 Concluding Remarks

The analyses of the BioA and BioB case studies point to a number of tensions. These tensions – be they paradoxes, contradictions or other tensions – are directly linked to two primary dialectics, the *Multivocal – Univocal Dialectic* and the *Conversation – Text Dialectic*. These primary oppositional tensions are not mutually exclusive. They are, in fact, interdependent in and throughout the pursuit of empowerment and participation processes.

Organizations' inherent tensions are "preformed into existence" (Cooren et al. 2013:7) in the interactions between organizational members. An inherent tension in this study was, for example, the challenge for assembly line members in BioB to engage in interactions through the interactive video website when they have limited access to computers. Tensions may have also emerged and been coproduced in various ways by the interactants in their conversations. One example of this is the conversation about potential tensions regarding how the mission- and vision statements are formed in BioA.

Tensions were enacted differently, but the analysis of both case studies indicates that no matter how or even if tensions are enacted, they do contribute to and influence the organizing process. The more members engage in conversations about tensions, the more they seem to handle tensions using the fourth or the fifth approach, that is, the *transcendence* or the *connection* approach, meaning that they either transform tensions into new perspectives or search for ways to embrace and draw energy from oppositional forces. In this process new insights evolve and it appears as if more (potential) tensions emerge which increase participation. Tensions that are not part of a coorientation process still influence the organizing because these tensions influence the direction of future coorientations. The tensions in regards to language choices in both organizations are examples of this.

Tensions appear to both encourage and increase participation even in situations where no instances of coorientations are identified. In BioB, for example, almost all of the comments on the interactive video website involved tensions, though none of these comments led to instances of coorientations or empowerment. When talking about the posted comments one interview person expressed surprise that the website was not used more frequently to get out frustrations about the fact that the management encouraged a focus on core values at the same time as redundancy processes were initiated. He added that people tended to raise their voices when feeling discontent.

The findings from this study indicate reflexive and recursive relationships between coorientation, empowerment, tensions and participation. The analysis of BioA's communicative initiative points to the conclusion that if tensions arise in situations where empowerment processes have begun, that is, situations where members feel and act empowered – a process needing coorientation – members strive to transform these tensions or use the energy from the oppositional forces and this process encourage and increase members' participation who then search for additional (potential) tensions.

Part III

9 Communication, Coorientation, Empowerment Process, Tensions and Participation

This chapter provides a general overview of this dissertation. The research questions are answered and the findings are further elaborated. I emphasize the communication-power relationship by combining and extending two theoretical frameworks. A conclusion is followed by suggestions for future research and practical implications. The chapter closes with an epilogue.

9.1 Challenges and Opportunities for Contemporary Organizations

Globalization and technological advancements further increase the need for rapid change and, therefore, continue to challenge the balance between organizational change and stability. Senior managers and managers are traditionally the ones responsible for withholding the organization's presentification (Brummans et al. 2014), that is, its image and position in society, while the organization's local communities of practice are expected to respond to the ever-changing external as well as internal environment. The rapid changes lead to a gap between *authority of position*, that is, the senior managers in charge of the organizational stability, and *authority of practice*, that is, organizational members who continually need to adjust their task to the changes.

Initiatives to empower organizational members and encourage participation are examples of attempts to create a balance between change and stability and thereby handle gaps mentioned above. Empowerment initiatives are on-going trends, given more or less attention for decades. Arguments have been put forth that if contemporary organizations are going to keep their market share and be competitive in an environment with rapid technological developments, organizational members at all levels need to adapt their modes of interacting and sensemaking (Cooren et al. 2013). Technological advancements also increase every member's opportunities to communicate with the external environment, making it easier for each organizational member to act as the organization's representative. Senior

managers need to share information about the organization and its situation with subordinates and give them opportunities for independent decision-making in order to enable these members to rapidly respond to changes – internal as well as external ones – but also to coordinate a common view of the organization together with the management. The parties need to handle complex coordinations, and this means that coorientation is required. Organizations that adhere to empowerment and participation processes with more engaged organizational members need leaders that organize opportunities for conversation and sensemaking (Windahl, Signitzer, and Olsen 2009).

In this dissertation – with a mixed methods embedded design approach and organizational discourse analysis – I explore how two organizations have incorporated communicative activities aiming to enhance communication between and among all organizational members and particularly between senior managers and subordinates and, with that, explicitly aim to empower organizational members and encourage them to participate in the organizing and the organization.

This study applies the Montreal School's view on the CCO perspective, exploring communicative initiatives using the theory of communication as a dialogic of text and conversation (Taylor and Van Every 2000, Taylor 1999) and the empowerment process definition (Tengland 2008). In addition the ventriloqual approach (Cooren 2012) is used to identify figures and tensions at the same time as a tensions-centered approach is employed in order to enhance the understanding of the communicative interactivities initiated by the two organizations. A dialectical lens with five approaches to deal with tensions (Seo, Putnam, and Bartunek 2004) is used to explore how tensions are enacted. Thus, tensions – both at the site and at the surface – have been explored. The interest lies in how these tensions reconcile the site and the surface, play into the communicative interactions and contribute to the organizing and the constitution of the organization.

9.2 BioA's and BioB's Communicative Initiatives

The two case organizations choose different approach when intentionally changing their text, that is, initiating structural changes, in order to provide activities for enhanced communication. Hence, Part II in this dissertation is comprised of two chapters (Chapters Five and Six) – one for each organization – focusing on the textual changes that aim to enhance and encourage communicative interactions that contribute to the organizing and the organization itself. Organizational members' appreciation of and views on these attempts are also accounted for.

BioA's communication practitioners developed their way of working with communication from a channel-driven approach to work more strategically with communication and to become business or communication partners with those needing to communicate. Their work initially aimed to enhance knowledge about communication and the relationship between communication and organization with the idea that this approach would enhance organizational communication in general and with that fulfill the organization's overall aim to empower its members. This was done mainly through workshops. Organizational members at all hierarchical levels who were involved in this initiative appreciated the work by the communication practitioners. They perceived that they had a better understanding of the current change process, *Lean*, and they perceived themselves as participating in an empowerment process. The senior managers stated in the interviews that they had a better understanding of the role of organizational communication and that they had become better providers of opportunities for conversations.

BioB decided to use an interactive video website with the aim of enhancing communication between and among all organizational members and, with that, empower members and regain the entrepreneurial spirit that used to characterize BioB. Four videos were launched, one at the time, on the interactive website. These videos focused on the CEO's and other members' narratives about the founding of BioB and its three core values, *Simplicity*, *Business Sense* and *Innovation*.

The idea was that this would lead to communication on the website as well as outside. But the result showed little interactivity on the website and few post-exposure activities. In fact, a comparison between the two questionnaires – one distributed before and the other one after the launch of the website and the videos – shows that the knowledge about the core values decreased during the same time as the interactive video website project. The number of members who stated that they considered the core values in their daily work also decreased.

Few members had seen one or more of the videos, and only 21 comments were posted on the site. However, the members that had interacted on the site stated that they felt more engaged in the communication about the core values, that they had a better understanding of the core values and that they had incorporated the core values in their daily work to a greater extent than before. The members that had seen at least one video were also more positive towards to use of this technology. The focus group conversations revealed that few members were aware of the website's existence and/or the opportunities to interact on the website.

9.3 Coorientation and Empowerment Processes

Adhering to the Montreal School and its CCO perspective means to begin with the perspective that an organization emerges in communication. It is not a product of communication because then […] "we would have to assume that it could exist in the absence of communication, which is absurd" (Taylor and Van Every 2000:104). Local conversations are distanciated and extended in time and space, imbricated, that is, conversation acts are built on one and another and eventually form the organization. Once an organization is given an identity, it is also given authority and can carry out acts through its members/agents. But it is only through its agents that an organization can act; it can never act on its own. Through its agents text can in turn influences conversations, and a recursive relationship between the two is established as they shape one another. Together they form a "self-organizing loop" (Taylor and Van Every 2000:210-211).

When the senior managers at BioA and BioB respectively acted in the name of their organization and decided to carry out changes – the particular changes that are in focus in this dissertation – their intentions were to provide opportunities for conversations, coorientation processes and with that imbrication and on-going changes of the text.

As a result, the analysis of how the two organizations attempted to enhance communication – while aiming to empower their members and encourage participation – is followed by an analysis of whether or not the communicative initiatives provided opportunities for coordinated activities among organizational members. This meant exploring if the textual changes provide opportunities for members to become involved in conversation to the extent that they started to coordinate their work. The challenge is to encourage organizational members to commit to coorientations while also maintaining these activities and processes. It is therefore also of interest to study the settings around these potential coorientation processes. What seems to encourage and facilitate or, instead, hinder coorientations processes in these two organizations? BioB used technology in a way they had not done before and since members did not use the interactive video website as intended, it was of interest to explore the reasons for that.

In BioA I identified a number of instances of coorientations, particularly in the workshops, but also outside in other situations such as, for example, by the assembly line. I also identified traces of past coorientations in interviews with senior managers. These past coorientations were made explicit when I identified figures that senior managers had been ventriloquized by but also were using, that is, ventriloquizing. I was made aware of these figures – one being that communication is vital in organizing processes – through workshops where senior managers learned more about communication, got themselves involved in coorientations and eventually coordinated their work

around this figure. In the interviews senior managers are talking about changes that they had carried out. These changes were results of the managers taking part in the work initiated by the communication practitioners. Some of the managers referred to these workshops, while others acted as if this was something that they had come up with themselves.

Once instances of coorientations were identified in BioA, I followed Kuhn's (2012) suggestion to explore what the circumstances were that lead participants to "tune in" to one another and engage in coorientations. The analysis of the workshops focusing on communication shows that these workshops began with a lecture-like session where participants learned more about communication and the act of communicating. This seems to encourage their interest in communication. Members were then encouraged to reflect on their own view on communication and, thus, become involved in conversation with other participants. Participants were given extensive time to discuss matters of concern.

But it was not only the lecture-like session and the extensive time given to engage in conversations that appeared to encourage participants to "tune in" to one and another. Workshops participants were also encouraged to discuss various matters of concern while being asked to reflect on previous experiences in regards to these matters of concern. In addition they were encouraged to reflect on alternatives in regards to the matter of concern. This seemed to make them reflect more on their own view of the matter but also on their interlocutors' views. Participants ventriloquized a plenum of agencies while also being ventriloquized themselves during these conversations. This is explicitly illustrated when they provided examples of previous successful or less successful communicative activities within their community of practice as well as examples from the overall organizational communication. Another example was from the *Team-twirl* workshop when the assembly line participants were encouraged to share examples of what they thought was/would be the best way to carry out a work task. One participant said that this exercise made her reflect more on her own ideas about how this work task should be carried out, which, in turn, increased her interest in reflecting on her colleagues' ideas once these were shared.

Organizational members "tuned in" to one another as they shared their own views while, at the same time, considering their interactants' view on the matter. Hence, adhering to the ABX model would mean that this was where they reached coorientation and, thus, were able to coordinate their work. The workshop sessions in BioA provided room for sensemaking – in this case a more comprehensive understanding of the role of organizational communication – which facilitated the coorientation process. Consequently, it appears that the circumstances that facilitated the "tuning in" were the opportunities for organizational members to learn more about communication while also being given the time and space to engage in conversations and reflect on related matters. Once participants reached

coorientation and started to coordinate their work, they became ventriloquized with the idea that organizational communication is vital and started to display such a focus. Communication became a figure that ventriloquized the participants to the extent that they seemed to further engage in conversation and also that they ventriloquized this figure and used it to promote communication as vital for the organizing process. The conversations about communication were distanciated and imbricated, which resulted in additional textual changes as the managers – after having attended these workshops – set aside resources for more communication opportunities and decided to make these workshops available to all organizational members.

The senior managers changed their attitude towards communication from looking at communication as common sense – a thing that just happens when needed – to placing communication on their agenda as something that needs time and resources, something that organizations cannot be without. Hence, the work by the communication practitioners led to conversation acts in a complex embeddenes or imbrication, as Taylor and Van Every (2000) refer to it, that changed the text. The management began to see communication as playing an important part in the constitutive process and the text was changed with their decision to invite all organizational members to attend similar workshops focusing on communication. Communication was emphasized throughout the organization and organizational members were given opportunities to become involved in conversations and opportunities for sensemaking, which led to coordinated activities.

These settings that provided opportunities for coorientation processes also provided a basis for empowerment processes. One workshop, for example, featured the CEO's visit to the workshop, and he emphasized his need for the knowledge that the workshop participants possessed about the organization. He urged them to tell him and the management team what they thought about the organization's vision and mission statements and similar. The workshop participants later stated that this made them feel that their work was essential for the organizing process and that they had knowledge that the management needed. The empowerment process continued when the vision and mission statements were presented to the organizational members for comments and adjustments. At this point in time organizational members gained more knowledge about the organization, management's power diminished in that other organizational members contributed to the vision and mission statements and the messages. Not only did organizational members at all hierarchal levels participate in the conversation acts that resulted in the imbrication, but the coorientations also made organizational member aware of how their specific work tasks contributed to the organizing and the organization. Thus, the analysis of these communicative interactions indicates that an empowerment process was taking place.

Although there is no face-to-face conversation between *authority of position* and *authority of expertise* in this example – since the CEO just stopped in for a short visit and the senior managers were not participating in the workshop – it still appears as if this session contributed to diminish the gap between these two authorities through the empowerment process. The analysis confirms the relevance of metaconversation. Metaconversations are considered to be of particular importance for large, knowledge-based organizations (see, for example, Robichaud, Giroux, and Taylor 2004), and as this study suggests, it is also highly relevant for organizations aiming for an empowered and participative workforce, as several world views are joining the conversation to coorient. Hence, organizations need to develop metaconversations that bridge the divisions between communities of practice as well as between hierarchical levels within organizations.

In BioB's communicative initiative, a limited number of comments were posted on the website. Two dialogues were initiated on the website, but they quickly ended, and members never coordinated around the objects of concern that were the focus in these dialogues. As a result few members – none from the assembly line – stated that they had incorporated the core values into their daily work. The coorientations that appeared to have taken place did so as post-exposure activities. Members watched the videos and then engaged in dialogue with their colleagues in their communities of practice. However, most post-exposure activities were comments about the video content that did not lead to coordinated activities.

Overall, the majority of the organizational members did not become involved in conversation and coorientation processes about the core values, according to the results from the questionnaires, the discussions in the focus groups and the individual interviews. A majority of the organizational members also stated – after the incorporation of the website and the launch of the videos – that they did not consider the core values in their daily work. A comparison between the results from the first and the second questionnaires shows that organizational members were less familiar with the core values and worked less according to the core values after the interactive video website project than they did before the launch of the interactive website and the videos. This leads to the question of what happened in the organization during the time of the launch of the interactive video website and why this initiative resulted in so few instances of coorientations.

The technology itself did not appear to be the main obstacle. There are at least two characteristics that suggest that this initiative could lead to instances of coorientation. The first characteristic is that the website where the videos were launched provided opportunities to interact, although it did not necessarily occur in real time. The second characteristic is that the videos focused on organizational members' narratives. Narratives are central

in the constitutive process as they reflect the interplay between conversation and text (see, for example, Robichaud, Giroux, and Taylor 2004). Hence, these narratives had the potential to work as metaconversations, used to facilitate the translation of the text into the various communities of practice and thereby contribute to eventually changing the text. But the narratives were missing something: Knowledge about the organization's current situation as well as future plans and vision facilitates and encourages members' action. The videos content did not include BioB's vision, which seemed to be especially important during the particularly turbulent times when this project was implemented. This was even something that members requested in their comments on the website.

Still, rather than the characteristics of the technology and the content, there seem to be other reasons why this communicative initiative did not fulfill its purpose. Material obstacles were for example not considered such as the fact that members in the assembly line have limited access to computers.

Organizational members were also not used to communicating using this type of technology, and they were not helped to "forget" their "remembered routines" (Kuhn 2012:555). The flagship representing BioB's communication culture was the regular town hall meeting, and with a charismatic leader, members enjoyed attending these meetings. But the launch of the interactive website and the videos was announced via email and the intranet, although as many as 74 percent of the 147 members who answered the second questionnaire stated that they had received information about the core values at town hall meetings. Members were not reminded to change their routines and thus forgot about the website and the videos and some members were never even made aware of the website or the videos' existence.

Another obstacle that hinder the use of the website was that some of the members that knew about the website were ventriloquized by a figure that hindered them from becoming interested in the core values. This figure was the idea that previous efforts to encourage the implementation of the core values in the daily work had failed or at least not had clear endings.

A final obstacle concerns the turbulent times that the organization experienced throughout the time that the interactive website project was implemented. Few members were interested in the core values, as they were more concerned with whether or not they are being made redundant or about the effects of a potential sale of the organization. The internal communication manager who was in charge of the interactive video website project was even made redundant around the time when the fourth and last video was launched.

These may also be the reasons why focus group participants suggested that if the videos are to be used in the future they should contain content showing how various departments work or the results of changes at a

particular department or community of practice. Focus group participants also suggested that the videos may be used to introduce new members of the management board. These suggestions align with previous findings stating that video comprised of simple content and focusing on ordinary people are more likely to generate user engagement (Shifman 2012). But this is in contrast with the statements by the few members who have posted comments on the interactive video website. These members stated that they were more familiar with the core values and consider them in their daily work. These members were also more positive towards the use of the website and appreciated the opportunities for interactivity. This supports the indications that the characteristics of the interactive video website may not be the factors that influence instances of coorientations.

The few instances of coorientations, in the form of post-exposure activities, resulted in empowerment processes among only a handful of BioB's organizational members, not even among members of a whole community of practice, and this change did not seem to be lasting since focus group participants did not confirm that they had fully incorporated the core values into their daily work. Hence, these few instances of coorientations and empowerment processes did not have an impact on BioB's organization as a whole. The aim to enhance communication between all organizational members was not fulfilled, the majority of the members did not participate in empowerment processes, participation did not increase and the organization did not regain the entrepreneurial spirit.

9.4 Extending Theoretical Frameworks

Instances of coorientations prove to be essential for empowerment processes. Empowerment processes need at least two actors who interact in regards to an object of concern. Although the empowerment process model indicates the activities involved in empowering, it shows significant shortcomings when questions turn to *how* these activities change the authority relations between the interactants. An extension of this model is therefore suggested. Based on the Montreal School's conversation-text relationship, the empowerment process model can be extended to emphasize the coorientation process and pay attention to the relationship between conversation and text and how these participate in the construction of authority in empowering processes. Thus, it can enhance the understanding of how the authority relationships change and are reconstructed. Making communication the constitutive force in the empowerment process illustrates how the text influences the construction of the authority relationships, the interactants' sensemaking and their coordinating activities, which are essential for the empowerment process.

This act also extends the Montreal School's theoretical framework because, unlike the Montreal School, the empowerment process model focused on the power relationships between managers and subordinates and emphasizes the need for material, social and linguistic variations between the interactants. Hence, the empowerment process model acknowledges that organizational members are not equally capable of discursively constructing the organization and highlights the importance of a person (or group) A supporting another person (or group) B. From the Montreal School's CCO perspective, adhering to this extended theoretical framework provides an opportunity to explore the process through which organizational members may be empowered. Combining and extending the two frameworks, I accentuate the communication-power relationship. Empowerment processes require instances of coorientations in regards to the text and to the authority relations, but how each of these is comprised is determined by practice and established interactively. This is in line with Taylor and Robichaud's (2004) argument that an analyst can never predetermine the object of concern because that will influence the outcome and fail to capture the dynamics of the sensemaking interactions.

In the empirical material this is illustrated, for example, through the element of BioA's CEO's narrative about the current opportunities and challenges BioA was confronting and the organization's need for its members to contribute with their knowledge and expertise, which enhanced members' understanding of the text and that their work tasks contributed to this text, the organization. In this action, senior managers share knowledge about the organization with subordinates. After the CEO's narrative subordinates were encouraged to become involved in conversations about the text. The analysis of the empirical material further examines this process when members were given the opportunity to engage in conversation about their roles and work assignments while also contributing to the formation of vision and mission statements: Senior managers shared power with subordinates. These actions enhanced subordinates understanding of how they may contribute to the organizing process while also finalizing the extension of these members' responsibilities. This was also an illustration of how this organization aimed to work out the contrast of sources of authorities, that is, the gap between *authority of position* and *authority of expertise*.

9.5   Endemic & Ubiquitous Tensions

Once instances of coorientations had been identified and analyzed in BioA and I had come to the conclusion that there were only few instances of coorientations in BioB, I continued to further explore the communicative initiatives and how they contributed to the communicative constitution of the

two organizations. This was done by exploring how tensions emerged and were enacted by organizational members. Analyses of the situated performances, which were part of the textual change initiatives, illustrate how tensions – be they inherent and "performed into existence" (Cooren et al. 2013:7) or coproduced in the interaction – played into the situated performances. The analysis also focuses on understanding how tensions influence participation.

Two primary oppositional tensions were identified and put forth: the *Multivocal – Univocal Dialectic* and the *Conversation – Text Dialectic,* as I found that these were directly linked to the tensions that emerged in BioA and BioB and that had an impact on the coorientation, empowerment and participatory processes.

The two primary oppositional tensions are not mutually exclusive but, rather, interdependent. They may, for example, both be linked to change and stability because conversations represent change and texts represent stability in the *Conversation – Text Dialectic* while the univocal may represent stability and multivocal may represent change in the *Multivocal – Univcoal Dialectic*.

The ventriloqual approach was used to identify figures that clashed and caused tensions, and the dialectical lens with the five strategy approaches was used to analyze how organizational members in both organizations handle tensions. In the work to enact tensions organizational members use various strategies, and each of the five strategy categories were used at one time or another. The analysis indicates that the most successful outcomes in regards to the organizational process occurred when members attempted to transform tensions into a new perspective or when members searched to connect the oppositional tensions and draw energy from the two.

The analysis shows that tensions have an impact on the organization, no matter if they are attended to or not. In situations where tensions are not attended to, the most common reason is that members do not have the opportunity to coorient and coordinate their activities. Sometimes this means that members do not recognize the tensions and may not even reflect on the consequences. The communication ambassador's story about how senior management distributes 50-60 slides – covering a management meeting about BioA's current situation and future plans – to managers and expects them to present this to their subordinates in 15 minutes is an example of a tension that impacts the organizing process although no one reflects on it. It was not until this communication ambassador attends the *Message testing and Message integration* workshop that she realized that the management's act had an impact on the organizing because members would coorient around different objects of concern or not at all.

Other times members were made aware of the consequences, but they were not able to identify the source. An example of this is the manager's story about how he struggled to get members from the assembly line to

engage in conversations about how to develop their work tasks. He knew that they had many ideas on how to improve the line, but once they met to discuss improvements he was the only one talking. As in the previous example, it was not until he participated in one of the workshops aiming to enhance the understanding of the constitutive power of communication that he realized that it was the change of environment that hindered the members from participating. In both cases, tensions impacted the organizing process.

Apart from tensions linked to specific situations and or circumstances in each organization there were also tensions that were linked to the empowerment process initiative. Since many world views needed to be considered and power was at stake, the object of concern had a polemic edge and tensions were endemic in empowerment processes. For example, through the empowerment process organizational members may get more responsibility but not more time or authority to handle these responsibilities. Ciulla (2004) refers to this as *bogus* empowerment, which is the opposite to *authentic* empowerment where members not only get more responsibility but also the necessary tools to handle their new situation. Related research furthermore suggests that empowering organizational members often leads to that members who feel and act empowered tend to voice their opinion more but they are less likely to consider their co-workers perspectives; hence, the *paradox of representation* arise. This paradox was not found in this study; rather, the more empowered members felt, the more they tended to voice their communities of practice's perspective. As a whole, the empowerment process can have some unpredictable results.

9.6 Coorientation, Empowerment Processes, Tensions and Participation – Reflexive and Recursive Relationships

Tensions play a significant role in the constitution of organizations no matter how much or little attention they are given. This dissertation shows that tensions are powerful agents of change in a number of ways. Tensions may contribute with new insights, and they appear to be more propulsive than what others have previously argued. If tensions are given room to be acted on in the form of sensemaking and coorientation processes by members who perceive themselves as being empowered, tensions tend to encourage and generate extensive member engagement and participation and, thus, promote organizing while further empowering interactants. This results in increased interactions and coorientations processes where tensions are the object of concern. Thus, it appears that coorientation and empowerment processes, tensions and participation form a "self-organizing loop," just as with the conversation and text dialectic.

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Take, for example, the conversations between the communication ambassadors in BioA – who at the time perceived themselves as being empowered – when they realized the importance and the challenge of introducing their new roles to their colleagues. The more potential tensions that were identified and coproduced, the more these communication ambassadors participated in the conversation about how to enact these tensions, and the empowerment process was enhanced.

The focus group sessions at BioB provide other examples of this. For example, when members from the assembly line where asked to engage in conversations about the interactive video website and the core values, these members stated that they enjoyed being asked for their opinion. They engaged in an intense conversation and started to identify a number of tensions, which became their object of concern in their conversations. They came up with suggestions on how to enact these tensions while also beginning an empowerment process because – as they stated themselves – they started to feel comfortable and confident that they could carry out the changes that they suggested for their community of practice. This illustrate that tensions are not just something that should be brought under control and exposed for management, tensions can also produce coorientation, empowerment, innovation and order.

9.7 Conclusion

In this dissertation I have accounted for how two organizations emphasized communication while aiming to empower organizational members and increase participation. The aim was never to compare the two organizations but, rather, to study different ways of emphasizing communication. However, throughout the process I realize that some comparisons have been made. Here I put forth three important findings from this dissertation, one comparison and two more general conclusions.

First, the communicative initiative in BioA was comprised of instances of both coorientations and empowerment processes and, thus, contributed to the communicative constitution of the organization. BioA's communicative initiative provided examples of how the contrast of sources of authority, that is, the gap between *authority of position* and *authority of expertise* is worked out in practice. In BioB, however, there were only a handful of instances of coorientations and empowerment processes. Since these did not contribute to overall textual changes, the communicative initiative did not contribute to an overall communicative constitution of BioB.

Second, I acknowledge that managers and subordinates are not equally capable of discursively constructing the organization. Thus I accentuated the

communication-power relationship by combining two theoretical frameworks and extending each. The empowerment process model and the Montreal School's CCO perspective with the conversation - text relationship inform each other, and together they illustrate how the coorientation process and the text and conversation relationships participate in the construction of authority while emphasizing the need for material, social and linguistic variations between the interactants.

Third, tensions are powerful agents of change, and they contribute to organizing processes, no matter if they are attended to or not. Tensions seem to promote change and generate ideas in environments where empowerment processes are involved – or where members act as empowered members – and opportunities are given to engage in conversation. They seem to participate in a reflexive and recursive relationship between coorientations, empowerment processes, participation and tensions. This means that organizational members that are given opportunities to engage in conversation while perceiving themselves as participating in an empowerment process or act as empowered members tend to actively search for and identify tensions, transcending these or search for ways to seek energy from oppositional forces. With more tensions to coorient around, empowered members further engage in conversations and coordinated activities and with further conversations more tensions tend to emerge – inherent or coproduced. Under these circumstances, tensions encourage further empowerment processes, engagement and participation. It becomes a self-organizing loop, just as with the conversation and text relationships.

9.8 Suggestions for future research

In an environment where tensions are endemic and ubiquitously present while also being important agents of change, I would like to highlight the findings from this study that indicate a reflexive and recursive relationship between coorientation, empowerment, tensions and participation. However, since this study only indicates this, I urge scholars to further explore this possible reflexive and recursive relationship as well as how tensions contribute to the communicative constitution of organizations.

The continually increasing interest for using technology advancements for organizational communication makes it relevant to turn to the result from the study at BioB. Many contemporary organizations attempt to leverage this and similar technologies. At first sight the results seem to confirm previous findings stating that videos comprised of simple content and focusing on ordinary people are more likely to generate user engagement than complex content. However, when further exploring the data from the BioB study it

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seems that there are other reasons why the interactive video website did not contribute to enhance communication between organizational members and encourage empowerment and participatory processes. Hence, it may be of interest to further explore whether the use of an interactive video website might have the potential to become more successful if such initiative is guided by simplicity, that is, beginning with concrete and simple videos before moving on to complex and fuzzy topics, or if it is that circumstances – such as material artifacts in the form of for example members' access to the technology, consideration of the communication culture and other causes not related to the technology itself – have more to do with how the technology is leveraged and used in organizations.

The CCO perspective has been criticized for treating managers and subordinates as being equally able to contribute to the organizing process (Cloud 2005). This dissertation illustrates the unequal balance in regards to communication-power between these two groups both theoretically – through the empowerment process – and practically – through the examples of the situated performances. Therefore I join Heather M. Zoller in her call for CCO scholars to consider engaging in further theorizing the communication-power relationship (Zoller 2014).

As have been mentioned and also will be accounted for in the epilogue, BioA and BioB were selected for their management boards' unique views on communication, which indicates that this is not a commonly shared view among organizations' management boards. Hence, I encourage studies asking how management boards in various organizations view organizational communication and empirical studies focusing on how management put their communicative strategies into practice.

9.9 Suggestions for practice

Over the years the empowerment trend has been reoccurring. Swedish organizations have worked with democratic, participatory and empowerment processes since the mid-twentieth century, more or less successfully. One argument for why these processes have not been successful in a Swedish cultural setting is that although Swedish organizations have little need to avoid uncertainty, and with small power distances (Hofstede 1980), Swedish organizational cultures have been described as being collectivistic in comparison to the more individualistic Anglo-Saxon organizational culture, hence with little interest for individual power. However, contemporary empowerment processes may be more successful in a Swedish setting since focus often is on the group level – a community of practice for example – and not necessarily on the individual. This appears to be the case in BioA.

Hence, an empowering process may be a successful attempt to aim for a balance between change and stability and respond to challenges from globalization and technology advancements. But a prerequisite for a successful empowerment process seems to be that organizational members are aware of the constitutive power of communication. Multiple opportunities for communication need to be provided where members can involve in conversation about the organization's vision and mission, specific work tasks and responsibilities. Dialogue is necessary for members to be able to coordinate their work.

The results indicate that tensions need attention, as they play a significant role in the constitution of organizations. Tensions are endemic and ubiquitously present in contemporary organizations and they play into the organizing process whether they are attended to or not. These tensions may be inherent, produced or reproduced and may take the form as contradictions, ironies, paradoxes or double binds. If organizational members are given opportunities to get involved in dialogue with each other, the chances are that tensions will be given more focus, and most importantly, be handled more in-depth.

This study confirm previous research stating that oppositional tensions are best managed either through *transcendence,* that is, oppositional tensions are transformed into a new reformulated whole or through *connection,* that is, oppositional tensions are respected and privileged (Putnam 2013, Seo, Putnam, and Bartunek 2004). By providing situations as well as time for conversation acts among organizational members, the chances are greater that tensions will be explicitly considered in instances of coorientations and, thus, have – in the eyes of the organizational members – a positive influence on the constitution of the organization.

In this dissertation the fundamental organizing nature of communication is emphasized and, with that, the importance of giving room to tensions in the conversations. Tensions are powerful agents of change, and they may provide new insights and appear – if given room to be acted on – to encourage organizational members engagement and participation in the organizing process. Tensions even seem to encourage empowerment processes among organizational members. By not considering tensions the organizing process will likely take an unexpected turn and lead to an unexpected or unwanted outcome because even though tensions may not always lead to indecision – as Cooren et al. (2013) confirm in their study – tensions do constitute the daily realities.

This study suggests that previous change processes that have not had an explicit ending might ventriloquize organizational members in such a way that they develop a resistant attitude towards change. I therefore suggest that all change processes should have an explicit ending, no matter if they were

successful or not. It may even be wise to celebrate; either there is a positive outcome worth celebrating, or there is an unsuccessful change and it is time to celebrate that the organization has come to realize this and has decided to leave the change behind.

Even for such a change process as *Lean*, where the idea is that the change process will be part of the organization as long as the organization exist, a never-ending change, the initiative itself should have an explicit ending. Scholars and practitioners have emphasized this before, but it needs to be emphasized again.

Another practical outcome that the dissertation put forth concerns the uses of technology for organizational communication. If an organization wants to use technology to communicate in a way that has not been done before, it is crucial to focus on how organizational members are made aware of this technology. Also, there cannot be any structural obstacles that hinder some members from accessing the technology. Organizations should consider its communication culture when planning to implement new communication technologies.

9.10 Epilogue

The two organizations participating in this study were selected because of their unique focus on communication. Senior management at both organizations considered communication to be vital in the organizing process. However, with a new management board at each organization, neither of them continued with the communication efforts that were in focus in this study. This indicates that we still have far to go before practice considers communication as vital in organizing processes and the organization as a whole.

BioA
BioA got a new CEO shortly after this research project was completed. He did not share the idea that communication and organization are recursively interdependent and mutually constitutive but he let the head of communication stay on the management board. The communication practitioners no longer had the mandate to carry out their work as business or communication partners. Hence, the Head of Business Communication and one of the communication practitioners left the organization while the communication strategist – the one who had led the development of *Leading through Communication* – moved to a new position and stayed with the organization for another couple of years, still using and further developing the communication strategy process.

BioB

The head of internal communication who was responsible for the interactive video website project at BioB was made redundant in the spring of 2010 and the new head of communications – the head of both internal and external communication who had been appointed a couple of months before – did not feel ownership with the interactive video website project. This was a challenge for the research project in that it made it difficult for us to publish the second and last questionnaire and also made the focus group sessions challenging. These challenges indicated that the new head of communication's interest in the interactive video website was low; she had her focus elsewhere. Considering BioB's overall organizational challenges, it was understandable that she did not focus on the interactive video website. BioB got a new CEO shortly after I had carried out the focus groups sessions. This CEO only stayed with the organization for a couple of months, which indicated that the organization was still going through turbulent times. BioB was finally bought by a larger bio-medical organization in 2011.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1: BioA Overview of collected material

Sammanställning av insamlat material

BioA

Intervjuer

Business partner och vår kontaktperson	061211	45 min
Kommunikationsstrateg	061211	61 min
Projektledare för Lean	061204	61 min
Chef	070117	68 min
Chef	070117	49 min
Fabrikschef	070117	51 min
Fabrikschef	070117	71 min
Kommunikationschef	061211	72 min
Fabrikschef	Juni 06	45 min
Projektledare för Lean	Juni 06	35 min
Vice fabrikschef	Juni 06	30 min

Observationer

Workshop 1 (av totalt 3) inom kommunikationsprocessen "Att leda med kommunikation"	Kommunikationsstrateg respektive business partner och vår kontaktperson	060529
Workshop 2 (av totalt 3) inom kommunikationsprocessen "Att leda med kommunikation"	Kommunikationsstrateg respektive business partner och vår kontaktperson	060607
Workshop 3 (av totalt 3) inom kommunikationsprocessen "Att leda med kommunikation"	Kommunikationsstrateg respektive business partner och vår kontaktperson	060612

"Lagsnurra" (1 av 2 + uppföljning)	Extern konsult och vår kontaktperson	061212
"Lagsnurra" (1 av 2 + uppföljning)	Extern konsult och vår kontaktperson	061213
Uppföljning av "lagsnurra"	Extern konsult och vår kontaktperson	070227
Workshop för kommunikationsambassa dörer inom kommunikationsprocesse n "Att leda med kommunikation"	Kommunikationsstrateg respektive business partner och vår kontaktperson	070119
Workshop för chefer inom kommunikationsprocesse n "Att leda med kommunikation"	Kommunikationsstrateg respektive business partner och vår kontaktperson	070515

Möte

Projektmöte.	Kommunikationschef & våra kontaktpersoner	HT2005
Projektmöte.	Kommunikationschef, kommnikationsstrateg respektive business partner och våra kontaktpersoner	mars 06
Projektmöte.	Kommunikationschef, kommnikationsstrateg respektive business partner och våra kontaktpersoner samt projektledare för Lean	060505
Projektmöte.	Kommnikationsstrateg respektive business partner och våra kontaktpersoner samt projektledare för Lean	061011

Enkät

77 besvarade enkäter	Operatörer, gruppchefer och service tekniker	061204 070115 070427 070428

Appendix 2: BioA Interview guide (Managers)

Intervjufrågor till chefer

Bakgrundsfrågor
1   Hur länge har du jobbat på BioA? Med vad? Vilken roll har du i dag?
2   Hur många organisationsförändringar har du varit med om?

Bakgrund till förändringen
3   Vad var målet med förändringen?
4   Vems var initiativet?
5   Det finns många som ser förändringar som hotfulla – hur ser du på det? (hot internt eller externt)

Kommunikation om förändringen
6   Vad var ledningens viktigaste budskap om förändringen?

7   Vilket var ditt viktigaste budskap till medarbetarna?

8   Upplevde du att ledningen och cheferna gick ut med ett gemensamt budskap (ej detsamma som att de använde samma ord eller samma OH-bilder, utan snarare att de var eniga om själva kärnan i informationen).

9   Fick du själv trovärdig och meningsfull information om förändringen?

10 Fick du tillgång till denna information i tillräckligt god tid?

11 Var du själv negativ eller tveksam till förändringen? Om ja, vad gjorde du för att inte hamna i kollisionskurs med ledningen (dvs. för att hantera situationen)?

12 Hur förberedde du dig inför kommunikationen med din personal (dvs. frågan ska ge svar på om ip. använde informationsmaterial från ledningen/informationsavdelningen eller själv formulerade om och anpassade informationen efter mottagarna och hur ett ev. mötet planerades)?

13 Berätta hur du informerade din närmaste personal om förändringen (vilka kanaler valdes etc.).

14 Tog du initiativ till en diskussion med personalen om betydelsen av förändringen? Berätta vad som hände under mötet (Vad hände?)

15 Hur reagerade personalen på din information? Vad ville personalen ha mer information om? Vad ville personalen diskutera?

16 Vad upplevde du som särskilt besvärligt i kommunikationen med personalen (ge några exempel)?

17 Vilket ansvar har medarbetarna att själva söka efter information?

18 Hur skulle du vilja beskriva det allmänna kommunikationsklimatet på företaget (den emotionella tonen – öppet, slutet, vänligt, avslappnat, formellt etc.)?

Kommunikations-/informationsavdelningens roll

19 Vilken roll har kommunikations-/informationsavdelningen haft i förändringsprocessen? Vilken roll anser du att de bör ha?

20 Vilket stöd har du fått från kommunikations-/informationsavdelningen? Vad har du fått hjälp med? Vad saknar du?

Kunskap och lärande i relation till förändringen

21 Vad behöver du veta/kunna under och efter en förändring för att kunna kommunicera med dina medarbetare? Berätta om något kritiskt tillfälle vid kommunikationen av en organisationsförändring.

22 Vad skulle du vilja ha mer kunskap om när det gäller kommunikation i förändringsprocesser?
   – Hur man förklarar på ett övertygande sätt
   – Hur man presenterar ett material vid ett möte
   – Hur man på bästa sätt använder audiovisuella hjälpmedel, t.ex. PowerPoint och webbsidor?
   – Hur man leder ett stormöte?
   – Hur man genomför ett s.k. svårt samtal (t.ex. att någon ska sägas upp)?

23 Har ni något kunskapsutbyte på företaget mellan chefer om deras erfarenheter av kommunikation i förändringsprocesser? När sker dessa och hur ser de ut?

24 Vad har du som chef lärt dig om kommunikation, som du kan använda i ditt fortsatta arbete?

Appendix 3: BioA Interview guide (Communication Practitioners)

Bakgrundsfrågor
- Hur länge har du jobbat på X-företaget? Med vad? Vilken roll har du i dag?
- Hur många organisationsförändringar har du varit med om?

Bakgrund till förändringen
- Vad var målet med förändringen X?
- Vems var initiativet?
- Det finns många som ser förändringar som hotfulla – hur ser du på det? (hot internt eller externt)

Gemensamma inledande frågor
- Fråga om informatörens roll i organisationen. (Ex. om denna är medlem i ledningsgruppen, avdelningens sammansättning, vad man arbetar med rent konkret.)
- Upplever du att du har varit med och drivit förändringen framåt på något sätt?
- Vilken var din primära roll i samband med förändringen? (handlar det om att vara språkrör, rådgivare producent, att vara med och aktivt driva förändringen osv).

Arbetssätt och modeller för kommunikation i förändringsprocesser
- Hur gick ni tillväga när ni skulle göra den här förändringen?
- Använde ni någon kommunikationsplan eller strategi för att hjälpa till i när ni skulle planera och genomföra förändringen?
- I så fall, berätta om hur ni arbetade ni fram det här dokumentet? Hur använde ni det sedan?
- Har ni gjort några utvärderingar av informationsavdelningens jobb i något annat projekt eller förändring? Hur har ni i så fall använd den kunskapen?
- Hur upplever ni att era kommunikationsverktyg har fungerat? Berätta om exempel på saker som fungerat. (Workshops, föreläsningar, modeller, anpassa efter resp. företag)

- Kan du ge exempel på någon problematisk situation som ni gått igenom? Var ni t ex tvungna att förändra er sättet ni hade planerat att kommunicera på/kommunikationsplanen?
- Vilken roll spelar praktisk erfarenhet och kunskap i förhållande till teoretisk sådan?
- Finns det någon person på avdelningen som har som särskild uppgift att inhämta ny kunskap/uppdatera sig på området?

Informatörens arbetssätt
- Hur såg/ser arbetsgången ut i kontakten mellan infoavdelning, chefer och medarbetare under förändringen? Vem rapporterar till vem?
- Kan du ge något exempel på en situation där du känt att du suttit mitt emellan ledningen och medarbetarna och varit tvungen att ta ställning för den ena parten?
- Hur tror du att organisationen har inhämtat historia och kunskap?

Intern och extern kommunikationskompetens
- Att kommunicera om en stor förändring ställer ju ganska stora krav på att informatörerna har mycket kunskap och information om både förändringen och om hur man kommunicerar en förändring. Hur upplever du detta? Var du väl rustad när ni inledde arbetet med förändringen?
- Tar ni tillvara på tidigare kunskap som finns inom organisationen på något sätt? Hur använder man gamla erfarenheter?
- Föregås förändringsprojekt av utbildning för chefer? I så fall, hur är dessa kurser upplagda (vilka moment består de av?)
- Hur använder ni exempelvis webbsidor, e-post, diskussionsgrupper som stöd till cheferna inför en organisationsförändring? (IKT-medier)
- Brukar ni använda er av konsulter för att planera och genomföra kommunikationen vid en organisationsförändring? I så fall, vilka är era erfarenheter av detta samarbete med konsulter?
- Till vilka uppgifter används konsulterna?

Informatörens status i organisationen
- Många tycker att det är viktigt att få ta eget ansvar och att man får genomföra sina arbetsuppgifter på det sätt man själv tycker är bäst. Vad tycker du?
- Ibland kan det ju hända att man hamnar på kollisionskurs med exempelvis ledningen inom företag, det kan ju handla om så enkla saker som att ledningen och info uppfattar något olika. Har du varit med om något sådant?

- Om det skulle vara så att det finns vissa frågor som du anser vara viktiga för infoavdelningen i ert jobb, tycker du att det går bra att prata om detta med dina chefer? Lyssnar de på dig?
- Hur skulle du vilja beskriva det allmänna kommunikationsklimatet på företaget? (den emotionella tonen – öppet, slutet, vänligt, avslappnat, formellt, etc.)

Appendix 4: BioA Questionnaire

Mittuniversitetet
MID SWEDEN UNIVERSITY

Enkätundersökning

Kommunikationen om Lean på ▉

Kontaktpersoner

Mats Heide
Mats.Heide@msm.lu.se
0730-79 95 67
Lunds universitet

Therese Monstad
monstad@jmk.su.se
0708-12 83 86
Stockholms universitet

Kommunikationen om Lean på █████

Den här enkäten är sammanställd av forskare vid Mittuniversitetet, Lunds universitet och Stockholms universitet. Syftet är att undersöka kommunikationen om Lean på ██ Enkäten är samtidigt en del i ett större projekt som handlar om kommunikation vid förändringar. I projektet ingår även ████ och ████.

Dina svar kommer att behandlas med **sekretess** och presenteras **anonymt**.

---

1. Hur väl skulle du kunna beskriva målet med förändringen till Lean-production på ditt företag för någon annan?
   Sätt **bara ett** kryss:

Mycket bra	Ganska bra	Dåligt	Inte alls
❏	❏	❏	❏

2a. Hur delaktig känner du att du har varit i beslutsprocessen om förändringen?
   Sätt **bara ett** kryss:

Mycket delaktig	Ganska delaktig	Lite delaktig	Inte delaktig alls
❏	❏	❏	❏

2b. Hur delaktig känner du att du är i beslutsprocessen om *hur* Lean införs?
   Sätt **bara ett** kryss:

Mycket delaktig	Ganska delaktig	Lite delaktig	Inte delaktig alls
❏	❏	❏	❏

3. Hur öppet upplever du att ledningen har redovisat följderna av förändringen?
   Sätt **bara ett** kryss:

Stor öppenhet	Ganska stor öppenhet	Liten öppenhet	Ingen öppenhet alls
❏	❏	❏	❏

4. Anser du att ledningen har kommunicerat på ett trovärdigt sätt?
   Sätt **bara ett** kryss:

Mycket Trovärdigt	Ganska trovärdigt	Lite trovärdigt	Inte trovärdigt alls
❏	❏	❏	❏

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5. Hur nödvändig tycker du att förändringen har varit att genomföra för företaget?
Sätt **bara ett** kryss:

Mycket nödvändig	Ganska nödvändig	Ganska onödig	Mycket onödig
❏	❏	❏	❏

6. Hur får du information om förändringen?
Kryssa för **alla** de alternativ som gäller för dig:

a.   muntligt från närmaste chef   ❏
b.   muntligt från VD   ❏
c.   via intranät   ❏
d.   skriftlig företagsinformation   ❏
e.   vid arbetsplatsträffar   ❏
f.   ████████   ❏
g.   ████████   ❏
h.   från kollegor   ❏
i.   från facket   ❏
j.   från massmedierna   ❏
k.   annat, vad?   ....

7. Hur skulle du helst vilja få information om förändringen?
Ange **enbart ett** alternativ:

a.   muntligt från närmaste chef   ❏
b.   muntligt från VD   ❏
c.   via intranät   ❏
d.   skriftlig företagsinformation   ❏
e.   vid arbetsplatsträffar   ❏
f.   ████████   ❏
g.   ████████   ❏
h.   från kollegor   ❏
i.   från facket   ❏
j.   från massmedierna   ❏
k.   annat, vad?   ....

8. I vilken utsträckning känner du dig nöjd eller missnöjd med det sätt du får/har fått information på? Sätt **bara ett** kryss:

Mycket nöjd   Ganska nöjd   Ganska missnöjd   Mycket missnöjd

❑   ❑   ❑   ❑

9. Varför känner du dig nöjd/missnöjd?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………...

…………………………………………………………………………………………………...

10. Tycker du att du **fått veta** vad förändringen kommer att innebära …
Sätt **ett kryss på varje rad** i tabellen:

	I stor utsträckning	I ganska stor utsträckning	I ganska liten utsträckning	Inte alls
… för dig personligen och ditt arbete				
… för din avdelning/enhet				
… för företaget som helhet				

Egen kommentar:

…………………………………………………………………………………………………...

…………………………………………………………………………………………………...

11. Upplever du själv mest fördelar eller mest nackdelar med förändringen?
Sätt **bara ett** kryss:

Mest fördelar   Vissa fördelar   Vissa nackdelar   Mest nackdelar

❑   ❑   ❑   ❑

12. Hur skulle du vilja beskriva **kommunikationen** om förändringen?
Bedöm kommunikationen efter motsatsparen nedan. Sätt ett kryss i den ruta på varje rad som bäst motsvarar din uppfattning.

	Mycket		Varken eller		Mycket	
Täta kontakter	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	Få kontakter
Konkreta budskap	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	Abstrakta budskap
Dialog och samtal	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	Envägskommunikation
Information som förklaras	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	Information utan förklaringar
Upprepning av information	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	Information som inte upprepas
Personlig kommunikation	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	Opersonlig kommunikation
Präglad av närhet	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏	Präglad av distans

13. Vilken betydelse har dialog och samtal för att du ska förstå vad förändringen leder till?
Sätt ett kryss på varje rad.

Dialog och samtal …	Mycket stor betydelse	Ganska stor betydelse	Ganska liten betydelse	Ingen betydelse alls
… med kolleger	❏	❏	❏	❏
… med min närmaste chef	❏	❏	❏	❏
… med ██████ ████ och/eller ████ ████	❏	❏	❏	❏
… med ledningen	❏	❏	❏	❏

14. Har du kunnat diskutera förändringen tillräckligt …
    Sätt ett kryss på varje rad.

Diskutera tillräckligt	Stämmer mycket bra	Stämmer ganska bra	Stämmer knappast	Stämmer Inte alls
… med kolleger	❏	❏	❏	❏
… med min närmaste chef	❏	❏	❏	❏
… med ███████ ████████ och/ eller ████████ ████████	❏	❏	❏	❏
… med ledningen	❏	❏	❏	❏

15. Om du har egna synpunkter om förändringen, framför du dem till din närmaste chef?
    Sätt bara ett kryss:

Ja, ofta	Ja, någon enstaka gång	Nej, aldrig
❏	❏	❏

16. Anser du att din närmaste chef har informerat på ett trovärdigt sätt om förändringen?
    Sätt bara ett kryss:

Mycket trovärdigt	Ganska trovärdigt	Lite trovärdigt	Inte trovärdigt alls
❏	❏	❏	❏

17. Här följer några påståenden om kommunikationen med den närmaste chefen när det gäller förändringsarbetet. Ange för vart och ett av påståendena hur väl du instämmer med det:

	Instämmer helt (1)	(2)	(3)	Instämmer inte alls (4)
Kommunikationen med min närmaste chef är **personlig**.	❏	❏	❏	❏
Det är **mitt ansvar** att ge synpunkter om förändringen.	❏	❏	❏	❏
Jag **uppmuntras** att framföra mina synpunkter.	❏	❏	❏	❏
Mina synpunkter gör **ingen skillnad**.	❏	❏	❏	❏

	Instämmer helt (1)	(2)	(3)	Instämmer inte alls (4)
Min chef **för vidare** mina synpunkter **uppåt** i organisationen.	❏	❏	❏	❏
Min chef ger mig **feedback** om hur det går med mina synpunkter.	❏	❏	❏	❏
Ingen av mina kollegor **framför synpunkter** till chefen.	❏	❏	❏	❏
Jag är rädd för **kritik** om jag framför mina synpunkter.	❏	❏	❏	❏

18. Här följer några påståenden om svårigheter med kommunikationen under förändringen. Ange för vart och ett av påståendena hur väl du instämmer med det:

	Instämmer helt (1)	(2)	(3)	Instämmer inte alls (4)
För lite information	❏	❏	❏	❏
För lite tid att ta till sig den information som finns	❏	❏	❏	❏
För mycket information	❏	❏	❏	❏
Informationen som ges berör inte mig direkt	❏	❏	❏	❏
Informationen som ges är svår att förstå	❏	❏	❏	❏
Brist på möjligheter för dialog och samtal	❏	❏	❏	❏
Möten med många deltagare gör det svårt att diskutera och ställa frågor	❏	❏	❏	❏

19. Här följer några påståenden om hur en arbetsplats kan fungera. I vilken utsträckning instämmer du i påståendena:

	Instämmer helt (1)	(2)	(3)	Instämmer inte alls (4)
Beslut fattas enbart av chefer.	❏	❏	❏	❏
Representanter för ledningen syns sällan.	❏	❏	❏	❏
Jag har stora möjligheter att påverka förändringar.	❏	❏	❏	❏
Medarbetarna har förtroende för cheferna.	❏	❏	❏	❏
Stämningen är kylig.	❏	❏	❏	❏
Det finns ett "vi och dom"-tänkande mellan olika enheter.	❏	❏	❏	❏
Förändringar uppmuntras.	❏	❏	❏	❏
Förändringar innebär oftast ett hot för medarbetarna.	❏	❏	❏	❏

20. Vem anser du **driver** förändringsarbetet?
    Sätt **bara ett** kryss.

a. ❏ VD
b. ❏ min närmaste chef
c. ❏ andra chefer
d. ❏ ███████████ och/eller ███████████
e. ❏ medarbetare
f. ❏ enstaka eldsjälar
g. ❏ facket
h. ❏ annan, vem ………………………………………

21. Lämna gärna övriga kommentarer som inte täckts in av frågorna ovan:

………………………………………………………………………………………………………...

………………………………………………………………………………………………………...

………………………………………………………………………………………………………...

Bakgrundsfrågor

22. Hur länge har du arbetat i företaget?

    ………………….. år

23. Har du arbetat i något annat företag?
    ❏ Ja
    ❏ Nej

24. Vad arbetar du som?
    ❏ maskinoperatör
    annat, nämligen …………………………………………………………..

25. Vilket år är du född?
    ❏ 1940–1959
    ❏ 1960–1979
    ❏ 1980–

26. Är du man eller kvinna?
    ❏ Man
    ❏ Kvinna

27. Vilken högsta skolutbildning har du?
    Sätt bara **ett** kryss.
    ❏ Folkskola, grundskola eller motsvarande
    ❏ Folkhögskola
    ❏ Yrkesutbildning (KY)
    ❏ Gymnasium eller motsvarande
    ❏ Högskola/Universitet

Tack för att du fyllde i enkäten, och på så sätt bidrar till kunskap om kommunikationen om Lean på ▮ och även till forskningen om kommunikation vid förändringar.

Catrin Johansson
och projektgruppen "Kommunikation i förändringsprocesser"

Se mer information om projektet på www.miun.se/komik

Appendix 5: BioB Overview of collected material

Sammanställning av insamlat material

BioB

Intervjuer			**Min**
	VD	Okt 2008	45
	Kommunikationschefen	March 2010	30
	Ansvarig för internkommunikationen	Okt 2009	60
	HR Chef	Maj 2010	33
	Kommunikatör	Okt 2009	60
	Chef	Maj 2010	50

Fokusgrupper			
	Produktionslinjen	18 maj	50
	Produktionslinjen	27 maj	46
	Chefer och mellanchefer	18 maj	65
	Forskning och admin	18 maj	70

Enkät			
280 (62%)	Enkät 1	Okt 2008	
147 (41%)	Enkät 2	Feb/mars 2010	

Projektmöten	Regelbundet	2008-2010	

Observationer			
Regelbundna observationer av interaktiviteten på webbplatsen		2008-2010	

Appendix 6: BioB Cover letter for Questionnaire 1

UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

Uppsala den 2 oktober, 2008

Institutionen för informations-
vetenskap

Department of Information Science

Box 513 SE-751 20 Uppsala
Sweden

Besöksadress/Visiting address:
Ekonomikum (plan 3),
Kyrkogårdsg. 10

Telefon/Phone:
+46 (0)18-471 11 45 Stefan
Hrastinski
+46 (0)18-471 10 18 Therese
Monstad

Telefax/Fax: +46 (0)18 471 78 67

www.dis.uu.se

stefan.hrastinski@dis.uu.se
therese.monstad@dis.uu.se

Enkät om BioBs värderingar
Vi vill genom en webbaserad enkät undersöka din
uppfattning om BioBs värderingar, "enkelhet",
"affärsmässighet" och "nytänkande". Vi är mycket
tacksamma om du avsätter några minuter till att
fylla i enkäten!

Undersökningen är en del i ett forskningsprojekt
som handlar om värderingar och kommunikation i
företag. Projektgruppen består av medarbetare på
BioB, företag X och forskare från Uppsala
universitet.

Enkäten innehåller bakgrundsfrågor om ålder, kön
och utbildning. Dessa frågor är viktiga för att
kunna göra jämförelser mellan grupper. Vi
försäkrar er att alla som svarar förblir anonyma.

Du får gärna kontakta oss med kommentarer och
synpunkter eller om du har frågor om
undersökningen. Ring eller skriv e- post till Stefan
Hrastinski eller Therese Monstad.

Tack för din medverkan!

Appendix 7: BioB Questionnaire number 1

Enkät om BioBs värderingar

Vi vill genom denna enkät undersöka din uppfattning om BioBs värderingar: enkelhet, affärsmässighet och nytänkande. Vi är mycket tacksamma om du avsätter några minuter till att fylla i enkäten.
Enkäten är sammanställd av forskare från Uppsala universitet.

1 Kön

○ Man

○ Kvinna

2 Ålder ☐

3 Vilken utbildningsbakgrund har du?

◉ Grund/folkskola eller motsvarande

○ Gymnasium eller motsvarande

○ Universitet/högskola

4 Hur många år har du arbetat på BioB? ☐

5 Vid vilken enhet arbetar du huvudsakligen?

◉ Supply Chain

○ Medical Affairs

○ Research & Development

○ EMEA - (Sales)

○ Quality Assurance

○ Strategic Marketing

○ Stabsfunktioner (HR, Corporate, Legal, Finance och adm)

6 Nedan följer ett antal påståenden om BioBs värderingar.

	Instämmer inte alls			Neutral			Instämmer till fullo
Jag har god kunskap om BioBs värderingar.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
BioBs värderingar genomsyrar mitt dagliga arbete.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Jag kan beskriva BioBs värderingar för en vän.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Jag arbetar utifrån BioBs värderingar.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Jag kan beskriva BioBs värdering ”enkelhet” för en vän.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Jag kan beskriva BioBs värdering ”affärsmässighet” för en vän.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Jag kan beskriva BioBs värdg”nytänkande” för en vän.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Jag upplever att det är svårt för oss medarbetare att arbeta utifrån BioBs värderingar.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Jag tror att de flesta medarbetare på BioBs känner till företagets värderingar.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Jag tror att BioBs värderingar kan få en positiv inverkan på företagets framtid.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Jag tror att de flesta medarbetare arbetar utifrån BioBs värderingar.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
BioBs värdering ”affärsmässighet” påverkar mitt arbete.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
BioBs värdering ”enkelhet” påverkar mitt arbete.							
BioBs värdering ”nytänkande” påverkar mitt arbete.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	○	○	○		○	○	○

7 Hur har du fått information om BioBs värderingar? (Det är möjligt att välja flera alternativ)

☐ Via stormöten (i matsalen)

☐ Via webfilm

☐ Via intranätet

☐ Via nyhetsbrev

☐ Via epost

☐ Personligen från närmaste chef

☐ Genom workshops

☐ På annat sätt

☐ Jag har inte fått information

8 Hur föredrar du att få information om vad som är aktuellt på BioB? (Rangordna svarsalternativen genom att markera det sätt du helst vill ha information på med siffran 1, det sätt du i andra hand vill ha information på med siffran 2 och så vidare)

Via stormöten (i matsalen)	
Via webfilm	
Via intranätet	
Via nyhetsbrev	
Via epost	
Personligen från närmaste chef	
Genom workshops	
På annat sätt	

Appendix 8: BioB Cover letter for Questionnaire 2

UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

Institutionen för Informatik
och Media

Box 513
SE-751 20 Uppsala

Besöksadress/Visiting address:
Ekonomikum (plan 3),
Kyrkogårdsg. 10

Telefon/Phone:
018-471 11 45 Stefan Hrastinski
018-471 10 18 Therese Monstad

www.im.uu.se

stefan.hrastinski@im.uu.se
therese.monstad@im.uu.se

Uppsala den 17 februari, 2010

Enkät om BioBs värderingar och webbplatsen med filmer.

Vi vill genom den här webbaserade enkäten följa upp din uppfattning
om BioBs värderingar och användningen av webbplatsen med filmer
om BioBs historia och värderingar.

Undersökningen är en del i ett forskningsprojekt som handlar om
internkommunikation i företag.

Syftet med projektet är att samla kunskap hur man kommunicerar
internt i företag. Projektgruppen består av medarbetare på BioB,
företag X och forskare från Uppsala universitet.

Den webbaserade enkäten handlar om BioBs värderingar, "enkelhet",
"affärsmässighet" och "nytänkande" samt om webbplatsen med filmer
om BioBs historia och värderingar. Resultatet är viktigt för er inom
BioB, dels för att få veta vad alla medarbetare tycker, dels för att
kunna förbättra kunskapen om BioBs värderingar, kommunikationen
kring dessa och den interna kommunikationen i allmänhet. Därför har
din medverkan stor betydelse och vi är mycket tacksamma att du
avsätter några minuter till att fylla i enkäten.

Enkäten innehåller också en del bakgrundsfrågor
om ålder, kön och utbildning som brukar finnas med i enkäter. Dessa
frågor är också viktiga att svara på, eftersom vi forskare har stor nytta
av svaren när vi ska göra olika typer av jämförelser mellan grupper.
Vi vet att man kan känna sig identifierad genom de här svaren. Men
vi försäkrar er att ingen obehörig kommer att få ta del av era svar.
Enkätsvaren kommer att sammanställas av forskare vid Uppsala
universitet.

Du får gärna kontakta oss med kommentarer och synpunkter som inte
täcks av enkäten, eller om du har frågor om under-
sökningen, ring eller skriv e-post till: **Stefan Hrastinski** eller
Therese Monstad

Tack för din medverkan!

Appendix 9: BioB Questionnaire number 2

Enkät om BioBs värderingar och webbplatsen med filmer om BioBs historia och värderingar.

Vi vill genom denna enkät följa upp din uppfattning om BioBs värderingar och användningen av webbplatsen med filmer om BioBs historia och värderingar. Vi är mycket tacksamma om du avsätter några minuter till att fylla i enkäten. Enkätsvaren kommer att sammanställas av forskare vid Uppsala universitet. Ingen obehörig kommer att få ta del av dina svar.

Tack på förhand!

Vänliga hälsningar
Stefan Hrastinski, forskare,
Institutionen för informatik och media, Uppsala universitet
Therese Monstad, doktorand
Institutionen för informatik och media, Uppsala universitet

1 Kön

○ Man

○ Kvinna

2 Ålder ☐

3 Vilken utbildningsbakgrund har du?

◉ Grund/folkskola eller motsvarande

○ Gymnasium eller motsvarande

○ Universitet/högskola

4 Hur många år har du arbetat på BioB? ☐

5 Vid vilken enhet arbetar du huvudsakligen?

◉ Supply Chain

○ Medical Affairs

○ Research & Development

○ EMEA - (Sales)

○ Quality Assurance

○ Regulatory Affairs

○ Strategic Marketing

○ Stabsfunktioner (HR, Corporate, Legal, Finance och adm)

○ Project Management

6 Besvarade du den förra enkäten om BioBs värderingar (hösten 2008)?

○ Ja

○ Nej

○ Vet inte

7 Nedan följer ett antal påståenden om BioBs värderingar.

	Instämmer inte alls			Neutral			Instämmer till fullo
Jag har god kunskap om BioBs värderingar.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
BioBs värderingar genomsyrar mitt dagliga arbete.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Jag kan beskriva BioBs värderingar för en vän.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Jag arbetar utifrån BioBs värderingar.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Jag kan beskriva BioBs värdering "enkelhet" för en vän.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Jag kan beskriva BioBs värdering "affärsmässighet" för en vän.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Jag kan beskriva BioBs värdg"nytänkande" för en vän.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Jag upplever att det är svårt för oss medarbetare att arbeta utifrån BioBs värderingar.							
Jag tror att de flesta medarbetare på BioBs känner till företagets värderingar.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Jag tror att BioBs värderingar kan få en positiv inverkan på företagets framtid.							
Jag tror att de flesta medarbetare arbetar utifrån BioBs värderingar.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
BioBs värdering "affärsmässighet" påverkar mitt arbete.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
BioBs värdering "enkelhet" påverkar mitt arbete.							
BioBs värdering "nytänkande" påverkar mitt arbete.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

8   **Har du sett någon/några av webbfilmerna om BioBs historia och värderingar?**

○   Ja

○   Nej

9   **Följande påståenden avser användningen av webbplatsen med filmer om BioBs historia och värderingar.**

	Instämmer inte alls			Neutral			Instämmer till fullo
Jag rekommenderar gärna en kollega att använda webbplatsen med filmerna.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Jag kommer INTE att använda webbplatsen med filmerna i framtiden.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Webbplatsen med filmerna var användbar för att lära sig mer om BioBs historia och värderingar.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Webbplatsen med filmerna är en bra kanal för den interna kommunikationen.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Jag kände mig engagerad i diskussionen kring BioBs historia och värderingar via webbplatsen med filmerna.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Det var givande att kommentera webbfilmerna.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Det kändes ovant att skriva kommentarer via webbplatsen.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Webbfilmerna kändes mer givande när man hade möjlighet att kommentera dem med kollegor via webbplatsen.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Jag kände mig engagerad i diskussionen kring BioBs historia och värderingar via webbplatsen.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Jag upplever att webbfilmerna om BioBs historia och värderingar ledde till en ökad diskussion på jobbet om dessa ämnen.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

10 **Jag gav kommentarer via webbplatsen**

○ Ja

○ Nej

11 **Hur har du fått information om BioBs värderingar? (Det är möjligt att välja flera alternativ)**

○ Via stormöten (i matsalen)

○ Via webbfilm

○ Via intranätet

○ Via nyhetsbrev

○ Via epost

○ Personligen från närmaste chef

○ Genom workshops

○ På annat sätt

○ Jag har inte fått information

12 **Hur föredrar du att få information om vad som är aktuellt på BioB? (Rangordna svarsalternativen genom att markera det sätt du helst vill ha information på med siffran 1, det sätt du i andra hand vill ha information på med siffran 2 och så vidare)**

○ Via stormöten (i matsalen)

○ Via webbfilm

○ Via intranätet

○ Via nyhetsbrev

○ Via epost

○ Personligen från närmaste chef

○ Genom workshops

○ På annat sätt

13   **Här följer några frågor om hur ofta du använder dig av datorer och internet.**

	Aldrig	Minst 1ggr/mån	Flera ggr/mån	Minst 1ggr/vecka	Flera ggr/vecka	Varje dag	Flera ggr varje dag
Hur ofta använder du datorer?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Hur ofta använder du YouTube eller andra webbplatser med videoklipp?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Hur ofta använder du internet på fritiden?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Hur ofta använder du internet på jobbet?	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

14   **Har du ytterligare synpunkter eller kommentarer som rör Bi oBs värderingar generellt och/eller webbplatsen med filmerna om BioBs historia och värderingar?**

…………………………………………………………….

…………………………………………………………….

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Appendix 10: BioB Focus group invitation letter

UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

Institutionen för Informatik
och Media

Box 513
SE-751 20 Uppsala

Besöksadress/Visiting address:
Ekonomikum (plan 3),
Kyrkogårdsg. 10

Telefon/Phone:
018-471 11 45 Stefan Hrastinski
018-471 10 18 Therese Monstad

www.im.uu.se

stefan.hrastinski@im.uu.se
therese.monstad@im.uu.se

Fokusgruppsintervjuer inom ramen för forskningsprojektet om BioBs värderingar och webbplatsen med filmer.

På BioB pågår sedan 2008 ett forskningsprojekt som studerar användandet av webbplatsen med filmer om BioBs historia och värderingar.
Undersökningen är en del i ett forskningsprojekt som handlar om internkommunikation i företag.

Syftet med projektet är att samla kunskap hur man kommunicerar internt i företag. Projektgruppen består av medarbetare på BioB, X och forskare från Uppsala universitet.

Inom ramen för detta forskningsprojekt har BioBs medarbetare givits möjlighet att besvara två webbaserade enkäter som handlat om BioB värderingar och om webbplatsen med filmer om BioBs historia och värderingar.

Nästa steg är genomförandet av fokusgruppsintervjuer. En fokusgruppsintervju går ut på att man samlas i en grupp för att diskutera ett antal teman som presenteras av fokusgruppsledaren, i detta fall en forskare. Under fokusgruppsintervjuerna hos er kommer vi att träffas i en och en halv timme för att diskutera BioBs värderingar och uppfattningen om webbplatsen med filmerna.

Resultatet är viktigt för er inom BioB, dels för att kunna förbättra kunskapen om BioBs värderingar, kommunikationen kring dessa och den interna kommunikationen i allmänhet. Därför har din medverkan stor betydelse och vi är mycket tacksamma att du vill delta i fokusgruppsintervjuerna.

Du får gärna kontakta oss om du har frågor om fokusgruppsintervjuerna eller om undersökningen som helhet, ring eller skriv e-post till: **Stefan Hrastinski** eller **Therese Monstad**

Tack för din medverkan!

Appendix 11: BioB Focus group guide

Agenda:
Kort presentation Therese
Innan vi börjar diskutera temat för dagen tänkte jag berätta hur jag tänkt mig upplägget för dagen
Presentation av deltagare
Bakgrund till projektet
Enkäter och nu fokusgrupper
Syfte med fokusgrupper
Etik/anonym

<u>Teman fokusgrupper:</u>
1. Hur kommunicerar ni vanligtvis inom BioB? (Hur tycker ni att internkommunikationen på BioB borde se ut? Fungerar den bra eller dåligt, enligt er uppfattning? (Här kan de bli många diskussioner o det gäller att hitta ett sätt att relativt snabbt leda in respondenterna på de specifika frågor om videofilmerna).

2. Vilken roll menar ni att webbplatsen spelar i förhållande till andra kommunikationsalternativ?

3. Har ni besökt webbplatsen med filmerna om BioBs historia och värderingar? Om ja, har ni sett någon eller några av filmerna?

4. Vad tyckte ni om filmerna med BioBs historia och värderingar?

5. Kunskap och attitydfrågor
    a) Har filmerna ökat er kunskap om företagets värderingar? Ge exempel

    b) Arbetar ni i större utsträckning utifrån företagets värderingar? Ge exempel

6. Vilka fördelar respektive nackdelar kan ni se/upplever ni med webbplatsen med filmerna? Även om ni inte tyckte att just de här videofilmerna var bra, tror ni att kanalen som sådan kan vara intressanta att använda framöver? OM NGN SVARAR JA: Vad kan

man då sända el vad kan man göra? Här finns det möjligheter till fortsatt diskussion.

7. Vad tyckte ni om webbplatsen som en kanal för att kommunicera internt?

> a) Passar den här typen av teknik ett företag som BioB?
>
> b) Kan webbplatsen fungera som ett komplement till, eller t o m ersätta stormöten? Varför? Varför inte? Tvåvägskommunikation?
>
> c) Varför tror ni att det var så få som kommenterade respek tive ställde frågor via webbplatsen? Varför gjorde inte ni själva det?
>
> d) Vad tror ni är orsaken till att det inte uppstod någon diskussion?
>
> e) "Orsakade" webbplatsen med videofilmerna diskussioner utanför webbplatsen? T ex i fikarummet, på lunchen osv? Vad handlade i så fall dessa diskussioner om?

8. Hur ser ni helst att den interna kommunikationen genomförs, dvs genom vilka kanaler bör kommunikationen genomföras?

9. Tidigare erfarenhet av YouTube och Internet? Hur tror ni denna erfarenhet påverkar er användning av webbplatsen?

Appendix 12: BioB Interview guide

Intervjuguide

Agenda
Kort presentation Therese
Bakgrund till projektet
Enkäter, fokusgrupper och nu intervjuer
Etik/anonym
Presentation av intervjuperson

Bakgrundsfrågor till chefer
- Utbildning

- Tidigare arbeten

- Hur länge har du arbetat där du är idag?

Intervjufrågor
1. Hur kommunicerar ni vanligtvis inom BioB? Vilka är de vanligaste kommunikationskanalerna vid olika tillfällen? Fungerar det bra eller dåligt? Hur tycker du att interkommunikationen borde se ut/fungera?

2. Vilken roll menar du att webbplatsen spelar i förhållande till andra kommunikationsalternativ?

3. Har du varit delaktig i beslutet att implementera av webbplatsen med filmerna?

4. Vem har drivit/står bakom införandet av webbplatsen med filmerna?

5. Vad var syftet med webbplatsen med filmerna?

6. Har du själv besökt webbplatsen med filmerna om BioBs historia och värderingar? Om ja, har du sett någon eller några av filmerna?

7. Vad tyckte ni om filmerna med BioBs historia och värderingar?

8. Kunskap och attitydfrågor

- o Har filmerna ökat din kunskap om företagets värderingar? Ge exempel
- o Arbetar du i större utsträckning utifrån företagets värderingar? Ge exempel

9. Vilka fördelar respektive nackdelar kan du se/upplever du med webbplatsen med filmerna? Även om du inte tyckte att just de här filmerna var bra, tror du att kanalen som sådan kan vara intressanta att använda framöver?

10. Om du jämför denna kommunikationskanal med andra kommunikationskanaler som använts internt på BioB, hur tycker du då att den fungerar? Kan den ersätta någon kommunikationskanal, vara ett komplement eller fungerar den inte? (ex. jmfr. Intranät, nyhetsbrev, stormöten, möten med närmaste chef, workshops, e-post).

11. Vad tyckte du om webbplatsen som en kanal för att kommunicera internt?
- o Passar den här typen av teknik ett företag som BioB?
- o Kan webbplatsen fungera som ett komplement till, eller t o m ersätta stormöten? Varför? Varför inte? Tvåvägskommunikation?
- o Varför tror du att det var så få som kommenterade respektive ställde frågor via webbplatsen? Varför gjorde inte du själv det?
- o Vad tror du är orsaken till att det inte uppstod någon diskussion?
- o "Orsakade" webbplatsen med filmerna diskussioner utanför webbplatsen? T ex i fikarummet, på lunchen osv? Vad handlade i så fall dessa diskussioner om?

12. Vad gjordes med/hur hanterades de frågor/kommentarer som lämnades via webbplatsen? Bidrog frågorna/kommentarerna till en gemensam tolkning om hur värderingarna kan implementeras i organisationen? I vilken utsträckning och på vilket sätt tar ledningen hänsyn till medarbetarnas synpunkter/förslag (som förmedlas via webbplatsen)?

13. Hur föredrar du att få information/kommunicera i framtiden?

14. Hur ser ni helst att den interna kommunikationen genomförs, dvs genom vilka kanaler bör kommunikationen genomföras?

15. Beskriv din erfarenhet av datorer, Internet och webbfilm, t ex YouTube.

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